



**9 PM**

# **Compilation**

**9<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> January 2023**

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# General Studies Paper – 1

### General Studies - 1

#### 1. [How countries treat their ultra-rich](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**How countries treat their ultra-rich**” published in the **Business Standard** on **9th January 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 1 – Effects of globalization on Indian society.

**Relevance:** About capitalism and its present impact on globalization.

**News:** In the recent period, some rich and powerful people have faced trouble in countries such as the US, Russia, China, and Saudi Arabia.

About Freedom in the World index and the reality of ultra rich persons

**US:** The US has a score of 83 and is classified as “Free” in the index. There rich people in the US can oppose the government without fear of death, jail, exile, expropriation or commercial harm.

**Saudi Arabia (score of 7, regarded as “Not Free”):** About 500 people were locked up in a Hotel by the “anti-corruption agency”. Many victims were forced to buy their freedom by giving up their wealth.

**China (score of 9):** Ever since the present Chinese President took charge, he deployed state power against the private sector.

**Russia (score of 19):** Ever since the Ukraine war, the Russian rouble has lost its hard-currency status. Rich people have been dying under mysterious circumstances, at an average rate of three per month.

**Read more:** [Digital India is well positioned to make the most of globalization](#)

How capitalism is slowly damaging the present globalization?

After the Berlin Wall was brought down, the world made inevitable progress towards capitalism and freedom. The world nations are approaching the third globalization in a way it damages the globalization.

**Note:** *The third globalization is marked by the emergence and eventual dominance, within the most advanced industrial countries, of the information sector.*

Such as, **1)** The State’s use their power in ways that are unfavourable to globalisation. For instance, the US government blocking Chinese de facto public sector undertakings like Huawei from operating in its country, **2)** The financial investors in the first world countries demand higher risk compensations when investing in unsafe places, **3)** There is a narrowing of global value chains to emphasise production in safe places, and **4)** Several wealthy families in places like China and Russia are systematically moving assets, businesses, homes, and loved ones into rule-of-law havens like London.

**Read more:** [WESTERN MNCs HAVE WEAKENED GLOBALIZATION BY TAKING SIDES](#)

Whether the rich are the target of taxation or the engine of growth, their exit is harmful for globalization.

#### 2. [A timely halt – SC must lay down rehabilitation norms for eviction from public spaces](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**A timely halt – SC must lay down rehabilitation norms for eviction from public spaces**” published in **The Hindu** on **9th January 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 1 – Urbanization, their problems and their remedies.

**Relevance:** About the land conflicts between the public and the state.

**News:** Earlier, the Uttarakhand High Court demanded the eviction of around 50,000 people within a week as they are accused of squatting on railway property for decades in Haldwani in Uttarakhand. But recently the Supreme Court has halted the forcible eviction.

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What are the directions of the Supreme Court?

The court **a)** Demanded the need for rehabilitation before eviction, **b)** The court orders had allowed proceedings against individual occupants under the Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Act, 1971, to be complete before eviction.

About the land conflicts between public and state

People tend to encroach on public land as there is a **shortage of housing** and **inadequate recognition of the right to shelter**. This often leads to attempts to evict the occupants and spawns litigation.

What are the impacts of land conflicts between the public and the state?

-The public claims occupancy rights based on long years of stay at the same location.

-Court judgments stress rehabilitation measures. But mandatory rehabilitation may prove to be an incentive for encroachment. Further, India does not have a good record on the rehabilitation of evicted people from public spaces.

So, the Supreme Court in the Haldwani eviction case should **a)** lay down the law on meaningful rehabilitation, **b)** Prescribe effective prevention of encroachments.

### 3. [Asia the saver – The global savings glut may persist as, despite ageing rapidly, Asia can continue to be a net saver](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article “Asia the saver – The global savings glut may persist as, despite ageing rapidly, Asia can continue to be a net saver” published in **Business Standard** on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS 1 – Population and Associated Issues

**Relevance:** impact of demographic changes on Current Account balance

**News:** The article discusses the impact of aging population and savings on the current account balance of Asian nations.

**How an aging population may affect the saving of Asian nations?**

The demographic shift in 10 major Asian economies (the **A-10**: China, India, Indonesia, Japan, the Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand, Korea, Malaysia, and Taiwan) is faster than the economic transition.

Further, there is disparity among the A-10 on the current account balance. **For example**, India and Indonesia run deficits, whereas north Asian economies run in surpluses.

However, they have collectively accumulated a surplus of nearly \$5 trillion in the last decade. These surpluses are invested in global assets which have also led a boom in the consumption of the world.

But an **aging population may lead to a drop in the savings** of A-10 because production would fall due to a smaller number of workers and consumption may keep rising due to the increasing lifespan.

The number of consumers per worker is known as the **dependency ratio**. **A higher ratio could turn current account balances from surpluses to deficits.**

**How higher dependency ratio affects the current account balances?**

**First**, the aggregate demand that affects current account balances includes **domestic consumption and investment**. Investment (households, corporations and the government) fall as population growth slows and then turns negative.

This in turn leads to lesser requirement of investments in growth of the economy and invest is more driven by global demand-supply balances and rather than local demand. This affects the current account balance.

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**Second**, household savings depend on sufficiency of pensions, especially for the retirees who depend on pensions for their future. If pension mechanisms are not adequate, it leads to a drop in consumption. Therefore, there should be a better saving mechanism in order to have a better current account balance.

### **How better pension plans can help in the current account surplus?**

The **Japanese fund GPIF** has nearly 10 percent of all Japanese wealth, with half of it deployed in foreign financial assets.

The accumulated foreign assets of Japan are so large that the **income from them exceeds 4 percent of gross domestic product**. This helps Japan's current account to stay in surplus **despite a shrinking workforce**.

However, the pension plans of most of the Asian economy are not good enough to build higher savings which ultimately affects the current account.

Therefore, there is a need for personal savings or government-mandated savings in Asia to grow. This increase in savings with the increase in financial assets will make the A-10 economies as providers of capital to the world.

#### 4. [The delay in the decennial Census](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article **"The delay in the decennial Census"** published in **The Hindu** on **10th January 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 1 – Population and associated issues.

**Relevance:** About the implications of the delaying census.

**News:** The decennial Census exercise has been postponed till September 2023. Except for the 2021 census, none of the previous exercises has been delayed.

#### **What is the Census?**

[Click Here to read](#)

#### **What does the Constitution say about the Census?**

[Click here to read](#)

#### **How is the Census conducted?**

The decennial census is carried out by lakhs of enumerators empanelled and trained by the government in two phases.

**First phase:** It is the housing Census, where data on housing conditions, household amenities and assets possessed by households are collected.

**Second phase:** In this phase, data on population, education, religion, economic activity, Scheduled Castes and Tribes etc are collected.

What are the implications of the delaying census?

Census data is crucial for various administrative functions, welfare schemes, and other surveys. The implications of the delaying census are,

**Firstly, outdated Census information** (available from the last Census in 2011) often becomes unreliable and affects those who do and do not receive the benefits of welfare schemes. For instance,

As per the National Food Security Act, 2013, 67% of the country's population (approximately 80 crore in 2011) is entitled to receive subsidised food grains from the government under the targeted public distribution system (PDS). Over the last decade means that if the 67% ratio is applied to 2020's projected population of 137 crore, PDS coverage should have increased to around 92 crore people.

**Secondly**, census data are **critical for other sample surveys** conducted in the country as they use the Census data as a 'frame' or list from which a representative sample of the population is

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selected for surveys. For instance, for the latest edition of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) released last year, it was the 2011 data that served as the sampling frame.

Thirdly, census is **crucial to determine the population of migrants and migration patterns**. Despite the large-scale migration during the pandemic, the only data available from the government was from 2011, which could not answer queries on the numbers, causes and patterns of migration.

### 5. [The beginning of India's cultural renaissance](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article **“The beginning of India's cultural renaissance”** published in **The Hindu** on **11th January 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS1- Indian culture

**Relevance**– Government policies and interventions for promoting culture of India

**News**– The article explains the recently held Kashi Tamil Sangamam and its significance

**What is the significance of Kashi and Tamil Nadu for Indian culture?**

Kashi is one of the **oldest living cities** of the world. In Tamil Nadu, people speak the **world's oldest language**. are towering pillars of ancient Indian civilisation.

Both have rich and old traditions of **arts, music, craftsmanship, philosophy, spirituality**. Tamil saints lived in Kashi and intensified its spiritual aura. There was a tradition of taking holy Ganga jal to the Rameshwaram temple.

**What were the main events of Kashi Tamil Sangamam?**

People from all walks of life from Tamil Nadu visited Kashi. They experienced the **city's traditions** and its **iconic landmarks** such as the Kashi Vishwanath temple.

The government organised a **‘textiles conclave’** during the Sangamam. Several **eminent personalities** of different segments of the textile industry from Tamil Nadu and Kashi shared their experiences and exchanged ideas at a session on **Amrit Kaal Vision 2047**.

The textiles conclave also dwelled on **wooden toys**.

**What is the significance of this sangamam?**

Sangamam created a unique platform to **rediscover and integrate** our heritage and ancient knowledge with modern thought, philosophy, technology and craftsmanship. This creates a **new body of knowledge and fosters innovations**. It will help our artisans, weavers, entrepreneurs and traders.

For instance, Varanasi is well known for **Banarasi silk saris**. Kancheepuram is famous for its **shimmering silk saris**. Weavers and entrepreneurs from both regions have a lot to gain from interacting with each other.

The textiles sector has great **job-creating potential**. India's textiles market is expected to grow at a CAGR of 12-13% to nearly \$2 trillion by 2047s. Kashi and Tamil Nadu have a key role to play to achieve this vision.

The Sangamam was in step with the entire spectrum of this government's policies. These policies have focused on **welfare of the poorest of the poor, love for Indian culture, and promoting local industries and handicrafts**.

The Sangamam has ignited a **new cultural zeal** in India. It is the beginning of India's **cultural renaissance** that is not limited to the bonding of Tamil Nadu and Kashi. It will extend to all cultures of this great country.



# General Studies Paper –2

General Studies - 2

1. [Madhya Pradesh HC's resolution to call 'lower courts' as district courts is a welcome step towards ending judicial feudalism](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article “**Madhya Pradesh HC's resolution to call 'lower courts' as district courts is a welcome step towards ending judicial feudalism**” published in **The Indian Express** on **9<sup>th</sup> January 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – Governance

**Relevance:** problems associated with lower judiciary

**News:** The **High Court of Madhya Pradesh has passed the resolution** that judiciary in all courts other than the High Court shall be referred to as the ‘district judiciary’ and not as ‘subordinate judiciary’. Also, all courts other than the High Court shall be referred to as the ‘trial courts’ and not as ‘subordinate courts.’

The term “district judiciary” is also used by the Constitution (Article 236).

**Did the Constitutional Assembly discuss the renaming of the subordinate judiciary?**

The issue of naming the hierarchy of courts, especially the “subordinate” courts, was **not discussed** in the Constituent Assembly Debates (**CAD**).

However, discussions on the composition, jurisdiction, and functions of the Supreme Court and high courts were made.

Further, the **official literature on district courts** also does not make any demand or consideration for a name change.

However, the problem of a smaller number of judges in lower judiciary and their independence were discussed by various commissions and reports.

**What are the different discussions made related to the lower judiciary?**

The **inadequate strength of judges** in district court was discussed by the **120th Law Commission Report**.

It was also **discussed by the Standing Committee** headed by Pranab Mukherjee in its 85th report (2002) which **recommended increasing judge** strength to 50 per 10 lakh people.

Further in 1998, the **Supreme Court directed that the state** should provide for the re-employment of the retiring judicial officer till the age of 62 years in case vacancies in the cadre of the district judge.

However, the Court held the retirement at 60 years as being “**logical**” and “**reasonable**”, due to the retirement age of judges of the SC and the High Courts (65 and 62 years respectively).

SC also stated that an **independent and efficient judicial system is one of the basic structures of our Constitution**.

This is because the principles of the rule of law and democracy give all citizens fundamental right to constitutional remedies and **access to the judiciary has been termed as a basic right** by the SC.

However, research conducted by the Supreme Court Centre for Research and Planning highlighted that **the lower judiciary has an inadequate number of judges** given the workload which act as **hindrance the access to justice**.

**What are the limitations of the High Court over the lower judiciary?**

**The Constitution enacts a hierarchy of jurisdictions but it does not enact hierarchy of justices**. Each judge is supreme within the appointed jurisdiction. No judge acting within her jurisdiction is higher or lower.

Further, higher court judges can only direct lower court judges by remaining **under the sphere of judicial review**. **The Constitution prescribes that the equality and dignity of all justices, and judicial process, is horizontal and not vertical**.

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Further, the supervision of high courts extends to posting, promotion, leave, transfer and discipline of the members of the district judiciary. It has complete authority and control over its officers and employees.

