



9 PM

Compilation

27th March to 1st April, 2023

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General Studies Paper – 1

General Studies - 1

1. [Vaikom, a satyagraha, and the fight for social justice](#)

Source- The post is based on the article “**India’s DPIs, catching the next wave**” published in “**The Hindu**” on **30th March 2023**.

Syllabus: GS1- Modern Indian history

Relevance- Social movements before independence

News- The article explains the Vaikom movement.

What are some facts about the Vaikom movement?

Vaikom was a **temple street entry movement** launched in 1924.

The purpose was to end the **prohibition imposed on backward communities** in using the roads around the Vaikom Mahadeva temple.

It was launched by leaders in Kerala such as **T.K. Madhavan, K.P. Kesava Menon and George Joseph**, on the **advice of Mahatma Gandhi**. The movement was sustained and successfully conducted by **Periyar E.V. Ramasamy**.

How the movement started and sustained with time?

The committee against untouchability launched the protest on March 30, 1924, when three persons from various communities were prevented from entering the temple streets.

The protest sustained itself for more than one and a half years, leading to many arrests and satyagrahis being jailed. Police started to **arrest the leaders** of the protest.

Their arrests **created a vacuum** as there was no leader to lead the protest. Then Periyar decided to lead the protest.

As a mark of appreciation, the editor of Tamil journal Navasakthi and scholar, Thiru. Vi. Kalyanasundaram, conferred the title **Vaikom Veerar on Periyar**.

What are some significant events related to movement?

The Vaikom movement consists of **day-to-day protests, arrests, of inquiries, jail terms and agitations**.

There was also the support of the higher castes for a 13-day march to the capital. A resolution was introduced in the Assembly in support of the **free entry to the streets around the temple (Sanchara)**. But it was defeated.

Mahatma Gandhi arrived to negotiate between the government, protesters and orthodox Hindus. Since Mahatma Gandhi insisted that it **should be a local protest**, requests to make it a **pan-India movement** failed.

The **traditionalists** caused many troubles for the satyagrahis. It included **counter rallies** marked by violence. The resolution for the **right to sanchara** was defeated in the Assembly by the open support of the traditionalists. They were backed by the government and the administration.

Tamil Nadu played a pivotal role in Vaikom Satyagraha. Periyar and Kovai Ayyamuthu, a firebrand leader, worked in tandem with leaders in Kerala. But they faced repressive action.

How does the movement end?

The movement **ended on November 23, 1925**. The 19 leaders, including Periyar, Kesava Menon and T.K. Madhavan, was released on August 30, 1924.

The rally by the upper castes that began on November 1, reached Trivandrum on November 13, submitting its memorandum to the Queen regent.

Mahatma Gandhi held talks with the **Queen of Travancore, social reformer Narayana Guru, traditionalists and police commissioner W.H. Pitt**.

On November 17, the satyagrahis announced their **decision to withdraw** their protest. On November 23, the government of the Travancore princely state declared that people could enter three of the four streets around Vaikom temple.

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2. [Misogyny in the matrimonial market: Data shows Indian men prefer wives without jobs](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Misogyny in the matrimonial market: Data shows Indian men prefer wives without jobs**” published in “**The Indian Express**” on **1st April 2023**.

Syllabus: GS1- Social empowerment. GS2- Vulnerable sections of the population

Relevance– Issues related to women empowerment

News– A recent study we carried out on a large matrimonial website to understand the marital preferences of men.

What are the main findings of a survey of the matrimonial websites?

Female profiles who were employed received nearly 15% fewer responses from male relative to those who were not working. The preference for **non-working female partners** holds across all education groups of female profiles.

Moreover, women employed in “**masculine**” occupations were 3% less likely to receive responses compared to women employed in “**feminine**” occupations.

A woman in a “masculine” job who stated a **preference to continue** to work after marriage was less likely to generate male interest, relative to a woman in a “feminine” job who **preferred to continue** working.

Profiles of working women generated less interest from men even when their caste, education levels and family incomes matched those of the men.

Further, the level of discrimination against working women was higher by male with lower education levels.

How does the working status of a married woman have an impact on domestic work performed by women?

In urban India, married women spend almost **7.5 times more time on domestic work** as compared to married men. As per **Time Use Survey 2019**; women in north India spend more time on domestic work relative to women in the south.

Women who are not working spend much more time on domestic work. It is more than women in “**feminine**” occupations and much more than those in “**masculine**” fields. These findings suggest that **male-dominated occupations** may be characterised by more **inflexible working schedules**.

Other evidence suggests that women in male-dominated occupations may even be considered “**sexually impure**” due to greater interactions with men at work.

What are the socio-economic impacts of marriage preferences?

The marriage preferences are likely to contribute to India’s persistently **low female labour force participation** and high levels of **occupational segregation by gender**.

This segregation may also perpetuate the **gender gap in earnings**, because “feminine” occupations pay 30% lower daily wages on average than “masculine” occupations.

General Studies Paper –2

General Studies - 2

1. [What's The Missing Block In Building Institutes Of Excellence?](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**What's The Missing Block In Building Institutes Of Excellence?**” published in **The Times of India** on **27th March 2023**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Issues related to development and management of education

Relevance: concerns with regulating higher educational institutes.

News: The article discusses the problems with regulating higher educational institutes in India and measures that address the issue.

What are issues with regulating higher education in India?

There are numerous higher education regulators in India with University Grants Commission (UGC) being the largest regulator.

The problem with multiple regulators is that **educational institutes cannot promote holistic and multi-disciplinary education.**

However, in order to become self-reliant, a country needs a knowledgeable and skilled workforce with the **regulators focusing on providing learning outcomes-based education and individualised learning on a mass scale.**

This can only happen by **building higher education institutes of excellence** and by investing in academic and research excellence.

However, building excellence institutions is difficult if several regulators work in silos with no consultation processes and with overlapping roles.

Hence, the concern of multiple regulators has been addressed by [National Educational Policy \(NEP\) 2020](#) through Higher Education Commission of India (HECI).

About Higher Education Commission of India (HECI)

HECI will be established through **an act of Parliament**. It will have **four verticals** – **1)** a regulatory vertical, **2)** an accreditation vertical, **3)** a funding vertical, and **4)** a standard-setting vertical.

Each of them will function in an autonomous mode but in a coordinated manner.

HECI will holistically integrate multiple higher education disciplines in all degree providing colleges.

Further, the use of the [Academic Bank of Credits](#) by all educational institutions will provide mobility for students to move from one institution to another or migrate from one discipline to another.

Read More: [Higher Education Commission of India \(HECI\)](#)

How can HECI function as an effective regulator?

HECI should refrain from bringing out regulations in areas requiring no regulation. It should assess the impact of regulations on functioning of higher education institutes and changes that can be brought through such regulations.

HECI can take input from stakeholders such as students, faculty members, non-teaching staff, institutional heads, etc. for formulating the regulations.

On the whole, the **function of HECI must be transparent, open to take suggestions and feedback, practise regulatory self-restraint and intervene only when there is necessity for intervention.**

There is also a need to create an **interconnected web of regulatory functions** under the different verticals of HECI. This will ensure that the regulations brought by one regulatory body gets considered in the jurisdiction of another regulatory body.

Must Read: [Inclusive Development in Education – Explained](#)

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What is the way ahead?

As a consolidated regulator, **HECI can play a revolutionary role in making India's higher education** suitable for innovative ideas while boosting India's ambitions to develop institutes of excellence.

2. [Making sense of the disqualification of a Lok Sabha MP](#)

Source: This post is created based on the article

"Making sense of the disqualification of a Lok Sabha MP" published in **The Hindu** on **27th March 2023**.

"We need to review defamation, raise the bar for disqualification" published in **Indian Express** on **27th March 2023**.

Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 2, Parliament and State legislatures—structure, functioning, conduct of business.

News: An opposition party leader recently disqualified after the verdict in a criminal defamation case.

Section 8 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 (RP Act) specifies the offences that disqualifies a member of the legislature.

Clause (3) of this section specifies that the member can also be disqualified for the conviction under any offence other than the ones mentioned in the other two clauses, for which he/she is sentenced to not less than two years.

Since, **Lily Thomas vs Union of India**, 2013 case judgment, the bar on instant disqualification upon conviction has been lifted.

However, if the Court stays the conviction and sentence, the disqualification will be lifted, and the membership will be restored to the legislature.

Read More – [Criminal defamation in India – Explained, pointwise](#)

What is another view regarding instant disqualification upon conviction?

It is a general view that the seat of the legislature shall fall vacant as soon as conviction and sentence are announced by the trial court. However, a closer look reveals that the words, use in Section 8(3) of RP Act, **"shall be disqualified"**, cannot mean instant disqualification. If there were words, **"shall stand disqualified"**, it would have meant instant disqualification, without any act from any authority.

At present, the interpretation suggests that that the person shall be disqualified by some authority. As per the [article 103](#), President is authorised to take such decisions.

There are some expert's opinion that article 103 can be invoked only when a dispute arises on the fact of disqualification. However, this article covers the disqualifications arising due to offences under Section 8 of the RP Act 1951. SC, uphold this positions in Consumer Education and Research Society vs Union of India (2009) case. In this case, President performs adjudicatory and declaratory functions.

In cases where adjudication is not required, the President can simply declare that the sitting Member has become subject to disqualification. But the intervention of the President is essential under Article 103 even in cases where a sitting member has been convicted and the disqualification takes effect from the date of conviction.

Therefore, the notification issued by Lok Sabha Secretariat disqualifying Rahul Gandhi was not correct. Section 8 (3) does not specify which authority is empowered to disqualify an MP; therefore, President must have been referred in this case.

What are other issues associated, as per Former CEC S Y Quraishi?

First, in another such case, in October 2013, Rasheed Masood became 1st legislature to lose his membership. After that, over 20 other legislators, including Lalu Prasad, have been disqualified.

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However, the case of Lakshadweep MP Mohammed Faisal is unique. He was awarded a 10-year sentence in a criminal case. 2 days later, Lok Sabha Secretariat issued a notification to disqualify him.

In January, the Kerala High Court stayed Faisal's conviction and stayed the by-poll. However, he is not yet reinstated on his position. Here the question arises, why the suspension of conviction by Court did not come into immediate effect, like the disqualification. In *Lok Prahari v Election Commission of India* (2018), the Supreme Court held that once a conviction has been stayed during the pendency of an appeal, the disqualification which operates as a consequence of the conviction cannot remain in effect.

Second, what was the reason for treating the Rahul Gandhi's remarks as criminal defamation instead of civil defamation. Furthermore, why was the sentence of the maximum possible prison-term of two years was awarded.

Third, how many of our politicians can truly survive the test of Section 153 (a) and Section 505 (Acts deal with promoting enmity based on religious and linguistic grounds.)

What are the issues with Lily Thomas judgements?

As per P.D.T. Achary (Author of the article), there are many flaws with the Lily Thomas judgment:

- 1) Article 103 provides that the disqualification of sitting Members shall be decided by the President. So, constitution distinguishes between candidates and sitting Members. SC ignored this fact and struck down the time window of 3 months.
- 2) A temporary exemption in favour of a sitting member is a reasonable requirement. Because a sudden disqualification will lead to constituency losing its representative. Section 8(4) was enacted to deal with precisely such a situation.

Why Criminal Defamation law needs a relook?

Many countries including U.K., U.S. and Sri Lanka have scrapped the criminal defamation law.

In *Kulnar Singh vs Mukhtiar Singh* (1965), the Supreme Court advocated for allowance to the politicians for the rhetorical, hyperbolic or metaphoric words in the atmosphere, which is usually surcharged with partisan feelings and emotions.

People of mature democracies must be able to enjoy humour without any fear.

3. [Understanding IMF bailouts](#)

Source: This post is created based on the article "**Understanding IMF bailouts**", published in **Indian Express** on 27th Feb 2023.

Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 2 – International Institutions

News: IMF recently approved a bailout plan for Sri Lanka. It is also in a negotiation with Pakistan for bailout plan.

What are the situations in which nations seek IMF bailout?

When nations face major macroeconomic risk, mostly in the form of a currency crisis. In the case of both Pakistan and Sri Lanka, their currency value has dropped steeply against the U.S. dollar. Currency depreciation often results into government forcing central banks to create fresh money without any basis. It results in a rapid rise of the overall money supply. It leads to price rise due to demand and further reducing currency value.

The rapid decline in the currency value makes people hesitant to accept the currency in exchange for goods and services.

It also discourages foreign investment into country.

Many times, domestic policies of government adversely impacts the currency's exchange rate and foreign exchange reserves. For example, in the case of Sri Lanka, a decrease in foreign tourists visiting the country led to a steep fall in the flow of U.S. dollars into the nation.

It results into shortage of money to meet their external debt and other obligations, to purchase essential imports, and also to prop up the exchange value of their currencies.

In this case, countries seek IMF's help.

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How IMF helps countries in distress?

The IMF lends money, often in the form of [special drawing rights](#) (SDRs), IMF provides assistance to countries through a number of lending programs such as the extended credit facility, the flexible credit line, the stand-by agreement, etc.

What are the conditions of IMF's bailout and are these justified?

IMF imposes certain conditions, before it lends any money to countries. The country will have to agree to implement certain structural reforms as a condition to receive IMF loans.

As per some critics, these reforms are too tough on the public of country. Some accuses IMF's conditions to be influenced by international politics.

However, IMF argues that countries that seek an IMF bailout are usually in a crisis due to certain policies adopted by their governments. Thus, it will not be fruitful for IMF to waste the resources on country, where same policies continue. For instance, the IMF may demand a country affected by high price inflation to ensure the independence of its central bank. Handling corruption is usually one of the demands, like in case of Sri Lanka.

4. [AUKUS focus is on submarine tech., there is no room for a fourth nation: sources](#)

Source: This post is created based on the article “**Understanding IMF bailouts**”, published in **Indian Express** on 27th Feb 2023.

Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 2 – International Organisations

News: As per the sources, submarine technology development is the primary focus of the [AUKUS](#) arrangement. In this segment, there is no scope of potential collaboration between AUKUS and India.

However, cooperation with India is possible in the second pillar for broader technology cooperation.

Pillar-2 of the group is useful for cooperation in technologies like electronic warfare, cyberspace and quantum.

Under AUKUS arrangement, Australia will receive at least three second-hand SSNs from the U.S. in the 2030s as an interim measure. While U.K. will design and develop five new SSNs from the early 2040s to the late 2050s.

Official sources also confirms that cooperation between India and the U.S. on such a sensitive technology as the SSN is unlikely. It is because of the U.S. regulatory frameworks and India's strategic autonomy.

India has its own indigenous programme for the design and development of SSNs. However, India is still looking to procure six advanced conventional submarines to arrest its depleting submarine strength, and also speeding up its SSN programme.

5. [The cost of insurance-based funding](#)

Source: This post is created based on the article “**The cost of insurance-based funding**”, published in **The Hindu** on 27th Feb 2023.

