



# **Mains Marathon Compilation**

**November, 2022**

## **Mains Marathon Compilation for the Month of November, 2022**

- 1. The accident at Morbi is a symptom of a crisis at the heart of India's urban governance. Discuss the issues facing urban local governance in India. What policy measures can be helpful in making it effective?**
- 2. What are multi-modal logistics parks (MMLPs)? How can they revolutionize India's logistics landscape?**
- 3. Enumerate the agro-climatic conditions required for saffron cultivation. Discuss the initiatives launched in India for promoting Saffron cultivation.**
- 4. Examine the significance of genetic engineering for agriculture.**
- 5. How far Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) have been successful in fulfilling the financial needs of agriculture sector and rural economy?**
- 6. What is Dhara Mustard Hybrid-11 (DMH-11)? Why there has been opposition to its commercial release? Are hybrid mustard varieties better than local ones?**
- 7. With reference to UNEP report, Adaptation target not keeping pace with growing risks. What are the reasons behind the slow adaptation? What measures can be taken for increasing its pace to tackle growing climate risks?**
- 8. What are the reasons behind Delhi's air pollution as per CSE report? What policy measures can be taken for effectively reducing the pollution?**
- 9. Is uniformity through Uniform Civil Code (UCC) desirable for a nation that is as diverse as India? Provide justifications for your argument.**
- 10. Do you think government regulations can be helpful in achieving the full potential of UPI in India?**
- 11. Analyze the impacts of the recent Supreme Court's judgment that upheld the validity of the 103rd Constitutional Amendment.**
- 12. What is the Black Sea Grain Initiative? Discuss its importance in tackling the global food crisis.**
- 13. What are the issues associated with the global efforts to counter terrorism? Also, highlight the steps taken by the government of India to Counter Global Terrorism.**
- 14. Discuss the implications of the recent Supreme Court ruling on Provident Fund (PF) pensions.**
- 15. In light of the present conditions, what are the challenges that the world's financial system is facing?**
- 16. Public service broadcast is a good idea in a diverse country with myriad issues. Examine the statement.**
- 17. Do you think that the private sector can find solutions to climate change by funding the trillions needed for a global transition to clean energy?**
- 18. Provide a general account of groundwater usage in India. What measures are required to conserve groundwater?**
- 19. Considering the present circumstances, discuss the significance of the Bali G-20 summit.**
- 20. What is India's long-term strategy to transition to a low-emission pathway to become carbon-neutral by 2070?**

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- 21. As the world shrinks with technological and communication changes, terrorists, criminals, weapons, and funds are also able to move across national boundaries easily. In light of the statement, highlight the efforts made by India to tackle these challenges.**
- 22. Health must be turned into a feature and eventually a function of air pollution policy. Discuss.**
- 23. Many state governments are switching back to Old Pension Scheme (OPS). Do you think that OPS is bad for economics? Give reasons in support of your argument.**
- 24. Rethinking cities to make them more liveable, inclusive, and integrated is a key component in promoting smart cities. Elaborate.**
- 25. FDA has recently approved lab-grown meat for human consumption in the US. How is lab-grown meat developed, and how is it different from real meat?**
- 26. 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. In the light of the statement, highlight the hurdles in the effective implementation of the grant of the Permanent Commission to women in the armed forces.**
- 27. Industrial policy needs to be strengthened to make it more aligned to tackle India's present challenges. Comment.**
- 28. Highlight the economic and environmental significance of Mangroves. What are the threats facing Mangroves in India?**
- 29. The COP27 agreement on loss and damage is significant, but the meeting did not address several other pressing issues. Analyze the statement.**
- 30. Highlight the key takeaways from the recently concluded summit of the Group of 20 nations in Bali, Indonesia. What lessons can India learn from it?**
- 31. Do you think the Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2022 is an improvement over Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019? Provide reasons in support of your arguments.**
- 32. Highlight the strategic and ecological significance of the Great Nicobar project. Also, discuss the concerns associated with it.**
- 33. What are the reasons behind the increasing suicide rate in India? How does the National Suicide Prevention Strategy aim to tackle this menace?**
- 34. Highlight the significance of the India-Australia Free Trade Agreement.**
- 35. Critically analyze the mechanisms available to resolve inter-state boundary conflicts in India?**
- 36. Processed food regulation is too lenient to make a difference to snacking's serious health costs. Comment.**
- 37. Millets are considered to be "powerhouses of nutrition". In the light of the statement, comment on the significance of the Millet for India.**
- 38. The Constitution has a clear imprint on day-to-day life, though we may not be really conscious of it. Discuss the Significance of inculcating awareness of the constitution among the common citizens.**

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- 39. What are the reasons behind the overcrowding of prisons in India? State the measures that are required to handle the overcrowding.**
- 40. Discuss the factors supporting the growing cultivation of exotic and novel fruits and vegetables.**
- 41. Market Infrastructure Institutions (MIIs) suffer from the conflicting nature of different roles. Elaborate.**
- 42. Inclusion is integral to rapid growth. Discuss.**
- 43. 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.**
- 44. Accepting reforms mooted by previous panels will strengthen the Election Commission's independence. Elaborate.**
- 45. What are the implications of the Supreme Court's ruling on the EPFO pension scheme?**
- 46. Discuss the need for a comprehensive "maritime vision" and articulating it into a "National Strategy for Maritime Security".**

**Q.1) The accident at Morbi is a symptom of a crisis at the heart of India's urban governance. Discuss the issues facing urban local governance in India. What policy measures can be helpful in making it effective?**

**Indian Express , ToI**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Write some issues facing urban local governance in India. Also write some measures to make it effective.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

**74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992** provided constitutional status to local urban bodies. This act added a new **part IX-A** to the Constitution entitled as 'The Municipalities' and a new Twelfth Schedule containing 18 functional items for municipalities. The recent accident at Morbi, Gujarat exposed the issues associated with the urban local governance in India.

**Issues facing urban local governance:**

- **Poor governance:** In some States, **elections** to urban local bodies have not been held for years, defeating the goal of decentralised governance. E.g. Tamil Nadu. There is a complete lack of planning and governance at the urban local body level.
- **Lack of management capacity:** Poor urban planning and rapid unregulated growth in cities has caused severe damage to India's cities. E.g. recent **Bangalore flooding**.
- **Financial condition:** Collectively, 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.
- **Top-down approach:** Urban planning is done at the state government level and municipalities have little or no role in it. Poor planning, poor accountability, and poor governance have led to disasters.
- **Lack of coordination:** Poor coordination among centre, state, and various departments at local level lead to poor implementation of urban policies. There is a range of institutions with **overlapping functional jurisdiction**, leading to confusion and poor coordination.

**Measures to make it effective:**

- **Greater autonomy:** State governments need to begin the process of empowering elected leadership of urban local bodies. Municipalities should be more autonomous in their functioning, so that they can deliver quality service.
- **Encouraging public-private partnership:** at both state and city levels **to fund city development**.
- **Planning:** The urban local bodies should **prioritise the development programmes**. Any mega project envisaged needs to be developed taking into account the views of all the stakeholders.
- **Governance reforms:** A minimum level of staffing should be provided in metropolitan areas. Elections to ULBs should not be, generally, delayed beyond six months. The Government may consider the adoption of a common categorisation of urban bodies across the country so as to assist a systematic planning process and devolution of funds.
- To make changes **voters should demand accountability** from empowered urban bodies, not state governments with conflicts of interests.

A series of reforms are needed by the Indian government to strengthen local-level governance. To improve urban governance and delivery of services there should be appropriate government as well administrative actions.



**Q.2) What are multi-modal logistics parks (MMLPs)? How can they revolutionize India's logistics landscape?**

**Live Mint**

**Introduction:** Explain multi-modal logistics parks (MMLPs).

**Body:** Write about how multi-modal logistics parks can revolutionize India's logistics landscape.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

Multi-modal logistics parks are **large land parcels with rail and road connectivity**, where goods coming in get seamlessly transferred to trains and other modes of transport in a **hub-and-spoke model**.

So, freight from production zones will be shipped to nearby logistics parks, where it will be aggregated and shipped on a larger vehicle to a logistics park near the consumption zone. Then, the freight arriving at the destination logistics park will be disaggregated and distributed to the consumption zones inside the city. The **first multi-modal logistics park is coming up in Chennai**.

Multi-modal logistics parks revolutionize India's logistics landscape in following manner:

- **Reduced logistics cost:** They will provide **value-added services** such as customs clearance, labelling, repackaging, and packaging. All these features will ultimately bring down the overall logistics cost from the current about **14% of GDP to less than 10% of GDP**.
- **Improved efficiency:** The MMLPs will **increase the warehouse capacity** of the country. It will help in improving the efficiency of freight movement and reduction of freight transportation cost.
- **Lower handling costs:** due to the presence of best-in-class **modern and mechanised handling** infrastructure. They are expected to reduce secondary freight costs by co-location of large warehouses and value-added services.
- **Aggregation of demand:** These parks will ensure improved train services, **use of modern equipment, and electronic data interchange**. So, the time taken for the entire process of moving goods from the production centre to ports will be reduced.
- **Container movement:** Not just for exports, MMLPs will also facilitate the movement of containers to seaports for inland demand. As of now, inland goods movement is usually not done via containers.
- **Lower warehousing charges and less pollution:** because these parks are typically situated outside city limits where land costs are lower. Reduction in freight movement on busy city roads and movement of goods in larger trucks will also lower overall cost of freight.

India aims to become **US\$ 5 trillion economy in the near term and a developed economy by 2047**. For this, connectivity and robust infrastructure will become crucial points. As logistics develop, manufacturing and other industries like warehousing and infrastructure development will also develop and make India a manufacturing hub.