However, this authority does not mean that the principle of independence of the judiciary or the democratic rule of law is curtailed.

### 2. [The superbugs are here – and they are resistant to antibiotics](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article “**The superbugs are here – and they are resistant to antibiotics**” published in **The Indian Express** on **9<sup>th</sup> January 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – Health

**Relevance:** measures needed to tackle AMR

**News:** Antimicrobial resistance (AMR), also called antibiotic resistance, is a global health challenge and a worrying public health crisis. The WHO has declared it as one of the top 10 health threats facing humanity.

**How is AMR caused and what action has been taken by the government?**

**Read Here:** [What is AMR and its causes](#)

Many countries including India have come up with AMR national action plans (NAPs) to tackle AMR.

However, the development and implementation of antimicrobial plans are not adequate. Therefore, other measures are required to reduce and reverse AMR.

**What are the measures required to reduce AMR?**

**Prevention:** Disease prevention and wellness are key to public health. Sanitation drives, clean water supply and hospital-driven infection-control programmes are needed to prevent AMR.

**Prescribing antimicrobials judiciously:** There is also a need to prescribe antimicrobials judiciously and only when they are absolutely needed.

**Proper Coordination:** There is a need for proper coordination amongst the animal industry and environmental sectors to prevent the unnecessary use of antibiotics in farms.

**Robust surveillance systems:** A robust surveillance system is needed that allow the detection of resistant pathogens of all kinds in the environment.

**Investment in Research and Development:** There is a need to invest heavily in research and development through both government and private funding. This will bring new antibiotics which could be an essential component in restoring the balance and ensuring fight against AMR.

However, the profits on these investments are negligible which could be a cause of concern.

**Financial incentives:** There is a need to formulate new types of financial incentives to measure return on investment and measure profitability of the antibiotic.

### 3. [Imagining the politics of fraternity](#)

**Source:** This post is created based on the article “**Imagining the politics of fraternity**”, published in **The Hindu** on **9<sup>th</sup> January, 2023**.

**Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper 2, Indian Polity,

**Context:** The principle of fraternity is one of the most important principles for keeping the nation together. India must strive hard to uphold this principle.

The Bharat Jodo Yatra led by an opposition party is ongoing. The achievements of the yatra are debatable, however it reminds of the principle of fraternity or Bandhutva Fraternity, which is not merely a value to aspire to, but a foundational principle that should be upheld by all the political forces.

**What is the principle of fraternity?**

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Traditionally there were two ideas of fraternity. However, Indian view was developed during freedom struggle.

**Judeo-Christian world view:** It seeks to achieve the brotherhood among all men, which is based on the belief that all men are children of God.

**Secular idea:** It was born out of French revolution. It is a sense of solidarity and brotherhood among those who were opposed to the tyrannical monarchical order.

### **Indian Context of fraternity:**

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was the strongest proponent of the idea of fraternity, which was developed during the process of anti-colonial struggle and nation-building. As per him, the absence of fraternity, owing to caste consciousness within Hindu society, was the primary reason for the colonisation of India and the chief hurdle in nation-building.

For Ambedkar, fraternity was the fundamental enabling condition for the realisation of liberty and equality, which could hold India together, instead of laws alone.

### **Significance of the principle of fraternity**

**First**, it was included in the Preamble as well as in the fundamental duties of our Constitution.

**Second**, globally extreme social and economic polarisation is promoting xenophobia and racial tensions.

**Third**, in India too, politically backed incidents of violence are rising. On the economic front, the top 1% have cornered more than 40% of the wealth in 2021; while the poor and middle classes struggle with inflation.

#### 4. [Making healthy choice the easier choice](#)

**Source:** This post is created based on the article “**Making healthy choice the easier choice**”, published in **The Hindu** on **9<sup>th</sup> January, 2023**.

**Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper 2, Social issues, Health related issues

**News:** The 2017-18 National NCD monitoring survey reported that 98% of Indians do not take adequate fruits and vegetables and only 59% of adults do adequate physical activity.

### **What are the reasons behind unhealthy lifestyle of Indians?**

- 1) People giving less importance to health.
- 2) Eating unhealthy due to taste and cost consideration.
- 3) Laziness for physical exercise

### **What are the factors causing unhealthy lifestyle?**

Physical, economic, and socio—cultural environments, in which people make their decisions about taking food or doing physical activity, do not support healthy choices.

**First**, people including children are heavily influenced by food marketing.

**Second**, unhealthy products are easily available, priced lower and displayed more prominently in grocery stores.

**Third**, culturally, our diet is so cereal/pulse-based, that leaves a little space to eat sufficient fruits and vegetables.

**Fourth**, some of the factors discourage people from doing physical exercise – air pollution, weather (hot-cold-rains), unusable footpaths, lack of parks or, often unsafe and poorly lit parks.

**Fifth**, industry self-regulation of front—of—pack food labelling has not worked well. Commercial interests like the food industry are powerful interest groups. They would oppose interventions aimed at labelling or reducing salt or sugar.

### **What should government do?**

- 1) Regulating the marketing of foods to children. Many countries have banned or restricted the advertising of food and beverages on children’s channels or at times when they watch television.

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- 2) Taxing junk food, incentivizing healthier options and subsidizing fruits and vegetables should be considered to tackle the issue of affordability.
- 3) Improving awareness of people about making healthy choices.
- 4) Preventing multiple reheating of oils, lower oil, salt, and sugar use during preparation at the restaurants.

### 5. [UGC guidelines on foreign universities: The University Gimmicks Commission](#)

**Source:** This post is created based on the article “**UGC guidelines on foreign universities: The University Gimmicks Commission**”, published in **Indian Express** on **9<sup>th</sup> January 2023**.

**Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper 2, Social Issues, Issues associate with education

**News:** University Grants Commission (UGC) has allowed entry of foreign universities in India through new guidelines. However, there are many issues associated with these reforms that require a proper discussion.

**What are the challenges to the success of UGC guidelines on foreign universities?**

**First**, top universities like Princeton, Stanford, Yale and Oxford don't have any branch campuses anywhere in the world, even in the countries with most liberal regulatory environments. Why would they establish their branches in India?

**Second**, majority of the foreign universities, operating globally, are **not top-tier institutions**. Some of the top tier universities like NYU Abu Dhabi are operating with massive subsidies from the home government. If one checks the C-BERT list that maintains a comprehensive list of international campuses, **most foreign campuses are very small**, with an average size of 300-400 students.

**Third**, as per the guidelines, UGC will ensure that the **qualifications of the faculty** assigned to India will be the same as those of the faculty in the parent institution. However, if the qualification means that the faculty is to be exceptional like in top universities, they might not take interest as they won't have the economic or lifestyle incentives, unless either their salaries are matched or exceeded.

**Fourth**, when India has many investors that can create a university similar to foreign ones, **why they are not investing?** The answer lies in the **regulatory uncertainty**. Project like Institutions of Eminence revolution have not picked up due to that.

**Fifth**, UGC has been looking to standardise the admissions process for all public universities and trying to curb their autonomy as well. **How is it going to protect the autonomy and distinct identity of foreign universities.**

**Sixth**, guidelines seem to have ignored the **required combination of capital, vision, and human resources** it takes to get a high-end research university.

### 6. [Indians abroad: History, spread, remittances](#)

**Source-** The post is based on the article “**Indians abroad: History, spread, remittances**” published in **The Indian Express** on **10th January 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Indian diaspora

**News-** The article explains the history, classification, numbers, geographical spread of diaspora. It also explains the remittances sent by them and their involvement in politics of the host country.

**What is the history of diaspora in India?**

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, thousands of Indians were sent to countries in the east pacific and the Caribbean islands under the ‘**Girmitiya**’ arrangement as indentured labourers. They were taken to work on plantations in British colonies, which were reeling under a labour crisis due to the abolition of slavery in 1833-34.

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As part of the **second wave of migration**, nearly 20 lakh Indians went to Singapore and Malaysia to work in farms.

The **third and fourth wave** saw professionals heading to western countries. Workers were going to the Gulf and west Asian countries due to opportunities provided by the oil boom.

### **How can we classify overseas Indians?**

Overseas Indians are classified into three categories: **Non-Resident Indians (NRI), Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs), Overseas Citizens of India (OCIs).**

NRIs are Indians who are residents of foreign countries. The PIO category was abolished in 2015 and merged with the OCI category.

According to the **MEA**, PIO refers to a **foreign citizen** who at any time held an **Indian passport**, or who or either of their parents/ grandparents/great grandparents was born and **permanently resided** in India as defined in **Government of India Act, 1935**, or who is a spouse of a citizen of India or a PIO.

A separate category of OCI was carved out in 2006. An OCI card was given to a **foreign national** who was eligible to be a citizen of India on January 26, 1950, was a citizen of India on or at any time after January 26, 1950, or belonged to a territory that became part of India after August 15, 1947.

### **What are the numbers and geographical spread of the diaspora?**

According to a report of the **Parliamentary committee on external affairs**, as on December 31, 2021, there were 4.7 crore Indians living overseas. The number includes **NRIs, PIOs, OCIs, and students.**

The countries with **over 10 lakh overseas** Indians include the United States of America, United Kingdom, United Arab Emirates, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Myanmar, Malaysia, Kuwait and Canada.

According to the **World Migration Report, by the International Organisation for Migration**, India has the largest emigrant population in the world.

### **What is the situation of remittances in the case of India?**

According to the latest **World Bank Migration and Development Brief**, for the first time, India is on track to receive more than **\$100 billion** in yearly remittances.

The report notes that India, China, Mexico, the Philippines and Egypt in descending order are among the top five remittance recipient countries.

### **What is the level of involvement of the diaspora in politics of their country of residence?**

The vocal **political positions** taken by a section of the Indian diaspora is a recent phenomena. The **Hindu American Foundation**, a Hindu advocacy group based in the US, was set up in 2003.

### **What are the charges of biases against diaspora?**

The **parliamentary panel report** pointed out that conventions such as the Pravasi Bharatiya Sammelan leaves out a large section of the diaspora that is not wealthy.

It expressed apprehension that low or semi-skilled and blue collar workers may not feel comfortable to participate in the said celebration. **Participation and involvement** should be **more broad-based** by accommodating the vulnerable sections of the diaspora community.

7. [A step towards fighting corruption](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**A step towards fighting corruption**” published in **The Hindu** on **7th January 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Important aspects of governance

**Relevance**– Issues related to corruption

**News**– The article explains the recent Supreme Court judgement on corruption in public life. It also explains the reason behind corruption by public servants and important aspects of the fight against corruption.

**What are notable points of recent SC judgement in Neeraj Dutta v. State (Govt. of NCT of Delhi)?**

It lowered the requirement for the **quantum of evidence** to convict persons charged with corruption.

It laid down that even if prosecution witnesses turn hostile, a conviction would be possible. This will be possible if **circumstantial evidence** produced by the prosecution points unmistakably to the guilt of the accused.

The court has directed that infirmities such as **non-availability of the complainant** should impact the prosecution.

**What are important aspects to fight against corruption?**

There are two aspects to the fight against corruption. The first is the **severity of the law** and its application. The second is the **strength of public opinion** that would help carry forward the campaign for a clean public life.

**Deterrence by strong laws** works only up to a point. It disregards the fact that the more penalties for criminal behaviour will increase the **quantum of proof** required for conviction.

**What are the reasons behind the misdeeds of public servants?**

Corruption by public servants can be partly attributed to **political corruption**. No **entitled service** can be obtained without bribing the administrative or political hierarchy.

Jobs are often sold at a price. Many applicants are prepared to pay without a complaint as there is **acute unemployment**.

No approval for construction of a building or for registration of a property is possible without payment of a bribe.

Several public servants involved in this racket cite illegal demands from the **political hierarchy** as the reason for such bribes.

**Will the SC judgement be effective in tackling corruption?**

It may not **deter** people from corruption.

Corrupt public servants will find other means of covering up their misdeeds. Many are willing to offer bribes to public servants. This **nexus between offender and victim** has become a part of our **ethos**.

8. [Securing cyberspace for children: How to tackle online child sexual abuse and exploitation](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Securing cyberspace for children: How to tackle online child sexual abuse and exploitation**” published in **The Indian Express** on **10th January 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Vulnerable actions of the population. GS3- Basics of cyber security

**Relevance**– Issues related to childrens

**News**– The article explains the increasing danger of online child sex exploitation and abuse and its impacts. It also explains the challenges in dealing with online child sex abuse and suggest solutions to handle these challenges.

### **Why the threat of online child abuse and exploitation has increased in recent times?**

**Multiple lockdowns** during Covid-19 forced children to turn to the internet for education, entertainment and everything. It led to an increase in their average screen time.

This **prolonged online exposure** has increased threats to online safety for children.

The rapidly evolving digital landscape and advances in information technology have given rise to **better encryption services and the dark net**. It has provided a **safe cover of anonymity** to offenders.