Syllabus: GS 2, Issues associated with Health

Context: The article discusses the features of Tamil Nadu public health model that made it successful.

In comparison to all India average, Tamil Nadu has achieved significant improvements in maternal and infant mortality and universal immunisation coverage, and a low total fertility rate. Its health infrastructure is far better compared to all India average.

Therefore, there is a need to analyse the TN health model, its pros and cons.

How is TN health infrastructure financed?

The funding for the health infra comes from the National Health Mission to the Chief Minister's Comprehensive Health Insurance Scheme (CMCHIS).

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The union government and state governments are bearing the health burden of the state in a 60:40 ratio. The State government bears the insurance premium of the remaining 60 lakh families out of total. The indirect funding through the insurance companies have made it possible for the state government, but it also has its own implications:

First, it led to decentralisation of medical and healthcare administration. Now, heads of the department are empowered to purchase drugs. Now, individual departments can prioritise their needs and hasten decisions in patient care.

Second, as every department in the medical college has become an individual establishment, they compete with one another to maximise profit and minimise losses. Now, the secondary and tertiary healthcare systems look at the patient's ailment from the view of indemnity.

Insurance companies are delaying the payments due to administrative reasons. So, the overworked hospital staff also need to focus on the negotiations with the insurance companies.

Cost cutting has led to hiring of high number of contractual staff.

Third, Doctors in the primary health centres are functioning like managers rather than clinicians. They focus has been shifted to implementation of Union government schemes using available finances.

Fourth, creation of district health societies is making the system complicated. These societies recruit doctors on a 11-month contract with a consolidated monthly emolument of ₹60,000, nurses for ₹15,000 and health workers for ₹8,500. These contractual employment for doctors is discouraging for 10,725 MBBS passing out every year.

Fifth, between 2012 and 2021, ₹7,783 crore was allotted in the CMCHIS to insurance companies in Tamil Nadu. Of this amount, majority has been claimed by private sector. It will lead to shrinking space for public hospitals.

Sixth, India has achieved good health results by ensuring doctors came from different socio-economic strata and by empowering them with good pay and providing opportunities for post-graduation and super specialisation.

Therefore, the profit-loss calculation and treatment of public health as a health industry will lead to loss of empathy for patients among health professionals.

6. [Express View: SC order on UAPA lowers the bar for state when restricting freedoms](#)

Source: The post is based on the article **“Express View: SC order on UAPA lowers the bar for state when restricting freedoms”** published in the **Indian Express** on **27th March 2023**.

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

Relevance: About membership of a banned association.

News: Recently, the Supreme Court has held that mere membership of a banned association is sufficient to constitute an offence under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act 1967.

About the recent SC ruling

Must read: [Supreme Court changes stand; now mere membership of a banned outfit is a crime under UAPA](#)

What are the previous rulings of the court on membership of a banned association?

Section 10(a)(i) of the UAPA states that where an association is declared unlawful by a notification, “a person, who is and continues to be a member of such association shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to two years, and shall also be liable to fine”.

In 2011, the court discussed the line between advocacy and incitement to violence. The court also discussed how a passive membership or intellectual sympathy to a cause can spill over to a real call to violence. The ruling distinguished between active and passive members. In the same year, the court applied the same principle in two other cases and granted bail.

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Both the centre and state of Assam had sought a review of this reading. The present ruling has overruled three older cases.

What are the reasons for overruling the decision?

Firstly, the court accepted the state's argument that **1)** there are sufficient safeguards in the stringent UAPA framework, **2)** State is taking "every effort to ensure that every member of the association is made aware of the fact that such association is declared as unlawful", **3)** The government declare an organisation as unlawful only after a robust adversarial process wherein ample opportunity is given to the organisation to appeal before judiciary to justify its aims, objectives and activities being legal and not 'unlawful'. This is done within the constitutional setup.

Secondly, the "court ought not to have relied upon the US Supreme Court judgments" since the US law is "in contradistinction to the scenario in question in India". The court also explained that in the landmark Maneka Gandhi v Union of India case the court expanded on personal liberty. On the other hand, free speech in the US is unrestricted.

7. The Supreme Court puts the spotlight on the mode of execution in death penalty cases

Source: The post is based on the article "**The Supreme Court puts the spotlight on the mode of execution in death penalty cases**" published in the **Indian Express** on **27th March 2023**.

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

Relevance: About the mode of execution in death penalty cases.

News: Recent Supreme Court debates have spotlighted the mode of execution in death penalty cases.

What was the case about and What is the Centre's stand on death by hanging?

Read here: [SC Bench seeks data on alternatives to hanging](#)

What are the observations of the SC on death sentences?

Read more: [Abolition is the way: On the higher judiciary's move on the death penalty](#)

What are the issues associated with the execution by hanging in death penalty?

Immense suffering while executing: A documentary on "instantaneous death" by dislocating the cervical vertebrae in the US and the UK exposes that the persons undergo immense suffering due to asphyxiation before dying.

Chances of errors: Researchers have found that death by hanging has many instances of snapped ropes, necks that slipped out of nooses, partial or total decapitations, and slow death due to strangulation (instead of having the neck broken).

So, the immediate and painless nature of death attributed to hanging is an exception rather than the rule.

Global shift: Various courts including the Privy Council, the Supreme Court of Uganda and the High Court of Tanzania have relied on the suffering caused by hangings to reject it as a humane method of execution.

Issues in implementation: Ever since the constitutional validity of the death penalty was upheld, significant constitutional concerns have emerged over every aspect of its administration.

What are the challenges in changing the mode of execution in death penalty cases?

Meeting constitutional requirements: Just because the death penalty is currently permissible it is not open to the state to use any method of execution. Any mode of execution that the state adopts must be capable of meeting constitutional requirements and that is a burden for the state to discharge.

Issues with lethal injections: Execution in death penalty using lethal injections have the following issues. **a)** Irrefutable evidence from the US that lethal injections have been mishandled

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and leading to immense suffering. For example, a private study that examined 9,000 executions in the US between 1900 to 2010 found that executions using lethal injection had a higher rate of being botched than any other method, **b)** The procedure of lethal injections has not been scientifically or medically studied on human beings.

Note: Most states rely on a three-drug combination of sodium thiopental, pancuronium bromide and potassium chloride for lethal injections. While sodium thiopental puts the prisoner to sleep, pancuronium bromide renders the prisoner paralytic and unable to show any pain before potassium chloride causes cardiac arrest.

What should be done?

Instead of searching for the mode of execution in the death penalty, India should revisit the very administration of the death penalty in India.

Read more: [Death penalty: Deciding the rarest of the rare](#)

8. [Supreme Court verdict on UAPA is fraught with risk](#)

Source- The post is based on the article “Supreme Court verdict on UAPA is fraught with risk of making it legal for agencies to act lawlessly while claiming to fight terrorism and preserve State’s security” published in “The Indian Express” on 28th March 2023.

Syllabus: GS2- Judiciary

Relevance- Important judgement impacting the rights of people

News- Recently, the Supreme Court in **Arup Bhuyan vs The State Of Assam Home Department** held that mere membership of a banned association is sufficient to constitute an offence under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967.

What are issues concerning the judgement?

The judgement is **fraught with the risk**. Agencies can **act lawlessly** while claiming to fight terrorism and preserve the State’s security.

Unless there is a **specific intent to enhance the abilities** of an unlawful organisation, convicting a person as a member is a **violation of the rule of law**. The verdict also suffers from **substantive contradictions in its reasoning**.

The Court has set aside the reading down of both **Section 10(a)(i), UAPA**. It has struck down its previous rulings in **Arup Bhuyan vs State of Assam, and State of Kerala vs Raneef**.

The **Raneef judgement** provided a narrow interpretation of **Section 10(a)(i) of UAPA**. **Section 10(a)(i)** punishes **membership of unlawful organisations** with imprisonment for a term which may extend to two years.

In **Arup Bhuyan (2011)** the Supreme Court ruled that **mere membership of a banned organisation** will not incriminate a person. It can be done if a person **resorts to violence or incites people to violence or does an act intended to create disorder**.

Banned organisations are not known to **keep a registry** with their members’ names, addresses, phone numbers, and email IDs. In most cases, membership must be inferred.

Jyoti Babasaheb Chorge vs State of Maharashtra (2012) demonstrates how innocent young men and women can get incriminated as **members of unlawful organisations merely by association**.

15 people, all young tribal women and men, were charged as members of the [Communist Party of India](#) (Maoist) for possessing Maoist propaganda literature. There was no accusation against them of being involved in any terrorist act or act of violence.

What are the challenges faced by states in case of laws against terrorism?

The definitions of terrorist and unlawful organisations in UAPA are **vague**. The Act merely states that they are organisations **involved in “unlawful activities”** and notified as such.

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States worldwide are facing troubles in **defining terrorism and terrorist groups with some precision**. Their purpose is to protect against the **inappropriate labelling** of people as terrorists, and to **curtail the abuse** of counterterrorism powers.

Mislabelling dilutes efforts to combat actual terrorism. It undermines **democratic values and institutions** and increases the security threat.

9. [Golden fist: On the victory for Indian women boxers](#)

Source: The post is based on the article **“Golden fist: On the victory for Indian women boxers”** published in **The Hindu** on **28th March 2023**.

Syllabus: GS – 2: Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre.

Relevance: About Indian women boxers.

News: Indian women boxers collected four gold medals in the recent Delhi World championships. This is a significant milestone ahead of Hangzhou Asian Games, a qualifying event for the 2024 Paris Olympics.

What are some significant achievements of Indian women boxers in the recent Delhi World championship?

Nitu Ghanghas, Nikhat Zareen, Lovlina Borgohain and Saweety Boora have won the gold medals and India topped the medal sheet.

Note: In 2006 also India collected four gold medals as M.C. Mary Kom, Sarita Devi, K.C. Lekha and R.L. Jenny won.

Nikhat Zareen became the second Indian after Mary to win more than one World title.

How International Boxing Association (IBA) is helping women boxers?

The IBA tried to ensure transparency and fairness. It took action against below-par match officials and athletes who seemingly enjoyed an unfair advantage. It offered a lucrative prize purse, including \$100,000 to each winner, and financial support to boxers as an incentive to boost participation.

What will be the way forward?

The IBA is in conflict with the International Olympic Committee due to its exclusion from the Olympics over various issues. This has to be rectified.

The event demonstrated the competitiveness and appeal of women’s boxing. The successful conduct of the event has encouraged the IBA to look at India as a potential market for boxing destinations. The Boxing Federation of India’s also need to conduct more elite events to inspire the boxing community further.

10. [Healthcare in India has made great progress, but challenges remain](#)

Source- The post is based on the article **“Healthcare in India has made great progress, but challenges remain”** published in **“The Indian Express”** on **28th March 2023**.

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

News- The article deals with challenges faced by the healthcare sector in India.

What are the achievements of India in healthcare?

In 2007, it was estimated that India would achieve a total fertility rate of 2.1 only by 2041. India has achieved this by 2020.

High maternal and infant mortality seemed very difficult to overcome in 2010. Ten years later, the latest NFHS-5 findings show that in BIMARU states, hospital deliveries have soared to 89 per cent.

What are the challenges faced by the healthcare sector in India?

Non-communicable diseases – Cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes are increasing. They all share four **behavioural risk factors** — an unhealthy diet, lack of physical activity and use of tobacco and alcohol.

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'India: Health of the nation's states' report estimated that the proportion of deaths due to non-communicable diseases has increased from **around 38% in 1990 to 62% in 2016**.

Obesity has increased **from 19% to 23% between NFHS-4 and NFHS-5**. Among Delhi's citizens, 38 per cent were found to be obese, followed by Tamil Nadu and Kerala. This increases the risk of diabetes, hypertension, and CVD.

Inequalities in the state of infrastructure– Since 2018, governments at the Centre as well as the state are establishing **health and wellness centres**. But a 2022 report by the **Centre for Community Medicine in AIIMS** found huge **variations between states**.

Some northeastern states like Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland were found to have better arrangements. The lowest proportions of primary health facilities were in Jharkhand, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh.

Inequalities– In urban areas, the challenge is to **bridge the gap** in hospital services between large urban agglomerations and tier II and tier III cities.

A recent **Lancet publication** found that core health services are **not uniform** across state-run district hospitals. Just 16% of the district hospitals in Tamil Nadu offered all key services. In some states, it was just 1%. People have to bank on the private sector.

Large hospital chains like Apollo, Fortis account for just 4-5% of the beds in the private sector. Standalone hospitals and nursing homes provide 95% of private hospital beds. They are unable to provide **multi-specialty, tertiary and quaternary care**.

Insurance and high expenditure on health– The other problems centre around **low health insurance penetration and the very high personal outgo** on healthcare. From 2018, the **Ayushman Bharat insurance** scheme for 10 crore poor families has been undertaken. Nearly 74% of Indians are either covered or eligible for health insurance coverage.

However, millions remain uninsured. **Out-patient doctor consultation costs, diagnostics, and drugs** account for around 50% of the total health expenditure.

It is, therefore, essential to provide insurance for the **unorganised middle class** and to include identified out-patient costs.

Use of Artificial Intelligence and digital technology– Use of AI for healthcare is welcome. But there are **ethical and regulatory concerns** related to it. A new dimension has made the regulation of healthcare even more compelling.

[11. The entry of foreign firms should herald more legal sector reforms](#)

Source: The post is based on the article **"The entry of foreign firms should herald more legal sector reforms"** published in **Live Mint** on **29th March 2023**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Governance – Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors

Relevance: measures needed to bring legal reforms

News: The Bar Council of India (BCI) has allowed foreign lawyers and foreign law firms to practice and set up offices in India.

About the BCI decision to permit foreign lawyers

Read Here: [Foreign lawyers, firms can operate in India: BCI](#)

Foreign lawyers and firms will be allowed to practice on the **principle of reciprocity**. This means that the other country must also offer similar treatment to Indian lawyers and firms.

What are the advantages of allowing foreign firms in India?

The BCI Rules for **Registration and Regulation of Foreign Lawyers and Foreign Law Firms in India, 2023**, states that the standards and proficiency of Indian lawyers and firms are up to international standards.

Therefore, allowing foreign lawyers and firms will –**a)** help in the growth of the legal profession, **b)** generate employment and retainership opportunities, **c)** provide global exposure to Indian lawyers.

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Read More: [Global law, local practice – BCI's move recognises India's corporate globalisation](#)

What other steps can be taken to bring legal reforms in the country?

Allow FDI in Indian law firms: As per the rules, **persons not qualified to practice law in India are restricted from investing in a law firm.** This makes Indian law firms to be dependent on the domestic capital from the lawyers.

Further, restricting FDI to the Indian legal firms will give the competitive advantage to foreign legal firms operating in India.

Hence, allowing FDI in legal sector will – **a)** allow Indian lawyers and law firms to raise foreign capital, **b)** benefit Indian legal sector through innovation and technology **c)** help local legal entrepreneurs create more startups.