**Q.3) Enumerate the agro-climatic conditions required for saffron cultivation. Discuss the initiatives launched in India for promoting Saffron cultivation.**

**The Hindu**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Write some agro-climatic conditions required for saffron cultivation. Also write some initiatives launched in India for promoting Saffron cultivation.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

Pampore region, commonly known as **Saffron bowl of Kashmir**, is the main contributor to saffron production. Pampore Saffron Heritage of Kashmir is one of the **Globally Important Agricultural Heritage systems (GIAHS)** recognised sites in India. India occupies the 2nd largest area but produces approximately 7 percent of the total world production.

**Agro-climatic conditions required for saffron cultivation:**

- **Altitude:** Saffron grows well at an altitude of 2000 meters above sea level. It needs a photoperiod (sunlight) of 12 hours.
- **Soil:** It grows in many different soil types but thrives best in calcareous (soil that has calcium carbonate in abundance), humus-rich and well-drained soil with a pH between 6 and 8.
- **Climate:** need of explicit climatological summer and winter with temperatures ranging from not more than 35 or 40 degree Celsius in summer to about -15 or -20 degree Celsius in winter.
- **Rainfall:** It also requires adequate rainfall that is 1000-1500 mm per annum.

The following initiatives are launched in India for promoting Saffron cultivation:

- The **National Saffron Mission** was initiated in the year 2010 to extend support for creation of irrigation facilities through tube wells and sprinkler sets which would help in production of better crops.
- North East Centre for Technology Application and Reach (NECTAR) under **Saffron Bowl project** has identified few locations in Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya for saffron cultivation.
- A new **saffron park** has been started for the purpose of processing and promoting the sale of saffron from the Kashmir Valley.
- With the **introduction of GI Tagging and new techniques** of processing, the quality of Kashmir's saffron has been raised to be among the top in the world.
- Now Saffron of Kashmir is **available at 'NAFED' shops** across the country which will give a lot of impetus to the cultivation of saffron in Jammu and Kashmir.
- The **India International Kashmir Saffron Trading Centre (IIKSTC)** provided an **e-auction** for the Saffron growers and fetching them double the prices for their crop.

A proper strategy must be devised so that the saffron growers get full benefits. The adoption of latest technologies will not only increase the production but will also ensure better quality.

**Q.4) Examine the significance of genetic engineering for agriculture.**

**Business Standard**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Write some the significance of genetic engineering for agriculture. Also write some associated concerns.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

Genetic Engineering is the process of modifying an organism through the artificial manipulation, reconfiguration, and replication of DNA or other molecules such as nucleic acids. India has approved commercial cultivation of only one GM crop- **Bt cotton**. 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.

**Significance of genetic engineering for agriculture:**

- **Altering growth in Plants:** genetic engineering modifies the genes of plants in such a way that the plant can grow faster and, allowing the plant to survive and produce more crop yield.
- **Pest Resistance:** It can be used to change the genes of plants to make them more resistant to pesticides. E.g. **Bacillus thuringiensis (Bt) crops** contain bacterium crystal toxins that make them more resistant to other insects.
- **Crop Improvement:** It can be used to increase crop yields, lower food costs, improve food quality, food security, and medicinal value. For example, **Golden Rice**.
- **Herbicide Resistance:** The use of herbicide resistant plants provides additional benefits to farmers by reducing and simplifying the use of herbicides. In today's world, genetic engineering is also assisting scientists in the transfer of resistance to non-herbicide plants.
- **Frost Resistance:** using genetic engineering, the seed plant can withstand negative temperatures, giving the plant the ability to withstand even harsh climatic conditions.

**Concerns:**

- **Impact on Health:** Effects of GM crops on human health can be unpredictable. They might have a tendency to provoke any allergic reaction.
- **Environmental Concern:** They can **reduce species diversity**. E.g. Insect-resistant plants might harm insects that are not their intended target. GM technology could also allow the transfer of herbicide tolerant genes from GM crop to weeds, creating "**superweeds**", which will be immune to common control methods.
- **Economic Concerns:** Introduction of a GM crop to market is a lengthy and costly process. Patenting these seeds increases the price of seeds and small farmers especially in developing countries cannot afford to buy GM seeds every year.

By resisting genetic engineering technologies, India risks falling behind the rest of the world. Transparent, science-based, and efficient biosafety laws and regulations can help India to encourage the industry to invest in development in plant varieties that are able to resist pest attacks and diseases.

**Q.5) How far Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) have been successful in fulfilling the financial needs of agriculture sector and rural economy?**

**Business Standard**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain how Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) have been fulfilling the financial needs of agriculture sector and rural economy. Also write some issues.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) under Regional Rural Banks Act, 1976 are financial institutions which ensure adequate credit for agriculture and other rural sectors. They were set up on the basis of the recommendations of the Narasimham **Working Group (1975)**. The equity of a regional rural bank is held by the Central Government, concerned State Government and the Sponsor Bank in the proportion of 50:15:35.

Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) have been successful in fulfilling the financial needs of agriculture sector and rural economy:

- To make the agriculture sector more profitable and to increase the scope of rural industries, the government included the concept of priority sector. The RRBs are required to provide 75% of their total credit as **priority sector lending (PSL)**.



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- RRBs **increase employment opportunities** by encouraging trade and commerce in rural areas.
- RRBs perform various functions such as carrying out government operations like **disbursement of wages of MGNREGA workers** and distribution of pensions, providing **para-banking facilities** like locker facilities, debit and credit cards, mobile banking, internet banking, and UPI services.
- RRBs provide **cheap and liberal credit facilities** to small and marginal farmers, agriculture labourers, artisans, small entrepreneurs and other weaker sections.
- They **act as a catalyst element** and thereby accelerate the economic growth in the particular rural region.

### Issues:

- **Incurring losses:** many of RRBs branches do not have enough business as they focus mainly on offering government's schemes like direct benefit transfer in the rural areas of the country.
- **Regional imbalance:** They are concentrating their branches in some specific states and districts & losing other prospective groups of customers.
- **Poverty alleviation:** Although various efforts have been made in this regard, lack of economic infrastructure, poor marketing strategies, poor knowledge of customers, low production, low awareness about savings have created many hurdles for RRBs.
- **Low finance:** They are dependent on NABARD to collect finance for their further operation.

RRBs should start some new insurable policies like deposit-linked cattle and other animals' insurance policies, crop insurance policies, or life insurance policies for the rural depositors.

### Q.6) What is Dhara Mustard Hybrid-11 (DMH-11)? Why there has been opposition to its commercial release? Are hybrid mustard varieties better than local ones?

#### The Hindu

**Introduction:** Explain Dhara Mustard Hybrid-11 (DMH-11).

**Body:** Write some reasons of opposition to its commercial release. Also explain how hybrid mustard varieties better than local ones.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

DMH-11 is a transgenic crop because it uses foreign genes from a different species. DMH-11 is a **hybrid variant of mustard** developed by researchers at The Centre for Genetic Manipulation of Crop Plants, at the University of Delhi. It is a result of a cross **between two varieties: Varuna and Early Heera-2**. The soil bacterium Barnase in Varuna induces a temporary sterility because of which it can't naturally self-pollinate and Barstar in Heera blocks the effect of barnase allowing seeds to be produced. The result is DMH-11 that not only has better yield but is also fertile.

#### Reasons of opposition to its commercial release:

- Activist groups allege that the GM mustard has **not been evaluated as a herbicide (glufosinate-ammonium) tolerant crop** posing potential risks.
- GM mustard plants may dissuade bees and other pollinators from pollinating the plant and this could have knock-off **environmental catastrophes**.
- Some groups argued that GM mustard poses a **health hazard and could cause cancer** as HT (Herbicide Tolerant) technology was mostly carcinogenic.

#### Comparison of hybrid mustard varieties to local ones:

- Trials conducted by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) suggest that DMH-11 has 28% **higher yields** than its parent Varuna and was 37% better than zonal checks, or local varieties that are considered the best in different agro-climatic zones.

- These trials lasted three years and took place in eight different locations. DMH-11, rather than being an end in itself, indicates the success of the barnase-barstar system, which can be used as a platform technology to develop newer hybrids.

There should not be any unnecessary delay in the approval of GM crops as an early decision will allow seed multiplication for farmers to be able to plant in the 2023-24 crop season. DMH-11 alone may not resolve India's edible oil crisis, thus rather seed companies should invest and develop their own hybrids.

**Q.7) With reference to UNEP report, Adaptation target not keeping pace with growing risks. What are the reasons behind the slow adaptation? What measures can be taken for increasing its pace to tackle growing climate risks?**

**Business Standard**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain some reasons behind the slow adaptation, with reference to UNEP report. Also write some measures that can be taken for increasing its pace to tackle growing climate risks.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

According to the **UNEP's Adaptation Gap Report, 2022: 'Too Little, Too Slow'**, global efforts towards adaptation planning, financing and implementation are not enough to prepare vulnerable communities around the world to adapt to the rising risks from the impacts of climate change. **Reasons behind the slow adaptation:**

- **Inadequate flow of finance:** Combined mitigation and adaptation finance flows in 2020 fell short of the annual US\$100 billion global goal pledged by developed countries. The adaptation finance gap in developing countries is likely five to 10 times greater than current international adaptation finance flows and continues to widen.
- **Inadequate involvement of stakeholders** through elite capture of resources and exclusion of marginalized groups, including women, indigenous peoples and local communities.
- Inadequate attention to **local contexts and ownership** through genuine local participation in adaptation design and implementation.
- **Short-term focus and neglect of future climate risks** resulting in inadequate attention to the long-term viability of adaptation solutions.
- Retrofitting development activities as adaptation actions without specifically addressing climate risks, often resulting in marginal resilience benefits or maladaptation.