### **What is online child sexual abuse and exploitation and its impacts?**

It refers to activities such as the production and distribution of **child sexual abuse material**. It also includes live streaming of **sexual assault of minors**, obtaining **sexually explicit material**. This poses serious harm to children. They experience **psychological stress** such as anxiety, trauma, and depression.

It can also lead to **behavioural changes** like drug and alcohol abuse, self-harm, and lower motivation for academics.

The consequences of online sexual abuse in childhood are **far-reaching**. It may extend into adulthood by creating issues with intimacy and affecting **interpersonal relationships**.

### **What are the main administrative challenges when dealing with online child abuse?**

There exists limited **law enforcement capacities** and gaps in the **legislative framework**.

**Lack of awareness and urgency** around the issue are other challenges.

There is a lack of workforce in relevant social welfare organisations.

### **What are the steps taken by the government to tackle online child sex abuse?**

It has **improved the mechanism** for reporting online offences against children.

It has also developed **new tools and software** to control and remove the presence of child sexual abuse material on social media and other platforms.

Efforts have also been made to **sensitise** schools and boost the **technological capacity** of law enforcement agencies to further deal with the issue.

### **What is the way forward to prevent child abuse?**

According to the **Model National Response**, there are **six key domains** that should be focussed to effectively address this issue. These are policy and governance, criminal justice, industry, society and culture, research and victim support.

It is imperative to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of **cross-sectoral governance mechanisms** that are set up to **systematise the national response** to child sexual abuse material. The huge backlog of child abuse cases must also be **fast-tracked**.

There is a need to **institutionalise the collection of national-level data** on child sex abuse.

The recent **Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2022** can provide an opportunity to meet this exigency.

There should be further development of **clear mandates** and creation of a **logical framework**.

These should define the roles and duties of all relevant **stakeholders** within **standard operating procedures** for investigation.

**Continuous dialogue** between the industry, government and other collaborators, with a **distinct agenda and division of responsibilities** is necessary. Industry partners must be provided with **suitable training and awareness** of the magnitude of child abuse, along with **proper toolkits and guidance**.

There is need to promote a **systematic and constant approach** to training the judiciary and prosecution on child abuse. It should be centred around **child-sensitive protocols**.

**Comprehensive remedies or reparations** for victims are important. They need to be handled by a **specialised workforce**.



**Basic online safety measures, parental support initiatives and community awareness** training can be integrated into existing education programmes.

Existing systems must be evaluated by monitoring and documenting their overall **effectiveness and accessibility**. It should include assessment of relevant hotlines and portals.

Dedicated effort must be made for **ethical and informed media reporting** on relevant cases.

A **collaborative effort** of various institutions across the nation is required to build a safer cyberspace.

**Stricter implementation** of prevention laws, and **adequate resources** to sustain these efforts is required.

### 9. [Indian campuses of foreign universities are a win-win for students and institute](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Indian campuses of foreign universities are a win-win for students and institute**” published in **The Indian Express** on **11th January 2023**.

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

**Relevance**– Higher educational institutions

**News**– The article explains the recent draft UGC regulations on allowing foreign educational institutions to set up their campuses in India.

**Why draft UGC regulations on allowing foreign educational institutions in India is a win-win situation?**

These regulations have an **in-built mechanism** to ensure the entry of only the highest-quality institutions. Foreign higher education institutions intending to come to India will be experienced in imparting education. They will have robust **financial resources, integrity, long-term commitment**, and a **better understanding of the venture’s feasibility**.

Campuses of foreign HEIs will attract students from the **Global South**. It will provide an **environment for interaction**.

It will give more viable options to Indian students who opt for **overseas education**. Many students are not able to go for overseas education due to family or financial situations. Foreign HEIs will provide opportunities for students who do not wish to immigrate to stay in India and study at a foreign university.

The **National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration** recently conducted a study to gather reliable information on foreign universities’ priorities regarding establishing their campuses in India. Several universities ranking in the top 200 have expressed their interest in considering India as a destination.

Foreign HEIs will foster **healthy competition** among Indian institutions to better their standards and establish world-class institutions.

**Institutions of Eminence** have made considerable progress in **multidisciplinary teaching and research, leveraging technology for effective teaching-learning**, and promoting the **internationalisation of higher education**. They and other institutes in India can be potential partners in **research collaborations** with FHEIs in cutting-edge areas.

**How other government initiatives can be helpful for foreign HEIs?**

The establishment of foreign campuses will be facilitated through the provisions of the **Foreign Exchange Management Act 1999** and its rules. Foreign HEIs can establish campuses under Companies Act, 2013; Limited Liability Partnership Act, 2008; and as a joint venture with an existing Indian entity.

The biggest incentive for FHEIs is that there is no need to keep a **corpus fund** and they can repatriate their funds to the parent university.

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The Union budget announced on February 1, 2022, emphasized **foreign direct investment (FDI)** in education.

Following **NEP 2020**, the UGC has been proactively working to **meet the aspirations** of Indian higher education institutes. It is providing them with more **autonomy** and bringing out **progressive regulation**. The draft regulations on FHEIs consider the current and desired stages of **internationalizing Indian higher education**.

### **How will these reforms transform higher education?**

Regulations regarding campuses of FHEIs along with the other recent initiatives like the **joint, and dual degrees** with foreign universities, and the regulations for enabling the Indian universities to open campuses in other countries should not be read in **silos**.

The **cumulative effects** of the enabling provisions must be seen as a catalyst for **transforming higher education** in India.

### 10. [Barking up the wrong tree](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Barking up the wrong tree**” published in **The Hindu** on **11th January 2023**.

**Syllabus**: GS2- Salient feature of Representation of People Act

**Relevance**– Issues related to electoral reforms

**News**– The article explains the issue of remote voting by migrants.

Recently, the EC proposed using isolated **remote voting machines** to enable voters who are residents elsewhere to vote in their home constituencies.

### **What are issues with the proposed remote voting machines?**

First, it will have to ensure that all applicants for **remote voting** are able to do so without hindrance, and all applications are **processed fairly** without **selective exclusions**. It is necessary to define under what conditions will remote voting be denied.

It is not sufficient just to define a **protocol**. There is a need to ensure that all applications and the decisions on them are **publicly verifiable**, from both remote and home locations. This can only be done with **verifiable zero-trust technology** that is linked to **digitisation of the electoral rolls**. It requires a **thorough examination**.

Second, it needs to ensure that a person allowed to vote remotely is invalidated for **local voting**. The two lists will be at different locations. So, the correctness will not be easy to demonstrate in a **publicly verifiable** way.

Third, there is a need to decide the place for **consolidation and counting** of both the electronic votes and the VVPAT slips. It needs to decide whether counting happens at the remote location, or at the home constituency after consolidation. In the former case, disclosing the remote voting results will compromise vote secrecy.

Fourth, there are questions regarding **polling agents** at remote locations.

These problems require considerably more **due diligence**. They will also require a significant shift of emphasis from **designing electronics to ensuring verifiability**.

### **What are issues with current use of EVM by the Election Commission?**

The Election Commission’s emphasis on **unverifiable voting machines** has been a long-standing problem.

**Software-independence** is a necessary condition for verifiability. A **standalone EVM**, whichever way its components are internally connected, cannot be **software-independent**.

The **German Constitutional Court** ruled against EVM use in 2009.

**U.S. National Academy of Sciences** recommended against pure electronic voting in a public report in 2018.

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One method to ensure **software-independence** is to audit the electronic results with a count of the VVPATs. The procedure for doing this is called **risk limiting audit**. Unfortunately, it appears that election results are declared in India without any VVPAT audits.

Even the Supreme Court's direction of auditing five randomly selected EVMs in every Assembly constituency against VVPAT counts appears to be without any **sound statistical basis**.

### 11. Japan's national security strategy: Why if Japan goes nuclear, India should welcome the decision

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Japan's national security strategy: Why if Japan goes nuclear, India should welcome the decision**” published in **The Indian Express** on **11th January 2023**.

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

**Relevance**– India and Japan defence relationship

**News**– The article explains the recent **National Security Strategy doctrine** releases by Japan

**What are the main points of recent National Security Strategy doctrine releases by Japan?**

**Chinese military power** is growing exponentially. In less than a decade, the Chinese nuclear arsenal would match the US and Russia. Expectations are low that the US would have the will or the capacity to bring China to the arms control table.

North Korea is continuing with its **nuclear proliferation programme**. It is perhaps now unstoppable. **Ballistic missile tests** by it have violated Japanese airspace. The mood in South Korea is slowly turning in favour of its own nuclearisation.

**Extended deterrence** including nuclear weapons is the cornerstone of the **US-Japan alliance**. It allowed Japan to not have its own nuclear arsenal. Now it is no longer possible to continue with it due to the rising Chinese threat. Japan is worried about the **future adequacy** of its alliance with the USA.

It calls for Japan to strengthen the **deterrence and response capabilities** of its alliance with the US. It includes **extended deterrence** by the US that is backed by its full range of capabilities, including nuclear.

It adds that Japan would strengthen its **defence capabilities** to take “**primary responsibility**” for its defence, without excluding support from the US. It will develop **autonomous capabilities** through a **sustained military build-up**, and procure deep strike weapons. These are the green shoots of **strategic autonomy**.

It will invest in the **Indo-Pacific and the Quad**.

**What can be inferred from this national security strategy by Japan?**

The unstated part is the possibility of **nuclear-sharing** by Japan. If implemented, this may be new to Asia. But, it is a long-standing US practice with its **key NATO allies** in Europe.

The second unstated option is the possibility of Japan itself acquiring nuclear weapons. The document makes no reference to this. But there are references to the US finding it increasingly difficult to maintain a **free and open international order**.

**Why should India welcome the Japanese inclination for nuclear weapons?**

India and Japan privileged **nuclear disarmament** as a priority. Their ways are separate. But there comes a time when this priority must be subordinated to the demands of **national security**.

India reached this conclusion reluctantly in 1998. If Japan reaches the same conclusion, it too would have a good reason due to increasing Chinese and North Korean threat. It has **technological capabilities** for that.

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A **multipolar Indo-Pacific** can be **truly multipolar** only if Japan is assured of **national self-defence**.

As a **strategic partner** and friend, India should respect the decision of Japan.

### 12. [Bad and ugly – A Governor’s departure from convention has set off unsavoury events](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the following articles

**“Bad and ugly – A Governor’s departure from convention has set off unsavoury events”** published in **The Hindu** on **11th January 2023**.

**“The Guvs Are Off – Governors in some opposition-ruled states are keeping bills pending for long, violating constitutional spirit”** published in **The Times of India** on **11th January 2023**.

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

**Relevance:** About the role of the governor in the assembly.

**News:** Recently, the Tamil Nadu governor walked out of the Tamil Nadu assembly and also skipped a few portions of the government pamphlet. The other substantive issue is the governor also sitting on bills passed by the legislature.

About the role of the governor in passing bills

**Article 200** stipulates that a governor shall “declare” that he/she is giving assent to a bill or withholding consent. Governors can forward a bill to the President for consideration or return a bill with a message suggesting changes. But if the house passes the bill again, the governor has to give assent.

The Supreme Court has repeatedly ruled that **legislative power of governors is extremely limited** and that governors are bound by the aid and advice of the cabinet.

However, there is constitutional and judicial silence on how long a governor can keep a bill pending.

Can the governor skip a part of the government text?

According to the constitutional convention, the President or the Governor should not depart from the text, as it is nothing but a statement of policy of the elected government.

**Read more:** [Kerala Government’s Bills to remove the Governor as Chancellor of State Universities](#)

What should be done?

The events highlight the consequences of a confrontationist attitude on the part of constitutional functionaries. So, in the longer term, the role of the Governor in the country’s constitutional scheme needs a thorough overhaul.

The governor is a key intermediary in the Centre-state relationship. The Constitution gives Parliament and the Union government the upper hand when laws of the state clash with those of the Centre. The governors should aid in maintaining this status quo.

**Read more:** [The Governor is under the Constitution, not above it](#)

### 13. [Reducing preterm births and stillbirths](#)

**Source–** The post is based on the article **“Reducing preterm births and stillbirths”** published in **The Hindu** on **12th January 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Issues related to development and management of health

**Relevance–** Child and maternal health

**News–** The article explains the issue of child mortality caused by preterm births and stillbirths in India. It also explains the scenario of healthcare funding in India.

**What are some statistics about child mortality in India?**

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The '**Levels and Trends in Child Mortality**' report on child mortality by the **United Nations Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation** estimates that globally, five million children died before their fifth birthday in 2021.

India's share in these **child mortalities** was estimated at 7,09,366 under-five deaths; 5,86,787 infant deaths; and 4,41,801 neonatal deaths.

The **Sample Registration System of 2022** showed wide **inter-State variations** in child mortality in India. The **infant mortality rate** in Madhya Pradesh was six-fold of the rate in Kerala. The children in rural parts have much higher mortality rates than their urban counterparts.

