



Mains Marathon
Compilation

30th Jan to 4th Feb, 2023

Mains Marathon Compilation for the Month of February, (First Week) 2023

1. What are the controversies associated with Indus Waters Treaty? Why is there a call to modify the Treaty?
2. NREGA is underperforming because its most basic design principles are not being properly followed. Discuss.
3. What are the reforms that developing countries are seeking in the functioning of the United Nations? Also, highlight the hurdles in the implementation of reforms.
4. Discuss the policy measures that can be helpful in reducing the fertiliser subsidy bill.
5. What are the measures taken by the government to handle the Red Sanders smuggling? Why the smuggling continues even after several measures?
6. Deprivation of liberty even for a single day is one day too many. In the light of the statement, discuss the reasons behind the increasing number of undertrials in India.
7. Project Tiger, which is completing 50 years very soon, requires a reboot. Discuss.
8. Cooperatives have been playing a critical role in our economy for a long time. Discuss the government initiatives for promoting the cooperative sector in India.

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Q.1) What are the controversies associated with Indus Waters Treaty? Why is there a call to modify the Treaty?

The Hindu

Introduction: Contextual introduction.

Body: Explain some controversies associated with Indus Waters Treaty. Also write some reasons for modification of the Treaty.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

Indus Waters Treaty gives **India control of 3 Eastern Rivers (Beas, Ravi and Sutlej)**. **Pakistan** gets control of **3 Western Rivers (Chenab, Indus and Jhelum)**. The treaty gives **India 20%** of the water from the Indus River System and the rest **80% to Pakistan**. The treaty allows India to utilize the waters of Western Rivers for **limited irrigation use** and **non-consumptive use** for such applications as **power generation, navigation** etc.

Controversies associated with Indus Waters Treaty:

- There has been a longstanding dispute over **two hydroelectric power projects** – one on the Kishanganga river (a tributary of Jhelum) and the other on the Chenab (Ratle).
- As for India's 850 megawatt Ratle hydroelectric power project, Islamabad has repeatedly raised concerns over its design, insisting that India would use the project's reservoir to create deliberate and artificial water shortage or cause flooding in Pakistan.
- Pakistan had demanded the constitution of a **Court of Arbitration**, while India demanded a **Neutral Expert** to resolve the dispute.
- Under the pact, any difference needs to be resolved under a three-stage approach. However, in the case of the Kishenganga and Ratle Hydro Electric Projects, the World Bank started two concurrent dispute redressal processes at the insistence of Pakistan, which India felt was a breach of the IWT.

Why is there a call to modify the Treaty?

- **Unequal sharing of the waters:** Pakistan has been allocated ~80% of the Indus basin waters. Experts have termed this the **most generous water sharing treaty**. It is the only water-sharing pact in the world that compels upper riparian State to defer to the interests of the downstream State.
- **To resolve the long-standing dispute:** so that Pakistan is provided an opportunity to initiate "intergovernmental negotiations" within 90 days regarding the differences that the Indian side has described as a "material breach".
- It **prevents India from building any storage systems** on the western rivers. Even though the treaty lays out that under certain exceptional circumstances storage systems can be built.
- The basin's size and volume is getting altered by **climate change**. The contribution of glaciers in the Indus basin is higher than in the Ganges or Brahmaputra basins. A change in the flow conditions may classify as 'change of circumstances' which can justify renegotiation or termination in the future.

India should take steps to completely utilize its entitlement of waters of Western Rivers. The infrastructure to utilize the waters has remained under-developed in J&K.

Q.2) NREGA is underperforming because its most basic design principles are not being properly followed. Discuss.

The Hindu

Introduction: Contextual introduction.

Body: Explain why NREGA is underperforming.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

The government of India has been running the **world's largest employment guarantee program** since 2005 under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). It guarantees 100 days of work a year to every rural household with an aim to enhance the livelihood security of people.

Why NREGA is underperforming?

- **Regressive spending pattern:** where poorer States spend less NREGA funds than better-off ones. As if on cue, a committee to suggest reforms has been constituted instead of listening to the long-standing demands of workers and their collectives.
- **Delays in wage payments:** For instance, seven or more functionaries have to sign off before payment due to a worker can be approved (stage one of the wage payment cycle). This does not even include the series of delays from when the payment is approved till payment is made (stage two of the cycle). In contrast, the processing of loans from private banks is done in fewer steps.
- **Top down "reforms":** The majority of reforms have **focused on centralisation** such as the electronic fund management system, geo-tagging of assets and a national mobile monitoring system (NMMS). E.g. Almost 3,000 women NREGA workers in Bihar are protesting against the NMMS application after the app failed to capture their attendance.
- **Intermittent and unpredictable fund releases** by the central government are one of the fundamental reasons why State governments are unable to ensure the full potential of NREGA. As of today, ₹18,191 crore in liabilities is due to 24 States. Poor performing States, on account of inadequate funds, typically discourage and often deny demand for work.
- Instead of using expenditure and income poverty as the only markers, exclusion must be identified at the household level.