**Measures to tackle growing climate risks:**

- **Linking adaptation and mitigation actions:** such as nature-based solutions, from the outset in planning, finance and implementation can enhance co-benefits. It could also limit potential trade-offs, such as hydropower reducing food security or irrigation increasing energy consumption.
- **Better climate risk data and analysis:** which are essential to safeguarding lives and means of subsistence in vulnerable nations and communities.
- **Increase financing for adaptation:** developed countries should provide a clear roadmap for their promise of doubling finance for adaptation to \$40 billion, which they had promised at COP 26 in Glasgow.
- The world urgently needs a **new business model** for turning adaptation priorities into investable projects.
- There should be implementation and operationalisation of **early warning systems against extreme weather events** and slow onset changes such as sea level rise.

Strong mitigation and adaptation are both key to avoiding hard adaptation limits. Ambitious, accelerated action to adapt to climate change is therefore paramount, together with strong mitigation efforts.

**Q.8) What are the reasons behind Delhi's air pollution as per CSE report? What policy measures can be taken for effectively reducing the pollution?**

**Indian Express**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain some reasons behind Delhi's air pollution as per CSE report. Also write some policy measures that can be taken for effectively reducing the pollution.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

India's national capital New Delhi is known for being **one of the world's most polluted cities**, with the problem getting particularly severe in the winter months. Air pollution in Delhi-NCR and the Indo Gangetic Plains is a complex phenomenon that is dependent on a variety of factors.

The Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), a Delhi-based organisation that focuses on environment-related research and advocacy, gave following reasons behind Delhi's air pollution:

- **Local sources of pollution: vehicular emissions** may have contributed around 51 percent to the PM2.5 levels in Delhi. Among these local sources, the next largest contribution was 13 percent from residential sources, and 11 percent from industries.
- **Construction activities** contributed around 7 percent to PM2.5, followed by 5 percent each from the burning of waste and the energy sector. Road dust contributed around 4 percent to PM2.5 levels.
- The 67.1 % pollution came from **NCR districts** (32.8 per cent), other districts (25.8 per cent) and biomass burning in the neighbouring states (9.5 per cent).
- With vehicles contributing to the nitrogen dioxide levels in the city, the hourly nitrogen dioxide level was also found to peak around the time that **congestion** was maximum on the roads.

**Measures for effectively reducing the pollution:**

- **Verifiable and measurable shift to public transport** by improving access, improving bus services and integration of metro stations with other modes of transport, besides providing an extensive network of walking and cycling infrastructure to connect neighbourhoods.
- Delhi needs **congestion and pollution pricing** and other restraint measures to control the traffic volume.
- Targets set for the **electrification of the new vehicle** fleet should be accelerated and met.
- The State Governments of the NCR region must **fill the critical infrastructure gaps** that impede the implementation of policy measures. For instance, vehicle restraint measures are difficult to implement during smog episodes if the public transport infrastructure is inadequate in the region.
- Government should find ways to **commercialize paddy straw**, as wheat straw is useful farmers have found ways to use it, unlike paddy.
- **More smog tower and anti-smog guns** should be installed to reduce the level of smog in the capital.

Appropriate political will and aware citizenry is a prerequisite to tackle the menace. India must establish **a national environment regulator** just like SEBI (Stock Market regulator), RBI (Banking sector regulator) etc.



**Q.9) Is uniformity through Uniform Civil Code (UCC) desirable for a nation that is as diverse as India? Provide justifications for your argument.**

**The Hindu**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain why Uniform Civil Code (UCC) is desirable. Also write some issues associated with it.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

A Uniform Civil Code (UCC) is one that would be applicable to all religious communities in their personal matters such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, adoption etc. **Article 44**, one of the Directive Principles of the Constitution lays down that the state shall endeavour to secure a UCC for the citizens throughout the territory of India.

**Why Uniform Civil Code (UCC) is desirable?**

- The Supreme Court in various judgements has called for the implementation of the UCC. E.g. Shah Bano Begum judgement of 1985.
- UCC would provide **equal status** to all citizens.
- It is commonly observed that personal laws of almost all religions are discriminatory towards women. Men are usually granted upper preferential status in matters of succession and inheritance. It would **promote gender parity** in Indian society.
- UCC would accommodate the aspirations of the young population who imbibe **liberal ideology**. Its implementation would thus support the **national integration**.
- UCC will **simplify** the cumbersome **legal matters** governed by personal laws. It will also help in **speedy disposal of cases** and reduce burden on the judiciary.

**Issues:**

- Certain civil laws in all communities were “inseparably connected with religious beliefs and practices”. UCC would **come in the way of Article 25** of the Constitution.
- Constitutional law experts argue that perhaps the framers did not intend total uniformity, which is why personal laws were **placed in entry 5 of the Concurrent List**, with the power to legislate being given to Parliament and State Assemblies.
- According to Law commission a unified nation did not necessarily need “uniformity”, and secularism could not contradict the plurality prevalent in the country.
- There are **practical difficulties** due to religious and cultural diversity in India across the religions, sects, castes, states etc.
- Experts often argue that the **time is not ripe for** Indian society to embrace such UCC.

Major awareness efforts are needed to reform current personal laws. This should be initiated and undertaken by the communities themselves. Legal intervention should be undertaken only if a practice violates fundamental rights of citizens.

**Q.10) Do you think government regulations can be helpful in achieving the full potential of UPI in India?**

**Indian Express**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain how govt. regulations can be helpful in achieving the full potential of UPI in India. Also write some concerns.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

UPI is an instant real-time payment system developed by National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) facilitating inter-bank transactions. The interface is regulated by the Reserve Bank of India. The recent discussion paper by the RBI on charges in payment systems has



triggered widespread public debate, especially on the zero-charge framework for UPI transactions.

**Helpful in achieving the full potential of UPI:**

- UPI apps have not been receiving any Government incentives and that the entire incentive amount is being appropriated by banks.
- UPI's core model of payments makes it an unsustainable business for small players who do not have other means of revenue like the big players, resulting in skewed competition and innovation in the sector.
- But for UPI enablers like PSPs and banks, a revenue model that meets their operational costs and offers them the width **to invest in new technologies and upgrade their systems** is the bare minimum for sustainability.
- **Rising UPI transactions** also need to be matched by a robust scaling of the current systems, and banks and PSPs might not have the incentive to invest further in their UPI infrastructures in absence of revenue clarity from the stream.

The following points explain that government regulations can be counterproductive in achieving the full potential of UPI in India:

- Only 3-7% of **rural consumers** are actively using UPI, with many even unaware of its existence. So from the digital public good perspective, it is probably not the right time to levy charges on UPI for merchants or consumers.
- If MDR is levied on all merchants, then the major target of the digital inclusion drive of UPI – **small merchants** who deal with petty cash daily – will not accept digital payments.
- Over the past few years, government and RBI have spent, on average, Rs 5,400 crore annually on printing and even more on currency management. The expenditure towards UPI may be much lower and could even curtail the expenditure on cash.

What the UPI ecosystem needs is **a balancing act** between digital payments growth and incentivizing of the system. One way to strike this balance is by re-introducing MDR as a revenue stream for the banks and PSPs and also subsidising it for merchants to ensure that they incur no charges.

**Q.11) Analyze the impacts of the recent Supreme Court's judgment that upheld the validity of the 103rd Constitutional Amendment.**

**The Hindu , Indian Express , ToI**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain some positive impacts of the recent Supreme Court's judgment that upheld the validity of the 103rd Constitutional Amendment. Also write some negative impacts.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

The 10% EWS quota was introduced under the **103rd Constitution (Amendment) Act, 2019**. It inserted **Article 15 (6) and Article 16 (6)**. It is for reservation in jobs and admissions in educational institutes for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) but excludes the 'poorest of poor' among SC, ST, Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBC) and OBC. Recently the Supreme Court upheld the validity of the 103rd Constitutional Amendment.

**Positive impacts:**

- The new reservation is in furtherance of the Preamble's goal of **achieving justice** — social, economic and political.
- EWS quota is **an affirmative action**. Groups already having reservation don't need additional benefits. There are extremely poor people among the general categories too.
- This is significant because this shifts the reservation policy from its goal of correcting "social injustice" to **correcting "individual deprivation."**

- The 10% quota is **progressive** and could **address the issues of educational and income inequality** in India.
- The proposed reservation through a constitutional amendment would give **constitutional recognition to the poor from the upper castes**.
- **Better Targeting:** Individuals rather than group became the basis of backwardness.

**Negative impacts:**

- **Unit of measurement:** The Union government maintains lists of SCs, STs and OBCs and these lists explicitly mention the names of castes and tribes that qualify to be included in them. But EWS category targets "families" as opposed to castes or tribes.
- The 103rd amendment of the Constitution has changed reservation policy from "social" to "individual." This also allows for a **great deal of arbitrariness** to be introduced into the policy. The government might face difficulties in defining the EWS category and setting the required income limits for the category.

Reservation is fair, as far as it provides appropriate affirmative actions for the benefit of the downtrodden and economically backward sections of society. But, reservation beyond the limit will lead to the ignorance of the merit, which will disturb the entire administration.

**Q.12) What is the Black Sea Grain Initiative? Discuss its importance in tackling the global food crisis.**

**The Hindu**

**Introduction:** Explain Black Sea Grain Initiative.

**Body:** Explain its importance in tackling the global food crisis.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine began, exports of grain from Ukraine, as well as food and fertilizers from Russia, have been significantly hit. The Black Sea Grain deal endeavours to **tackle escalating food prices** emanating from supply chain disruptions. The deal is brokered by the **UN and Turkey** and signed by the UN, the Russian Federation, Turkey and Ukraine to resume Ukrainian grain exports via the Black Sea amid the war.

