



**Mains Marathon**  
**Compilation**

**20<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2023**

## Mains Marathon Compilation for the Month of March, (Third Week) 2023

1. Universal Health Care must encompass primary, secondary, and tertiary care for all who need it, and at affordable cost without discrimination. Examine the statement.
2. Rising import restrictions may put FTAs and global value chain integration at risk; external imbalances can be addressed with other foreign trade policy tools. Discuss.
3. IPCC report points to the higher risk India's indigenous groups face & the value of local knowledge. Elaborate on the statement.
4. Extreme heat as climate change worsens could adversely impact our economic output unless we adopt mitigative measures. Discuss
5. Do you think that the old pension scheme is a regressive redistribution mechanism that favours a better-off class? Give reasons in favour of your arguments.
6. Highlight the importance of the High Seas Treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of resources in the open oceans.
7. Why is the government encouraging semiconductor manufacturing in India?
8. Highlight the challenges posed by the stray dog crisis in India. Also, suggest some measures to tackle this crisis.

**Q.1) Universal Health Care must encompass primary, secondary, and tertiary care for all who need it, and at affordable cost without discrimination. Examine the statement.**

**The Hindu**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain some steps which are required to provide UHC. Also write some issues.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

The concept of universal health coverage (UHC) was first proposed by the **Bhore Committee** in **1946**. UHC entails ensuring all people have access to quality health services—including prevention, promotion, treatment, rehabilitation, and palliation – without incurring financial hardship. The concept covers three key elements — access, quality, and financial protection. India is committed to achieving **Universal Health care for all by 2030**, which is fundamental to achieving the other Sustainable Development Goals.

**What steps are required to provide UHC?**

- **Health Services:** Prioritise health services which are of most significance to reducing mortality and morbidity. There is need to **invest in pre-service medical and paramedical education** and also engage in multi-sectoral partnerships to address determinants of health.
- **Finance:** Increase domestic resource mobilisation and budget re-allocation at frequent intervals. Focus should be on **efficient and judicious time-bound utilisation** of financial resources.
- **Equity:** safety net approaches including vouchers and conditional cash-transfers should be expanded and also expand service delivery for **marginalised and vulnerable groups**.
- **Preparedness:** State level and international collaborations should be enhanced to prepare for and respond to public health emergencies such as **epidemics/pandemics**.
- **Governance:** Ensure that all citizens have access to data and information on UHC. For this strengthen national institutions and organisations through capacity building and use effective mechanisms for inter-sectoral dialogue and work.
- India needs to own its **digital health strategy** that works and leads towards UHC and person-centered care. E.g. Online consultation through video conferencing

**Issues:**

- There are not enough government-run institutions for the poor who cannot afford exploitative and expensive private care. There is a need for public healthcare centers to **prevent wasteful expenditure**.
- Another challenge is **regulating private health-care providers**. As they have a conflict between the profit motive and the well-being of the patient.
- The National Health Service model needs to have not only **good management and adequate resources** but also sound work culture and professional ethics. India's public health services do not have a good record on this part.
- It fails to assure accessibility or affordability as its financing is conditional to insurance premiums paid either by the individual or state.

Every individual has a right to be healed and not have complications, disability, and death. That right is guaranteed by the new global approach to UHC, where nobody is left uncounted and uncared for. For achieving the targets of Universal Health Coverage, the Government of India has implemented a flagship public health scheme – **'Ayushman Bharat'**.

**Q.2) Rising import restrictions may put FTAs and global value chain integration at risk; external imbalances can be addressed with other foreign trade policy tools. Discuss.**

**Live mint**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain some Issues with rising import restrictions. Also write some measures to address these issues.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

The government has been working on reducing imports for several years and has raised tariffs along with other barriers. The government is also working on strategies to **contain “non-essential imports”**. Imports were denied if they were deemed “inessential”. They were also denied if they were accepted as essential but were indigenously available.

**Issues with rising import restrictions:**

- If imports can be restricted by non-tariff means, our negotiating partners would worry that the **benefit of tariff concessions could be negated by resorting to import curbs**. That is why the WTO prohibits quantitative import restrictions, except in circumstances of a balance-of-payments crisis.
- Protectionism does not benefit the domestic economy. It rather **encourages inefficiency of domestic manufacturers**.
- Our credibility in wanting to integrate with global value chains also requires assurances that imports will not arbitrarily be restricted. It might be possible that major manufacturers become **reluctant to locate investments in India** for global supply if there is a danger of arbitrary restrictions on imports.
- Import restrictions are sometimes urged because of our large trade deficit. This **ignores our large surplus on the ‘invisibles’ account**, reflecting booming service exports and also remittances.