The government should provide greater funds for the proper implementation of the scheme. It currently provides 0.47% of GDP while **the World Bank recommends 1.7 %** for the optimal functioning of the program.

Q.3) What are the reforms that developing countries are seeking in the functioning of the United Nations? Also, highlight the hurdles in the implementation of reforms.

The Hindu

Introduction: Contextual introduction.

Body: Explain reforms that developing countries are seeking in the functioning of the United Nations. Also write hurdles in the implementation of reforms.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

The United Nations is currently made up of 193 Member States. The mission and work of the United Nations are guided by the purposes and principles contained in its founding Charter. The main organs of the UN are the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, the International Court of Justice, and the UN Secretariat

The developing countries are seeking following reforms in the functioning of the United Nations:

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- The G4 (Brazil, Germany, India, and Japan) group is primarily focused on **U.N Security Council (UNSC) reform** and permanent membership of the body. The Permanent members of UNSC have remained fixed. This is problematic as the membership of UN has grown almost four times since its formation.
- The **veto power** has been the exclusive domain of P5 members. Many countries have put question mark on the existence of veto, which is **contrary to democratic principles**.
- The **UN General Assembly (UNGA)** can only make non-binding recommendations, which is another reason for ineffectiveness of the UN and another important issue of UN reform.
- The Economic and Social Council has been criticized, as it has become overshadowed by institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank, which are lacking democratic processes, transparency, and accountability.

Hurdles in the implementation of reforms:

- **Disunited state of the UNGA:** the reform of the UN Security Council was a member-driven process and for that, the members of the UNGA had to first come together to pass a resolution demanding the reform of the Security Council. Among the 193 countries, there are five negotiating groups and they are neutralising each other.
- **Lack of Consensus:** different countries have **different perceptions** of the requirement for change. For e.g. G-4 nations demand a seat each as a permanent member, Coffee Club asks for expansion of non-permanent seats, African union wants its representation at any cost etc.
- The **permanent members** were “historically not enthusiastic” about reform of the UN system, but they had all agreed that it was necessary for introducing changes in the Security Council.
- The **system of veto** in the Security Council has become a tool to block the work of the global body and not to encourage it.

India called for a new template of multilateralism that reflects today’s reality, gives voice to all stakeholders, addresses contemporary challenges, and focuses on human welfare.

Q.4) Discuss the policy measures that can be helpful in reducing the fertiliser subsidy bill.

Business Standard

Introduction: Contextual introduction.

Body: Explain some measures that can be helpful in reducing the fertiliser subsidy bill.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

In 2021- 22, India’s import of fertilisers touched an all-time high of \$12.77 billion in fiscal terms. Fertilizer subsidy has doubled in a short period of three years. For 2021-22, the Union Budget has estimated fertilizer subsidy at ₹79,530 crores (from ₹66,468 crores in 2017-18). The following policy measures that can be helpful in reducing the fertiliser subsidy bill:

- There is a need to cap or even **reduce consumption of high-analysis fertilisers** – particularly **urea** (46 per cent N content), **DAP** (18 per cent N and 46 per cent P) and **MOP** (60 per cent). Products such as liquid “**nano urea**” can be used which is conducive to easier absorption by the plants.
- Promote sales of **SSP** (containing 16 per cent P and 11 per cent S) and **complex fertilisers**.
- **DAP use** should be **restricted** mainly to paddy and wheat because other crops don’t require fertilisers with 46% P content. India can also import more rock phosphate to make SSP directly or it can be converted into “weak” phosphoric acid.
- The agriculture departments and universities should **revisit their existing crop-wise nutrient application recommendations, and create awareness** amongst farmers about suitable substitutes for DAP.