Lift restrictions on solicitation and advertising: Indian legal professionals are barred from advertising their legal services **because their services are considered to be in the public interest of securing justice.** This makes commercialization of the legal profession undesirable. However, in reality this profession is already commercialized. Lawyers and law firms are in the business of serving clients and charge fees for their services.

Therefore, lifting restriction on advertising the legal profession will – **a)** enable efficient price discovery in the legal market as lawyers or firms could reveal their fees and charges, **b)** price discovery would allow more individuals and firms to enter the legal market and lead to growth and lower service charge, **c)** encourage market players to conduct research and innovation that might offer superior services, as seen in advanced countries.

What is the way ahead?

India is set to reach a size of \$5 trillion plus in a few years. This will increase the demand for quality legal services and **better dispute resolution mechanisms are integral to a sound business environment and the ease of doing business.**

Therefore, the BCI, law ministry, policymakers and other stakeholders must make policies that will lead to growth, development and innovation in the legal sector to better serve the interests of justice and the economy.

[12. Healthcare in India has made great progress, but challenges remain](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Healthcare in India has made great progress, but challenges remain**” published in **The Indian Express** on **29th March 2023**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Issues Related to Healthcare

Relevance: challenges with healthcare

News: The article discusses the progress made in healthcare and associated challenges.

What are some of the progresses made in healthcare?

It was believed that India would achieve a total fertility rate of 2.1 only by 2041.

However, as per the recent **National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5)**, India achieved it by 2020 and hospital deliveries even in the backward states have increased to 89 percent. However, challenges in healthcare still remain.

What are the challenges with healthcare in India?

Diseases: Cardiovascular diseases (CVDs), cancers, chronic respiratory diseases (CRDs) and diabetes are prevalent. These are **caused by an unhealthy diet, lack of physical activity and use of tobacco and alcohol.**

As per a report, the proportion of deaths due to non-communicable diseases (NCDs) has increased from around 38 percent in 1990 to 62 percent in 2016.

Obesity has increased from 19 per cent to 23 per cent between NFHS-4 and NFHS-5. This increases the risk of diabetes, hypertension, and CVD.

Infrastructure: The government is building primary healthcare by establishing health and wellness centres. However, as per a recent report, there **is a huge variation between states.**

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For example, some states like Mizoram and Gujarat had better healthcare arrangements in their health centres while the situation was grim in Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh.

Urban areas: The challenge in the urban areas lies in bridging the gap in hospital services between large urban agglomerations and tier II and tier III cities.

As per a Lancet report, **the provision of core health services is not uniform across state-run district hospitals.**

For example, while only 16 percent of the district hospitals in Tamil Nadu offered all key services, it was just 1 per cent in Mizoram and UP.

Private hospitals: Private hospitals own two-thirds of the country's hospital beds.

Large hospital like Apollo, Fortis, Max, account for just 4-5 percent of the beds while **standalone hospitals and nursing homes provide 95 percent of private hospital beds.**

However, **standalone hospitals and nursing homes are unable to provide multi-specialty, leave alone tertiary and quaternary care.**

Therefore, there is a need to bridge the gap between services available in the metros and big cities and in districts. This can be done by **making the centrally-run hospital and the district hospitals fully functional.**

Health Insurance: Schemes such as the [Ayushman Bharat](#), the **Employees State Insurance (ESIC)**, and **CGHS** have covered nearly 74 percent of Indians.

However, millions remain uninsured. Out-patient doctor consultation costs, diagnostics, and drugs **account for the 50 percent of out-of-pocket (OOP) personal expenditure.**

It is, therefore, essential to provide insurance for the unorganised middle class and to include identified out-patient costs.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital technology: These would bring revolution in healthcare. However, **ethical and regulatory concerns remain.**

Due to this, Indian Council of Medical Research released [guidelines](#) for the lack of accountability for machine-made medical decisions. However, regulations are also needed for substandard institutions and for unqualified medical practitioners.

13. [Suspect moves: On changes to reservation policy in Karnataka](#)

Source: The post is based on the article "**Suspect moves: On changes to reservation policy in Karnataka**" published in **The Hindu** on **29th March 2023**.

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

Relevance: About the recent reservation policy of Karnataka.

News: The Karnataka government decided to scrap the 4% quota for Muslims within the Other Backward Classes (OBC) category and earmark an additional 2% each to the dominant Vokkaliga and Veerashaiva-Lingayat communities. This is reminiscent of the abrogation of the 5% quota for Muslims in Maharashtra in 2015.

Note: *The Karnataka State Backward Classes Commission has not recommended for the withdrawal of reservations for Muslims.*

What will be the impact of the decision?

a) The scrapping of reservations for Muslims, including their poorer members, will now have to compete with the general category for the 10% 'Economically Weaker Sections' quota, **b)** The move will be seen as discriminative and divisive against a minority group in the hope of garnering the support of the majority.

Read more: [On reservation for women in politics](#)

What are the constitutional provisions for reservation?

The Constitution **does not allow reservation on the basis of religion alone**. For example, there have been judicial verdicts striking down quotas for Muslims for not being backed by a proper study of the extent of backwardness in the community.

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However, it is possible to extend reservation benefits to the backward sections among religious minorities identified on the basis of relevant criteria. For example, some States have been implementing reservations in educational institutions as well as public employment for Muslims by including them in the Backward Classes (BC) list.

In conclusion, major decisions, such as changing the reservation policy, in the run-up to elections may end up creating unwanted fires.

Read more: [Supreme Court's Judgment on EWS Reservation – Explained, pointwise](#)

14. [Civil society organizations require wholesome support](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Civil society organizations require wholesome support**” published in **Live Mint** on **30th March 2023**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Governance – Non-Governmental Organisations

Relevance: concerns associated with CSOs

News: Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), and other kinds of not-for-profit organizations are working for societal improvement.

The article discusses concerns associated with CSOs.

What are the concerns associated with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)?

Donors want to support costs which are incurred for programs and activities that directly deliver the desired benefits or improvements to intended communities.

However, they don't want to support other costs involved in the operation of the CSOs, known as **overhead cost**. It is impractical for a CSO to only focus on the outcome while neglecting other costs.

For example, a CSO working with public schools to enhance learning will have team members who train and assist teachers. Their salaries and activity costs are just as essential as the teaching-learning-material and resources given to schools.

The donors in this case, will be ready to support teaching material and not for the salaries and expenses for the staff of CSOs.

Further, **donors expect CSOs to be strong and stable organizations** which have good processes, sound accounting and reporting, leadership succession and development, the capacity to scale up, and more.

However, **a CSO can only become stable when it is being financially supported for these things**.

Some donors provide support for CSO **overhead expenses ranging from 5-10% of the cost base**, which is very low given the enormous amount of expense needed by CSOs to function.

Hence, a reasonable donation for overhead cost should range from 15%-25%.

Moreover, **donors are also reluctant to commit long term funding for CSOs**. This has weakening effect on Indian civil society.

What can be the way ahead?

Donors usually look for a strong, vibrant and high-capacity CSO ecosystem. This is only possible when they start supporting CSOs objectives along with their overhead costs wholeheartedly.

15. [India needs public policy education](#)

Source- The post is based on the article “**India needs public policy education**” published in “**The Hindu**” on **30th March 2023**.

Syllabus: GS2- Governance

Relevance- Reforms in administration

News- The article explains the importance of public policy education.

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What are issues with public management education in India?

Lack of institutions– Most executives in government require an understanding of **public management**. However, the supply of **formal education in public management** is inadequate as compared to business management education.

As per data from the AICTE, there are 3,182 institutions with an approved intake of 4.22 lakh in business management programmes. But only about 130 universities offer **public administration programmes** and only 29 institutes that offer **public policy programmes**.

Lack of opportunities– There are **few jobs available** for people pursuing courses in public management. The private sector offers limited opportunities in **government advisory roles, consulting and Corporate Social Responsibility**.

For public sector opportunities, students have to go through competitive exams. Therefore, neither educational institutes nor students find **any incentive** to prefer public management courses.

Lack of public policy training– There are very few civil servants who have got **exposure to public management** before joining service. Most of them undergo the **departmental induction training programme**.

There are **a few opportunities for in-service officers** to study public management in India and abroad. In the 10 years between 2012 and 2021, 194 civil service officers went abroad to study public management at the Master's level.

Within the country, there are five institutions in which 194 civil service officers have been sponsored by the government for **full time public policy courses** in the last three years.

What is the way forward to boost public management education in India?

Public management should be one of the **compulsory subjects for the UPSC civil service examination**. This will help in multiple ways.

Existing training institutions of the government should have a **larger component of public policy** as part of induction training. They should build up a case study bank for training.

The government can create **certain specialised positions of public policy analysts**, to be picked up from the market directly. **New job avenues** for the graduates of public policy programmes can be created by this.

How introducing public management as an optional subject in UPSC creates a win-win situation?

First, civil servants who join the government would have **formal education in public management** before they enter service.

Second, this creates an **opportunity or incentive** for universities and private institutions to offer the subject at the graduate or postgraduate level. Public policy education, research and case studies will get a major boost from this new demand.

Third, those who don't clear the exam would develop **better understanding in public management**. It will make them **better citizens as well as effective private sector managers**.

16. SMART PDS scheme: A bold initiative in digitisation

Source- The post is based on the article "**SMART PDS scheme: A bold initiative in digitisation**" published in "**The Indian Express**" on **30th March 2023**.

Syllabus: GS2- Government policies and interventions

Relevance– Use of digital technology for welfare schemes

News– The article explains the initiatives by the government to digitise the food grain distribution.

What are the benefits of Scheme for Modernisation and Reforms through Technology in Public Distribution System (SMART-PDS)?

It prevents **leakage of foodgrains, increases the efficiency** of the distribution chain and **ensures the availability of such provisions** for migrants.

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A lot of data is being generated and stored every day by states and UTs. **Data Analytics** on the TPDS ecosystem can be used to generate **critical information** about the beneficiaries, their food security needs and patterns of migration.

It can implement **data-driven decision-making**. It can be leveraged for the delivery of many other central schemes and welfare programmes.

Convergence and integration with the use of AI can really be a game changer for people as well as governments in bringing accountability across all programmes.

What are other successful initiatives for digitisation of food grain distribution?

Today, nearly 93% of the total monthly allocated foodgrains are distributed through the [Aadhaar authentication](#) mode using **electronic Point of Sale devices**.

This can be attributed to the **100% digitisation of ration cards, online management of beneficiaries' data, computerisation of foodgrains' allocation and supply chain management systems in all states, and the installation of ePoS devices**.

The government has launched a Central Sector Scheme called **Integrated Management of Public Distribution System (IM-PDS)** To sustain the reforms brought in by the **End-to-end Computerisation of TPDS Operations scheme**.

Its main objectives are: Implementation of [One Nation One Ration Card](#), creation of a **national level data repository** for ration cards data; creation of **integrated data infrastructure** across ration card management.

[One Nation One Ration Card](#) is seamlessly functional in all 36 States and UTs and is consistently recording over 3.5 crore monthly portable transactions. This count is steadily improving. It has so far recorded more than 100 crore portability transactions.

The data generated during this process has now become a tool for many other central ministries and state governments. It includes benefits for the e-Shram Portal, Ayushman Bharat, and PM-SVANidhi Yojana. Agriculture ministry envisages family-based ONORC data to map the beneficiaries.

17. [India's DPIs, catching the next wave](#)

Source- The post is based on the article "[India's DPIs, catching the next wave](#)" published in "[The Hindu](#)" on **30th March 2023**.

Syllabus: GS2- e-governance

Relevance- Digital India

News- The article explains India's digital public infrastructure.

What are some facts about India's digital public infrastructure?

India's digital public infrastructure or India Stack is a **partnership** between governments, regulators, the private sector, selfless volunteers, startups, and academia/think tanks.

It has led to many Lego blocks to create a **superstructure** which delivers **consistent, affordable, and across the board value** to citizens, government and the corporate sector.

What are different initiatives under India digital public infrastructure that show its effectiveness?

Aadhar- The judgement of the Supreme Court of India on privacy led to **slow opening** of Aadhaar to the private sector

The rapid adoption and ease of doing business in day-to-day transactions has now led to a **gradual opening of Aadhaar** for various private sector applications.

Aadhaar holders can **voluntarily use** their Aadhaar for private sector purposes. Private sector entities need not seek special permission for such usage.

Aadhaar data can be **shared between government departments**, but with the **prior informed consent** of the citizen.

Banks and other regulated entities can store Aadhaar numbers as long as they protect it using vault and other similar means.

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UIDAI is making efforts to incentivise Aadhaar usage. Aadhaar authentications have shot up to 2.2 billion per month, and the cumulative number over the past 12 years has crossed 100 billion. **Digi Yatra and DigiLocker**– Digi Yatra is a **Biometric Enabled Seamless Travel experience** based on a **facial recognition system** through a partnership between industry and government. It ensures **seamless identification** of passengers at key checkpoints such as airport entry, security check and boarding gate clearance.

About two lakh passengers have utilised this successfully. Air passenger traffic in India was estimated to be over 188 million in the financial year 2022. When Digi Yatra reaches a third of them, it will lead to **second order effects and more innovation**.

DigiLocker is another example. It is one of the **least known Digital Public Infrastructure**. It today has 150 million users, six billion stored documents. Plans are to expand it to many countries around the world.

When one applies for a passport now, one need not even upload any PDF or submit some notarized papers. **A simple consent** on the passport application form allows it to fetch the relevant data from DigiLocker.

Zerodha, Upstox, RazorPay, Equal and many other insurances and fintechs use **DigiLocker API** for their **Know Your Customer**.

Today, there is a lack of a **single portal** at the Union or the State level where industry can see all the **necessary compliances**. An **Enterprise DigiLocker** can be created.

UPI- The unified payment interface or UPI which is breaking records. It has now crossed **eight billion transactions per month** and transacts a value of **\$180 billion a month**.

[18. A hardhanded response that strikes at the root of rights](#)

Source- The post is based on the article “**A hardhanded response that strikes at the root of rights**” published in “**The Hindu**” on **30th March 2023**.

Syllabus: GS2- Polity

Relevance– Issues related to right of workers

News– An estimated 19 lakh government and semi government employees have been on strike demanding that the government return to the Old Pension Scheme

What has been the response of the government towards strikes in India?

Since 1960, the government’s approach to strikes by their employees has been to invoke **ESMA, or the Essential Services Maintenance Act**. It is used both by central and state governments. It was historically a **colonial instrument**. Since 1950, several States on numerous occasions, have promulgated ESMA.

What are issues related to government response to strikes?

Private sector employers argue that the government, which is supposed to be a **model employer**, often uses its **elaborate legislative and police powers**. But they do not have any choice. They have to face a strike and attempt negotiations with striking employees.

There are questions related to the **definition of essential**. There are questions related to the **criteria for defining essential services and duration** for which an industry can be called as an essential service in order to prohibit strikes or protests.