It was to provide for a **safe maritime humanitarian corridor** for Ukrainian exports (particularly for food grains). The central idea was to calm markets by ensuring an adequate supply of grains, thereby **limiting food price inflation**. It foresees the establishment of a control centre in Istanbul, to be staffed by U.N., Turkish, Russian and Ukrainian officials, to run and coordinate the process. Ships would undergo inspections to ensure they are not carrying weapons.

**Importance in tackling the global food crisis:**

- As per the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, approximately 10.1 million tonnes of grains have been shipped since the initiative commenced.
- It was earlier inferred that the supply situation in markets was seen to be easing, with potential for further **price drops**.
- People hoarding the grain in the hope of selling it for a sizeable profit owing to the supply crunch were obligated to sell.
- The initiative has also been credited for having made a "huge difference" to the global cost of living crisis.
- Ukraine is among the largest exporters of **wheat, maize, rapeseed, sunflower seeds and sunflower oil**, globally. Its access to the deep-sea ports in the **Black Sea** enables it to directly approach Russia and Europe along with grain importers from the Middle East and North Africa.

- The shipment of grain and food stocks into world markets will help bridge the global food supply gap and **reduce pressure on high prices**.
- About 44% of the shipments, which include corn, wheat, rapeseed, and sunflower oil among others, reached high-income, 28% reached low and lower-middle-income countries and 27% reached upper-middle income countries.
- Its access to the deep-sea ports in the Black Sea enables it to **directly approach Russia and Europe** along with grain importers from the Middle East and North Africa.

The Black Sea Grain Initiative is a welcoming step as ensuring food security to the people will protect them from another impending global food crisis.

**Q.13) What are the issues associated with the global efforts to counter terrorism? Also, highlight the steps taken by the government of India to Counter Global Terrorism.**

**The Hindu**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain some issues associated with the global efforts to counter terrorism. Also write some steps taken by the government of India to Counter Global Terrorism.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

Terrorism is the illegitimate use of force to provide injury to common people for political and ideological gains. Recently, India has decided to host the special session of the **United Nations Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee (UNSC-CTC)**. It is focused on **new and emerging technologies**.

**Issues associated with the global efforts to counter terrorism:**

- **Lack of response:** The “Global War On Terrorism” (GWOT), as it was conceived by the **post-9/11 United States** is over, as the United States negotiated with the Taliban, and then withdrew from Afghanistan.
- **Global polarisation:** The growing global polarisation over the Russia-Ukraine war is not only **shifting the focus from terrorism** but is also blurring the lines on what constitutes terrorism.
- **Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism:** **very little progress** has been made on the actual issues such as the definition of terrorism, concerns over human rights law conflicts etc. Moreover, consensus for the convention is still elusive.
- **Emerging technologies:** **Drones** are already being used to deliver funds, drugs, weapons, ammunition, and even improvised explosive devices.
- After the COVID-19 pandemic, there is concern about the use of **biowarfare, and Gain-of-Function (GoF) research to mutate viruses** and vectors.
- Terror financing uses **bitcoins and cryptocurrency**, and terror communications use social media, the dark web, and even gaming centres.

The following steps have been taken by the government of India to counter global terrorism:

- **Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties (MLATs):** in criminal matters to facilitate the investigation, collection of evidence etc. have been signed with other countries.
- In 2018, India highlighted its demand for a **Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT)** at the UN General Assembly (UNGA).
- **Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System:** It vastly improves the capability of Border Security Force (BSF) in detecting and controlling human trafficking and cross border terrorism, etc.
- **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967:** It enables more effective prevention of certain unlawful activities of individuals and associations and for dealing with terrorist activities etc.



- **National Investigation Agency:** It is India's counter-terrorist task force and is empowered to deal with terror related crimes across states without special permission from the states.
- **Policy of Zero-Tolerance:** India calls for zero-tolerance against terrorism and focuses on developing a common strategy to curb it.

India, as host of counter-terrorism events, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the next G-20, must stop fighting the “last war” on terrorism.

**Q.14) Discuss the implications of the recent Supreme Court ruling on Provident Fund (PF) pensions.**

**Indian Express**

**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.15) In light of the present conditions, what are the challenges that the world's financial system is facing?**

**Business Standard**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain some challenges that the world's financial system is facing.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

The **Ukraine conflict** poses the biggest challenge to growth since the global financial crisis (GFC) of 2007. As per IMF, the world economy will grow at 3.2 percent in 2022 and 2.7



percent in 2023. Growth in 2023 will be the lowest since 2010, leaving aside the pandemic year of 2020.

According to the **IMF's Global Financial Stability Report 2022**, there are following challenges that the world's financial system is facing:

- **Slow growth and rising interest rates:** Rising interest rates translate into losses in the bond market and increase in bad loans.
- **China's housing market:** 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.
- **Poor market liquidity:** Central banks are tightening monetary policy and shrinking their balance sheets. When liquidity is limited, the fall in prices can be steep. 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. According to the IMF, 50 per cent of small firms would have difficulty servicing debt.
- **Leveraged finance under pressure:** Leveraged finance is of the high-yield variety. In the US today, more than 50 percent of leveraged finance is composed of firms with a B rating or relatively higher risk of default.
- **Declining housing price:** Rising interest rates could trigger a steep decline in housing prices worldwide. These orders of declines will have adverse implications for banks.
- **Banks in emerging markets:** Banks accounting for a third of banking assets would lack the minimum capital required. Globally, however, banks that fall below the 4.5 percent minimum would account for no more than 5 percent of global banking assets.

Keeping the global trends in mind, India should form relevant policies to avoid the future impacts of the present global financial issues.

**Q.16) Public service broadcast is a good idea in a diverse country with myriad issues. Examine the statement.**

**The Hindu**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain why public service broadcast is a good idea. Also write some issues.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

Recently the Union Cabinet approved new guidelines called '**Guidelines for Uplinking and Downlinking of Satellite Television Channels in India, 2022**' which point out that as airwaves and frequencies are public property and need to be used in the best interest of society. It mandates the channels to broadcast content on themes of national importance and socially relevant issues for at least 30 minutes every day.

**A good idea:**

- Broadcast companies will be allowed to uplink foreign channels from Indian teleports, which would create **employment opportunities** and make India a **teleport hub** for other countries.
- In the time of polarising opinions, heated debates and narrow targeting of ideas on television, this initiative will bring **positive change**.
- The themes that have been picked out, are subjects on which a lot **more awareness** is necessary like education, agriculture and rural development, health and family welfare, science and technology, welfare of women and weaker sections of society, protection of environment etc.

**Issues:**

- The broadcasters are concerned as they have paid hefty fees for their use and any binding guidelines that **adversely impact their commercial interests** are not fair towards them.

- No set of modules and rules on the format of fulfilling the obligations and left to the **discretion of channels** which might create chaotic issues.
- It could be misused for **vested propaganda and political gains**.
- There is **no clarity yet on compensation norms** and who is going to pay the expenditure for the public service component on TV.
- As the Central Government may, from time to time, issue a general advisory to the channels for telecast of content. This suggests that the centre will keep **an eye on the media**.
- The air-time devoted to this exercise can easily exceed 30 minutes. So, news channels might **protest** the mandatory move.

The proposed guidelines are the need of the hour to increase the social awareness on the very necessary topics.

**Q.17) Do you think that the private sector can find solutions to climate change by funding the trillions needed for a global transition to clean energy?**

**The Hindu**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain how the private sector can find solutions to climate change by funding the trillions needed for a global transition to clean energy. Also write some concerns.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

Recently the **UNFCCC Standing Committee on Finance (SCF)** released a report on the progress made by developed countries towards achieving the goal of mobilizing \$100 billion per year. Climate finance is money used by countries to drive down greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the effects of climate change.

**Private sector can find solutions to climate change:**

- No government in the world has **enough money to solve the climate crisis** or complete the energy transition, and that private investment in clean energy technology is therefore critical to combating climate change.
- Private sector breakthroughs in areas such as **battery storage, green hydrogen and direct air carbon capture** could be “game changers” for reaching net-zero emissions.
- Private sector is increasingly disclosing climate-related risks and opportunities, as well as reassessing investments that previously didn’t consider climate risk.
- Transitioning to greater **use of solar, hydropower, wind, geothermal, and biomass power** in the developing world will require vast investment.

**Concerns:**

- **Lack of transparency** of information on mobilized private finance.
- The private sector is especially **weak in the poorest countries**, when compared to many middle-income countries. This limits the opportunities to mobilise finance from local companies.
- The concern is that, unless efforts are made to steer private finance in an equitable manner, it would **mostly benefit a handful of developing countries**, but bypass the poorest ones, where the needs are greatest.
- Based on the experience of multilateral development banks (MDBs) in development and the private sector, concerns have also been raised that the private sector would mostly **benefit multinational companies from major economies**, instead of developing countries’ local companies.
- Private sector investments in developing countries have **concentrated on energy and transport**, whereas little attention has been paid to water infrastructure.

**Way Forward:**

- Develop a **common methodology** to record and track private finance to ensure an equitable distribution of the scarce climate finance available.
- Mobilization of private finance as a means of achieving the **\$100 billion goal**, should not come at the expense of, or involve a trade-off in addressing the needs of developing countries.

**Q.18) Provide a general account of groundwater usage in India. What measures are required to conserve groundwater?**

**The Hindu**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Write about groundwater usage in India. Also write some measures required to conserve groundwater.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

India is the **largest user of Groundwater** (GW) and 87% of GW is used for Irrigation. Recently the Ministry of Jal Shakti released the “**Dynamic Ground Water Resource Assessment Report**” for the entire country for the year 2022. The assessment was carried out **jointly by Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) and States/UTs.**

**Groundwater usage in India:**

- The 2022 assessment suggests that groundwater extraction (239.16 bcm) is the **lowest since 2004**. A **decrease in groundwater extraction** may indicate better water management
- **Improvement in groundwater conditions** in 909 assessment units in the country compared with 2017 assessment data.
- The total annual groundwater recharge for the entire country is 437.60 billion cubic meters (BCM).
- The groundwater extraction is **very high** in the states of Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu where it is more than 100%.
- The groundwater extraction is between 60-100% in the states of Delhi, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka and UTs of Chandigarh, Lakshadweep and Puducherry.
- In the rest of the states, the groundwater extraction is below 60%.