### **What are the challenges that are at the root of child deaths in India?**

There are two neglected challenges:

1. **Preterm births**– It means they are born alive before 37 weeks of pregnancy are completed. **Preterm babies** are two to four times at higher risk of death after birth in comparison to those born after 37 weeks of gestation.

India has a high burden of **preterm births**. One in every six to seven births is preterm. Studies have shown that preterm births contribute to one in every six under-five child deaths.

2. **Stillbirths**– A baby who dies any time after 22 weeks of pregnancy, but before or during the birth, is classified as a **stillborn**. Globally, an estimated 1.9 million stillbirths happened in 2021. In 2021, the absolute estimated number of stillbirths in India was greater than the death amongst children in 1-59 months of age.

One of the reasons **preterm births and stillbirths** do not get due attention is lack of **reliable data**. The data on stillbirths and preterm births are scarce. Even at the global level, the first-ever report on stillbirths was released only in October 2020.

### **What is the way forward to prevent stillbirths and preterm births?**

The majority of these births can be prevented by scaling up the **proven interventions** and improving the quality of health services.

The focus must be on increasing **access to family planning services**. There is a need to improve **antepartum services** such as health and nutrition, including the intake of iron folic acid by pregnant mothers. Further providing **counselling** on the importance of a healthy diet and **identification and management of risk factors** is also important.

There is a need for measures to **prevent, detect early and manage** diseases which put mothers at high risk, such as diabetes, hypertension.

**Monitoring labour and functional referral linkages** and improving the quality of health care services can help in preventing stillbirths.

**Data** on preterm births and stillbirths need to be better recorded and reported.

The **maternal and perinatal deaths surveillance guidelines** need to be effectively implemented and the **International Classification of Diseases'** definition for perinatal mortality must be adopted.

India needs to identify the **hot spot clusters** of stillbirths and preterm births for local and targeted interventions.

**Multi-stakeholder collaboration** is needed for **effective health interventions**.

### **What is the scenario of funding for the healthcare sector in India?**

In the **National Health Policy of 2017**, the government had committed to investing 2.5% of the GDP on health by 2025. Even by the best estimate, spending on health is around 1.5% of the GDP. It is among the lowest in the world.

There are multiple reasons why India's health system needs more government funding. Children continue to die from **preventable causes**. Pregnant women do not receive good quality care.

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**Inequities** in the health system impact the poorest and marginalised families. The primary healthcare system is **underfunded**.

14. [Mystery of vanishing monuments: Why we need to think about the way we preserve heritage](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Mystery of vanishing monuments: Why we need to think about the way we preserve heritage**” published in **The Indian Express** on **12th January 2023**.

**Syllabus**: GS2- Architecture from ancient to modern India

**Relevance**– Preservation and management of heritage

**News**– The article explains the preservation and management of monuments in India. It also tells about missing monuments.

**What does the 324th report of Rajya Sabha’s Standing Committee on transport, tourism and culture say about monuments and missing monuments in India?**

The primary mandate of the Ministry of Culture is **preservation and conservation** of ancient cultural heritage and promotion of **tangible and intangible art and culture**. The Ministry manages all the **Centrally Protected Monuments of national importance**, through the ASI.

There are 3,693 **Centrally Protected Monuments** and 4,508 **State Protected Monuments** in the country. 92 monuments are missing.

Vigorous efforts to identify the reportedly **untraceable monuments** were carried out by the respective field offices of Archaeological Survey of India. The exercise gave fruitful results and many monuments were traced out. But, there are 24 that have still not been rediscovered.

**What are some examples of missing monuments?**

**Barakhamba Cemetery** in Delhi is a missing monument. Barakhamba simply means 12 pillars. It seems to have been in the Nizamuddin area.

Other missing monuments are the **Kos Minars in Mujesar (Faridabad) and Shahabad (Kurukshetra)**. Kos Minars marked out the distance of one kosha and proliferated along the Grand Trunk Road.

**What are important questions regarding monuments and its management by ASI?**

First question is related to the method of deciding a **national monument**.

The second question is related to **de-notification** of those monuments for which there is no hope?

Another question is related to ASI **capability** to protect national monuments.

15. [Does the governor have the right to delete portions of his address to the legislative assembly?](#)

**Source**: The post is based on an article “**Does the governor have the right to delete portions of his address to the legislative assembly?**” published in **The Indian Express** on **12th January 2023**.

**Syllabus**: GS 2 – Governance

**Relevance**: issue associated with the Governor

**News**: The Tami Nadu Governor has sparked controversies after speaking outside the customary government-prepared address.

**What are various constitutional provisions and judgements related to the role of the governor in addressing the assembly?**

**Constitutional provisions**: Under Article 176(2(b)), the governor has the right to address the first session of the House. This address is an integral part of constitutional symbolism.

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However, the Constitution has not given discretion to governors in the matter of convening the session of the assembly and Governors have no right to question the purpose of convening the sessions of the House.

**Judgements:** A five-judge bench of the **Supreme Court** in *Nabam Rebia* (2016) had observed that the Governor of Arunachal Pradesh who advanced the session of the assembly without the advice of the chief minister had exceeded his jurisdiction.

The **Calcutta High Court** in *Andul Gafoor Habibullah v. Speaker, West Bengal Assembly* (1966) held that the governor cannot decline to deliver his address and refuse to fulfil his constitutional duty. Thus, the address under Article 176 is mandatory.

However, the HC also held that when the governor fails to deliver his address under Article 176 and walks out of the House after laying down the address on the table of the House, **will be considered as irregularity not illegality.**

Therefore, the validity of the House proceedings cannot be challenged on the ground of irregularity under Article 212.

The **Calcutta HC in another case** held that the governor has the **right to delete or not read irrelevant portions** which do not deal with the policy of the government.

It observed that the Governor can exercise his discretion in leaving out of his address the irrelevant matter.

Moreover, as per the **British convention since 1829**, the governor must read the full speech as it is basically the government's statement about which the governor like that of the British monarch has no responsibility.

**What can be the implications of the governors editing/deleting the government prepared speech?**

Governors editing/deleting the speech may **create a constitutional crisis.**

**For example**, the governor's address is defeated when the chief minister refuses to defend the address of the governor leading the House to reject the resolution on the governor's speech.

This defeat is considered as **a no-confidence motion** and the chief minister needs to resign.

Therefore, such a resignation for something that the government did not include in the ceremonial address but the governor had said on its own is undemocratic. Hence, the governor has no discretion in editing the address.

### 16. Under Constitution, law declared by the Supreme Court is binding on all

**Source:** The post is based on an article "**Under Constitution, law declared by the Supreme Court is binding on all**" published in **The Hindu** on **13<sup>th</sup> January 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – Governance

**Relevance:** judicial review and related issues

**News:** The Vice-President of India has recently made a statement regarding the power of the court on judicial review. This article discusses the tussle between the center and the court regarding judicial review.

**What are the statements made by the Vice-President of India?**

He is not happy with the **Kesavananda Bharati judgment of 1973** which gave the idea of the Basic Structure, upheld judicial review and limited the Parliament's power under Article 368 to amend the Constitution.

He has also criticized the National Judicial Appointments Commission (**NJAC**) judgment through which the SC struck down the law and upheld the collegium system.

**What is the stand of the court on the criticism?**

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**Article 141 of the Constitution** mandates that a law declared by the Supreme Court is binding on all courts, even the Supreme Court. Therefore, the court is bound to comply with the NJAC verdict and the judgment made was within the law.

Further, **the Parliament is free to bring a new law** on judicial appointments through a constitution amendment but that will also be subject to judicial review.

The SC has also advised the government and constitutional authorities that it is necessary that all follow the law as laid down by the court, else it may have a negative impact on the society and people will follow their will.

**Why is judicial review needed?**

**Kesavananda Bharati verdict had made clear that judicial review is not a means to curb parliamentary sovereignty.**

It is only part of a “**system of checks and balances**” to ensure constitutional functionaries do not exceed their limits. **Judicial review** holds an important place in a federal Constitution and it in no way makes the judiciary supreme.

SC in its past judgment has also observed that judicial review is in accordance with the law laid down by the Constitution.

Moreover, the court said that how the Parliament in the past has tried to curb the judicial power of the court through the 42nd Constitution amendment and therefore, there is a need to have checks and balances.

However, **regarding Article 368**, the SC has said that it is only a procedure for amendment of the Constitution. It could not be treated as a power vested in Parliament to amend the Constitution and alter the ‘**basic structure**’ of the Constitution.

### 17. Remove Raj From Raj Bhawans

**Source:** The post is based on an article “**Remove Raj From Raj Bhawans**” published in **The Times of India** on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – Indian Polity

**Relevance:** issue associated with the Governor

**News:** The article discusses the changing role of the Governor from the British period to the recent times.

**What were the roles of the Governor of the British era?**

Governors of British provinces could overrule elected ministers, make laws and ordinances, restrict proceedings in the legislatures, **dismiss a minister, or even dismiss the entire government and take back the reins.**

They could withhold assent to any legislation according to their will. **In appointing ministers, the governor could choose representatives from any community he wanted.**

However, this changed after the adoption of the Constitution.

**What changes were brought in the role of Governors by the Constitution?**

Governors were **made nominal heads of state**, with the powers of appointing ministers, summoning the legislature, assenting to Bills, and calling for President’s rule.

However, with time, governors became a medium through which the Union could interfere in state politics. **For example**, misuse of the President’s rule.

The **Supreme Court in 1994 said** that issues of forming a government had to be settled through **votes of confidence in the state legislature.**

However, even here the governor could influence the outcome of the vote by deciding which party would get the first chance to prove its majority.



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Governors have an important role to play in handling political crises and cautioning elected governments while remaining non-aligned with any political party.

However, this has not been the case as it is evident from the tussle between Tami Nadu government and the Governor, Delhi government and the L-G, etc.

**Read More:** [Bad and ugly – A Governor’s departure from convention has set off unsavoury events](#)

**What can be the way ahead?**

The **appointment and removal process of the governor** should change. Today, the Union government enjoys this power which ultimately misuses it.

Therefore, **a new system should be brought** for the appointment and removal of the Governor. Governors **should also be made accountable** to the Union, the state and the Rajya Sabha through their appointments and removals.

### 18. [Delhi LG has got it wrong, India doesn’t need new prisons — it needs prison reform](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Delhi LG has got it wrong, India doesn’t need new prisons — it needs prison reform**” published in **The Indian Express** on **13th January 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Functioning of judiciary

**Relevance**– Criminal justice system

**News**– The article explains the issues related to prison inmates in India

**What are the issues faced by prisoners in India?**

**The criminal justice system** is inherently **biased against disadvantaged sections**. The prison inmates include 20.9% SC, 11.24% ST, 35.06% OBC, and 20% Muslims. Further, 25% of the prisoner population is illiterate.

**Prison Statistics of India 2021 report of the National Crime Records Bureau** show that more than 77% of jail inmates are undertrials and every year this number goes up. The undertrial prisoners in Indian jails registered a 15% increase from 3.72 lakh in 2020 to 4.27 lakh in 2021. The same data set also records 25% of the prisoner population is **illiterate**.

There is a blanket ban on the **voting rights** of prisoners despite India being the world’s largest democracy. This includes incarcerated prisoners as well as undertrials. The ban lacks any **reasonable classification** based on the nature of the crime or duration of the sentence.

In other countries such as South Africa, Germany, France, Canada undertrials who are out on bail can enjoy the right to vote.

The number of **custodial deaths** has registered a 12% increase from 1,887 in 2020 to 2,116 in 2021.

There is a **lack of medical staff** in prisons. On December 31, 2021, the actual strength of medical staff was 2,080. The sanctioned strength of medical staff is 3,497

Instances of **manual scavenging** inside prisons have also been reported in the media.

They are still governed by the **colonial Prisons Act, 1894**, which treats prisoners as sub-par citizens and provides for strict **punishment rather than rehabilitation**.

**What is the stand of SC and legal provisions on prisoners?**

and The Supreme Court has outlined **three broad principles** regarding imprisonment and custody. First, a person in prison does not become a **non-person**. Second, a person in prison is entitled to all **human rights** within the limitations of imprisonment. Third, there is no **justification** for aggravating the suffering already inherent in the process of incarceration.

In **Hussain and Anr. v/s Union of India (2017)**, the apex court had ordered expeditious disposal of bail applications along the principle of bail being the norm and jail being the exception.

**Section 436A of the CrPC** stipulates that a person having undergone detention for half time of maximum period of imprisonment is entitled to be released on bail with or without sureties.

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### What is the way forward to improve the conditions of prisons?

The criminal justice system is based on four pillars — **deterrence, retribution, prevention, and reformation**.

There is a need to **liberalise** the bail system.

### 19. [Capital stalemate](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Capital stalemate**” published in **The Hindu** on **13th January 2023**.

**Syllabus**: GS2- Issues and challenges pertaining to federal structure

**Relevance**– Issues related to division of powers between centre and states

**News**– The article explains the issue of continuous tussle between Delhi government and Lieutenant governor over their respective powers.