ESMAs empower the government to define any economic activity as essential. It is an example of a **dangerous weaponization of the government**.

What is the ILO stand on right to strike?

The ILO has constructed the principles on the **right to strike**. The basic principle is that workers enjoy the right to strike. It is one of the principal means to **legitimately promote and defend their economic and social interests**.

ILO recognizes “**a general right to strike**” while allowing for an **imposition of restrictions** on strikes by some categories of public servants and workers in essential services. There could be a **prohibition of strike** action during **acute national emergencies**.

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The employees in **essential services** do not enjoy the right to strike. Essential services are those where “the interruption of which would **endanger the life, personal safety or health** of the whole or part of the population”.

The **question of essentiality** will depend on the **peculiarities prevalent** in countries. It has identified essential services such as the hospital sector, and services such as electricity, water supply, telephone, and air traffic control. Strikes in these may even be prohibited or strictly regulated.

Where the right to strike is prohibited or strictly regulated, **alternate dispute resolution** mechanisms must be put in place. It has mentioned a **negative list of industries** which are not essential. It includes the transportation and education sectors.

What should be the government’s approach towards strikes?

Governments have entrusted them with wide powers to include any economic activity as essential. It is **irresponsible, unwise and anti-democratic**.

Democracy means an **equitable distribution of power**. But, ESMA monopolizes power while suppressing the **democratic rights of stakeholders**.

India is a **pluralistic democracy** where protests hold an important place. Their sanctity needs to be respected by the government.

Social dialogue rather than authoritarian measures will promote **amicable and long-lasting solutions**.

19. Institutions of Eminence, mired in red tape

Source: The post is based on the article “**Institutions of Eminence, mired in red tape**” published in the **Indian Express** on **30th March 2023**.

Syllabus: GS – 2: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Education.

Relevance: About challenges faced by the IOE scheme.

News: Even after six years, the Institutions of Eminence (IOE) scheme is yet to become the game changer as it was intended to be.

What is the Institutions of Eminence scheme?

Must read: [Institution of Eminence Scheme](#)

What are the challenges faced by the IOE scheme?

The government funds amounting to Rs 3,000 crore have helped eight public universities initiate ambitious reforms and set up state-of-the-art research infrastructure. But Private IOEs are facing many challenges.

The ethos of India’s higher education ecosystem: This is the biggest Achilles heel for the IOE scheme. The ethos of the higher education ecosystem is decidedly pre-NEP 2020.

The scheme aims to free regulatory intervention is facing regulatory challenges: For example, **a)** four private institutes which received government-empowered committee approval for the IOE tag have not yet got it, **b)** Four institutions which received the IOE tag, continue to face red tape from UGC on matters such as hiring foreign faculty and admitting foreign students. The university regulator’s interventions have led to seats falling vacant in at least three private IOEs.

Defunct of the expert committee: The Empowered Expert Committee which was created to make UGC regulations more flexible for the IOEs has become defunct.

The mandate of the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI): The idea of university autonomy is now embedded in the higher education regulator proposed by the National Education Policy — the HECI. This yet-to-be-born agency is mandated to secure IOE-type autonomy for all universities, not just select institutes.

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Not easy to enter the multidisciplinary arena: Institutions which want to enter various domains have to undergo regulations comprises agencies such as the National Medical Commission, Architecture Council of India and the Bar Council.

How India can ensure reforms in the higher education system?

The government has often affirmed its ambition to develop India as a knowledge economy. The move to open up the education sector by inviting foreign universities is part of this attempt. The performance of IOEs shows that much more needs to be done on this front.

[20. Neighbours, Big & Small – Bhutan to Bangladesh, New Delhi must prepare to compete with China in the development space](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Neighbours, Big & Small – Bhutan to Bangladesh, New Delhi must prepare to compete with China in the development space**” published in **The Times of India** on **30th March 2023**.

Syllabus: GS – 2: India and its neighbourhood- relations.

Relevance: About Indian neighbours’ policy.

News: Recently, Bhutan has said that China has an equal say in resolving the Doklam dispute. This is different from Bhutan’s 2019 position which said that the tri-junction point between India, China and Bhutan at Doklam should not be unilaterally disturbed. This shows that Bhutan is taking a more accommodating stance on China because of current geopolitical realities.

What are the challenges faced by Indian neighbours in India – China tussle?

While India and China are locked in their own border disputes along the LAC, other countries in the neighbourhood fear getting caught in the tussle. So, they will sometimes stay away from the two Asian giants’ tussle.

Read more: [India failed to create positive impression among businesses moving away from China, says House panel report](#)

What are the impacts of Indian neighbours’ policy on India?

Indian neighbours’ inaction policy presents a strategic challenge for India. This is because of China’s dollar diplomacy and its advantage on Indian neighbours. For instance, a recent report highlights, China has handed out \$240 billion worth of bailout loans to 22 developing countries over two decades. Around 80% of those funds were provided between 2016 and 2021 when Beijing’s BRI projects picked up steam.

Must read: [China ramping up bailout loans to BRI countries: Report](#)

On the other hand, forcing Nepal, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka to let go of Chinese funds will have the opposite impact and build up resentment against India. For example, the 2015 blockade in Nepal has seriously hurt Indian interests.

Similarly, relations with Bangladesh might be hamper if the Bangladesh government is unable to balance ties with India with Bangladesh’s development imperatives.

What India should do?

India needs to **switch to a smarter approach**, drop the Big Brother attitude and work on its own attractiveness by timely completion of development projects. India should also sharpen our ‘Neighbourhood First’ policy.

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21. [Human life, above all: On the Rajasthan Right to Health Act and the stance of doctors](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Human life, above all: On the Rajasthan Right to Health Act and the stance of doctors**” published in **The Hindu** on **30th March 2023**.

Syllabus: GS – 2: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to health.

Relevance: About Rajasthan Right to Health Act, 2022.

News: The Rajasthan government has recently passed the Right to Health Act. But the doctors in the State are protesting and terming it as a ‘draconian law’.

About Rajasthan Right to Health Act, 2022

-The Act seeks to provide protection and fulfilment of rights, equity in relation to health and well-being for achieving the goal of health care for all. This is done through guaranteed access to quality health care for all residents of the State, without any catastrophic out-of-pocket expenditure

Note: *The Right to Health is in sync with the constitutional guarantee of the right to life, and other components of the Directive Principles. Under the constitution, no person seeking health care should be denied it, on the grounds of access and affordability.*

– The law provides for a social audit and grievance redressal.

-The Act gives every resident of the State the right to emergency treatment without paying a single paisa to any healthcare institution. The private healthcare institutions providing such facilities will be compensated for the charges incurred.

Read more: [The next step is a constitutional right to health](#)

Why there is opposition to Rajasthan Right to Health Act, 2022?

Narrow professional and commercial interests led to opposition to the law which is ‘good’ in ethical and legal terms.

Not believing in the government’s promise: The protestors were distrustful of the government’s promise of recompense for expenses incurred for treating patients during an emergency.

Further government interference: The Act might pave the way for further government interference in health care.

What are the court’s observations on the right to health?

In 1989, the Supreme Court observed that “every injured citizen brought for medical treatment should instantaneously be given medical aid to preserve life and thereafter the procedural criminal law should be allowed to operate in order to avoid negligent death”.

Read more: [UN declares access to clean, healthy environment as universal human right](#)

What should be done?

Rajasthan government should now work with protestors to gain the trust of the doctors through demonstrable action. Doctors should also work with the government to save human lives.

22. [Safe urban spaces for all shouldn’t be a long haul](#)

Source- The post is based on the article “**Safe urban spaces for all shouldn’t be a long haul**” published in the “**mint**” on **30th March 2023**.

Syllabus: GS2- Vulnerable sections of the population. GS1- Social empowerment

Relevance- Issues related to gender gap

News- The article deals with lack of access to safe and hygienic facilities for women.

What are some statistics related to coverage of Swachh Bharat Mission?

Swachh Bharat was begun on an impressive scale. **Over 100 million toilets** were built across rural India within a span of five years. In 2019, the country was declared “**open defecation free**” (ODF).

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The **Phase II of the mission** started to **sustain behavioral shifts** by focusing on **waste disposal, litter reduction, and stagnant water**. Today, of India's 594,240 villages, 235,708 are declared as **"ODF-plus"**.

How do women face difficulties in access to hygienic facilities and safe spaces?

Women still face not just an acute scarcity of **public urinal facilities in cities**. They also face the risk of **acquiring infections from unhygienic lavatories**. The private set-ups also lack these facilities.

Women who cannot work from home and have less control of their time schedules are more vulnerable.

They face **safety issues** in transport hubs or field-work trips by road, office spaces or institutional premises.

23. Doctors must embrace Right to Health Bill, not protest against it

Source: The post is based on the article **"Doctors must embrace Right to Health Bill, not protest against it"** published in the **Indian Express** on **31st March 2023**.

Syllabus: GS – 2: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to health.

Relevance: About Rajasthan Right to Health Act, 2022.

News: The Rajasthan government has recently passed the Right to Health Act. This made Rajasthan the first state in India to pass the Right to Health (RTH) bill. But the doctors in the State are protesting and terming it as a 'draconian law'.

About Rajasthan Right to Health bill

The bill allows free access to outpatient and inpatient services in all government and selected private hospitals in the state.

Must read: [Human life, above all: On the Rajasthan Right to Health Act and the stance of doctors](#)

Why Rajasthan is the ideal state to formulate and implement the Right to Health bill?

Rajasthan is the ideal state to formulate and implement the Right to Health bill because, **a)** In 2022, ["Healthy states, progressive India"](#) report placed Rajasthan in 16th position among 19 big states, **b)** As per the National Family Health Survey -5 (2019-21), the infant mortality rate and the neonatal mortality rate in the state are 30.3 per 1,000 live births and 20.2 per 1,000 live births respectively, **c)** The doctor-population ratio of the state is at an astoundingly low level of five doctors per 10,000 population (in comparison, it is 21 per 10,000 population in Jammu and Kashmir).

What are the expected benefits of the Right to Health bill?

a) Rajasthan's RTH is a legal entitlement for the patient which will prevent many doctors from extracting (not earning) money from patients, **b)** Rajasthan has one of the highest incidences of violence against healthcare professionals in the country. Violence against healthcare professionals is due to mistrust between patients and doctors. The RTH bill will increase trust in the system, and **c)** Ensure doctors work hand-in-hand with the poor and the have-nots.

Why there are oppositions to the Right to health act?

-Assault on private "business model": As per official data, more than 78% of healthcare in India is now delivered by private players. At this juncture, providing free emergency treatment and care will upset the entire private healthcare model foundation.

Doctors' mistrust of the system: This is due to two key reasons **a)** There is no clear definition of what can be classified as a medical emergency, **b)** Bureaucratic and political control to admitting or reimbursing payment for patients. The protest shows doctors' naivety in failing to embrace a historic moment in patient care in this country.

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What should be done?

The easiest way to make the society good is to bring equality and justice and this may be at the cost of the physician's ability to earn money. The RTH Bill just aims to achieve that.

24. [For judiciary, the red lines are bright and clear](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**For judiciary, the red lines are bright and clear**” published in “**The Indian Express**” on **1st April 2023**.

Syllabus: GS2- Functioning of judiciary

Relevance– Issues related to judicial review and judicial activism

News– Over the last few years, issues relating to tradition, culture and society have come before the constitutional courts of the country in the form of public interest litigation.

What are some facts about doctrine of basic structure and judicial review?

One of the most fundamental principles of **constitutional morality** is that every organ should look at its jurisdiction to discharge a particular role. It is to preserve the **sanctity of the doctrine of separation of powers**.

The doctrine is part of the **basic structure of the Constitution**. It is meant to preserve the **respective power of the legislature, executive and judiciary**.

The judiciary has the **power of review** over the other two organs. But, such power has limitations which must respect the **institutional independence and competence** of such organs.

The power of judicial review is not **judicial supervision or superintendence** over the legislature or executive. This position is especially applicable in matters of policy where **domain expertise** is required. This is also the case with **societal experimentation** where there is a need for a **process of consultation** between the electorate and the elected.

The doctrine of separation of power facilitates **participative democracy in letter and spirit**. It facilitates the **right of the public** to give effect to its will through the legislature.

Even if the decision of the majority is flawed, it cannot be reviewed by the judiciary except on the **grounds of constitutionality**.

What should be the way forward for the judiciary?

Judicial wisdom should not replace the **will of the majority**. The Constitution does not envisage replacing democracy with **judicial paternalism**.

The Constitution recognises that sometimes a good policy decision may be **unconstitutional**, and a bad policy decision may be constitutional. Only unconstitutionality is the ground for the **intervention of the judiciary**.

The judiciary should dissuade public interest litigants and civil society groups from seeking its intervention by crossing **constitutional limits**. In a democracy, those who wish to convince the legislature of their position must engage with **societal and legislative stakeholders** to put across their point of view.

There do exist areas where both the legislature and executive are not taking decisions because of their **vested interests**. It forces the affected parties to seek judicial remedy. In such instances, the Supreme Court may invoke its **extraordinary powers under Article 142** to address an exigency until the legislature brings in a law on the subject. An example of this is the **Vishakha guidelines**.

The judiciary cannot go for **judicial review** merely because the judiciary or some members of the judiciary disagree with the **social premise** underlying the law. State interest can not be questioned based on **judicial disagreement with the legislative or executive position**.

Judicial disagreement with legislative policy is not **proof of unconstitutionality**. Only the constitution is the measure to **assess constitutionality**.

Judiciary should not express its opinion on **matters of policy** where it has no jurisdiction, with the intention of **shaping public opinion** or to put pressure on the other organs. It can have an impact on the **public discourse**.

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The Constitution permits the judiciary to perform an **advisory role** in very limited circumstances and that too only when sought for. These **red lines** drawn by the Constitution cannot be breached by any constitutional Court.

25. [India's semiconductor mission might need a compass](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**India’s semiconductor mission might need a compass**” published in “**The Hindu**” on **1st April 2023**.

Syllabus: GS2- Indian Economy

Relevance– Electronics manufacturing

News– The United States Department of Commerce and its Indian counterpart have recently concluded a memorandum of understanding in March 2023 to ensure that subsidies by each country does not impact India’s semiconductor mission.

What are issues with existing institutional structure for semiconductor manufacturing in India?

The **Semi- Conductor Laboratory (SCL)** was set up in Mohali in 1983 by the then central government, with the vision of creating an electronics ecosystem in India.

However, the opening up of markets for consumer goods in 1991 and a fire that broke out in 1989 at the SCL, dashed these hopes.

The facility has not been successful in creating a **domestic semiconductor ecosystem**.

What is the way forward for the semiconductor mission of India?

The **institutional framework** already exists. SCL has been transferred back to the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeITY), as part of the **new semiconductor policy** announced in December 2021. However, no joint venture partner has been found.