**Measures to conserve groundwater:**

- **Dedicated law:** There is no central law governing the use of groundwater and various States have their own laws on regulating its extraction that are deployed in a perfunctory manner.
- A draft **National Water Policy** has recommended a shift in usage from water-guzzling crops and prioritising recycled over freshwater for industrial purposes.
- To improve the water table in those areas where it is being overused, on-farm water management techniques and **improved irrigation methods** should be adopted. E.g. Methods for artificial recharge of groundwater.
- **Traditional methods of water conservation** should be encouraged to minimize the depletion of water resources. E.g water from house run off is an excellent source of irrigation.
- The **agricultural power-pricing structure** needs to be revamped as the flat rate of electricity adversely affects the use of groundwater.
- There should be a policy in place to monitor the excessive exploitation of groundwater resources to ensure long-term sustainability. E.g. **Water meters** could be installed to monitor overuse.

Groundwater depletion is becoming an alarming issue day by day. Leveraging **schemes like Atal Bhujal Yojana** which seeks to strengthen the institutional framework and bring about



behavioural changes at the community level for sustainable groundwater resource management is vital.

**Q.19) Considering the present circumstances, discuss the significance of the Bali G-20 summit.**

**The Hindu**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain significance of the Bali G-20 summit.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

G20 members currently account for nearly **80% of world GDP, 75% of global trade, and 60% of the global population**. The Presidency, aided by the countries holding the Presidency before and after it (**Troika**), is responsible for setting the agenda of each year's Summit. Next year the "Troika" of G-20 will be made up of emerging economies for the first time with India, Indonesia and Brazil. The motto for the Bali G-20 summit is **Recover Together, Recover Stronger**.

**Significance of the Bali G-20 summit:**

- While the focus will be on **post-pandemic recovery** and dealing with energy and food security impacted by the Russian war in Ukraine, much interest will be around which leaders choose to hold **bilateral summits** on the sidelines.
- The leaders will engage in discussions over three sessions: **on Food and Energy security, Health Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment, and Digital Transformation**.
- India will focus on the **Global South** and the problems it is facing due to **geopolitical tensions**, food and fuel shortages.
- Efforts will be made to build **global consensus over issues** that have clearly divided the world.
- A range of **bilateral talks** will take place against the backdrop of ongoing tensions around the world, including those caused by the invasion of Ukraine and the ensuing economic and environmental consequences, the **climate crisis**, North Korea's simmering nuclear programme, and China's expanding global aspirations.
- Extensive discussions will be held on a number of **contemporary burning topics**, including the state of the world economy, issues pertaining energy, environment, agriculture, health, and digital transformation.

G20 has to include objectives, vision and mission statements, a permanent secretariat, and staff to oversee commitments and ensure continuity in the agenda. The G20, instead of international commitments, can focus on domestic commitments and start implementing them.

**Q.20) What is India's long-term strategy to transition to a low-emission pathway to become carbon-neutral by 2070?**

**The Hindu**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain India's long-term strategy to transition to a low-emission pathway to become carbon-neutral by 2070.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

India submitted its **Long-Term Low Emission Development Strategy (LT-LEDS)** to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), during the 27<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties (COP27) at Egypt. The LT-LEDS 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.

**Long-Term Low Emission Development Strategy:**

- **Improve energy efficiency:** Promotion of energy efficient/low carbon technologies, digitization of processes, and creation of trading schemes and other market-based enablers to achieve these goals will be pursued where relevant.
- **Process and fuel switching, and electrification in manufacturing:** These will be pursued, as relevant, based upon availability and access to technology and the provision of climate finance.
- **Enhance material efficiency and recycling:** Sector-specific material efficiency technologies and strategies will be enhanced through value chains, as material-demand trends shift.
- **Promote green hydrogen technology and infrastructure:** R&D in technology and infrastructure for green hydrogen will be given a boost, ramping up electrolyser manufacturing capacity.
- **Explore low carbon options in hard-to-abate sectors:** Best available technologies in the steel and cement sectors will be pursued.
- **Low-carbon and Sustainable development of MSMEs:** Strengthen financial support, knowledge sharing, and awareness of low carbon options and sustainable technologies.
- **Increased use of biofuels,** especially ethanol blending in petrol, the drive to increase electric vehicle penetration are expected to drive the low carbon development of the transport sector. India aspires to maximise the use of electric vehicles, ethanol blending to reach 20% by 2025, and a strong modal shift to public transport for passenger and freight.
- The LT-LEDS is also informed by the **vision of LiFE, Lifestyle for the Environment** that calls for a world-wide paradigm shift from mindless and destructive consumption to mindful and deliberate utilization.

LT-LEDS is the practical implementation of India's call for "**climate justice.**" This is essential to ensure that there are no constraints on realizing India's vision of rapid growth and economic transformation, while protecting the environment.

**Q.21) As the world shrinks with technological and communication changes, terrorists, criminals, weapons, and funds are also able to move across national boundaries easily. In light of the statement, highlight the efforts made by India to tackle these challenges.**

**Indian Express**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Write some efforts made by India to tackle the challenges of terrorism with the change in technology and communication.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

Terrorism is the illegitimate use of force to provide injury to common people for political and ideological gains. Terrorists violate law, threaten common people and directly challenge the state. India is increasingly playing a leading role in curbing the terrorism and terror financing. The following efforts are made by India to tackle the challenges due to terrorism:

- In 2009, the **National Investigation Agency** was established to deal with terrorist crimes.
- To gather information related to security, the **National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID)** has been established.
- An operational hub has been created for the **National Security Guard** to ensure a rapid response to terrorist attacks.

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- Strengthening the provisions in the **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967** to combat terror financing by criminalizing the circulation of high quality counterfeit Indian currency as a terrorist act and enlarge the scope of proceeds of terrorism to include any property intended to be used for terrorism.
- **A Terror Funding and Fake Currency (TFFC) Cell** has been constituted in National Investigation Agency (NIA) to conduct focused investigation of terror funding and fake currency cases.
- **Training programmes** are regularly conducted for the State Police personnel on issues relating to combating terrorist financing.
- Fake Indian Currency Notes (FICN) network is one of the channels of terror financing in India. **FICN Coordination Group (FCORD)** has been formed by the Ministry of Home Affairs to share intelligence/information among the security agencies of the states/centre to counter the problem of circulation of fake currency notes.
- Security at the international borders has been strengthened by using **new surveillance technology**, deploying additional manpower for **round the clock surveillance**, establishing observation posts along the international border, erection of **border fencing** and intensive patrolling.

Strengthening national coordination mechanisms to promote inter-agency participation and information exchange, facilitating joint monitoring, threat assessment are very essential to combat these challenges.

**Q.22) Health must be turned into a feature and eventually a function of air pollution policy. Discuss.**

**The Hindu**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain Present status of health in India's pollution policy-making. Also explain why health in India's pollution policy-making is essential.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

Air pollution is the degradation of air quality due to the contamination of pollutants. Industries (51%), Vehicles (27%), and Crop burning (17%) are the largest contributor to Air pollution. No city in India met the updated WHO safety standards of 5 micrograms of PM 2.5 per cubic metre of air. Nearly half surpassed this limit by more than 10 times.

**Present status of health in India's pollution policy-making:**

- India's environmental regulators, expert groups and decision-making entities **do not have any health expertise**.
- The recently constituted Commission for Air Quality Management also lacks any health representation.
- 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.
- Whether it is stubble burning or thermal power plant emissions, **decisions are made without any consideration** of their potential effects on health.

**Why health in India's pollution policy-making is essential?**

- The primacy of protecting public health is clearly laid out in the statement of objects and reasons of **India's key environmental laws**.
- 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.

- The effects of exposure to bad air are felt most deeply by **vulnerables in society** — children, the elderly, pregnant women, and those with pre-existing health conditions.
- Understanding the effect of pollutants on human health is key to developing policies for **environmentally friendly growth** in the transportation sector.
- Besides endangering health and shortening lifespan, air pollution adversely affects economic growth through reduced productivity and **decreased labour supply, and via health-care expenditures and lost welfare**.

Air pollution is a risk for all-cause mortality as well as specific diseases. To tackle air pollution as well as its consequences, India should centre science and health to permanently fix the problem of air pollution.

**Q.23) Many state governments are switching back to Old Pension Scheme (OPS). Do you think that OPS is bad for economics? Give reasons in support of your argument.**

**Indian Express**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Write significance of Old Pension Scheme with respect to economics. Also explain why it is bad for economics.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

The Old Pension Scheme (OPS) offers **inflation- and pay commission-indexed pension payments** to retired government employees and their spouses (after the employees' death) without any contribution from the employees. Under Old Pension Scheme, employees are not required to contribute to their pensions and pension was guaranteed.

**Economic significance of Old Pension Scheme:**

- **Short-term gains by Government:** They save money since they will not have to put the 10 per cent matching contribution towards employee pension funds.
- **Advantage for employees:** It will result in higher take-home salaries, since they too will not set aside 10 percent of their basic pay and dearness allowance towards pension funds.
- The pension drawn in New Pension Scheme (NPS) is lower than the OPS.
- NPS is dependent on the market prices of equity/bonds in which the amount is invested. Therefore, a crash in the markets can affect the pensioners.
- OPS is a fixed government expenditure irrespective of an economic slowdown or a stock market crash. This makes it useful in counter-cyclical policy measure during a crisis.