### What are the points of conflict between the Delhi government and Lieutenant governor?

Recently the Lieutenant governor of Delhi appointed 10 aldermen and a BJP councillor to preside over polls.

Main opposition party alleged that the Lieutenant governor had bypassed the tradition of **appointing the senior most councillor** as the presiding officer. Giving **voting rights** to the appointed alderman is in violation of the MCD Act.

There are allegations that the Lieutenant Governor is ignoring the Council of Ministers and issuing orders to the bureaucracy directly on all matters.

### What is the authority enjoyed by the Lieutenant governor of Delhi?

The Lieutenant Governor has executive control over only the three reserved subjects of **police, public order and land**. All other subjects lie with the elected government.

The Lieutenant Governor’s authority extends beyond those. She has **control over the bureaucracy**, and can exercise the **power to transfer**. She can **suspend or take any action** against any employee of the Delhi government.

### What is the way forward?

The Supreme Court has called for **statesmanship and wisdom** by actors.

The **legal ambiguity** over exercise of power should be removed.

### 20. [V-P Jagdeep Dhankhar sparks debate with remarks on Basic Structure of Constitution; what is it?](#)

**Source**: The post is based on the following articles

“**V-P Jagdeep Dhankhar sparks debate with remarks on Basic Structure of Constitution; what is it?**” published in the **Indian Express** on **13th January 2023**.

“**Jagdeep Dhankhar’s criticism of the basic structure doctrine should ring alarm bells**” published in the **Indian Express** on **13th January 2023**.

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

**Relevance**: About basic structure doctrine.

**News**: The Vice President of India has addressed the 83rd All-India Presiding Officer’s conference. In that, he criticised the Supreme Court once again, for using the doctrine of basic structure to strike down the constitutional amendment that introduced the National Judicial Appointments Commission Act.

What are the major highlights of the Vice President’s address?

**Read here: [Vice-President says court can’t dilute Parliament’s sovereignty](#)**

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What is the basic structure doctrine, and how was the doctrine developed?

The Doctrine of Basic Structure is a form of judicial review that is used to test the legality of any legislation by the courts.

Under this, the Parliament has vast powers to change the Constitution, but it cannot touch certain “basic features” or foundational principles that give the Constitution its coherence or identity, make it what it is. In short, the Parliament can amend, but not destroy the Constitution. In the Kesavananda ruling, the Supreme Court cited several aspects of the Constitution that could be identified as “basic features” of the document but added that it was not an exhaustive list.

For example, judicial review, rule of law, federalism, and democratic republic structure are identified as basic features.

In 2015, while striking down the National Judicial Appointments Commission Act, the court held “judicial independence” as a basic feature of the Constitution.

**Must read:** [Basic structure Doctrine](#)

What is the history of basic structure doctrine?

The origins of the basic structure doctrine are found in the post-war German Constitution law. After the Nazi regime, the German Constitution amended some provisions to protect some basic laws.

What are the criticisms associated with the basic structure doctrine criticised?

The Basic structure is **a)** Not found in the text of the Constitution itself, **b)** Enables the judiciary to encroach on the Parliament’s powers, **c)** Makes “unelected judges” to strike down amendments to the Constitution on the basis of this doctrine. This is “anti-democratic and counter-majoritarian.”

Why the basic structure doctrine is essential for the smooth functioning of the Constitution?

Both the legislature (governed by the majoritarian principle) and the court are an integral part of the democratic framework. These constraints help India to maintain the fine balance that makes democracy work better for the people.

**Read more:** [Supreme Court’s basic structure doctrine in a new context](#)

### 21. [The Pee Case: Why India Needs Tort Laws](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article “**The Pee Case: Why India Needs Tort Laws**” published in **The Times of India** on **14<sup>th</sup> January 2023**.

**Syllabus:** **GS 2 – Governance**

**Relevance:** **structural problems with Indian laws**

**News:** The article discusses a recent case of misbehavior with a woman in the flight.

**What are the issues?**

The accused has been booked under IPC provisions **Section 354** (assault or criminal force on woman with intent to outrage her modesty), **354A** (sexual harassment), **509** (act intended to insult the modesty of a woman), **510** (misconduct in public by a drunken person) and **294** (obscene acts).

The court has also denied the bail on the grounds of outraging the modesty of a woman. However, the offences for which accused has been booked is not appropriate.

**Why IPC sections that have been applied on Mishra is not appropriate?**

Person has been booked for an offence that is punishable **irrespective of the victim (man or woman)**.

The IPC sections that deal with offences or sexual offences against women **misleads the case and there is no evidence** at all that Mishra’s act was intended as a sexual offence.

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This shows there are **structural problems with the Indian laws** and judicial practices. The **concept of tort law is still underdeveloped in India** which misleads these kinds of cases that are less about criminal intentions and much more about negative consequences for the victim.

### **What is the tort law and how is it applied?**

Under **tort law**, a person who is **injured or the aggrieved party is compensated by the payment of damage. The accused is asked for compensation. Tort cases are civil cases.**

Tort law can be applied to damages caused to a person's health, safety, his environment, his property, his economic interests, or his reputation.

The application of tort law needs to be **applied through common sense**. Every damage caused cannot be considered the grounds for receiving compensation and every case need not be treated as criminal case.

However, **most of the Indian laws do not have tort clauses in it.**

### **Why do Indian laws not have tort clauses?**

One of the reasons behind excluding the tort clauses is **to provide space to the state functionaries**. It is an inappropriate established fact in India that the state and its functionaries cannot do wrong or cause damage.

Thus, India's Parliament never considered a comprehensive tort law which saved the state from paying compensation to victims. It was left for the judiciary to develop a tort jurisprudence.

Moreover, there are **some laws in India such as** The Environment Protection Act 1986, Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Workplaces Act 2013 and Motor Vehicles Act 2019 which **have tortious clauses**.

However, building tort into all laws, making it a part of social, governance and legal narratives is missing in India. Some judges have argued for codification of torts, but have not been successful.

### **Why is there a need to codify tort in India?**

If tort is codified in India, cases like Mishra's can be dealt with more logically and it will also benefit many other victims.

**For example**, victims of road accidents or those petitioning consumer courts and the complaints related with service providers of government or private.

### **What can be the way ahead?**

**India needs to have tort law like the US has** Federal Tort Claims Act that compensates individuals who have suffered personal injury, death, or property loss caused by wrongful act of an employee of the federal government.

However, there is a need for the Indian government to properly write the tort laws specifying the kind of liability and standard of proof, and judges must apply their mind and common sense when hearing tort cases.

## 22. [Myanmar's failed military regime is unsettling the whole region](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article **“Myanmar's failed military regime is unsettling the whole region”** published in **The Indian Express** on **12th January 2023**.

**Syllabus**: GS2- India and its neighbourhood

**Relevance**– India and Myanmar relations

**News**– The article explains the internal fighting in Myanmar and its destabilising potential for its neighbouring countries.

### **What are the internal security challenges faced by Myanmar?**

The military regime in Myanmar has failed to establish control over the country .

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Ethnic militias have joined hands with **pro-democracy** civilians. They have taken up arms against the military since the February 2021 coup.

The junta's confrontation with these groups is evident in the **Chin state**. For nearly a decade, Chin was one of Myanmar's relatively **peaceful border states**. **Chin National Army** is the armed wing of the **Chin National Front**. It had signed a ceasefire in 2012 with the then military government.

After the coup, the CNF joined hands with the **National Unity Government**, the political leaders of the pro-democracy struggle in Myanmar.

Another ethnic organisation called the Chin **National Organisation** also came up two months after the coup. It has its own armed wing called the **Chin National Defence Organisation**.

Every township in Chin state has its own people's militia called the **Chin Defence Force**.

**CNF-CNA headquarters** located right on the Mizoram-Chin border, has been training hundreds of volunteers who have signed up to take on the junta.

**How does it create security challenges for the neighbouring States of Myanmar?**

The Chin state lies in the proximity of the Mizoram side. It also directly threatens the **stability of the entire Northeast region**. Mizoram has given refuge to over 40,000 Chin people. Refugees have crossed over into Manipur, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh as well.

Bangladesh has been impacted by the **Rohingya influx**.

Continuous fighting in Kachin near the Chinese border has **security implications for China**.

**What is the way forward for stability in Myanmar?**

The country's ethnic groups who live along its borders do not trust the military to give them **federal autonomy**.

Peace in Myanmar and along its boundaries will come only with **real democracy**.

### [23. More than just an address](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**More than just an address**” published in **The Hindu** on **14th January 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS2-Polity

**Relevance:** Political System

**News**- The article highlights breach of constitutional convention with respect to special address made by governor.

The **Governor of Tamil Nadu, R.N. Ravi** made constitutional history in the State by omitting certain paragraphs. He departed from the official text of his special address at the opening of the Legislative Assembly of Tamil Nadu for 2023.

**What is a special address made by the president and governor?**

**Article 87 of the Indian Constitution** requires the President to make a special address to both Houses of Parliament assembled on the commencement of the first session of each year. **Article 176 requires the Governor** to make a special address at the first session of each year of every State Legislative Assembly and to both Houses wherever the State also has a Legislative Council. The language of these provisions were borrowed from the rules of the House of Commons.

**Jawaharlal Nehru**, stated that the President's address is nothing but a **statement of policy** of the government.

The Calcutta High Court, while interpreting this article in **Syed Abdul Mansur Habibullah v. The Speaker, West Bengal Legislative Assembly (1966)**, held that the special address keeps the members informed about the executive policies and legislative programme of the State government.

**What does departure from the official text of a special address mean?**

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When there is an independent power provided under **Article 175**, it is a **serious impropriety** for any Governor (or even the President) to omit several paragraphs from the speech prepared by the incumbent government.

The **Supreme Court** has held that **constitutional conventions** are as much a part of the Constitution as its written text.

These conventions fill the interstices of a written Constitution and enable **effective coordination** between the legislature, executive and the judiciary.

**Article 361** of the Constitution gives the Governor complete immunity from any legal action because our founding fathers hoped that Governors would maintain the **highest standards of rectitude and propriety**.

**What is the role of the Governor in this regard?**

The special address of the Governor is an important constitutional duty. It is performed with the **aid and advice of the Council of Ministers** with the Chief Minister at the head.

The constitutional role of the Governor is that of an **elder statesman** who brings a sense of gravitas to this high office.

The residents of Raj Bhavans are **expected to be above party politics** and should not hamper the functioning of a duly elected State government.

### 24. Of metals and rare earths

**Source**– The post is based on the article “Of metals and rare earths” published in **Business Standard** on **14th January 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS1-Geography,GS2-International Relations

**Relevance:** Minerals related Distribution of resources across the world

**News-** The article explains the need to diversify sources of rare earth minerals.

The news that Sweden has just discovered a large deposit of rare earth minerals sparked off thoughts about “atmanirbhar” in this vital area.

**What are the rare earth metals?**

Rare earths are a **class of metals**. Their oxides need to be used in small but significant quantities to make electric vehicles, mobile phones and sundry other consumer electronics, besides wind turbines and solar energy units.

**Renewable energy**, therefore, depends on these metals.

**What is the distribution of metals and rare earth metals across the world?**

China has a hammerlock on global mining and production of rare earth oxides. It has 44 million tonnes of proven reserves (2021), estimated at **one-third of known global reserves**.

China has a **60% of the world’s market share**.

The **US has a 15-16 per cent market share** and Myanmar (with the help of China) holds around 9.5 per cent. **India has around 1 per cent market share**.

By all accounts, Chinese mining and refining methods of these are fairly carbon-intensive and there have been reports of severe **environmental degradation** caused by Chinese mining practices.

**What are the barriers in diversifying supply chains?**

The barrier is **really the cost**. Given the scale of the opportunity and enabling policies, supply chains can be diversified if it’s made in sufficient quantities with policy support, it may become globally competitive.

However, if you don’t have domestic rare earths in sufficient quantities, you need to **import from China**. This has hard-to-model implications for geopolitics.

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China is also the **dominant player in many other elements** of global energy and electronics supply chains, including solar panels, wind turbines, electric vehicle batteries, electric vehicle drive trains, dynamos, alternators, and semiconductors.

### What is the way forward?

For other elements, **US** has looked for **additional local reserves**.

**Japan** has examined the possibility of **undersea mining**

Indeed, many nations have **domestic capacity** and **India aspires to join that club** with its multitude of production-linked incentive schemes.

This means nations can **switch suppliers** at need.

**In contrast, rare earths have a single-supplier**, and China will remain the **go-to supplier** for the foreseeable future.

### 25. [Bound supremacy – Parliamentary sovereignty isn't undone by the basic structure doctrine](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article "**Bound supremacy – Parliamentary sovereignty isn't undone by the basic structure doctrine**" published in **The Hindu** on **14th January 2023**

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

**Relevance:** About basic structure doctrine.

**News:** The Vice President of India in 83rd All-India Presiding Officer's conference criticised the doctrine of the basic structure for undermining parliamentary sovereignty.