During this period, the focus at MeITY seems aimed at attracting Intel into India to set up a fab. However, Intel primarily operates at <22nm node and 300mm. It requires over **\$10 billion in upgrade cost** to the SCL.

An **alternate approach** could be to leverage **human and capital assets at the SCL** to build on existing base in a targeted manner, by taking advantage of **recent technological breakthroughs** in a class of semiconductors that do not need advanced lithography equipment.

The segment of >180 nm node involves mixed signal analog, wide bandgap (GaN, GaAs, Silicon Carbide) for RF and power markets leveraging existing lithography capability already in place at the SCL.

In this scenario, an investment of \$50--\$100 million may result in the **development of Indian solutions** for automotive electronics, PV-Inverters, 5G infra-power amplifiers, railway electronics.

However, the upgrade has to be backed by **subsidies aimed at fabless design houses** with proven design willing to fabricate at the SCL in the 180 nm+ node.

The subsidies have to be aimed at global design companies with products aimed at **India-specific markets** such as motor drives for BLDC fans or e-bike chargers.

The recent efforts by the **India Semiconductor Mission** to open up subsidies to global small and medium sized enterprises in the **upstream supply chain** are welcome. Existing facilities like the SCL will benefit from this. But this should be coupled with more incentives.

The SCL needs a **full time director** with field experience rather than a career scientist from the Department of Space.

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26. [Lahore Lesson – If Pak HC can scrap sedition law, surely SC can do it](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Lahore Lesson – If Pak HC can scrap sedition law, surely SC can do it**” published in **The Times of India** on **1st April 2023**.

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

Relevance: About removing sedition in India.

News: Recently, Lahore High Court has scrapped Pakistan’s sedition law, calling it inconsistent with the country’s constitution. The progressive move should inspire removing sedition in India also.

What is Sedition Law?

Must read: [Sedition Law in India \(Section 124A IPC\) – Explained, pointwise](#)

About the history of Section 124-A

Read here: [Sedition needs a clear definition for it to be retained in law books](#)

About sedition laws in India and Pakistan

The sedition law is a legacy of the colonial penal code for the subcontinent. For example, in the India Penal Code 1860 Section 124A, the section on sedition, was added as an amendment in 1870.

From the very start, Section 124A was used against anti-colonial voices against whom no other charges could be slapped.

Post Independence, this law has been sometimes used to intimidate and silence critics including the opposition, journalists, human rights activists, and even student protesters.

What are the key judgments under the Sedition Law after Independence?

Must read: [Judgements under the Sedition Law](#)

What should be done?

In 2022, the Indian Supreme Court granted the Centre additional time to review the sedition law, telling the Centre to not register fresh FIRs under Section 124A.

Indian government can also consider removing the sedition law in India. As it is often used to punish wrong people for the wrong reasons.

General Studies Paper –3

General Studies - 3

1. [Banking turmoil in the West has placed India at a fork in the road](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Banking turmoil in the West has placed India at a fork in the road**” published in **Live Mint** on **27th March 2023**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Economy – Money and Banking

Relevance: Impact of US bank crisis on the world

News: The failure of three US banks have shaken the global economic crisis and has reminded the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) of 2008. However, the GFC of 2008 is different from the current crisis.

How is the current crisis different from the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) of 2008?

The problem during the GFC was with the credit risk caused by a surge in banks’ bad mortgage loans.

However, the current crisis in US regional banks is due to liquidity risk driven by deposit outflows, and [Silicon Valley Bank’s issues](#).

What are different scenarios emerging from the failure of the bank in the US?

Good scenario: In this, the US Federal Reserve manages to address banks’ liquidity needs via its new bank term-funding programme and its regular discount window.

This would prevent other smaller US banks from selling their assets at a loss. This restores confidence, deposit outflows stabilize and bank runs are avoided.

Bad scenario: It would cause a financial crisis leading to a wave of financial shocks. As seen from last year, there have been instances such as tremors in the cryptocurrency market, the UK pension liability-driven investing crisis and now in US and European banks.

However, in either of the scenarios, there will likely be weaker global growth and recession in both the US and Europe.

Why are recessions likely to happen in the US and Europe?

This is because – **a)** monetary policy takes time to be effective and the impact of the last year’s tightening policy is yet to fully emerge, **b)** the banking turmoil will further **weaken growth through due to tighter lending standards for the banks** and **c)** these shocks can have **ripple effect leading to high cost of capital** which in turn delay the capex by the firms along with increase in the saving.

What will be the potential impact of the crisis on India?

The crisis in the West for India means – **a)** weaker growth and lower inflation, **b)** slowdown in India’s exports and delay in private capital expenditure, **c)** moderate consumer demand due to higher interest rates and increased uncertainty.

It is also expected that India’s GDP growth will be moderate at 5-5.5% in 2023-24.

However, the **overall impact on India will be limited because** both financial and corporate sector balance sheets are stronger. India also has enough foreign exchange reserves to manage any capital account outflows.

Read More: [SVB, Signature Bank collapse: What are ‘Too-Big-To-Fail’ banks, and what makes Indian banks safe](#)

What lies ahead?

The worst inflation is yet to come and therefore, it is necessary for India to create buffers through monetary and fiscal policies.

For monetary policy, a forward-looking approach is needed by assessing the impact of past tightening domestic policy and global spillovers along with increasing scrutiny of macro-economic financial risks.

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For fiscal policy, there is a need to prepare for a potential slowdown in growth and tax revenues by curbing non-essential spending so that countercyclical public capital expenditure is maintained.

2. [Go, Afspa, Go – Every N-E district freed of this draconian law represents an advance. But it's time to consider full repeal](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Go, Afspa, Go – Every N-E district freed of this draconian law represents an advance. But it's time to consider full repeal**” published in **The Times of India** on **27th March 2023**.

Syllabus: GS – 3: Security challenges and their management in border areas.

Relevance: About removal of disturbed area tag.

News: After 2022, the Union home ministry has considerably reduced the number of “disturbed areas” in Assam, Manipur and Nagaland. In its recent review, the “disturbed area” tag has been removed from one more district in Nagaland.

About Armed Forces Special Powers Act or AFSPA

Must read: [Armed Forces Special Powers Act or AFSPA](#)

About AFSPA in North East

Read here: [Explained: AFSPA and the Northeast](#)

At present, eight of Nagaland's 16 districts have AFSPA in full force while in five others, AFSPA is imposed in parts. AFSPA was removed from Tripura in 2015, Meghalaya removed it in 2018 after 27 years. The Centre removed AFSPA from 23 districts – plus partially from another district – of Assam's 36 districts last year.

What will be the way forward?

The government has successfully brought militants to surrender, join peace talks and abandon arms. For example, the 2020 Bodo Accord and the 2021 Karbi-Anglong pact have addressed the root causes of insurgencies. With this, the climate is more amenable to the total removal of AFSPA.

3. [Is Every Bank Too Big to Fail?](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Is Every Bank Too Big to Fail? – US government rescue culture will hurt the global financial system, then growth and living standards everywhere**” published in **The Times of India** on **28th March 2023**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Economy

Relevance: About the US's changing attitude towards rescuing banks and its implications

News: Bank runs in the US have caused global economic shocks and it increases the burden on the government for its rescue. This has been caused by the easy money policy adopted by the US.

What is easy money policy of the US?

In the last few decades, **the easy money policy of the US**, made the US market five times larger than the world economy.

The market in the US was so deeply interconnected that the failure of even a midsize bank had global impacts.

This easy money era was shaped with **low interests and the state's responsibilities to rescue banks** and other economic institutions from crisis.

Even in the present bank runs, the easy money era is being followed. **For instance**, central banks are tightening monetary policy due to the inflation and the government is opting to rescue those which failed.

This rescue mechanism has **turned US from a minimalist state towards maximalist**.

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How has America grown from a minimalist state to maximalist?

Before the Civil War: America in the pre-1929-era was a minimalist state. In those times, economic rescues adopted by the government were rare and were also not controversial. America in had limited government intervention and no central bank. Trust in those times was kept at personal level not at institutional level.

During the American Industrial Revolution: Even during the industrial revolution, the government restrained in intervening into rescuing the economic institutions. This resulted in strong productivity and higher per capita income growth.

During the 1960s-70s: By this time also, people were against government rescue of the economic institutions.

During the 1980s: Free market ideology spread worldwide during this period. It also saw the rise of rescue cultures. Continental Illinois became the first US bank to fail.

FDIC extended unlimited protection to Continental depositors of the bank just as it recently did for SVB depositors.

During the 1990s: The first preventive rescue came in the late 1990s. The Fed organised support for Long Term Capital Management in order to avoid the threat of a systemic financial crisis.

Post-1990s: The US government in 2008 and 2010 attempted a larger rescue. It rescued big Wall Street banks in 2008.

And in 2020, the government took preemptive measures to rescue everyone including individuals and companies of all sizes, including those lacking solid collateral.

The Fed and Treasury combined spent trillions of dollars in loans and bailouts to thousands of companies across finance and other industries at home and abroad.

What are the implications of adopting maximalism?

Maximalism has led to a massive misallocation of capital and a surge in the number of zombie firms.

In the US, total factor productivity growth fell from 2% between 1870 and the early 1970s to 0.5% after 2008. This maximalist culture, instead of re-energizing the economy, is destabilizing the global financial system.

Hence, the government intervention eases the pain of crises but over time lowers productivity, economic growth and living standards.

4. [Let satellites terminate patchy internet coverage](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “Let satellites terminate patchy internet coverage” published in Mint on 28th March 2023.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Science and Technology

Relevance: expanding role of ISRO and digital connectivity

News: The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) has recently placed 36 OneWeb satellites in orbit.

What does this signify for India?

The satellites were placed in orbit using LVM-3 as a satellite launch vehicle. This has proved the reliability of the launch vehicle.

Further, the mission has also earned the reputation for the Indian space agency globally, because of the lower cost it offered for the mission.

About OneWeb Satellites

Read Here: [ISRO puts 36 OneWeb satellites in orbit](#)

OneWeb plans on launching services in India this July or August. It could extend the internet to parts of the country that either remain deprived of access or suffer poor connectivity.

India must utilize this opportunity and make the internet accessible in the remotest area.

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What steps have been taken by India to promote digital connectivity?

The **Digital India Program** is one of the steps towards promoting digitization.

The government is also coming up with a **spectrum policy**. However, concerns such as allocation or auction of airwaves, revenue generation, etc., still remain with the policy.

Whatever be the case, **India would need transparency in its policy** and not let delays arise from indecision. Because it would be unfortunate if other factors held India back from expanding the internet while technology is present.

What is the way ahead?

Even though India has earned a reputation worldwide for launching OneWeb satellites, the **concerns of internet shutdowns in India still remain**. For example, last year, India had more [internet shutdowns](#) than any other country.

Therefore, India must achieve the promise of full access reliability in order to fulfil its digital dreams. **This means that internet connectivity should not be cut unless there is an extreme national emergency.**

5. [Principles underlying tax architecture need wider debate](#)

Source- The post is based on the article “Principles underlying tax architecture need wider debate” published in “The Indian Express” on 28th March 2023.

Syllabus: GS3- Government budgeting

Relevance- Issues related to taxation

News- Recently, the Finance Bill 2023 was passed by voice vote in the Lok Sabha last week with 64 amendments.

What is the contentious decision related to amendments?

There was a decision to scrap the **tax benefit for debt mutual funds**. From April 1, investors in debt mutual funds cannot avail the **benefit of indexation** for calculation of **long-term capital gains**.

These investments will now be taxed at income tax rates applicable to an individual's tax slab.

What is the meaning of indexation for calculation of long-term capital gains?

Indexation means adjusting the cost of funds by **taking inflation into consideration**. It is offered to **debt fund investors** if the investment is **redeemed after 36 months**.

In the case of debt funds, long-term capital gains were taxed at 20% with indexation benefits. This benefit brought down an **investor's tax liability**.

What will be the impact of the decision to scrap the tax benefit for debt mutual funds?

There are concerns that the withdrawal of the benefit will affect investors. They will **reassess their allocations** to debt mutual funds. This may impact flows into these funds.

Debt mutual funds channel funds into the bond market. This move may be **detrimental to the growth and development** of the bond market in India.

According to a report by Crisil, **70% of the investment in debt funds** flows from institutional investors. Individual investors accounted for 27%. This will possibly affect flows to the **corporate bond market** and thus demand for corporate debt is likely to be impacted.

The difference between bank deposits and debt funds needs to be considered. Bank deposits are insured up to Rs 5 lakh. Debt mutual funds do carry risk depending on the risk profile of the bonds they hold.

What is the way forward for taxation structure in India?

Capital gains architecture in India needs to be **reexamined and reconfigured**. There are **different rates of taxation for different asset classes**. **Rationalisation of tax rate and the holding period** is desirable.

The principles underlying the tax architecture in India need to be **widely discussed and debated**.

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6. [This helicopter programme cannot go into a tailspin](#)

Source- The post is based on the article “**This helicopter programme cannot go into a tailspin**” published in “**The Hindu**” on **28th March 2023**.

Syllabus: GS3- Security

Relevance: Issues related to defence equipments

News- Recently, Dhruv helicopter in the Indian Navy’s newly acquired fleet of ALH Mk-III MRs experienced a sudden loss of power and rapid loss of height near Mumbai.

In another incident on March 26, an Indian Coast Guard ALH Mk-III MR (CG-855) on a test flight, crashed at Cochin International Airport soon after takeoff from the Coast Guard base at the airport.

What is the major cause behind the helicopter accidents?

Majority of accidents related to the ALH fleet have been caused by **critical failure or breakage in the flight control chain**. Therefore, certification of ALH requires a **level of reliability** of these systems.

Yet, there have been at least four or five reported cases of a sudden loss of control on the ALH due to breakages in flight control rods. The Mumbai incident indicates that not enough has been done to fix serious flaws.

Why is there a need for quick action to remove the faults causing helicopter accidents?

The **focus on safety** is a necessity. The fleet cannot remain grounded for long as these helicopters are a lifeline to defence personnel in many remote defence posts. These will now have to be serviced by an ageing Chetak/Cheetah fleet.

Flaws in design, production, quality control or certification may also impact the civil and export potential of the ALH.

There is much more at stake than reputation such as the **safety and longevity of all subsequent derivatives** like the Light Utility Helicopter. More than 300 of these machines form the backbone of the vertical lift service in the Indian military. There has to be a **quick action**.

7. [Sterilisation is the best way to address stray dog problem](#)

Source- The post is based on the article “Sterilisation is the best way to address stray dog problem” published in “The Indian Express” on 25th March 2023.

Syllabus: GS3- Environment

Relevance- Issues related to stray animals

News- The article explains the challenges associated with mass killing and confinement of stray dogs.

What are statistics related to the number of deaths caused by Rabies in India?

According to the 2021 edition of **National Health Profile**, there were 105 cases of human death from rabies in India in 2019. The 2018 edition put the figure at 97 in 2017.