**Bad for economics:**

- **Pension Liability Remained Unfunded:** There is no corpus specifically for pension, which would grow continuously and fund for pension.
- **Inter-Generational Equity Issues:** Current generation of taxpayers are paying for pension bill of those who joined government service before 2004 but are contributing to the 10 percent contribution the state governments have been making for those who joined from January 1, 2004.
- **Unsustainable:** Pension liabilities would keep hiking since pensioners' benefits increased every year; like salaries of existing employees, pensioners gained from indexation.
- **Burden on Exchequer:** Over the last three decades, pension liabilities for the Centre and states have jumped manifold. It accounts for 25% of the States' budget.

The pension scheme needs to be reformulated in a way that it provides benefits to employees without putting an onerous burden on the employers.



**Q.24) Rethinking cities to make them more liveable, inclusive, and integrated is a key component in promoting smart cities. Elaborate.**

**Business Standard**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain the need of rethinking cities to make them more liveable, inclusive, and integrated in promoting smart cities. Also write some suggestions.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

Currently, 54 percent of the world's population lives in cities, and it is predicted to rise to 66 percent by 2050. India is the **second largest urban system** in the world with almost 11% of the total global urban population living in Indian cities. India's urban population is expected to cross 50% of total population within next two decades.

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. Also it will be helpful in solving following issues:

- **No framework for development:** A sustainable blueprint for governance for smart cities is necessary. There is lack of a city development model and adequate standards for promoting smart cities, including for housing, water, sanitation, health, and environmental sustainability.
- **Multiplicity of projects:** There are multiple infrastructure projects like expansion of city roads and highways, water reservoir and storage-related development which are mostly undertaken by development authorities or the State governments.
- **Decreased role of local governments:** This leads to poor governance of the projects and lack of coordination.
- The present urban chaos in India is mainly the result of **ineffective and inefficient urban management, inadequate revenue base, lack of coordination between various municipal agencies**, and the non-participatory attitude of stakeholders.

**What can be done?**

- **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 labour force and a **safer and more secure environment**. It should also provide a unique identity for each city along with **greater adaptability to changing climatic, economic, and social factors**.
- **Use of ICT:** with numerous physical devices linked to an Internet of Things (IoT) network that provides **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.

Smart cities need to be sustainable smart cities with environmental, social, economic, and cultural dimensions. It must also integrate the newest technology with governance and enhance innovative socio-technical, socio-economic, and socio-cultural aspects of growth.



**Q.25) FDA has recently approved lab-grown meat for human consumption in the US. How is lab-grown meat developed, and how is it different from real meat?**

**Business Standard , Source 2**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain how lab-grown meat is developed. Also explain how it is different from real meat.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

70 billion land animals, and possibly trillions of marine animals, are killed for human consumption each year. Recently, the US Food & Drug Administration has for the first time given the green light to meat grown from cells. **Singapore** is the only country so far to have approved the **sale of cultivated meat products**.

**How is lab-grown meat developed?**

- The process of making lab-grown meat starts with the **careful removal of a small number of muscle cells** from a living animal or from the ovaries of a newly slaughtered animal.
- Then, a lab technician places the **harvested cells in bioreactors** before adding serum containing amino acids, sugars and other nutrients needed for cells to grow.
- The cells grow and multiply, producing real muscle tissue, which scientists then shape into edible scaffoldings.
- Using these scaffoldings, they can transform lab-grown cells into steak, chicken nuggets, hamburger patties, or salmon sashimi. The final product is a real cut of meat.

**Difference from real meat:**

- Lab-grown comes **from cells harvested** from a living animal, while conventional meat comes from an animal that's raised and killed for human consumption.
- It often does not contain the same **growth hormones and saturated fats** associated with conventional meat.
- Due to its high cholesterol and saturated fat content, meat consumption can lead to chronic disease. When growing meat in a lab, food scientists can actually **control the quantities of harmful cholesterol and saturated fat** in each cut.
- Lab-grown meat can also address the growing threat of antibiotic resistance. Factory farms administer high amounts of antibiotics to animals in order to keep them alive in filthy conditions.
- While it **doesn't contain harmful antibiotics** of traditional meat, lab-grown meat does contain the same amount of protein that is crucial to the health and proper functioning of our bodies.

Considering the amount of meat consumed globally, companies will need to invest in a lot of land and resources to be able to cater to the mammoth task of feeding all non-vegetarians. Cultured or lab-grown meat is a solution to save the planet from climate change and improve the health of people across the world.

**Q.26) 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. In the light of the statement, highlight the hurdles in the effective implementation of the grant of the Permanent Commission to women in the armed forces.**

**Indian Express**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Write some hurdles in the effective implementation of the grant of the Permanent Commission to women in the armed forces.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

Recently, the Supreme Court directed the Centre and the IAF to consider granting permanent commission to 32 retired women Short Service Commission (SSC) officers based on their suitability with the purpose of giving them pensionary benefits.

There are following hurdles in the effective implementation of the grant of the Permanent Commission to women in the armed forces:

- The government had resisted granting permanent commission to women officers, citing **bizarre reasons** like poor hygiene in forward areas, leading a life of isolation and troops from rural backgrounds not accepting women officers as commanders.
- The arguments are presented on the basis that a role in combat would require **tough training**, whereas the current training for women is different and at a much lower level than that of their male counterparts.
- The composition of rank and file being male, predominantly drawn from rural background with prevailing societal norms, the **troops are not yet mentally schooled to accept** women officers in command.
- **Domestic obligations** towards their children and families, prolonged absence during pregnancy and motherhood have a major bearing on the employment of women officers in the army.
- Male and female officers cannot be treated equally because of their '**different physical standards**'.
- The government has argued that if a woman is taken captive by insurgents/terrorists or as a Prisoner of War (PoW) by an enemy state, then it would become an international and deeply emotive issue which could have an impact on the society.

In countries like **United States and Israel**, women are allowed in active combat. India's Air Force and Navy give women both permanent commissions and select combat roles. To usher in a change in a regressive mindset prevalent in the society, a lot more must be done on gender sensitisation.

**Q.27) Industrial policy needs to be strengthened to make it more aligned to tackle India's present challenges. Comment.**

**Indian Express**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain some challenges with industrial policy. Also explain what can be done to strengthen the industrial policy.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

Industrial Policy is defined as the strategic effort by the state to encourage economic transformation, i.e. the shift from lower to higher productivity activities, between or within sectors. India aims to grow its manufacturing gross value added (GVA) by about 3 times to reach **\$1 trillion by 2025-26**.

### Present challenges:

- **Lack of Efficient Infrastructure and Manpower:** High technology based Infrastructure and **skilled manpower** are crucial for enhancing manufacturing competitiveness in the globalized economy. E.g. overburdened rail transport.
- The **MSME sector** seems to be relatively **less favourably** placed in terms of credit availability and credit cost of working capital as compared to the medium and large scale industrial and services sectors.
- India is still **dependent on foreign imports** for transport equipment, machinery (electrical and non-electrical), chemicals and fertilizers, plastic material etc.
- **Industrial locations** were established **without reference to cost-effective points** and are often politically motivated.
- Even 30 years after the liberalization of the private sector, the government is again **handing out subsidies and licenses** while putting up tariff walls.
- Due to ineffective policy implementation characterized by **red-tape** and strained labour-management relations most of these public sector enterprises are **running in loss**.

### What can be done?

- **Job creation:** 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 and unnecessary subsidies should be avoided.
- **Discipline the 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.
- **Soft industrial policies:** like encouraging research and development, extension services, vocational training, improving regulations and infrastructure are needed to improve **productivity**. These policies need to be customised to **local decentralised contexts**, to help small and medium sized firms.
- **Focus on green products:** for job-creation. E.g. renewable energy generation and storage, bioplastics, technologies of drip irrigation and rainfall harvesting, the reinforcement of sea walls, green energy-powered three-wheeler public transportation etc.

The industrial policy should involve creating industry that is equipped with innovation, technology, financially viable and environment friendly and whose benefits are shared by all sections of the society.

### Q.28) Highlight the economic and environmental significance of Mangroves. What are the threats facing Mangroves in India?

#### Times of India

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain some economic and environmental significance of Mangroves. Also write some threats faced by Mangroves in India.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

Mangroves are salt-tolerant vegetation that grows in intertidal regions of rivers and estuaries. They are referred to as **'tidal forests'** and belong to the category of **'tropical wetland rainforest ecosystem'**. India has a total mangrove cover of 4,992 sq km. **West Bengal** has 42.45% of India's mangrove cover.

#### **Economic significance:**

- Mangroves are among the most **productive terrestrial ecosystems** and are a natural, renewable resource. For instance, Sundarbans in the Gangetic delta supports around 30 plant species of mangroves.

- Mangroves provide **ecological niches** for a wide variety of organisms. They serve as breeding, feeding and nursery grounds for fisheries and provide timber and wood for fuel.
- They provide **numerous employment opportunities** to local communities and augment their livelihoods.

**Environmental significance:**

- The mangroves show edge effect, which means that they have large **species diversity** in comparison to marine or terrestrial ecosystem.
- Mangrove forests act as **water filters and purifiers** as well. Hence protecting the coastal ecology including coral reefs. They supply timber, fire wood, medicinal plants and edible plants to local people.
- Mangroves act as **shock absorbers**. They reduce high tides and waves and protect shorelines from erosion and also minimise disasters due to cyclones and tsunami.