What are the major highlights of the Vice President's address?

**Read here:** [Vice-President says court can't dilute Parliament's sovereignty](#)

How Parliamentary legislation is regulated in India?

Parliamentary legislation is subject to two limitations under the Constitution of India.

**1) Judicial review**, or the power of constitutional courts to review legislation for possible violation of any fundamental right, and **2) No amendment to the Constitution should have the effect of destroying any of its basic features**. This is ensured under two conditions. Such as, **a)** Under **Article 13**, laws inconsistent with or in derogation of fundamental rights are void, **b) 'Basic structure' doctrine** evolved by the Supreme Court in the **Kesavananda Bharati case**. The main purpose of the doctrine is to ensure that some fundamental features of the Constitution are not legislated out of existence.

What is the basic structure doctrine, and how was the doctrine developed?

**Read here:** [Basic structure Doctrine](#)

Why basic structure doctrine is not undermining parliamentary sovereignty?

**a)** Parliament is sovereign in its domain, but it is still bound by the limitations imposed by the Constitution, **b)** The basic structure doctrine had helped to save the Constitution from being undermined through the misuse of the parliamentary majority, **c)** A Parliamentary majority is short-lived, but essential features of the Constitution such as the rule of law, parliamentary form of government, separation of powers, the idea of equality, and free and fair elections ought to be perennially protected from legislative excess.

For changing the basic structure doctrine, a new Constituent Assembly has to come up with another constitution that changes these fundamental concepts. But a legislature formed under the current Constitution cannot be allowed to change its core identity.

# General Studies Paper – 3



General Studies - 3

1. [Utkarsh 2.0.: RBI's updated strategy requires another update](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**RBI's updated strategy requires another update**” published in the **Livemint** on **9th January 2023**.

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

**Relevance:** About Utkarsh 2.0. and its concerns.

**News:** Recently, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) launched Utkarsh 2.0.

What is Utkarsh 2.0.?

**Read here:** [RBI launches Utkarsh 2.0 for the period 2023-2025](#)

What is the need for Utkarsh 2.0.?

A formal medium-term strategy document like Utkarsh 2.0. is essential for highly complicated tasks such as,

-Financial systems in almost all economies have become exceedingly elaborate, entangled and complicated. This requires central banks to detect nascent signs of financial instability which could arise anywhere in the system and turn contagious.

-In a globalized world, central banks require to watch over foreign exchange flows and manage currency-rate volatility. They also balance price stability and growth.

What are the challenges present in Utkarsh 2.0.?

The document **a)** Missed laying down specific challenges and a detailed plan on how RBI proposes to engage with them, **b)** The Core Purpose outlined in Utkarsh 2.0 is a reworked version of the Reserve Bank of India Act's preamble. Which itself was amended and changed in 2016 as a precursor to RBI's formal adoption of a flexible inflation-targeting regime, **c)** Many specific strategy points mentioned are also core to what a central bank is expected to discharge anyway. For example, The document mentioned works such as “Create a resilient financial intermediation ecosystem; refining the regulatory and supervisory framework”. These are desirable end-result, than a strategy, and **d)** Does not mention about climate finance or green central banking.

What should be done to improve Utkarsh 2.0.?

RBI must stay vigil to a wider range of scenarios than its strategy document. Some transparency and a feedback loop with the public will help RBI to arm itself better against future uncertainties.

2. [Driving To Despair – Poor maintenance, poor policing, poor traffic rules enforcement, too much wrong with India's roads](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Driving To Despair – Poor maintenance, poor policing, poor traffic rules enforcement, too much wrong with India's roads**” published in **The Times of India** on **9th January 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc..

**Relevance:** About preventing accidents on Indian roads.

**News:** Recent road accidents in Delhi, Uttarakhand and Tamil Nadu highlight the multiple dimensions of risks and accidents on Indian roads.

A third of the 4. 1 lakh documented road accidents in 2021 resulted in 1. 5 lakh deaths. Another third of the accidents resulted in grievous injuries.

What should be done to reduce accidents on Indian roads?

**Ensure proper lighting:** Women motorists and pedestrians will feel much safer on better-lit roads. Further, these roads enable improved road visibility.

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**Added responsibility:** Agencies like NHAI and state public works departments, should not only construct and maintain major roads but also has to be entrusted with maintaining poor road conditions like potholes, inadequate signages and unscientific road construction.

**Encourage Samaritan initiatives:** The government should incentivise public participation in taking victims to hospitals promptly and reimbursing hospitals for emergency trauma care.

**Implementing Electronic monitoring:** The Motor Vehicles Act as amended in 2019 empowered state governments to conduct electronic monitoring of roads through speed cameras, CCTV cameras, speed guns, body wearable cameras etc. Investments in such tech upgrades should happen faster.

From policing to courts to transport departments to public works to healthcare, a **'whole of government' approach** can make citizens safer. Road safety enforcement should be the next generation of governance reforms that India must target.

**Read more:** [Road Safety in India – Explained, pointwise](#)

### 3. [From RIL to L&T and Adani, corporate giants build on EPC rule change](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article **“From RIL to L&T and Adani, corporate giants build on EPC rule change”** published in the **Business Standard** on **10th January 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Investment models

**Relevance**– Issues related to infrastructure development

**News**– The article explains the increasing preference of big infrastructure firms for EPC contracts.

Reliance Industries Ltd has decided that it would merge its engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) subsidiary Reliance Projects and Property Management.

Many big infrastructure companies are pivoting towards government EPC contracts in a major way.

#### **What is the reason for major infrastructure companies preferring EPC contracts?**

This shift is primarily on account of several initiatives by government agencies in 2022. Most prominent of them are the National Highways Authority of India and the Railways. As a result, new entrants will operate on a **low-debt model to build greenfield assets**. The government will be responsible for selling the completed projects.

Government agencies are now handing out infrastructure contracts stating that bidders have to separate the **project financing plans from the post-construction phase**.

The **new paradigm** for infrastructure projects suits companies like L&T, RVNL, Adani or RIL. They have **large reserves** of cash for implementing the project.

An EPC project begins life with a 20% upfront payment contract offered by the bidding agency. Subsequent payments are linked to achieving project milestones that can be monitored by technology. Bidders need to hardly raise any debt.

#### **What was the reason behind these decisions?**

This change was mainly the result of NHAI's Rs 3.3-trillion debt burden.

The finance ministry discovered that most of the debt was due to **hybrid annuity model-based projects** for roads. Under this model, the bidders were offered to build the roads or bridges on a **tight budget and timeline**. They were allowed to **compensate** themselves from the returns when the projects became operational by charging tolls.

Many contractors were suspicious about collecting tolls or levying user charges, NHAI offered **assured returns of up to 40%** of the total project expenditure, payable usually over 10 years. The contractor had to arrange the rest.

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Due to assured return, contractors **inflated projections**. Projects often came up late even as the government's bill mounted.

As a result of this, NHAI not only now asks the contractors to show **project construction cost**. It has also begun to use drones and satellites to monitor the pace of the progress.

In June 2022, the finance ministry said the past experience of the contractors has to be checked before issuing tenders.

### 4. [Has human-animal conflict increased in Wayanad?](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article “**Has human-animal conflict increased in Wayanad?**” published in **The Hindu** on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Environment

**Relevance:** reasons behind increasing human-animal conflict in Kerala and measures needed to mitigate.

**News:** There has been an increase in the human-animal conflict in Kerala. A daily worker was attacked by the elephant along with an attack on a bus.

**What has led to an increase in the human-animal conflict in Kerala?**

Human-animal conflict has become a serious wildlife management problem in Kerala in the last few years.

The reasons are – **a)** an increase in human population in wildlife habitats, **b)** habitat loss and fragmentation suffered by wild animals and **c)** change in cropping and land use patterns adopted by farmers.

Moreover, an analysis in various forest divisions of Kerala shows that human-wildlife conflict is a threat existing almost everywhere, but more frequently in the northern region and particularly in Wayanad.

**What can be done to prevent human-animal conflict?**

The only solution is **mitigation of conflict**. Both government and society should work together as a single entity to prevent human-animal conflict.

Further, **forest conservation must be made more effective**, through participatory programmes involving the people.

### 5. [A mountain reeling under human aggression](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the following articles

“**A mountain reeling under human aggression**” published in **The Hindu** on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2023.

“**Broken-Back Mountains: Joshimath, Darjeeling, Sikkim**” published in **The Times of India** on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Disaster and disaster management.

**Relevance:** About protecting Hilly areas.

**News:** The Himalayan town Joshimath is under tremendous stress, and a portion of it may sink. About Joshimath

**Read here:** [Who Tunnels Through A Sinking Town?](#)

Joshimath, or Jyotirmath, is a temple town and a municipality in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district. What are the challenges faced by Hilly areas?

**Increase in rail and road network:** The construction of highways and railway tracks has now become a prime cause for landslides and its occurrences have doubled over the years.

**Increase in construction activities:** For instance, in the next decade, the Government proposes to build 66 tunnels in the Uttarakhand Himalaya and 18 tunnels are already in operation.

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**Growth of the tourism sector:** For instance, in Joshimath, in 2022, close to 5 crore tourists, 4 crore kanwar yatris and 45 lakh Char Dham pilgrims went to Uttarakhand. That's about 10 crore.

**Increased waste generation:** For instance, the solid waste generation at Kedarnath was around 10,000 kg daily.

**Depleting groundwater:** Descending water levels have been observed in the hilly areas of tunnel construction. Further, erratic rainfall and ecological degradation associated with land use change are impacting mountain aquifer systems. For instance, the severity of the drinking water crisis in Darjeeling.

**Low investment opportunity:** People in tourist areas tend to invest in taxis and hotels. This again compounds the issue of urbanisation.

**Increase in fallow land:** Further, most of the farmers have now abandoned their traditional practices and only less than 20% of the agricultural land in the Himalayan districts of Uttarakhand is now being farmed and the rest has become fallow land.

**Read more: [Jolt From Joshimath – Govts have finally woken up to a hill town being on the brink of an ecological disaster. But more needs to be done](#)**

What should be done to protect hilly areas?

The steep gradients of the Uttarakhand Himalayas make it dynamically heterogeneous, in terms of climatic variables, and biodiversity. To protect the hilly areas the government should do the following,

-Like cities, hills also need investments and infrastructure. But that should not damage the ecological balance. The development strategy should be based on the region's natural resources such as forests, water, biodiversity and ecotourism.

-A **scientific study of hill towns** is needed to clearly define the carrying capacity of each hilly town.

-**Proper planning:** Sikkim railway project and Sevoke-Rangpo line are facing challenges due to improper planning.

-The Himalayan terrain demands **sustainable tourism**, not mass tourism.

-National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) report on the Chamoli disaster mentions that in the long term, it will be necessary to focus on **finding alternative sources of energy**.

In short, an appropriate strategy for human well-being should use traditional knowledge, agricultural practices, construction practices and local cultural aspects.

### 6. [Ozone hole, filling up now: What this means for climate action](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article "**Ozone hole, filling up now: What this means for climate action**" published in **The Indian Express** on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Climate Change

**Relevance:** recovery of ozone

**News:** An UN-based report suggests that the ozone hole of the world is expected to be completely repaired by 2066.

**How did the recovery of the ozone hole happen?**

It happened due to the successful elimination of Ozone Depleting Substances (**ODSs**), through the implementation of the **Montreal Protocol of 1989**.

As per the report, 99 percent of the substances banned by the Montreal Protocol have been eliminated from use resulting in a recovery of the ozone layer.

**What is ozone and what are the reasons behind its depletion?**

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Ozone, a molecule having three Oxygen atoms (**O<sub>3</sub>**) is found mainly in the **stratosphere**. It absorbs ultraviolet rays coming from the Sun. **Ozone hole refers** to the reduction in concentration of the ozone molecules.

In the 1980s, scientists began to notice a sharp drop in the concentration of ozone because of the use of chlorofluorocarbons (**CFCs**) that were used extensively in the air conditioning, refrigeration, paints, and furniture industries.

### **What were the key findings of the UN based assessment?**

As per the assessment, if current policies continued to be implemented, the ozone layer was expected to recover to 1980 values by 2066 over Antarctica, by 2045 over the Arctic, and by 2040 for the rest of the world.

Moreover, ozone-depleting substances are greenhouse gases which are more dangerous than carbon dioxide.

Therefore, the effective implementation of Montreal Protocol and elimination of ODSs would ensure the avoidance of 0.5 to 1 degree Celsius of warming by 2050.

Hence, with these views the Montreal Protocol was amended in 2016 to extend its mandate over hydrofluorocarbons (**HFCs**) that have replaced the CFCs in industrial use.

### **What are HFCs and what are the amendment made in the Montreal Protocol?**

HFCs do not cause much damage to the ozone layer but are very powerful greenhouse gases.