According to the relevant preceding **annual National Health Profiles**, there were 86 human deaths from rabies in 2016, 113 in 2015, 125 in 2014 and 132 in 2013.

What are arguments against the confining stray dogs in facilities or killing them?

Not in accordance with the Animal Birth Control(ABC) programme- Under the ABC programme, street dogs are picked up from an area, **sterilised and vaccinated against rabies**, and returned to the same area.

They keep **unsterilised and unvaccinated** dogs out. The authorities can concentrate on **sterilising and vaccinating** new areas until all stray dogs in a city or district are covered.

Killing all dogs in an area would enable **unsterilised, unvaccinated dogs** to come in. The authorities will have to **return again and again** to the same area to kill the new arrivals.

Until the **promulgation of the ABC Rules**, the number of stray dogs continued to increase in India despite relentless mass killings.

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Huge investment– India will have to invest thousands of crores of rupees to set up **necessary infrastructure** and deploy lakhs of people to catch dogs, operate them and take care of them. Housing and feeding stray dogs permanently in “facilities” will require a **continuous flow of funds**. A huge amount of money will be required for buying injection syringes and lethal drugs for killing, and the safe disposal of bodies.

No evidence in support of killings– Humane euthanasia does not help. As per the **WHO’s Expert Committee on Rabies**, there is no evidence that the removal of dogs has a significant impact on dog population densities and the spread of rabies.

Authorities confronted by problems caused by these stray dogs have turned to **mass destruction** in the hope of finding a quick solution. But, it does not resolve the stray dogs problem.

What are other benefits associated with the ABC programme?

The ABC programme reduces cases of dog bites. Sterilised bitches **do not go into heat**. Fights among dogs over bitches don’t happen. This fight raises their **aggression levels**.

The **rise in aggression levels** when they are guarding their puppies against threats will be reduced. Many get bitten while **teasing, hitting, or trying** to take away puppies.

8. [Centre has been lifting AFSPA in the Northeast incrementally. This must continue](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Centre has been lifting AFSPA in the Northeast incrementally. This must continue**” published in the **Indian Express** on **28th March 2023**.

Syllabus: GS – 3: Security challenges and their management in border areas.

Relevance: About removal of disturbed area tags and insurgencies from North East.

News: The Centre has lifted the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 from more police station limits in Assam, Manipur and Nagaland. This is the second time in a year that the Centre has reduced areas under AFSPA in the Northeast. This highlights the reduction of insurgencies from North East.

What are the areas under AFSPA at present?

Read here: [Go, Afspa, Go – Every N-E district freed of this draconian law represents an advance. But it’s time to consider full repeal](#)

About Armed Forces Special Powers Act or AFSPA

Must read: [Armed Forces Special Powers Act or AFSPA](#)

About AFSPA in North East

The prevalence of insurgencies is felt in almost all states in the Northeast. For example, the Naga rebellion since the 1940s, the Mizo uprising since the 1960s, radical Left groups in Manipur in the 1970s, and the ULFA in Assam in the 1980s. This necessitated the imposition of the AFSPA. The Army was sent in because the civil administration had failed to control the situation.

Read here: [Explained: AFSPA and the Northeast](#)

How does the government reduce insurgencies from North East?

a) Since the ceasefire with Nagas in 1997, successive governments have pushed for talks with the rebels, **b)** Assam has negotiated with its rebels — Ulfa, Bodo and Dimasa groups — despite stray incidents, **c)** The Mizo rebels, who signed a peace accord in 1986 when Rajiv Gandhi was prime minister, joined electoral politics in Mizoram and won office, and **d)** The Tripura government has successfully negotiated the insurgency and got the AFSPA removed in 2015.

What should be done to utilise the reduction in insurgencies from North East?

Recently, the Manipur government had withdrawn the ongoing ceasefire pact with two Kuki militant groups. They were among the 25 Kuki-Chin-Mizo militant groups with which the state had signed a “Suspension of Operations” agreement.

A stable Northeast is extremely important, especially when Myanmar is in crisis. So, the government has to maintain a balance between regional and ethnic identity assertion and nationalism.

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9. [Waste Is Winning – Cities’ effluent management is way behind target and a health hazard. Eco-friendly, inexpensive solutions exist](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Waste Is Winning – Cities’ effluent management is way behind target and a health hazard. Eco-friendly, inexpensive solutions exist**” published in **The Times of India** on **28th March 2023**.

Syllabus: GS – 3: Pollution.

Relevance: About sewage treatment in India.

News: Recently, nodal pollution body, Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has found all 18 drains of Delhi that empty treated wastewater into the Yamuna fall short of chemical standards mandated before any drain reaches the river. It also found that around 22% of Delhi’s untreated waste ends up in Yamuna.

About India’s Wastewater generation and sewage treatment capacity

As per a Niti Aayog report, “of 72,368 million litres of urban wastewater that India generates daily, only 28% is treated.” That means 72% of wastewater is untreated and “maybe disposed of in rivers/lakes/groundwater”.

At least three laws, over 10 government policies and missions are functioning since 1985 to tackle India’s wastewater, polluted and dead rivers problems. But still, India is not completely addressed the issue.

What are the contributing factors to poor sewage treatment in India?

Wastewater, and sewage treatment in India is abysmal. This is because **a)** India lacks the legal and political will, **b)** Fewer funds are allocated for sewage treatment, **c)** Limited availability of land in urban areas for sewage treatment plants. Further, residents are also in fear of an economic hit as the odour and aesthetics lower land prices in their area, **d)** The regulations are not strict and there is an absence of an oversight framework, **e)** Lack of civic awareness about the problem, **f)** Due to urbanisation, the influx of migrants into cities has increased manifold and resultant population growth in urban areas and **g)** Illegal dumping, poorly managed drainage systems, multiple leakages, and conventional technology in existing treatment plants are other issues.

All this led to the widening of the gap between sewage treatment capacities and sewage generated.

What should be done to improve sewage treatment in India?

1) Some Chinese cities addressed sewage treatment by building plants underground. This can be done in India as well, **2)** India needs to prioritise waste management before it starts constructing wetlands and urban water bodies, **c)** India should utilise the decentralised wastewater plants as they are an inexpensive and ecologically sustainable way to address the problem.

10. [Understanding the street dogs-human conflict](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Understanding the street dogs-human conflict**” published in “**The Hindu**” on **28th March 2023**.

Syllabus: GS3- Environment – Man- Animal Conflicts

Relevance– Issues related to stray animals

News– There is growing Intolerance against dogs and conflicts between humans and animals are increasing.

What are the reasons behind growing intolerance towards street dogs?

Resident Welfare Associations– They are often the **instigators of violence**. They do not have real power. Power demands that an enemy be identified. So, dogs living there peacefully become the target.

Animal instincts– Dogs get **aggressive** when they perceive a threat. They want to protect themselves or their litter from attacks if they are unwell or hungry.

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They become aggressive if they are forcibly relocated, or have witnessed abuse and neglect.

Implementation of rules– The **Animal Birth Control (Dogs) Rules of 2001** have been recommended by the WHO and the World Organisation for Animal Health as the only way to bring about a sustained decline in the dog population.

However, necessary measures have not been implemented by local authorities to manage the street dog population.

The **lack of budget and infrastructure, the prevalence of corrupt and inefficient practices, and the absence of transparency and monitoring** are the challenges in implementation.

Fascination for foreign breeds– It is responsible for bad treatment of native breeds. Business of Pet shops thrive due to it.

What are steps taken by the government to regulate foreign breeds?

In 2016, the Central government **prohibited the import of pedigree dogs** into India. In 2017, it notified Rules for strictly regulating dog breeders.

In 2018, following a **recommendation by the Law Commission**, the Pet Shop Rules were notified to prevent the trade of pedigree dogs.

What is the importance of street dogs?

If there is a vacuum created by killings of dogs, it will be occupied by a **more inconvenient species**, such as rats, mice, mongoose and cockroaches.

The **London Plague of 1665** was a result of the killing of 2,50,000 dogs and cats. The mice population grew, and 70% of the human population was wiped out. A similar incident happened in Surat in the near past, when a plague scare was spread as a result of removing dogs.

What is the way forward to reduce the conflicts between humans and dogs?

The **effective strategy** would be the **implementation of the ABC(Animal Birth Control) Programme** by municipal bodies in accordance with the **new ABC Rules of 2023**.

A **proactive approach** would be to **encourage the adoption of Indian dogs**. If one person out of every 100 people adopts a dog from the street, there would be no dogs on the roads.

The **native breeds** of dogs should be promoted. Native dogs have **better immune systems** and make great pets.

The importance of people who look after native dogs on the streets has been recognised by our courts. In the new ABC Rules, community dog caregivers have been granted protection from harassment.

Reports of dog attacks must be tested on the **benchmark of proof**. Recently, it was reported that two children had been killed by dogs in Vasant Kunj in New Delhi. Still, it has not been proven.

[11. A disturbing example of the normalisation of lawfare](#)

Source– The post is based on the article **“A disturbing example of the normalisation of lawfare”** published in **“The Hindu”** on **25th March 2023**.

Syllabus: GS3- Polity – Parliament and State legislatures—structure, functioning, conduct of business

Relevance– Issues related to disqualification of representatives

News– Recently, Rahul Gandhi was disqualified from the membership of Lok Sabha after two year imprisonment in defamation case.

What are issues with the court judgement in the defamation case of Rahul Gandhi?

Legal reasoning– The complainant claimed that by virtue of his surname, he and all other people having surname “Modi” had been defamed by Mr. Gandhi’s remark.

The **law of defamation** is clear that if references are made to an **indefinite “class” of people**, an individual cannot claim that they are a member of that class. Therefore, they have been defamed.

For example, if I say that “all lawyers are thieves”, a lawyer cannot come to court and say that they have been defamed.

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The “class of all persons in the world bearing the surname Modi” is a **indefinite and indeterminate group**.

Quantum of the sentence– Criminal defamation has a maximum penalty of two years’ imprisonment. This ‘maximum penalty’ is very rarely awarded. Defamation is a **pure speech offence**.

People should not be imprisoned for lengthy periods purely on the **basis of their statement**. There are almost **no recorded instances** of courts awarding the maximum sentence of two years in a criminal defamation case.

The quantum of sentence was exactly that which was needed to attract an MP’s disqualification from Parliament. Indeed, immediately after the judgement, Mr. Gandhi was disqualified. At that point, the judgement had not even been translated.

Why disqualification proceedings against Rahul Gandhi is not good for India parliamentary democracy?

The disqualification proceedings are another example of **delegitimizing the opponent**. The Representation of the People Act provides for disqualification.

Disqualifying an elected member of a legislature is an **extremely serious action** in a parliamentary democracy. It leaves them **without representation** until a by-election is announced and the seat is filled.

For this reason, the Representation of the People Act kept a parliamentarian’s disqualification in abeyance until at least one appellate body **could scrutinise** the initial order of conviction.

Why striking down provisions related to the three month period given to the legislature for appeal in the Lily Thomas case affects the political process?

The Supreme Court reasoned that the convicted politician could always move the appellate court for a stay upon their conviction. However, this interpretation **concentrates more power** in the hands of courts when it comes to the political process.

The Lok Sabha Secretariat issued the **disqualification order** before the convicted individual’s lawyers moved for a stay. So, the **protection** the Court thought was available is **not sufficient**. The Lily Thomas judgement is just one of many examples where the Supreme Court has **intervened in the political process**. It has made the **delegitimization of opponents** easier.

It is concerning because one crucial component of the legitimacy of courts is their reputation for **impartiality between contending political forces**.

12. Understanding the street dogs-human conflict

Source– The post is based on the article “**Understanding the street dogs-human conflict**” published in “**The Hindu**” on **29th March 2023**.

Syllabus: GS3- Science and Technology. GS2- E-governance

Relevance– Issues related to regulation of digital space

News– The Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Bill 2022 was proposed recently. It provides a framework to safeguard citizens’ information from misuse and unauthorised access.

What is the approach followed by the Digital Personal Data Protection Bill 2022?

The current draft of the Bill tries to tackle the issue of **conflicting sectoral regulations**. It states that the provisions of the Bill will **complement and not create exemptions** from existing regulations. But, in case of conflict, the Bill will take precedence.

The Bill raises concerns about **sectoral regulations** that may go beyond what the Bill provides.

What is the importance of sectoral expertise?

Data protection and privacy are highly dependent on **context**, including the type of data collected, how it is collected, the intended use and the associated risks. This makes **sectoral expertise** crucial to **regulate effectively**.

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Sectoral expertise offers a deep understanding of a particular sector, including its **market dynamics, technologies, risks and business models**. It also enables regulators to **engage with stakeholders and industry experts** in a well informed and productive manner.

What are the major approaches adopted by the global community to regulate privacy and protect data?

They are comprehensive legislation and sector -specific regulations.

Comprehensive approach– The **European Union’s General Data Protection Regulation** is the comprehensive approach.

The GDPR, despite being a **comprehensive framework**, has specific provisions for certain industries such as health care.

GDPR also permits EU Member States to implement measures which go beyond the provisions given in the GDPR. For example, Germany has stricter provisions compared to the GDPR.

The **European Data Protection Board** is made up of representatives from each EU member state’s data protection authority. It provides **guidance on the implementation and interpretation** of the GDPR, including sector specific issues.

Sectoral approach– The sectoral approach is **followed in the United States**. It is seen through laws such as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act in health care, and the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act for the financial sector. It consists of **regulations tailored to specific industries**.

What are issues with the American sectoral approach to data protection?

There are issues related to **inconsistent protection, problems in enforcement, overlapping and contradictory provisions, and a lack of federal regulation**.

This creates confusion and coverage gaps for businesses. There is **no centralised authority** to enforce data protection laws. It leads to a **lack of standardisation**.

What is the way forward for regulation of data in India?

The GDPR model may not work for India as the The Data Protection Board is designed as a **grievance agency, and not as a regulator**.

The current draft of the Bill needs **greater clarity and specificity** regarding the interaction with sectoral regulations. There is a need to draw from our experience to find the right balance.

In India, we already have sectoral regulations regarding data protection such as the Reserve Bank of India’s directive on storage of payment data. These are the result of **extensive industry consultations and expert input**.

Neglecting these regulations and establishing a new framework would **undermine the considerable effort** invested in their creation. It will require the industry to **readjust their operations** again at considerable cost.

The DPDP Bill must serve as the **minimum layer of protection**, with sectoral regulators having the ability to build on these protections.

Data protection is a **complex subject**. There is a need to create room for **sectoral experts** to **safeguard the interests of citizens** more effectively.

[13. Blended finance can fill investment gaps to meet SDGs](#)

Source: This post is created based on the article “**Blended finance can fill investment gaps to meet SDGs**”, published in Live Mint on 29th March 2023.

Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 3 – Indian Economy – Finance instruments

Context: Blended finance can help to meet SDGs by filling investment.