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- The government should popularise the use of **high nutrient use-efficient water soluble fertilisers** (potassium nitrate, potassium sulphate, calcium nitrate, etc) and **alternative indigenous sources** (for example, potash derived from molasses-based distillery spent-wash and from seaweed extract).
- In the long run, the government needs to **augment the agricultural income** of farmers so that they voluntarily give up their subsidies in the future. This would happen with better implementation of schemes like E-NAM, SAMPADA, PM Fasal Bima Yojana, etc. The ultimate solution is to make agriculture more lucrative and remunerative which would gradually lead to the withdrawal of subsidies and relieve the government of their fiscal burden.

Q.5) What are the measures taken by the government to handle the Red Sanders smuggling? Why the smuggling continues even after several measures?

The Hindu

Introduction: Contextual introduction.

Body: Explain some measures taken by the government to handle the Red Sanders smuggling. Also explain why the smuggling continues even after several measures.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

Red Sanders or red sandalwood is an endemic tree species with distribution restricted to the Eastern Ghats of India. The species found in **Andhra Pradesh** and growing up to a height of 10 to 15 metres is reported to be one of India's most exploited tree species, and is under severe pressure from illegal logging and harvesting.

The following measures are taken by the government to handle the Red Sanders smuggling:

- IUCN Red List has put it as **Endangered**.
- It has been added in the Wildlife protection act 1972: **Schedule IV**.
- It is internationally protected under CITES (convention on international trade in endangered species) **Appendix II since 1995**.
- **Operation Sesha** has been launched by directorate of revenue intelligence (DRI) by involving 17 countries.
- In 2014, Andhra Pradesh government formed **RSATSF (Red-Sanders Anti-Smuggling Task-Force)**.
- Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) launched **Operation Rakth Chandan**.
- Under the foreign trade policy of India, the **import** of Red Sanders is **prohibited**, while export is restricted.

Why the smuggling continues even after several measures?

- Its heartwood is in **demand in both domestic and international markets** and is used to make furniture and handicrafts, while the red dye obtained from the wood is used as a colouring agent in textiles and medicines.
- Its rich hue and **therapeutic properties** are responsible for its high demand across Asia, particularly China, for use in **cosmetics** and high-end woodcraft.
- Red sandalwood is both **rare and valued at exorbitantly high rates** in the international market, making it a hot commodity for smugglers operating from states bordering Andhra Pradesh. In China, Hong Kong and Pacific Rim countries, one ton of red sandalwood fetches up to Rs 10 crore.
- The Andhra Pradesh State Biodiversity Board found that smuggled red sandalwood was being used in the production of aphrodisiacs as well as astringent tonics to **treat chronic dysentery and diabetes**.

Enforcement agencies such as the Forest Department, Customs, Railways, Police, DRI (Directorate of Revenue Intelligence), and Coast Guard must coordinate efforts to curb Red Sanders trafficking by sharing information on hotspots and transit routes and real-time

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intelligence. Moreover, forests within the species' geographical range to be declared as "high conservation areas".

Q.6) Deprivation of liberty even for a single day is one day too many. In the light of the statement, discuss the reasons behind the increasing number of undertrials in India.

Times of India

Introduction: Contextual introduction.

Body: Write some reasons behind the increasing number of undertrials in India.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

An undertrial is a person who is being held in custody by a court of law and is awaiting trial for a crime. According to National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB), of the 554,034 prisoners, **77% were undertrials in 2021**. In 2021, **29.1% of undertrials had been in prison for more than a year**. District jails had the highest share of undertrials, accounting for 51.4% of the total, followed by the Central jails (36.2%) and Sub-jails (10.4%).

There are following reasons behind the increasing number of undertrials in India:

- **Low Capacity of Judicial System:** India has 21 judges per million population, while the Law commission has recommended 50 per million. This along with lack of infrastructure results in large pendency of cases which now has reached over 4.5 crore cases.
- **Poor Economic and Education Levels:** A large number of under trials are poor, illiterate, belonging to the marginalized communities. This along with lack of financial resources leads to inability to get legal aid and pay the bail amount.
- **Unnecessary Arrests and Issues of Bail System:** Law Commission (268th Report) has highlighted that over 60% of arrests are unnecessary. The Commission report also highlighted that the rich and the affluent get bail with ease. However, poverty becomes the reason for incarceration of many prisoners, as they are unable to afford bail bonds or provide sureties.
- **Delay in Investigation:** Investigation and trial process is often delayed by police and prosecution functionaries. This is due to poor 'Police-Population' Ratio. According to PRS, the sanctioned police strength was 181 police personnel per lakh persons in 2016, the actual strength was 137. The United Nations recommended standard is 222 police personnel per lakh persons.
- **Delays in Bail application:** Sometimes, bail applications are kept pending for months. Unnecessary arrest coupled with no bail is a double whammy. Appeals by the convicted are pending for decades in some HCs.
- **Unawareness about Section 436A of C.R.P.C.:** There is a gap between the number of prisoners eligible to be released and actually released, under Section 436A of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

A comprehensive **Bail Law** should be enacted to curb arbitrary arrests. There is a need for greater political and judicial will to push through the procedural reforms.