The **Kigali Amendment** to the Montreal Protocol seeks to **eliminate 80-90 percent of the HFCs currently in use by the year 2050**. This is expected to prevent another 0.3 to 0.5 degree Celsius of global warming by the end of the century.

Moreover, the success of Montreal Protocol is often cited as an example to curtail the other greenhouse gases. However, it might not be possible.

### **Why other greenhouse gases cannot be curtailed like ODSs?**

**ODSs are not widely emitted** and hence their limitation was successful but the emission of carbon dioxide is linked to the harnessing of energy. Almost every economic activity leads to carbon dioxide emissions.

**For example**, renewable energies have considerable carbon footprints because their manufacturing, transport, and operation involves the use of fossil fuels.

Further, unlike ODSs which were limited to the specific industry, greenhouse gas emissions are not limited to a few industries or economic sectors, but affects the entire economy.

## 7. [Conservative budgeting – Fiscal space should be used carefully](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article “**Conservative budgeting – Fiscal space should be used carefully**” published in **Business Standard** on **11<sup>th</sup> January 2023**.

**Syllabus:** **GS 3 – Indian Economy**

**Relevance:** **ways to use additional fiscal resources**

**News:** The Union government is confident of achieving the fiscal deficit target of 6.4 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in the current fiscal year.

### **What has led the government in achieving the fiscal deficit target?**

It is because of **conservative budgeting at multiple levels**. **For example**, the government budgeted for 9.6 percent growth in its tax revenue over the revised estimates for 2021-22.

However, the revised estimates calculated have grown by more than 23 per cent over the previous year.

Further, the government also assumed in nominal terms the Indian economy would grow by just about 11.1 per cent in the current fiscal year.

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But, the first advance estimates for national income, released last week, show the economy is expected to grow by 15.4 percent this fiscal year.

This expansion in the economy gives the government additional space to spend while maintaining the required fiscal deficit as percentage of GDP leading to higher growth and tax collection.

However, underestimating growth and revenue collection can have an effect on overall expenditure efficiency but it is also a viable option.

### **How underestimating growth and revenue is beneficial?**

Government has often struggled in the past to meet the fiscal-deficit target and ended up either **reducing capital expenditure or shifting revenue expenditure outside the Budget.**

However, adopting such measures in the present situation where both the debt-GDP ratio and fiscal deficit are at higher levels could create risks.

Further, it is also hard to anticipate both expenditure and revenue collection with precision at the time of presenting the Budget. Therefore, it is sensible for the government to adopt a conservative approach in Budget making.

Moreover, the government can also adopt a few measures when it has more fiscal space available in the year.

### **What measures can be adopted by the government when it has more fiscal space?**

1. **a)** reduce the deficit and aim to reach the stated medium-term fiscal targets as early as possible, **b)** deploy additional resources in building physical and social infrastructure, **c)** spend more on education and health, **d)** spend additional resources on defence.

However, to utilize its additional fiscal resources, the government needs to have a clear and transparent medium-term fiscal consolidation roadmap, else it may end up using additional fiscal space without any longer-term benefit.

### 8. [Get Wet, Get Well – Wetlands are nature’s shock absorbers. Their degradation in cities is real bad news for urban future](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Get Wet, Get Well – Wetlands are nature’s shock absorbers. Their degradation in cities is real bad news for urban future**” published in **The Times of India** on **11th January 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Environment and Bio-diversity Conservation.

**Relevance:** About the role of the governor in the assembly.

**News:** Data from Wetlands International shows India has lost nearly two of five wetlands in the last 30 years, while 40% of them can’t support aquatic animals.

About the report on Wetlands

A total of 75 Indian wetlands with a surface area of over a million hectares are designated as wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar Convention, which India ratified in 1982. But even the largest among them, the Sundarbans wetland, has lost around 25% of its mangroves due to erosion over the past three decades.

Vadodara lost 30% of its wetlands between 2005 and 2018, while Hyderabad has lost 55% of its semi-aquatic bodies due to inefficient waste management and unchecked urban development.

Encroachment and construction on Pallikaranai marsh in Chennai have made cities susceptible to flooding.

**Read more: [40% of wetlands in India lost in last 30 yrs: Experts](#)**

Why are wetlands significant?

Wetlands are vitally important for water storage and aquifer recharge and play the role of storm buffers and flood mitigators. Wetlands are also natural carbon sinks, making them crucial for combating climate change.

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What are the reasons for losing wetlands?

The majority of the wetlands are lost due to unplanned infrastructure, pollution, over-exploitation and reclamation, and reduction in sediments due to upstream dams.

**Ignoring urban wetlands:** The government has notified the Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017 to serve as a regulatory framework for conservation efforts. But most of the assistance provided by the Centre to states for the conservation of wetlands is directed towards the notified Ramsar sites. Thus ignoring urban wetlands.

What should be done to protect wetlands?

-The government should create greater awareness about the benefits of wetland conservation.

-Urban planning should actively incorporate the preservation of wetlands like that of [Delhi Master Plan 2041](#).

### 9. [Inside the growing rift in ethanol economy](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**INSIDE THE GROWING RIFT IN ETHANOL ECONOMY**” published in the **Livemint** on **11th January 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Energy.

**Relevance:** About the advantages and challenges in increasing ethanol-blending.

**News:** Today, the two-wheeler industry is looking at green and sustainable future mobility solutions spanning across electric, hybrid and alternate fuels. In such a scenario, ethanol-based products are an important option.

About the global success story of ethanol in Brazil

The biggest success story for ethanol in the world right now is Brazil. The country started blending ethanol with gasoline for transport in the mid-1970s.

A vast majority of vehicles on the road in Brazil—about 86%—are powered by flex fuel technology that gives consumers the flexibility to use ethanol blends between 20% and 85%. The country has achieved an average blend of 48%, by far the highest in the world.

What are the advantages of increasing ethanol blending?

**a)** It is a replacement for imported crude and also helps to save foreign exchange, **b)** It is also cleaner with lower carbon monoxide and hydrocarbon tailpipe emissions, **c)** As ethanol is produced by fermenting sugarcane juice, it has also been lauded as the panacea for the surplus sugar issue.

**Read more:** [India has achieved the target of 10% ethanol blending ahead of schedule](#)

What are the challenges in increasing ethanol blending?

Despite various promotion measures, India has **only achieved a 10% blend** under its [Ethanol Blended Petrol \(EBP\) Programme](#) (10% of ethanol blended with 90% of petrol).

While India has ample sugarcane, the country **doesn't yet have enough fermentation capacity** required to make ethanol.

The rise in the blending percentage of ethanol in petrol would **make fuel distribution more complex**. For instance, To achieve E20 itself, require separate fuel pumps, tanks to store the fuels, and tankers to transport them. This sort of a supply chain will come at a significant cost for oil marketing firms.

In India, **older vehicles don't get phased out** automatically. So, India would need to keep the supply of E10 fuel besides operating additional pumps with higher blends.

According to Niti Aayog, the **price of flex-fuel four-wheelers could shoot up** in the range of ₹17,000-25,000. These are only preliminary estimates and the actual figures could be higher.

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Ethanol has **27% less energy than petrol**. So, with higher levels of blending, the **fuel economy of the vehicle will diminish** by 4-8%. In short, the consumer will pay more for a less fuel-efficient vehicle.

Promoting ethanol will directly promote Sugarcane, which is a **water guzzling crop**.

Above all, **ethanol doesn't even solve the entire problem** as diesel is the majority transport fuel in the country (petrol accounts for 31% of transport fuel consumption).

**Read more: [Why India's policy to produce ethanol-blended petrol is short-sighted](#)**

What should be done for increasing ethanol blending?

**Sugar-producing states** of Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra can initially adapt to the ethanol economy.

India requires a **major overhaul of not only vehicles** that would need flex fuel engines **but also the infrastructure** to support various fuel types.

The government is yet to **stipulate a roadmap for flex fuel technologies**. Ideally, the government should set targets for emissions and create a road map.

**Directly incentivize consumers like Brazil:** In Brazil, pure ethanol has been incentivized by lower taxation—it is approximately 30% cheaper than E27 fuel. Consumers were also directly incentivized through tax exemptions for buying flex fuel vehicles. India can follow a similar approach.

### 10. [Delays, even with no jurisdiction](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article "**Delays, even with no jurisdiction**" published in **Business Standard** on **12<sup>th</sup> January 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Indian Economy

**Relevance:** problems with the IBC, 2016.

**News:** Judicial delays are acting as hindrance towards the insolvency process. It takes almost two years to admit an application and another two years to approve a resolution plan. This affects the purpose of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (IBC).

#### **What are the issues with the IBC?**

The IBC provides for a regulator in the form of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (**IBBI**) which makes regulations relating to resolution processes.

It provides for an Adjudicating Authority (**AA**) to adjudicate matters in relation to insolvency proceedings. It designates the National Company Law Tribunal to act as the AA for corporate insolvency proceedings.

The market participants and insolvency professionals conduct processes in accordance with the IBC and the regulations and submit them to the AA for adjudication.

The AA provides that a tribunal cannot test the legality of the parent legislation but claims that it is competent to test the legality of regulations, including the competence of the IBBI to make a regulation.

Hence, AA has been striking down regulations in collateral proceedings which is one of the reasons behind the delay in insolvencies.

Moreover, other tribunals which have exceeded its jurisdiction have faced setbacks from the Supreme Court.

The Court ruled in 2010 (*PTC India Ltd vs Central Electricity Regulatory Commission*) and in 2013 (*BSNL vs Telecom Regulatory Authority of India*) that the appellate tribunal does not have the jurisdiction to entertain challenges to regulations framed by the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission and the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India.

#### **What can be the way ahead?**



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The shift to a market economy required two major changes – **a)** the institutional environment and **b)** the institutional arrangement.

The IBC provides the institutional environment but it needs to evolve with the dynamics of the ecosystem for the institutional arrangement (regulators and tribunals) for implementing the law to work efficiently.

Therefore, these agencies need to discharge their assigned roles and not take over others' roles for best results.

### 11. [Reckless spree – Authorities must heed science and people living near mines, dams](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Reckless spree – Authorities must heed science and people living near mines, dams**” published in **The Hindu** on **12th January 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Disaster and disaster management.

**Relevance:** About protecting Hilly areas.

**News:** The land subsidence in Joshimath has highlighted geological disasters that have in fact manifested across India.

What are the other geological disasters?

There have been reports of **land subsidence** from **a)** Jharia, Bhurkunda, Kapasara, Raniganj and Talcher coal mines, **b)** Delhi and Kolkata due to the over-extraction of groundwater, and **c)** Mehsana for hydrocarbons.

The land in Chamba, Himachal Pradesh, began to sag shortly after a hydroelectric power project began test runs in the region.

Heavy rains in Aizawl triggered subsidence, exposing poor zoning enforcement and oversight of the regional carrying capacity.

**Read more:** [Who Tunnels Through A Sinking Town?](#)

What should be done to prevent further ecological disasters?

**Accept scientific findings:** Scientists from the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-National Geophysical Research Institute set out to examine the circumstances of the subsidence in Joshimath. Both the national and the State governments must agree to the team's findings, even if it means ceasing further construction work.

**Repair and restore:** The government must undertake whatever repair and restoration efforts it is undertaking at Joshimath at all the other sites as well.

**Must read:** [A mountain reeling under human aggression](#)

There is an argument to allow economically developing countries to emit more before becoming carbon-neutral. But that does not mean the government can plunder natural resources at the cost of climate justice.

### 12. [Bhopal's Real Lesson – Attempts to get more out of Carbide for the gas tragedy are futile. India needs good law on civil liability](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Bhopal's Real Lesson – Attempts to get more out of Carbide for the gas tragedy are futile. India needs good law on civil liability**” published in **The Times of India** on **12th January 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Disaster Management.

**Relevance:** About compensation for industrial disasters.

**News:** The government filed a writ petition against the 1989 settlement directing Union Carbide Corporation to pay \$470 million (nearly Rs 750 crore) as damages for the 1984 Bhopal Gas Tragedy.

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This is because, the settlement was panned for short-changing the victims, for being inadequate for environmental repairs and as an ineffective financial deterrent against gross negligence.

About Bhopal Gas Tragedy, and What are SC's remarks on increased compensation?

**Read here:** [Bhopal tragedy compensation fund of ₹50cr unutilised: SC](#)

The court held that demanding a settlement after over three decades could damage India's investment climate.

What are the present issues with deciding compensation?

At present, courts are arbitrarily deciding compensation. For instance, **a)** SC reduced the compensation decreed by Delhi high court to be paid in the Uphaar fire tragedy, **b)** SC set aside a Madras HC order that closed the Sterlite copper plant in Tuticorin but ordered the company to deposit Rs 100 crore with the district administration as pollution damages.

So to prevent such adhocism by the government and judiciary, **comprehensive legislation** is needed. It will help in promptly and accurately fixing civil liability for negligent conduct.