During covid-19, several producers of raw materials fell short of working capital required to for face masks, vaccines and supply chains.

To tackle this issue, a blended financing entity called Sustainable Access to Markets and Resources for Innovative Delivery of Healthcare (Samridh) was launched. The scheme was

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launched with the help of multiple stakeholders including Indian government, USAID, The Rockefeller Foundation and many more.

What was the significance of Samridh scheme?

The scheme assisted over 25 million people and deployed over \$16 million in philanthropic funds to over 60 social enterprises.

It has mobilized a capital pool of \$300 million to offer both grant and debt financing provisions to healthcare enterprises and innovators. It helped sustain their operations.

How blended finance mechanism are attractive to investors?

Blended finance lets investors choose different risk tolerances, while all participating in the same project. It means different investors can choose different risk and return mix in the same investment.

It incentivizes and mobilizes private capital into the business where investment is hard to come. To mitigate risks, blended finance initiatives offer technical support, capacity-building aid, relevant data and tools for impact measurement, monitoring and evaluation.

Successive grants are outcome-based, which is based on achieving set milestones for further funding.

Why there is a need for blended finance mechanism to achieve SDGs?

According to the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights, there is currently an annual shortfall of \$4 trillion in developing countries.

A policy brief by the G20's Think 20 Engagement Group highlights that several nations of the Global South are likely to fall short of their 2030 [sustainable development goals \(SDGs\)](#) on account of a funding gap.

Low-income regions find it harder to attract funding, due to small economy size, high regulatory complexity and country-specific risks. Moreover, relying solely on philanthropy and government funding cannot address transnational challenges.

Therefore, blended finance can be helpful, where investors hardly invest.

Innovative blending can **support project preparation and solve information gaps**, enabling investment in multiple projects. It can work at the institutional level by blending public subsidies in the market to encourage private investments.

Global crises like climate change and food insecurity can be handled using blended finance. In the G20 Sustainable Finance Roadmap also, India has emphasized the need to adopt innovative financing methods and can help the Global South develop blended finance instruments to meet SDGs.

Developing nations require an environment that lets private investments thrive, which calls for activating policies that allow private players and philanthropies to support their growth.

14. [RIP Sasha: India's dream of its own cheetah population rests on her companions](#)

Source: The post is based on the article **"RIP Sasha: India's dream of its own cheetah population rests on her companions"** published in the **Indian Express** on **29th March 2023**.

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

Relevance: About Sasha's death on India's cheetah reintroduction project.

News: Sasha, one of the eight Namibian cheetahs translocated to Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh has died due to kidney infection. The infection is reportedly picked up while in captivity in Namibia.

About Sasha, Cheetah Reintroduction Project and Kuno National Park

Read here: [Cheetah Sasha dies due to kidney ailment in Madhya Pradesh's Kuno National Park](#)

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About Cheetah range countries

Cheetahs' smaller, lighter Asiatic cousins once ranged across the swathe of land from the Indian subcontinent to the Arabian peninsula. They are now declared critically endangered, found only in Iran now. That too only 12 — nine males and three females — remain.

This is because of **a)** a decline in prey, **b)** loss of habitat and **c)** the rise in trophy hunting.

In India, the last three recorded cheetahs are believed to have been felled by Maharaja Ramanuj Pratap Singh Deo of Surguja in 1947.

What is the present state of India's cheetah reintroduction project?

Captive cheetahs, like domestic cats, are known to be especially prone to kidney disease. On the other hand, kidney disease is rarely seen in their wild counterparts. Among 8 cheetahs brought from Namibia, one male and one female have been released into the wild.

15. [GDPs Without Borders – That even Japan is open now to immigration shows what mistakes other aging, rich countries are making](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**GDPs Without Borders – That even Japan is open now to immigration shows what mistakes other aging, rich countries are making**” published in **The Times of India** on **29th March 2023**.

Syllabus: GS – 3: Employment.

Relevance: About global worker shortages and the role of the immigrant workforce.

News: The Japanese agriculturalists are now recruiting farm labour from across the Indian countryside. This is because Indians are willing to climb up Japanese mountains to cut and carry down Koyamaki (umbrella pines).

This is a win-win for both, as India has an overabundance of young farmers and the declining Japanese economy is facing worker shortages. Further, migrants also send money back to India.

How global nations are tackling worker shortages?

Many countries, like Japan, are having ageing populations. These countries are fully aware that expanding the immigrant workforce will expand their tax base, innovation, productivity, GDP et al.

IMF and others have also found that aggregate gains from the immigrant workforce can materialise very quickly.

What are the alternative methods tried by global nations to tackle worker shortages?

Efforts for raising national birth rates: This method is a complete failure. For example, in Japan itself, the population has changed little since 1991.

Create barriers to immigration: Rich countries' that keep the barriers to immigration not only hurts the poorer origin countries but also the rich countries also.

Read more: [Stopping the boats: On the U.K.'s new 'Illegal Migration Law'](#)

What needs to be done to facilitate a more immigrant workforce in future?

Countries like China and America's futures will likely be scripted by their exceptional attractiveness to migrants. A full embrace of immigrant workers will cheer the global economy and create GDPs Without Borders.

16. [State budgets may be too optimistic about their capital expenditure](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**State budgets may be too optimistic about their capital expenditure**” published in **The Indian Express** on **30th March 2023**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Budgeting

Relevance: analysis of states' budget.

News: Many states have come with their state budget. The article discusses the trend emerging out of the budget of the states.

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What are the different trends emerging from the states' budget?

First, states have estimated their revenue receipts to grow at a slower pace in the coming financial year. **States expect their revenue growth to slow down from 19 percent in 2022-23 to around 13 percent in 2023-24.** This is due to the expectations of a slowing economy.

Second, some states, such as Bihar and Telangana, expect their own tax and non-tax revenues to grow more rapidly in the coming fiscal year. **These earnings are so large that they exceed the nominal GDP growth anticipated in the Union budget.**

This higher revenue estimate comes at a time when the RBI expects a drop in economic growth from 7% in 2022-23 to 6.4 percent in 2023-24. Therefore, any shortfall in the revenue collection would affect the capex of the state.

Third, some states have forecasted much slower spending growth in the coming fiscal year. **Spending, which was above 20% in 2022-23, is anticipated to fall to 10% in 2023-24.**

States are expected to spend **1 percent of their GSDP on transport, 2.5 percent of GSDP on health, nutrition, social and family welfare.**

Some states have also continued to **prioritize debt management.** While state spending on committed expenditures (salaries, pensions, and interest payments) is expected to increase at approximately the same rate as last fiscal year.

Fourth, even though most of these states anticipate their revenue deficits to shrink in the coming year, the budget does not call for significant fiscal consolidation. **This means that a larger percentage of state borrowings will be used to fund capital spending.** Further, most states do not expect a sizeable reduction in their debt to GSDP ratios in the coming years.

Fifth, Capital expenditure by states is expected to rise above 3% of GSDP, exceeding revenue expenditure in the coming year. This is consistent with the central's government's expenditure priorities.

A higher budgetary allocation over capex is good but still concerns of remain.

What are the concerns with capital expenditure?

As per ICRA's estimates, states have spent just around half of what has been budgeted for, in the first 10 months of the year (April-January). **This implies that states are unlikely to achieve their capex targets for the year.**

Further, spending patterns of the states will depend on their revenues and therefore, **an inability to meet this year's targets will also raise questions over whether the targets for next year can be met or not.**

What is the way ahead?

States account for a sizeable share of public sector investments in the economy. Hence, slower growth in state capex implies that the overall public sector growth will be weaker both this and the next year.

[17. Import substitution can set climate action back](#)

Source: The post is based on the article **"Import substitution can set climate action back"** published in the **Livemint** on **30th March 2023.**

Syllabus: GS – 3: Energy.

Relevance: About India's solar panel producers.

News: India has set a target of 500GW of carbon-free capacity by 2030 (The present capacity is 122GW). The government is using public funds to spur the local production of solar panels by private players.

Import substitution under Atmanirbhar Bharat is India's biggest policy shift in recent times. But that is failing to provide results for India's renewable energy sector.

About India's solar panel imports and steps to curb imports

China has been the world's big supplier of solar panels. Imports accounted for over four-fifths of the panels set up in India until last year.

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To curb these imports, **a)** India imposed a safeguard duty of 15% on Chinese and Malaysian imports that were allegedly being dumped—sold below their cost of manufacture, **b)** India is charging a 40% import duty on photovoltaic modules and 25% on cells, and **c)** The government is providing an incentive scheme for polysilicon and wafers to solar cells and modules.

What are the challenges India is facing with import substitution?

a) Over half the incentive schemes fund is going to only three firms, **b)** The job gains from the incentive scheme is modest, **c)** Domestic panel-makers were still unable to compete with global players, and **d)** Import barriers allow India's local market to function at policy-elevated price levels.

Note: *Module prices of imported goods are exactly 40% higher than the local goods. But the profit motive of private producers are selling their modules at par with the imported price.*

-India and the world are **not exploring the logic of permitting global market forces in renewable space to reduce fossil fuels** applications in energy needs. So, import substitution might be a setback for climate action targets.

-Of the 280GW of solar capacity aimed for by 2030, India has only a little above 64GW right now. With import substitution, the pace might be delayed.

Read more: [India plans to export solar power: official](#)

What should India do to make India's solar panel producers competitive?

If India's overall aim is to reduce carbon exhaust, then it should be done at the lowest possible cost. The best way to make Indian industries competitive is by dropping duties and capping local prices by exposing Indian industries to global competition.

Read more: [What it will take to fulfill India's solar power dream](#)

18. [The issues with the Quality Control Orders for fibres](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**The issues with the Quality Control Orders for fibres**” published in **The Hindu** on **31st March 2023**.

Syllabus: **GS 3 – Growth and Development**

Relevance: **about revised Quality Control Orders (QCO) for textile industry**

News: The article discusses the revised **Quality Control Orders (QCO) issued for the textile industry**.

About revised Quality Control Orders (QCO)

A revised Quality Control Orders (**QCO**) have been issued for fibres (**cotton, polyester and viscose**). These fibres constitute the basic raw materials for the majority of the Indian textile and clothing industry.

Under the revised QCO, international manufacturers of these fibres, who supply to India, are also mandated to get a certificate of quality control from the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS).

BIS is the certifying authority for the QCOs.

What is the aim of the revised Quality Control Orders (QCO)?

The Indian textiles manufacturers import fibres due to the cost competitiveness, non-availability in the domestic market, or to meet a specified demand of the overseas buyer.

The fibres imported are often sub-quality and cheaper which does not cater the demand of the buyers.

Therefore, **the main aim of the QCO is to control import of sub-quality and cheaper items and to ensure that customers get quality products.**

What are the challenges associated with the revised QCO?

First, it is difficult to get a BIS certificate as it involves cost and many would not be interested in getting the certificate.

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This will make the Indian textile manufacturers, who are dependent on these suppliers for the raw material, to either look at other suppliers or lose orders.

Second, BIS officials have to visit the manufacturing unit abroad before issuing the certificate. This makes the process time consuming and the process is yet to be completed for all suppliers who have already applied for the BIS registration.

There is also no clarity on the fibres that were shipped to India before the certification.

Third, the domestic and international textile buyers have established a supply chain over the years and **BIS certification may cause disruptions** to it.

Fourth, some varieties of viscose or polyester fibres have special functional properties and separate **HS (Harmonised Commodity Description and Coding System)** code when imported. The textile industry imports just small quantities of such fibres and restricting its availability will deny Indian consumers of niche products.

Fifth, there is also a fear of **costs going up for basic garments**.

What can be the way ahead?

First, the textile industry is of the view that import of specialty fibres that are used as blends with other fibres should be made available without restriction.

Second, any overseas applicant for the BIS certificate should get it without delay after inspection.

Third, concerns exist regarding textile units using inferior fibres that aren't covered by the QCO, and financial assistance required by MSME yarn mills to set up laboratories to test quality of the products.

Therefore, the QCO should be applied only after the uncertainties have been resolved and the anomalies have been corrected.

19. [Women Not In Job Market? It's A Myth](#)

Source: The post is based on the article "**Women Not In Job Market? It's A Myth**" published in **The Times of India** on **31st March 2023**.

Syllabus: **GS 3 – Economic development: Indian Economy and issues relating to growth, development and employment.**

Relevance: **Abut female labour force participation rate**

News: The [Periodic Labour Force Survey \(PLFS\)](#) often in its various reports has shown low female labour force participation rate (FLFPR) in India. However, this might not be true.

Why is low female labour force participation rate (FLFPR) shown in India?

FLFPR is shown low despite the fact that **15% of pilots in India are women which is the highest in the world**. And, as per the **World Bank**, 42.7% of women in India were STEM graduates in 2018.

The low FLFPR as per the PLFS is because India fails the "**smell test**" or the "**duck test**". This implies that the actual FLFPR is higher from what is shown.

Further, NSSO data for 2004/05 showed FLFPR to be 35% but in 2011/12 this figure dropped to 26.1%

The reason behind the decline in FLFPR is because of the **changed definition of the ILO from 2011**.

The changed ILO definitions says that production towards home consumption (e.g., care-taking of cattle for milk consumed at home) would no longer be counted as "work for pay or profit". This dropped millions of women from FLFPR.

Note: Duck test refers to identification of something by its habitual characteristics.

Must Read: [PLFS findings on FLFPR: More women in the labour force must not lead us to complacency](#)

How can there be an increase in the FLFPR?

FLPR can be **increased by the enrolment of women in India at all levels of education**.

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The new generation (between 25 and 30 years) will cause the FLFPR to increase because higher education leads to greater work participation.

Further, **Indian women have a fertility rate less than the replacement rate of 2.1 and dropping.** And attitudes around the world (and in India) towards childcare are changing. Therefore, having babies is no longer a constraint towards FLFPR.

What is the way ahead?

First, there has been an **increase in female enrolment in higher education**, i.e., from two-fifths of male enrolment in 1983 to now 83%. The ratio is 95% in the dominant enrolment age group of 15-22 years.

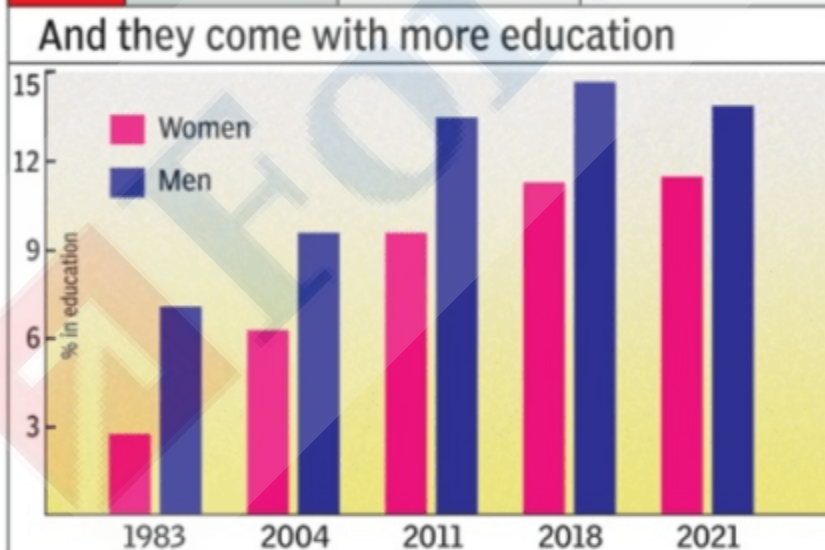
Second, labour force participation rates for women are now equal to, or higher, than the level observed in 2011 (if no change in ILO definition is considered).