Q.7) 'Project Tiger', which is completing 50 years very soon, requires a reboot. Discuss.

Times of India

Introduction: Contextual introduction.

Body: Explain about Project Tiger'. Also explain why it needs a reboot.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

Tiger is a unique animal which plays a **pivotal role in the health and diversity of an ecosystem**. Tigers are globally listed as "**Endangered**" on the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species. 'Project Tiger' is a **Centrally**

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Sponsored Scheme of the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change providing central assistance to the tiger States for tiger conservation in designated tiger reserves.

'Project Tiger':

- Project Tiger was first initiated in the year **April 1, 1973**. Project Tiger was administered by the **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)**. The tiger reserves are constituted on a core/buffer strategy.
- Around the 1970s the tiger count was only one thousand and two hundred, but according to the recent census, it has increased to three thousand. In fact, there has been a **thirty per cent rise** in the population in the last eight years.
- The Project Tiger has grown to more than 50 reserves amounting to almost 2.2% of the country's geographical area.

Due to following reasons 'Project Tiger' requires a reboot:

- Managing the tiger population, giving them safe habitat, avoiding human-tiger conflicts are some of the issues that the project has faced.
- **Politicalised Tiger Task Force** leading to the formation of the massive NTCA in 2005. The role of forest bureaucracy should be only to protect tigers from people and people from tigers.
- The present **official monopoly** over tiger research, monitoring, nature education, tourism, filmmaking, and even village relocation should end. NTCA needs to be wound up and India should aim for 10,000 tigers.
- A **new wildlife task force** with experienced officials, scientists, and enlightened political leaders needs to be set up to ensure a radical overhaul of tiger conservation.
- As per wildlife conservation activists and former forest officials, there is **lack of confidence and trust building** between the forest department and the villagers.

We have to create a healthy balance between sustainability and development. Tiger is an umbrella species so its conservation will ensure conservation of other wild animals too.

Q.8) Cooperatives have been playing a critical role in our economy for a long time. Discuss the government initiatives for promoting the cooperative sector in India.

Times of India

Introduction: Contextual introduction.

Body: Explain some government initiatives for promoting the cooperative sector in India.

Conclusion: Write a way forward.

Cooperative societies help small-scale entrepreneurs procure raw materials at discounted rates and reduce production costs. They provide producers with a platform to sell their products directly to consumers by removing intermediaries, which helps cut the selling price and ensure higher sales and profits for producers.

Government initiatives for promoting the cooperative sector:

- **Ministry for cooperation:** It will provide a separate administrative, legal and policy framework for strengthening the cooperative movement in the country.
- Setting up of massive, **decentralised storage capacity** so that farmers can store their produce and realise remunerative prices by selling at an appropriate time. This will be the world's largest grain storage facility.
- To promote the growth of new cooperative manufacturing societies, the budget has announced a **concessional income tax rate of 15%** for cooperatives that begin manufacturing before March 31, 2024.
- Cooperative societies have been given a **higher limit of Rs 3 crore for tax deducted at source** on cash withdrawals. For sugar cooperative mills, the claims for payment made to sugar farmers before the assessment year 2016-17 will now be considered an

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'expenditure'. This is expected to provide approximately **Rs 10,000 crore in relief to the sugar cooperatives.**

- The government is establishing a **national database of cooperatives** and a **National Cooperative University** to provide trained manpower to this sector.
- Further, under the PM's leadership a committee has been constituted by the cooperation ministry to formulate a **National Cooperative Policy**, which will include stakeholders' recommendations and become a vital link to connect the masses with the country's financial system.
- The budget also announced that **model bye-laws for primary agricultural cooperative societies (PACs)** are being formulated, to enable them to become multipurpose cooperatives to meet the country's diverse needs and remain financially profitable.
- Recently an MoU has been signed among the cooperation ministry, the IT ministry, NABARD, and CSC e-Governance Services India Limited. This MoU will **enable PACS to provide the services offered by the Common Service Centre.**

Given the way PM, with the resolve of '**Sahakar Se Samriddhi**', has brought cooperatives to the forefront of the nation's economic discourse, they will soon be one of the main drivers of India's growth engine.