### 13. [India's e-bus adoption ambitions require a financially sound plan](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article "**India's e-bus adoption ambitions require a financially sound plan**" published in the **Livemint** on **12th January 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.

**Relevance:** About e-bus adoption.

**News:** At CoP-26 in Glasgow, India committed itself to a net-zero target by 2070 and set ambitious goals to achieve by 2030. Electrification of India's public bus fleet is an important aspect of the agenda for clean energy to replace fossil fuels in the transport sector and help to curb carbon emissions.

What are the steps taken for e-bus adoption?

**e-bus auctions:** In 2022, India opened a window for 'Grand Challenge' bids. One of the world's biggest tenders for electric buses, it sought 5,450 e-buses in five major cities.

**Partnership agreements:** State transport corporations (STC) form agreements with private players to operate buses in partnerships. Under this, the private operator procures buses, complete with batteries and battery charging systems, operates and maintains them, and the STCs provide land, infrastructure and other support.

What are the advantages of e-bus adoption?

The major advantages are its potential to address concerns of air pollution, climate change and, most importantly, escalating fuel bills. The other major advantage is,

**Low operating cost:** According to government tenders operating costs of e-buses were a modest ₹47.49 per km for the most expensive 12m low-floor air-conditioned e-bus. This is almost 30% less than the price of operating a diesel bus and 25-40% less than the price found by tendering processes for smaller quantities.

**Read more:** [Ministry of Road Transport & Highways -Annual report 'Road accidents in India — 2021'](#)

What are the challenges in e-bus adoption?

**High initial cost:** Each e-bus costs about ₹1-1.5 crore. For companies to deliver buses against this tender, they have to raise a minimum of 70% as debt.

**Financial condition of STCs:** Of India's 72 STCs, only six are financially stable. the rest have been loss-making for years. The average earnings of an STC is ₹35- 40-per-km, whereas the cost-per-km (of operating diesel buses) is upwards of ₹90.

Further, the financial health of STCs does not help them to procure loans as they have historical payment delays and failures.

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What should be done to increase India's e-bus adoption rate?

**Project financing is key:** The government must provide payment security, just as it has done for the renewable energy sector in a transformational way. It could start with a payment security fund until a longer-term institutional solution is put in place.

**Dedicated institution:** The public transport system in India needs a dedicated institution, like Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI), to de-risk the market and raise capital. This entity needs to be capable of handling contract processes and also providing the necessary bankability to contracts. Over time, it could become the one-stop-shop responsible for the deployment of electric mobility in India.

**Tripartite agreements:** A tripartite agreement should be signed between the Centre, state governments and Reserve Bank of India. This should ensure state government guarantees on STC payments.

### 14. [India may be in better economic shape to create a rupee trade zone](#)

**Source-** The post is based on the article **"India may be in better economic shape to create a rupee trade zone"** published in the **Business Standard** on **13th January 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Economy

**Relevance:** Issues related to trade

**News-** The article explains the possibility of the rupee becoming a trade zone.

#### **What was the situation in the past?**

In the **early 1990s**, the modus operandi was to prepare export shipment documents from India in the name of Russian importers.

Goods were switched to some other destination and then Russian were paid 70-80% of the consignment value in hard currency.

It was **easy money**. But as more traders piled in; the commissions shrank to 5%. As a result, the trade fizzled out.

#### **What does the statistics reveal about trade with Russia?**

A **Business Standard analysis** found that India's merchandise terms of trade from Russia has been worsening.

In 1992, as the Russian Federation was rebuilding after the breakup of the Soviet Union, India was a net exporter of goods.

The **situation reversed in 2003-04**, and terms of trade have worsened since.

India's **exports to Russia have tripled** in the last two decades, but **imports from Russia have grown faster**.

#### **What is the journey of rupee trade so far?**

In the past, India did not make concessions on investment in government securities. Then, starved of foreign exchange, **India proposed bilateral rupee trade agreements**.

These agreements enabled India to import critical defence goods, often on easy rupee payment terms.

Agreements concluded between **1953 and 1958 accepted the rupee as the unit of account**, but imbalances were settled in **sterling or convertible currency**.

**From 1959**, payments for all transactions were to be affected in **inconvertible rupees**, and contracting countries agreed to hold rupee balances.

The value of the rupee was **fixed in terms of gold** for the purpose of these agreements until the **devaluation of the rupee in 1966** created issues with Russia over the rate of the currency.

#### **Why is a rupee trading zone distinct possibility?**

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Unlike in the past, India can supply many goods, commodities and medicines to Russia to better balance the rupee trade. Russia is facing western sanctions. Such an arrangement may not be easy due to China's growing influence. In 2001, [China](#) accounted for 3.9% of Russia's total imports, whereas India's share was 1.3 per cent. In **2021, a quarter of Russia's imports were from China**, whereas India's share had barely changed to 1.5 per cent.

### [15. India missed a chance to reform the Public Distribution System](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article **“India missed a chance to reform the Public Distribution System”** published in the **mint** on **13th January 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS3- PDS and Food security

**Relevance:** Issue related to distribution of foodgrains

**News-** The article explains the recent government move to end the PMGKY and the need to reform the Public Distribution System.

The government finally **ended the free foodgrain scheme** under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY) from 1 January.

#### **What is the PMGKY?**

The scheme was introduced as part of the pandemic relief effort in March 2020. It provided **5kg of free cereals, rice or wheat** to eligible Public Distribution System (PDS) beneficiaries.

PDS beneficiaries are entitled to **5kg of rice/wheat/millet at ₹3/2/1 per kg** as part of the **National Food Security Act (NFSA)**. The PMGKY was over and above that.

#### **What are the reasons for the discontinuation of the scheme?**

The primary reason for the discontinuation of the scheme is the **ballooning fiscal deficit** of the government.

This additional step will cost the government a small sum of ₹18,000 crore.

However, the impact of both these measures taken together is likely to be an **additional monthly spending of around ₹500-600** for a household of four members to purchase an additional 5kg from the market if they need it.

#### **Why is this not the best option?**

The PMGKY was meant to provide a cushion to the majority of rural and urban poor against the loss of income and employment during the pandemic.

While pandemic-related disruptions are over, most indicators of the rural economy suggest that **distress persists**.

**Cereal inflation has been in double digits** with no signs of slowing. The additional foodgrain could have been continued until inflationary pressures cooled.

A more serious matter of priority is for the government to **reform the PDS** as it exists today.

#### **What is the way forward?**

The PDS plays an **important role for consumers and farmers**. It enables the government to procure foodgrains for distribution. There is need take bold steps towards reforming the PDS in line with NFSA goals

**Diversifying to oilseeds and pulses** is essential to incentivize their production.

A better option would be **to expand the beneficiary roll** while **retaining subsidised issue prices** for food staples. That would have been a fiscally neutral step.

Government needs to **simply increase prices a little** to keep real prices constant. It enables the government to raise the quantum of grains given to beneficiaries without affecting its fiscal discipline. It is also possible to **provide pulses and edible oil**, which were given during the pandemic.

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16. [Terra Pharma – WHO ruling on two India-made cough syrups should lead to a thorough, transparent investigation at home](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Terra Pharma – WHO ruling on two India-made cough syrups should lead to a thorough, transparent investigation at home**” published in **The Times of India** on **13th January 2023**.

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

**Relevance:** About the concerns with Indian cough syrups makers.

**News:** The production licence of a drug firm was suspended after the WHO edict that two cough syrups made by the company should not be used for children.

What are the recent concerns associated with Indian cough syrups makers?

**a)** Ambrinol and DOK-1 Max were found in Indian drugs these contain toxic ethylene glycol. This is linked to 19 children’s deaths in Uzbekistan, **b)** A similar tragedy occurred in the Gambia where the deaths of 70 children were linked to the consumption of four contaminated syrups made by an Indian pharma manufacturer.

In both cases, poor manufacturing of solvents used in the medicines is the reason behind the issue.

**Note:** Medicines manufactured for export to rich countries are made according to the specifications of the importing country.

**Must read:** [Uzbekistan says 18 children die due to cough syrup made by an Indian firm; blame it on ethylene glycol](#)

Why is this a cause of concern for the Indian pharma sector?

**Problems in India:** These products were not sold in India. The medicines manufactured for use in India generally meet adequate standards. However, the problem of fake or less-than-ideally-effective pills persists.

**Loss of India’s reputation:** The malpractices of Indian pharma companies will create a wrong impact on India’s manufacturing/regulatory capability.

What should be done to ensure proper manufacturing of pharma products?

The government must **undertake a thorough and transparent inquiry** focussed on the supply chain. This should happen from vendors of active pharmaceutical ingredients to the manufacturing process to regulatory processes.

The government should **ensure proper pharma manufacturing standards** in India.

India deserves the tag ‘pharmacy of the world’. But with that tag, India should **understand the global responsibility of ensuring the strictest standards** for products.

17. [Costa Rica’s rainforest canopies tower 150 feet tall — these are the last biotic frontier](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article “**Costa Rica’s rainforest canopies tower 150 feet tall — these are the last biotic frontier**” published in **The Times of India** on **14<sup>th</sup> January 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Environment

**Relevance:** importance canopies of rainforests

**News:** Research has been carried out on the canopies of the rainforests of Costa Rica. This article discusses the features and impacts of rainforest canopies.

**What are some important features of rainforest canopies?**

Canopy when compared to forest floor is full of **sunshine, windier, and with extremes temperature and humidity**.

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This is because the **diversity of plants and animals evolved to live in this micro-environment could not be even seen in the forest floors.**

Canopies also perform several functions such as **capture nutrients** and provide resources for birds, mammals and insects.

Therefore, **anything which affects canopies impacts the rainforest as a whole.**

Moreover, canopies are also known as the **last biotic frontier** because it is very hard to reach those canopies as they are at a great height from the forest floor.

**What are epiphytes and what are their roles in the forests?**

**Epiphytes are plants which grow on the trunks and branches of trees.** They lack roots due to which they don't get nutrients from trees or the ground.

Instead, **they derive nutrients from rainfall, mist and cloud.** When they perish and fall to the forest floor, they pass these nutrients to other members of the ecosystem.

So, these **epiphytes function as giant sponges in the canopy** which move nutrient resources down into the forest ecosystem.

Further, in the research it was found that one-third of all the bird visits were to the epiphytes, not the host tree. Hence, epiphytes play an important role in the lives of the birds and animals occupying such rainforests.

**What is the importance of rainforest canopies in human life?**

It **produces oxygen and material for medicines.** Therefore, Costa Rica is also trying to conserve the rainforest due to their wide uses and benefits.

### 18. [Take a step to regulate deepfakes](#)

**Source-** The post is based on the article **"Take a step to regulate deepfakes"** published in **The Hindu** on **14th January 2023.**

**Syllabus:** GS3-Science and Technology

**Relevance:** Artificial Intelligence related issues

**News-** The article explains the need to regulate deepfakes.

**What are Deepfakes?**

Deepfakes leverage powerful techniques from **machine learning (ML) and artificial intelligence (AI)** to manipulate or generate visual and audio content with a high potential to deceive.

**What are the issues associated with deepfakes?**

**First,** deepfake videos can be used to spread **misinformation and propaganda.**

**Second,** there has been a history of using deepfakes to depict someone in a compromising and embarrassing situation. For instance, there is no dearth of **deepfake pornographic material** of celebrities.

**Third,** deepfakes have been used for **financial fraud.** Recently, scammers used AI-powered software to trick the CEO of a U.K. energy company over the phone into believing he was speaking with the head of the German parent company.

**Fourth,** Deepfakes can be used to **influence elections.** Recently, Taiwan's cabinet approved amendments to election laws to punish the sharing of deepfake videos or images.

**Fifth,** Deepfakes can also be used to carry out **espionage activities.** Doctored videos can be used to blackmail government and defence officials into divulging state secrets.

**What are the existing provisions related to deep fakes?**

**Section 500 of the IPC** provides punishment for defamation.

**Sections 67 and 67A** of the Information Technology Act punish sexually explicit material in explicit form.

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**The Representation of the People Act, 1951**, includes provisions prohibiting the creation or distribution of false or misleading information about candidates or political parties during an election period.

The Election Commission of India has set rules that require registered political parties and candidates to get **pre-approval for all political advertisements** on electronic media. However, these rules do not address the potential dangers posed by deepfake content.

### **Why is there a need to regulate Deepfakes?**

The lack of proper regulations creates avenues for individuals, firms and even non-state actors to misuse AI.

In India, the legal framework related to AI is **insufficient to adequately address** the various issues that have arisen due to AI algorithms.

The Union government should introduce **separate legislation** regulating the nefarious use of deepfakes and the **broader subject of AI**.

China is one of the few countries which has introduced regulations prohibiting the use of deepfakes deemed harmful to national security or the economy.

The proposed **Digital India Bill** can also address this issue. We can't always rely on the policy of self-regulation.