**What can be done?**

- To address the issue of large trade deficit, our foreign trade policy should ideally **declare categorically that quantitative import restrictions will not be used to reduce access to imports**. **Transparency of intent in policy** is critical for building trust, and trust is essential to attract investors.
- Some restrictions are necessary for safety reasons- for example, on toys with harmful paints. We should **upgrade our safety standards**, and these should apply to all items, including the locally made.
- **Foreign exchange reserves** can take care of sudden temporary pressures.
- The **policy of a floating but managed exchange rate** gives the Reserve Bank of India all the flexibility it needs to allow the exchange rate to adjust in a way that will help contain imports and simultaneously stimulate exports.
- If problem reflects an excess of aggregate demand over supply, which is spilling into balance of payments, the solution lies in **tightening fiscal and monetary policy**.

India wants to integrate with global value chains and take advantage of the **‘China plus one’** approach being adopted by many multinationals. However, such arbitrary import restrictions won’t encourage foreign manufacturers to invest in India.

**Q.3) IPCC report points to the higher risk India's indigenous groups face & the value of local knowledge. Elaborate on the statement.**

**ToI**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain findings of IPCC report on India.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released its final report of the sixth assessment cycle, titled “**AR6 Synthesis Report: Climate Change 2023**”. According to the report, India is among the countries that face the highest risk from climate change's impact, ranging from heat waves to cyclones and urban and rural displacement. The report also echoes the **Prime Minister's vision for “LiFE”** or Lifestyle for Environment.

**Findings of IPCC report on India:**

- India has **large informal sectors and outdoor workers** in various economic activities. It is important to note the evidence of observed extremes of heatwaves, heavy precipitation, droughts and tropical cyclones, and the chances of extreme compound events in terms of intensity and frequency.
- The historical **burden of inequity** in India's process of development has been on the poor and marginalised, with some policies partly addressing these issues, in the past 70 years. The report calls for **renewed attention and new policy design** given the additional vulnerabilities of climate change, yet protecting the rights of the poor and marginalized communities.
- The report highlights the importance of prioritising fairness, climate justice, **inclusivity**, respect for divergent worldviews, and **sharing knowledge** for transformative change. Prioritising these **shared values and inclusivity** is crucial to achieving sustainable climate action.
- In India, **public consultation process** in development projects needs to be revisited to include those changes that successfully shift development to sustainable models.
- India is the hotbed of global climate investment, but it needs to **distribute equally** to adaptation, along with mitigation efforts in the clean energy space.
- India has policies for insurance, social protection and safety nets that can reduce vulnerability and exposure. However, **innovation and adoption of low-emission technologies** lag due to limited finance and technology transfer.

India must act urgently on ways to **decarbonise the energy supply sector** and reduce the burden on it. The sector must meet the ever-increasing demand by managing wasteful energy-use through regulatory, market-based, and non-market-based policies and redistributive policy packages and retraining of people.

**Q.4) Extreme heat as climate change worsens could adversely impact our economic output unless we adopt mitigative measures. Discuss**

**Live Mint**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain how extreme heat could worsen economic output. Also write some mitigative measures.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

According to World Meteorological Organisation, the average annual temperatures have already gone above 1.2 degrees Celsius from pre-industrial times. According to IMD, some parts of India are experiencing temperatures that are exceptional for mid-March and are **at**

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**least 9 degrees above average.** Experts are concerned about the exceptionally high temperatures.

### How extreme heat could worsen economic output?

- **Reduced agricultural productivity:** Crops thrive within a narrow range of temperatures. While a small temperature increase can lead to a sharp drop in yields for grains like wheat, chickpeas, and mustard seeds. Last year's (2022) heat brought wheat production down by roughly 10 percent or almost 11 million metric tons.
- Employees are **less productive** during hot weather, even if they work inside, while children struggle to learn in extreme heat, resulting in lower lifetime earnings which in turn hurt future economic growth.
- Rising temperatures can hurt **labour productivity**. This includes outdoor sectors like construction sites and street vendors and indoor sectors such as cloth weaving, garment sewing and steel infrastructural products. This is because workers will **work less and absenteeism** will increase.
- Economists estimate that **worker productivity declines** by 2-4% with every degree Celsius increase in the temperature above normal levels,
- **Denial of sleep** at the night also hurts the ability to work the next day.