**Threats facing Mangroves in India:**

- **Sea level rise and coastal erosion:** Due to global warming, the sea levels are continuously rising. The rising sea levels have flooded large areas of mangrove forests. This has resulted in their depletion.
- **Invasion by alien species:** This has led to imbalance in ecological structure, resulting in their depletion.
- **Clearing:** Large tracts of mangrove forests have been cleared to make room for agricultural land, human settlements, industrial areas, shrimp aquaculture etc.
- **Damming of rivers:** Dams built over the river courses **reduce the amount of water** and sediments reaching mangrove forests, altering their salinity level.
- **Pollution:** Mangroves also face severe threats due to fertilisers, pesticides, discharge of domestic sewage and industrial effluents carried down by the river systems.
- **Climate change:** Unusually low rainfall and very high sea surface and air temperatures caused severe threats to the survival of mangrove forests.

Systematic and periodic environmental monitoring of existing mangroves is need of the hour. **Community participation** for conservation and management should be promoted.

**Q.29) The COP27 agreement on loss and damage is significant, but the meeting did not address several other pressing issues. Analyze the statement.**

**IE, TheHindu,**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain why COP27 agreement on loss and damage is significant. Also write several other pressing issues that are not addressed by COP27 meeting.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

Loss and damage (L&D) refers to impacts of climate change that cannot be avoided either by mitigation or adaptation. They also include not only economic damage to property but also loss of livelihoods, and the destruction of biodiversity and sites that have cultural importance. The countries at the COP27 in Egypt have decided to establish a '**Loss and Damages' fund**.

**Why COP27 agreement on loss and damage is significant?**

- The fund will be aimed at **helping** developing countries that are "**particularly vulnerable**" to the effects of climate change.
- The establishment of such a fund could have **positive repercussions** in climate circles and beyond. For example, several Pacific Island nations have been pushing for the International Court of Justice to strengthen international laws to include climate change. The establishment of a loss and damage fund could augment those arguments.



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- It also involves loss of livelihoods, the eradication of biodiversity, and the demolition of culturally significant locations. This increases the potential for impacted **countries to seek compensation**.
- The fund would initially draw on contributions **from developed countries** (greatest emitters) and other private and public sources such as international financial institutions.

### Other issues:

- The COP27 does mention that \$4 trillion will be required every year to meet the renewable energy targets till 2030. Yet, the rich countries are nowhere close to delivering on their commitment to provide \$100 billion every year.
- It leaves discussions for **how this fund is to be set up and who will pay** how much to it, for future COP negotiations.
- It is **not clear whether the new fund will be housed within the UNFCCC or outside of it**.
- The **definition of "particularly vulnerable"** is a bone of contention, with experts commenting that such distinctions only serve to sow divisions among developing countries, and that the fund should be open to all developing countries.

Even while the progress is gradual, nations must maintain their momentum and put up more effort to make sure that COPs continue to serve as credible catalysts.

**Q.30) Highlight the key takeaways from the recently concluded summit of the Group of 20 nations in Bali, Indonesia. What lessons can India learn from it?**

### Business Standard

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Write the key takeaways from the recently concluded summit of the Group of 20 nations in Bali, Indonesia. Also write what lessons India can learn from it.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

G20 members currently account for nearly **80% of world GDP, 75% of global trade, and 60% of the global population**. Next year the "Troika" of G-20 will be made up of emerging economies for the first time with **India, Indonesia and Brazil**. The motto for the Bali G-20 summit is **Recover Together, Recover Stronger**.

The key takeaways from the recently concluded summit of the G20 nations in Bali, Indonesia are as follows:

- **Condemning Russian aggression:** leaders adopted a declaration deploring Russia's aggression in Ukraine "in the strongest terms" and **demanding its unconditional withdrawal**. Most members stressed that it is causing immense human suffering and exacerbating existing fragilities in the global economy - constraining growth, increasing inflation, disrupting supply chains, heightening energy and food insecurity, and elevating financial stability risks.
- **U.S.-China ties on better footing:** major differences, especially over Taiwan, trade restrictions and technology transfers, still the two agreed to keep communications open and avoid confrontation.
- **Focus on global economy:** The G20 economies agreed to pace interest rate rises carefully to avoid spillovers and warned of "increased volatility" in currency moves. They said further fiscal stimulus measures should be "temporary and targeted".
- **Food security:** The leaders promised to take **coordinated action** to address food security challenges and applauded the **Black Sea grains initiative**.
- **Climate change:** G20 leaders agreed to pursue efforts to limit the global temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

### What lessons can India learn from it?

- Like Indonesia, India too needs to **lay the groundwork** for dealing with the agenda well in advance.
- 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.
- India must **find like-minded allies** like the Indonesians clearly relied on the Indians.
- India should **underline the importance** of the G-20.

G20 has to include objectives, vision and mission statements, a permanent secretariat, and staff to oversee commitments and ensure continuity in the agenda. The G20, instead of international commitments, can focus on domestic commitments and start implementing them.

**Q.31) Do you think the Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2022 is an improvement over Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019? Provide reasons in support of your arguments.**

### The Hindu

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain how the Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2022 is an improvement over Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019. Also write several issues in it.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

The Union Government has released the fourth iteration of a data protection law in India, now called the Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2022. The Personal Data Protection Bill, 2018, was proposed by the **Justice Srikrishna Committee**.

### **An improvement:**

- **Cross border data flows:** The PDP Bill, 2019 provided for local storage of data within India's geography. The DPDP Bill, 2022 allows for cross border data flow to "countries and territories" notified by the Central government.
- **Regulatory framework:** the current draft considerably reduces the scope of the proposed Data Protection Board of India (DPB). Out of the 22 clauses in the DPDP Bill, the Central government has been provided with rule making power in around 14 clauses.
- **Disempowering the data principals:** the DPDP Bill, 2022 does not allow them to seek compensation from data fiduciaries for harms they have suffered due to unlawful processing.
- **Penalties:** the quantum of penalties that can be imposed, with the cap being placed at ₹500 crore, are of a much higher magnitude than provided for under the PDP Bill, 2019. It places **duties on data principals**.
- The bill recognises the **data principal's right to postmortem privacy** (Withdraw Consent) which was missing from the PDP Bill, 2019.

### **Concerns:**

- **Age of digital consent** continues to be 18. It would result in **unequal access to the internet** and, finally, requiring consent from parents would hamper autonomous development of children. Such restrictions are in violation of India's obligations under the Convention on Rights of the Child.
- It does not provide for the **right of data portability** which empowered data principals by allowing them to choose between different platforms and enhanced competition to increase consumer welfare.
- It **subsumes the right to be forgotten under the right to erasure**. This compromises on the right to freedom of speech and expression of other individuals.

- Moreover, the DPDP Bill, 2022 **fails to provide adequate legislative guidance** for framing these rules. This leads to the concern of excessive delegation of legislation.
- The Central government **exercises greater control** over the proposed Data Protection Board of India (DPB) because it will appoint members of the DPB, set out the terms and conditions of appointment and lay out its functions.

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.

**Q.32) Highlight the strategic and ecological significance of the Great Nicobar project. Also, discuss the concerns associated with it.**

**Indian Express**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain some strategic and ecological significance of the Great Nicobar project. Also write concerns associated with it.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

Recently, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change gave environmental clearance for the development project on the strategically important Great Nicobar Island. 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.

**Strategic and ecological significance of the Great Nicobar project:**

- The proposed port will allow Great Nicobar to participate in the regional and global maritime economy by becoming a **major player in cargo trans-shipment**.
- The port will **cater to tourism** as well. Roads, public transport, water supply and waste management facilities, and several hotels have been planned to cater to tourists.
- More than **1 lakh new direct jobs and 1.5 lakh indirect jobs** are likely to be created on the island over the period of development.
- Great Nicobar is equidistant from Colombo to the southwest and Singapore to the southeast, and positioned close to the East-West international shipping corridor, through which a very large part of the world’s shipping trade passes. The proposed ICTT can potentially become a **hub for cargo ships travelling** on this route.
- It is important for **national security and consolidation** of the Indian Ocean Region as increasing Chinese assertion in the Bay of Bengal and the Indo-Pacific.

**Concerns:**

- The proposed massive infrastructure development is in an ecologically important and **fragile region, including the felling of almost a million trees**. This is doubly significant because these are primary evergreen tropical forests with high biological diversity and also high endemism.
- The loss of tree cover will not only affect the flora and fauna on the island, it will also lead to **increased runoff and sediment deposits** in the ocean, **impacting the coral reefs** in the area.
- Environmentalists have also flagged the **loss of mangroves** on the island as a result of the development project.
- The project area is home to **rare flora and fauna**. These include the leatherback sea turtles, Nicobar megapode (a flightless bird endemic to the Nicobar islands), Nicobar Macaque and saltwater crocodiles.
- The project is likely to affect 1,761 people, including the indigenous Shompen and Nicobarese communities.



Given its physical location, the A&N Islands are the natural platform for collaboration between India and Southeast Asia. Proper steps should be followed to mitigate concerns associated with this project.

**Q.33) What are the reasons behind the increasing suicide rate in India? How does the National Suicide Prevention Strategy aim to tackle this menace?**

**The Hindu 1, The Hindu 2**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain the reasons behind the increasing suicide rate in India. Also write how the National Suicide Prevention Strategy aims to tackle this menace.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

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%.

**Reasons behind the increasing suicide rate in India:**

- **Family problems:** account for 34% of all suicide-related deaths. With urbanisation and the breakdown of the traditional large family support system, suicide tendencies increase.
- **Unemployment:** Unemployment rate in India is very high. In Sikkim, about 27% of the state's suicides were related to unemployment and found to be most common among those between 21 and 30 years of age.
- **Failure in exams:** Academic pressure, social pressures, and the breakdown of support systems are a few major causes of suicide among youth.
- **Lack of professional help:** According to a report by India Spend, India has 87% shortage in mental-health professionals and low public spending on mental health.
- Nearly 18% of all suicide-related deaths are due to **illness**.