Third, adjusted weekly LFPR status for all women is now at 38.7%, which is two percentage points above 2011.

Therefore, the issue of low FLFPR given by the PLFS in its various reports should not be considered as a matter of concern.

The growing enrollment with increasing FLFPR must be acknowledged by the policy makers and international organizations.

Year	Usual Status	Weekly Status	Weekly Status*
1983	44.4	31.9	34.7
2004	42.7	37.3	43.7
2011	31.2	27.2	36.9
2018	24.5	21.6	33
2021	32.8	27.2	38.7



Source: NSSO/PLFS data for various years. Note: All data is for age 15 and above. Weekly status* refers to LFPR when education is also considered "work"

Source: Times of India

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Note: Three different definitions of LFPR are – weekly status, long-term employment (usual status), and weekly LFPR adjusted for education (i.e., one is considered “in work force” if attending school).

20. Laud the failure of J&J’s shot at patent evergreening

Source- The post is based on the article “**Laud the failure of J&J’s shot at patent evergreening**” published in the “**mint**” on **30th March 2023**.

Syllabus: GS3- Science and Technology

Relevance- Issues related to patents

News- Last week, when the Indian Patent Office rejected an application by Johnson & Johnson (J&J) to extend its patent on its TB drug Bedaquiline beyond its primary patent’s expiry this July.

Why is there a need for proactive action against TB?

TB is an **ancient airborne disease**. It is one of the **deadliest infectious killers**. According to the **WHO**, 10.6 million were infected by the disease in 2021 and an estimated 1.6 million people died.

India bears the **world’s largest burden** of TB as well as its multi-drug resistant version (MDR-TB).

Due to **resistance to existing medications**, **strains** have emerged that could evade the effects of various drugs. It means **fewer treatment options, lower survival rates and a much longer duration of treatment**.

The drugs have **harrowing side effects** ranging from kidney and liver disorders to permanent deafness.

What are some facts about the Bedaquiline drug?

It is used against **advanced TB**. It has improved **cure rates**. It is also observed to be a **safer alternative to injectables** such as Kanamycin and Amikacin.

WHO has advised the countries to scale up its use, with certain caveats.

What are provisions in the Indian patent act to safeguard the interests of citizens?

The Indian patent act has special provisions to **prevent evergreening**. These were introduced through an **amendment to the Indian Patents Act in 2005**.

It ensures that a patent is not granted to a new form or use of a known substance, unless the modification shows **enhanced efficacy**.

These provisions have acted as important **public-health safeguards**. It has allowed the timely entry of generics and helped to bring down the cost of life-saving drugs. It makes them **more accessible**.

What will be the future implications of the order?

The failure of J&J’s **evergreening attempt** will let other drug-makers manufacture and sell this life-saving drug after July 2023. **Competition** will ensure its price drop.

The national TB programme currently relies on J&J supplies for its Bedaquiline requirement. It will be able to procure the drug from other players expected to enter the market.

India **exports generic drugs** to several low-income countries where **TB prevalence** is high. So, patients elsewhere will also be able to access this drug at **reasonable cost**.

21. The country mustn’t get entangled in a web of fake news

Source- The post is based on the article “**The country mustn’t get entangled in a web of fake news**” published in the “**mint**” on **30th March 2023**.

Syllabus: GS3- Role of Media and Social Networking Sites in Internal Security Challenges

Relevance- Issues related to misinformation and fake news

News- The events during the Covid19 shows the disrupting potential of fake news.

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What are some examples related to the impact of fake news?

Fake news during the Covid hit the **poultry sector** hard. As per research note published by **ICAR-Central Avian Research Institute**, industry's losses were over \$3 billion.

According to the **All India Poultry Breeders Association**, Indian poultry farmers faced an average loss of about ₹50 per kg as a result of rumors.

The misinformation on the Indian poultry industry had **socio-economic ramifications**. Stakeholders operating at different levels of the value chain had multiple forms of impacts. They faced **social and psychological distress**.

Farmers could not sell their chicken for a long period of time during the pandemic. As **procurement dropped sharply**, they were left with culling as their only option. This led to both **short- and long-term financial adversities** for farmers.

How fake news works?

Fake news rarely **works in isolation**. A message that might look harmless has the potential to impact many livelihoods.

Research shows that misleading or manipulative information relies on **psychological mechanisms**. In times of anxiety, a **defence mechanism** could kick. It helps the mind to deny the **seriousness of a threat**.

Why does India need to act decisively to deal with fake news?

India has an estimated **850 million active internet users**. This growth has seen a **parallel boom of misinformation**. **NCRB** shows a spike in fake news cases under **Section 505 of the IPC** across the country in 2020.

The fact-checking agency of Lok Sabha busted 1,160 rumours since its inception in November 2019.

Newschecker.in identified **2,824 instances of misinformation** across nine languages in 2021 alone. Since a vast number of cases **go unreported**. The actual prevalence of the problem is significantly worse.

Artificial intelligence tools that create **photo-realistic images** have added to the menace.

India has had **no specific legislation** to regulate fake news. The government relies on **insufficient provisions** such as the **Information Technology Act and IPC**.

What is the way forward to deal with fake news?

Better campaigns aimed at generating **media literacy** among users of social media are needed. It is incumbent upon all users, however, to **identify fake news and think hard** before we share anything over the internet.

The upcoming **Digital India bill** is expected to have measures against fake news. In framing rules, there is a need to understand the **gravity of the problem**.

The anticipated law itself does not end up becoming a **weapon against free expression**.

It is crucial for the bill to appropriately **define the term 'fake news'**.

22. [Colombian hippopotamus: Hippos are coming](#)

Source: The post is based on the article "**Hippos are coming**" published in the **Indian Express** on **31st March 2023**.

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

Relevance: About Colombian hippopotamus.

News: In the late 1980s, the founder and leader of the Medellin Cartel in Colombia brought a few hippos as a collection of his exotic animals. After his death in 1993, four of the hippopotamus escaped and have since multiplied.

Recently, the Colombian government has decided to relocate 70 such hippopotamus – and 60 are reportedly going to come to India.

Note: These are called as 'cocaine hippos' as they were brought to the country by a drug lord.

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What is Hippopotamus?

Must read: [Hippopotamus](#)

They are also called as river horse.

These are semi-aquatic herbivores, which have often been posited as a “missing link” between land-based and marine mammals (whales, seals, etc).

They are known to kill creatures as massive as the Nile crocodile and kill more humans than any large carnivore in the African continent.

What will be the benefit for India if Colombian hippopotamus arrives in India?

Their arrival to India can serve many a purpose. They will make for a great tourist attraction. Like the cheetahs at Kuno in Madhya Pradesh, the “river horse” could lead to a jump in tourists for whichever state(s) receives them.

[23. Giving International Court of Justice a say could make climate-related processes more justice-oriented](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Giving International Court of Justice a say could make climate-related processes more justice-oriented**” published in the **Indian Express** on **31st March 2023**.

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

Relevance: About the UNGA resolution on climate injustice

News: Recently, a UN General Assembly (UNGA) resolution has asked the International Court of Justice to evaluate options under international law for suing countries failing to avert climate emergencies.

About the UNGA resolution on climate injustice

The resolution was sponsored by the small Pacific island nation, Vanuatu. It was adopted unanimously by the UNGA.

According to the UNGA, the resolution will provide clarity to states on their obligations under international law to protect their people, now and in the future, from climate impacts.

Reason for adoption: Many countries are now asserting their right to reparations after climate emergencies, for example, Pakistan.

Read more: [India Submits its Long-Term Low Emission Development Strategy to UNFCCC](#)

What is the significance of the UNGA resolution on climate injustice?

a) The ICJ’s opinion will not be binding but its pronouncements carry moral weight, **b)** The resolution reflects the frustration of the international community — especially of small island countries — with the procedures of the global climate agencies, particularly the UNFCCC, **c)** The resolution testifies to the global consensus on the climate crisis, **d)** The advisory could set the stage for countries incorporating climate justice in their legal frameworks. Just like the UN Declaration of Human Rights has found a place in statute books across the world and **e)** The intervention of ICJ could make climate-related processes more justice-oriented.

What are the previous instances where climate change negotiations were taken by a non-environmental UN forum?

Global warming has been part of the UN Security Council’s agenda since 2007. From time to time in the past 15 years, the UNSC has tried to frame the issue from a security standpoint, instead of looking at it from only a developmental or environmental perspective.

However, both India and China have rightly resisted the securitisation of climate change.

Must read: [IPCC AR 6 Synthesis Report](#)

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What should be done?

Though the UNGA resolution on climate injustice is talking about rights and justice instead of securitisation, holding individual countries to account for their climate inaction will have many challenges.

Instead of continuing climate change negotiations on a non-environmental UN forum, the nations should work on **reforming the UNFCCC**. UNFCCC need to be more equity-sensitive and justice-oriented. But for that, it requires support from wealthy members like the US.

[24. The focus of the new policy on reducing points of friction across the system is unmistakable](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**The focus of the new policy on reducing points of friction across the system is unmistakable**” published in “**The Indian Express**” on **1st April 2023**.

Syllabus: GS3- Indian economy

Relevance– External sector of the economy

News– Recently, the **Foreign Trade Policy 2023** was unveiled by the Union government.

What are the aims of the new trade policy?

Shift from an **incentive to a tax remission-based regime**.

Improve the **ease of doing business**.

Promote exports through **collaborations**.

Focus on **emerging areas**.

The government has articulated the goal of achieving **\$2 trillion in export of goods and services by 2030**.

What are the focus areas of the new policy?

The focus of the new policy is on **reducing points of friction across the system**. The measures focus on providing **automatic approvals for various permissions**.

For instance, the **processing time for revalidation** of various authorisations, which currently ranges from three days to one month, is expected to be brought down to one day.

Facilitation of **e-commerce exports, widening the basket covered under RODTEP** are also the focus areas.

Other thrust areas of the policy are steps being taken to **boost manufacturing, rationalising the thresholds for recognition of exporters, merchanting trade reform, and greater use of the rupee in international trade**.

Further, a **one-time amnesty scheme** has been introduced that aims at faster resolution of trade disputes.

What is the way forward for better implementation of the policy?

India accounts for a **minuscule portion of global trade**. Its share in global merchandise exports stands at around 1.8%, while that in services is roughly 4%. There is **considerable scope for improvement** for the country on this count.

The new policy needs to be **supplemented with other measures** to boost the country’s trade performance. These range from **lowering import tariffs and ensuring a competitive exchange rate to signing broader and deeper free trade agreements**.

[25. Global warming will cause conditions beyond human tolerance — this will impact homes too](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Global warming will cause conditions beyond human tolerance — this will impact homes too**” published in **The Times of India** on **1st April 2023**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Climate Change

Relevance: about the impact of climate change on homes

News: The article discusses the impact of climate change on homes.

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What are some of the impacts of climate change on homes?

Indoor house temperature is often two to three degrees below the outside temperature, especially in tropical countries.

In the coming future, **the indoor temperature is expected to rise to 36 to 38 degrees which is beyond human tolerance levels.**

Further, **the designs used for building homes are neither climate resilient nor good for health.**

When building homes, **high density and the number of units are preferred** over the health advantages associated with climate adaptive building.

How can houses become climate resilient?

In warmer countries like India, **natural ventilation can play a key role** because there isn't a sharp difference between indoor and outdoor temperatures.

Roshan Daans, the traditional windows can also reduce heat slowly and intelligently.

Vertical greening is also beneficial; however, it should not be used in places with high humidity.

People also install exhaust fans on windows, leaving little space for ventilation. Hence, **buoyancy driven ventilation** will be needed to lower heat.

It is also necessary to understand local climatic conditions before building houses. **For example,** tropical nations mustn't mimic the tall glass building model which comes from very different climatic zones.

Further, **factors like ease of using the technology, accessibility, awareness** of co-benefits, affordable maintenance, etc. are responsible for adopting any climate resilient technology at homes.

However, any such technology would also require social acceptance.

Why is social acceptance necessary for adopting climate resilient technology at homes?

As per a study, it was found that **women in India are reluctant to use air conditioners for themselves.** In India, **women didn't take many energy decisions independently,** rather they are mostly dependent on males of their families.

It was also found that despite temperatures over 30 degrees, women were not using air conditioners for themselves. **Women suffer more than males from heat, which has a negative impact on their health and well-being.**

Thus, approval across all genders and social classes is required for a climate resilient technology to succeed in the market.

What can be the way ahead?

Sustainability 1.0 gave materials which are low carbon value chain systems. But **Sustainability 2.0 means thinking about** people-centric metrics like the acceptability indices of technology.

Thus, **engineers involved in developing such a kind of technology should also study the interaction between technology and society** and understand people's aspirations and constraints.

It will enable industry to help communities navigate climate change better within their homes.

26. [Human Genome Editing: Scientists Vs Rogues](#)

Source: The post is based on an article **"Human Genome Editing: Scientists Vs Rogues"** published in **The Times of India** on 1st April 2023.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Science and Technology

Relevance: concerns over genome editing technology

News: The **Third International Summit on Human [Genome Editing](#)** was held in London last month.

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What are the excerpts of the summit?

Scientists found that changing genes in some of the cells of an existing person does not impact their heritable cells. Gene editing method like [CRISPR](#) is also being used by scientists to **cure sickle cell disease**.

However, **extremely high costs and infrastructure needs of gene therapy treatments are not manageable** for a vast majority of either patients or healthcare systems.

CRISPR has also been used in China to alter the [embryos](#) (created through IVF) of twin girls to try to make them resistant to HIV in 2018.

However, concerns remain over funding and monitoring of gene therapy, especially in a country like China.

There was news of efforts going in China to get access to cutting-edge western genomic and biotech ecosystems through academic espionage and early-stage investment.

There were also concerns over carrying gene therapies in China in the absence of scientific public documentation as it may have a catastrophic impact on humanity, as was seen in the case Covid-19.

Must Read: [Gene Therapy: Approaches, Benefits and Concerns – Explained](#)

What lies ahead for India in genome editing technology?

Developing Gene therapy technologies in India is not only about cost ownership and access but also the processes of knowledge production and knowledge produced.

Therefore, **genome editing research reaching its full therapeutic potential for Indians will need science in India to step up**.