### Mitigative measures:

- **Change in forecast model:** The forecasting model used by the Reserve Bank of India, the Quarterly Forecasting Model can be used in predicting heat waves also.
- **Innovative model:** A collaborative effort by the government, private sector and voluntary organizations must invest in new building materials for homes as well as factories. Private investments in new roofing solutions to cool down homes in urban slums should be encouraged.
- **Urban greening:** where more trees and other vegetation can help to cool down cities and towns.
- Climate smart agricultural practices like aerobic cultivation, cover-crop method, micro-irrigation, rainwater harvesting should be promoted.
- **Adaptive technologies and practices** including resilient agro-pastoral practices, water management and rehabilitation of ecosystems should be promoted.
- Fast-tracking the **switch to clean energy sources** is vital to dealing with the issue of the heat wave.

The solution to climate change lies in understanding the impact of climate change in our life and taking steps to achieve climate resilience. Urban greening can help to cool down cities and towns.

**Q.5) Do you think that the old pension scheme is a regressive redistribution mechanism that favours a better-off class? Give reasons in favour of your arguments.**

### The Hindu

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain how old pension scheme is a regressive redistribution mechanism. Also write arguments against this.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

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

**Old pension scheme: a regressive redistribution mechanism:**

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- The **World Inequality Report 2022** estimated the average monthly income of the bottom 50% of the population to be ₹4,468, whereas it is ₹14,669.7 for the middle 40%. The salary of a government employee is higher than the income of **more than 90% of the population**.
- From 2004 to 2019, the pension expenditure of States registered an average annual growth of 16%. OPS **compels governments to compress an already low social sector expenditure**, pushing the marginalized into a downward spiral of indigence.
- Many State governments have yet to implement the **Seventh pay norms**, whereas some States have reportedly not paid arrears of the Sixth pay. Governments at the State level do not have **fiscal autonomy**.
- Currently, the **bottom 50% of the population** bears the burden of indirect taxation **six times more** than their income. It will push them into destitution and abject **poverty**.
- OPS will create **expenditure challenges for providing public goods**. It will deprive a large population of basic necessities.

### Not the case:

- **Short-term gains by Government:** They save money since they will not have to put the 10 per cent matching contribution towards employee pension funds.
- It will result in higher take-home salaries, since they too will not set aside 10 percent of their basic pay and dearness allowance towards pension funds.
- The pension drawn in New Pension Scheme (NPS) is lower than the OPS.
- NPS is dependent on the market prices of equity/bonds in which the amount is invested. Therefore, a crash in the markets can affect the pensioners.
- OPS is a fixed government expenditure irrespective of an economic slowdown or a stock market crash. This makes it **useful in counter-cyclical policy measure** during a crisis. The pension scheme needs to be reformulated in a way that it provides benefits to employees without putting an onerous burden on the employers. A participatory pension for government employees will provide a more **egalitarian outcome**.

### Q.6) Highlight the importance of the High Seas Treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of resources in the open oceans.

#### Indian Express

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain the importance of the High Seas Treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of resources in the open oceans.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

The High Seas Treaty is being referred to as the '**Paris Agreement for the Ocean**'. It is being negotiated **under the UNCLOS**. It is expected that the treaty will also help mitigate the impact of climate change on oceans. At present, only 1.2% of international waters fall under protected areas. The high seas account for **more than 60% of the world's ocean area** and cover about half of the Earth's surface, which makes them a hub of marine life.

#### Importance of the High Seas Treaty:

- The high seas are home to around 2.7 lakh known species, many of which are yet to be discovered.
- They regulate the climate by playing a **fundamental role in planetary stability** by mitigating the effects of climate change through its absorption of carbon and by storing solar radiation and distributing heat around the globe.
- Activities will be highly **regulated, and conservation efforts** similar to what happens in forest or wildlife zones, will be undertaken.

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- Oceans host very diverse life forms, many of which can be useful for human beings in **areas like drug development**. Genetic information from these organisms is already being extracted, and their benefits are being investigated.
- The treaty seeks to ensure that any benefits arising out of such efforts, including monetary gains, are **free from strong intellectual property rights controls**, and are **equitably shared** amongst all.
- Under the provisions of the new treaty, commercial or other activities that can have significant impact on the marine ecosystem, or can cause large-scale pollution in the oceans, would require an **environmental impact assessment** to be done, and the results of this exercise have to be shared with the international community.

Just like atmospheric warming; the window to take actions to protect marine ecosystems, before irreversible catastrophic damages happen, will be limited. The countries must act with urgency to reach consensus to protect marine ecosystems in the earnest. A binding High Seas Treaty is necessary in this regard.