Recently, the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** announced a **National Suicide Prevention Strategy**, to achieve reduction in suicide mortality by 10% by 2030. The National Suicide Prevention Strategy is significant to tackle this menace:

- The strategy is in line with the **WHO's South East-Asia Region Strategy for suicide prevention**.
- The Strategy is etched with **evidence-based practices** to reduce the number of suicides and strings together multiple sectoral collaborations to provide a cohesive strategy and achieve the intended reduction in the number of suicides.
- It commits to establishing **effective surveillance mechanisms** within the next three years, and establishes psychiatric outpatient departments to provide suicide prevention services through the District Mental Health Programme in all districts within the next five years.
- The Strategy also intends to write in **mental health in the curriculum in educational institutions** within the next eight years.
- **Addressing issues relevant to India**, including access to pesticides, and alcoholism, has set the Strategy on the path towards achievement of the goals.
- Develop **community resilience and societal support** for suicide prevention.

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.



**Q.34) Highlight the significance of the India-Australia Free Trade Agreement.**

**Business Standard**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain the significance of the India-Australia Free Trade Agreement.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

India and Australia signed an Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA). Currently, Australia is the 17<sup>th</sup> largest trading partner of India and India is Australia's 9<sup>th</sup> largest trading partner. The ECTA is expected to increase trade between the two sides to \$45-50 billion over five years, from the current estimate of \$27 billion, and create over 10 lakh additional job opportunities.

**Significance of the India-Australia Free Trade Agreement:**

- **Boost to bilateral trade:** India is expected to get zero-duty access to Australia for its goods over five years. India will also allow Australia to export raw materials under preferential terms like coal and mineral ores.
- **Services sector:** It covers key areas of the Indian services sector like IT, ITES, business services, health, education and audio-visual services. STEM graduates, doctoral students will get 4 years of work visa in Australia. Postgraduate will get 3 years' work visa.
- **Pharmaceuticals sector:** India and Australia have agreed to enable **fast track approval** for patented, generic and biosimilar medicines. Both sides have agreed to audits of imports that require sanitary and phytosanitary inspection as per the law of the land.
- **Dispute Settlement Mechanism:** This is the first trade deal signed by India that has a compulsory review mechanism after 15 years of implementation.
- **Rules of origin:** Products should be "wholly obtained or produced in the territory of one or both of the parties". This section ensures that waste material will not be exported by either side unless they contribute to the production of any of the items listed in the ECTA. It aims at creating **anti-dumping measures**.
- **Strategic Importance:** ECTA will further boost India's partnership with Australia along with Japan in trilateral **Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI)** and **QUAD** Grouping along with U.S.A. and Japan.

ECTA will further cement the already deep, close and strategic relations between the two countries. It will significantly raise living standards, and improve the general welfare of the peoples of the two countries.

**Q.35) Critically analyze the mechanisms available to resolve inter-state boundary conflicts in India?**

**The Hindu**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain some mechanisms available to resolve inter-state boundary conflicts in India. Also write associated issues.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

According to the Union Home Ministry (MHA) 11 States and one Union Territory have boundary disputes between them and "occasional protests and incidents of violence are reported from some of the disputed border areas". 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.

**Available mechanisms to resolve inter-state boundary conflicts:**

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- Inter-state border disputes can be resolved by the states themselves or by the Centre through dialogue and political settlements.
- **Inter-state council:** Under **Article 263** of the Constitution, the Inter-state council is **expected to inquire and advise** on disputes, discuss subjects common to all states and make recommendations for better policy coordination.
- **Judicial mechanism:** **Article 131** confers, on the Supreme Court of India, exclusive jurisdiction to deal with disputes which involves any question (whether of law or of fact), on which the existence or extent of a legal right depends.
- **Zonal Councils:** under the **States Re-organisation Act, 1956**, five Zonal Councils have been set up. Besides this, a North Eastern Council has been set up under the **North Eastern Council Act, 1971**.

### Issues:

- 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. It is merely an **advisory body** with no bindings on either the centre or the state. Thus, often its recommendations are ignored by the government at the centre as well as the states.

### Way forward:

- Regular meetings of Inter-State Councils (ISCs) must be held.
- Zonal councils need to be revived to discuss the matters of common concern to states in each zone—matters relating to social and economic planning, border disputes, inter-state transport, etc.

### Q.36) Processed food regulation is too lenient to make a difference to snacking's serious health costs. Comment.

#### Times of India

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain how the processed food regulation is too lenient to make a difference to snacking's serious health costs.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

The comprehensive national nutrition survey-2016 states that more than half the children between the ages of 5 and 19 show biomarkers of non-communicable diseases. And, consuming highly processed foods increases the risk of obesity, diabetes, hypertension, heart diseases, stroke, and kidney disease. The non-communicable diseases account for 60% of all deaths in the country.

#### **Too lenient to make a difference:**

- **Limited ability to control quality and safety:** The sheer number of players, especially in the large unorganized segment, involved in the food value-chain, makes implementation of quality and safety norms difficult.
- **High limits:** Lifestyle diseases like diabetes, hypertension and cardiac ailments are already at alarming levels but FSSAI limits for permissible sugar, salt and fat content in processed foods are very high.
- **Long time for FOPL:** FSSAI has given the snack industry a long four-year-period before front of packet labelling (FOPL) becomes mandatory. Moreover, 'positive nutrients' may

mask the negative impact of high fat, salt and sugar in the food and the industry will use it to **mislead the consumer**.

- **Labelling format:** The labelling format appears to be aimed only at individuals who are literate and nutritionally aware. Further, limited general and nutrition literacy mean understanding of the text-intensive nutrient information is difficult.
- **Issues with star rating:** the positive factors for a higher rating like presence of vegetables, fruits, nuts, millets, fibres, etc are no consolation if the sugar, salt or fat content are also high in the same product.
- FSSAI's **baseline reference value** for food risk factors at 21 gms per 100 gms serving for sugar in solid foods is **too high** considering that WHO had recommended keeping daily sugar intake to below 25 gms ideally.

Government should consider using taxation as an instrument to discourage junk foods and incentivise healthy food as regular tax hikes on cigarettes have helped disencentivise smoking. Also recommended dietary allowance (RDA) claims of the packaged food industry need rigorous laboratory testing.

**Q.37) Millets are considered to be “powerhouses of nutrition”. In the light of the statement, comment on the significance of the Millet for India.**

**Indian Express**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain the significance of the Millet for India.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

Millets is used to describe small-grained cereals like sorghum (jowar), pearl millet (bajra), little millet (kutki), finger millet (ragi/ mandua), etc. Millets are mainly **a kharif crop in India**. They have high nutritional value. The Agriculture Ministry has also declared millets as “**Nutri Cereals**”. The **year 2023** will be celebrated as the **International Year of Millets**.

**Significance of the Millet for India:**

- **Social benefits:** Millets possess immense potential in the battle against poverty and provide food, nutrition, fodder and livelihood security. In rainfed farming areas, millet cultivation provides livelihood to 50% of tribal and rural population.
- **Millets market:** India is the largest global producer with a 41% market share. It is estimated that the millets market is set to grow from its current market value of more than USD 9 billion to over USD 12 billion by 2025.
- **Restoration of ecosystems and sustainability:** Land degradation has been a major problem in India. Drought-tolerant crops (like millets) with low dependence on chemical inputs would put far less pressure on ecosystems.
- **Biofuel and climate resilience:** Millets also offer a significant cost advantage over maize as a feedstock for bio-ethanol production. They have higher photosynthetic efficiency. Their potential yield is unaffected by higher carbon dioxide levels.
- **Addressing SDGs:** Millet farming has led to women's empowerment. The Odisha Millet Mission saw 7.2 million women emerge as 'agri-preneurs'.
- **Nutritional benefits:** They are a rich source of macronutrients and micronutrients like calcium, protein and iron. They have a **low glycemic index** that prevents type 2 diabetes. They can help to prevent cardiovascular diseases, lower blood pressure.
- **Water efficient:** They require less water. It is about one-third of rice, wheat and sugarcane.
- Boosting millet cultivation will **empower the average farmer** and achieve the objectives of enhancing incomes and improving crop diversification.

There is a need to promote **agribusiness startup incubation centres** and increase popular awareness of benefits of millets among consumers. We have to enhance millet cultivation. There is a need to increase crop area under millet cultivation.

**Q.38) The Constitution has a clear imprint on day-to-day life, though we may not be really conscious of it. Discuss the Significance of inculcating awareness of the constitution among the common citizens.**

**The Hindu**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain the significance of inculcating awareness of the constitution among the common citizens.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

A Constitution helps serve as a set of principles, rules and procedures on which there is a consensus. These form the basis according to which the people want the country to be governed and the society to move on. This includes not only an agreement on the type of government but also on certain ideals that the country should uphold.

Significance of inculcating awareness of the constitution among the common citizens are as follows:

- Every individual in our society should be aware of their rights which will **help people to vote for the right government**. With the help of Constitutional awareness, an individual can be a **responsible citizen**.
- Constitutional awareness is important because each generation needs to know not only the **rights and privileges** granted by the Constitution, but also the obligations of its citizens.
- The constitution contains provisions relating to the **powers and duties of government**, the relations between government and people and the rights and duties of people.
- This helps in **maintaining discipline in the society**, makes government responsible and makes people aware that the government belongs to them.
- The importance of fundamental duties is that they define the **moral obligations of all citizens** to help in the promotion of the spirit of patriotism and to uphold the unity of India.
- Constitutional knowledge allows young people to understand how they fit into the world around them — and the role civic responsibility plays in Indian society.
- It allows for the **greatest level of transparency** and the ability for students to citizens between the varying quality of information sources.

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.

**Q.39) 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 **fines, 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.40) 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.41) 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.
- **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.42) 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.43) 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.44) 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:**

- **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.45) 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.46) 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.