### Q.7) Why is the government encouraging semiconductor manufacturing in India?

#### The Hindu

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain why the government is encouraging semiconductor manufacturing in India.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

Semiconductors are the building blocks of almost every modern electronic device from smartphones to connected devices in the Internet of Things. The Union Government has disbursed around ₹1,645 crore in **performance-linked incentives (PLI) for electronics manufacturers** so far. The Semiconductor Industry is facing an acute crisis with a **global semiconductor shortage**. Hence, the shortage is expected to have a major impact on global manufacturing industry and consequently the economy.

The government is encouraging semiconductor manufacturing in India due to following reasons:

- These chips are **found in practically every modern electrical appliance** and personal electronics devices. More and more nations are trying to turn **away from China's dominance** in the space, following geopolitical pressures to de-leverage themselves from supply chain vulnerabilities.
- Semiconductor companies have been gearing up to ramp up capacity for manufacturing advanced chips **required by 5G Technology**.
- Also, India imports almost all semiconductors to meet its demand, which is estimated to reach around \$100 billion by 2025 from about \$24 billion now. It will **cut the import bill too**.
- Further, these chips are made with embedded instructions, which may contain **malware or backdoors** and are impossible to diagnose. And as Semiconductor chips are used in various strategic areas like, defence and telecom, the domestic manufacturing of chips assumes **strategic importance** and would **provide a measure of security**.
- Setting up domestic manufacturing units would help **to insulate India against future supply disruptions**. Moreover, any **intellectual property** that is generated will be a big bonus.
- This move will also **make the Indian manufacturers globally competitive** to attract investment in the areas of core competency and cutting-edge technology.



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- Additionally, economies with a large production of Semiconductor chips, like US, Japan, Korea, China and Singapore, have benefited the most in terms of **enhancing their GDP** and establishing a **strong foothold on the global economy**.

Chip production is a resource-intensive and expensive process. Initial funding should focus on areas like design and R&D. Like-minded nations should specialize in different aspects of the semiconductor and electronics manufacturing process.

**Q.8) Highlight the challenges posed by the stray dog crisis in India. Also, suggest some measures to tackle this crisis.**

### The Hindu

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain the challenges posed by the stray dog crisis in India. Also, suggest some measures to tackle this crisis.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

Stray dogs are protected under the **Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960** and Rules enacted under Section 38 of the Act, particularly the Animal Birth Control (Dogs) Rules, 2001. That makes it illegal for an individual, RWA, or estate management to remove or relocate dogs. Only 15% of all stray dogs vaccinated. India's stray population is huge, adoption is terribly slow and limited as many people only want foreign breed dogs.

### **Challenges posed by the stray dog crisis:**

- At almost 21,000, India also accounts for more than a third of all **rabies-related deaths**.
- From the last five years, more than 300 people — mostly children from poor and rural families — have been **killed by dogs**.
- A 2017 study showed that homeless dogs in rural areas can also be **devastating for wildlife**. Over 80 species, of which more than 30 are on the endangered list, were targeted by dogs in wilderness areas.
- Dogs that are out by themselves could **cause accidents** when it runs on the road, which may also lead to injuries to them and other people.
- Stray dogs enjoy opening garbage bags and they can lead to the garbage and refuse being scattered all around the environment and street. Stray dogs will scavenge for food and can break open garbage cans and disturb gardens.

### **Measures to tackle this crisis:**

- **Recommendation of court:** People who feed stray dogs could be made responsible for vaccinating them and bearing costs if somebody is attacked by the animal.
- Every **Resident Welfare Association (RWA)** should **form "Guard and Dog partnerships"** in consultation with the Police Dog Squad. So that dogs can be trained and yet be friendly to residents of a colony.
- The municipal corporation, the resident welfare association, and local dog groups should **vaccinate and sterilize** the animals.
- Sick animals, aggressive animals, would have to be **euthanized**. A segment of the population can be **sheltered**.
- The only long-term solution is to implement **strict pet ownership laws**, prohibit people from carelessly feeding dogs everywhere, and set up facilities to house dogs.
- There is a desperate need for **more staff and funds**. Besides sterilisation, efforts must also be focused on **adoption**. And we must find some compassion to help resolve this crisis humanely.

As long as dogs are homeless on the streets, the idea of a rabies-free India, with harmonious co-existence between people and dogs, will be a utopian dream. Keeping dogs homeless is bad for dogs, bad for people, and bad for wildlife.