



**9 PM**

# **Compilation**

**24<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> April, 2023**

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of April [Fourth Week] 2023

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# General Studies Paper – 1

### General Studies - 1

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#### 1. [India as most populous can be more boon than bane](#)

**Source-** The post is based on the article “India as most populous can be more boon than bane” published in “The Hindu” on 24th April 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS1- Population and associated issues

**Relevance-** Issue related to population growth, size and composition

**News-** India is projected to be the most populous country by mid-2023 by superseding China. United Nation reports suggest that India will have a population of 142.86 crore by mid-2023. It is 2.9 million higher than China’s population of 142.57 crore.

#### **What is the right perspective to look at the population of any country?**

Population in itself is not a burden. The nature of **population growth, size and its composition** decide when a population becomes a “**resource**” or a “**burden**”. Population is a resource as long as the **country’s carrying capacity** is intact.

**Carrying capacity** is not just per capita availability of natural resources. It is a **dynamic concept** which changes according to **changing technology, the efficiency of production and consumption systems** of a country.

There is a need to look at the **age composition** of the population. It tells us about available **support ratios** in the form of the number of the working age population (15-64 years) against the dependent population.

#### **What are the key mechanisms to translate a demographic bonus into economic dividend?**

**Employment or job creation** is an important mechanism to translate demographic bonus to economic dividend.

**Education, skills generation and healthy lifespan** are important to translate demographic opportunity into economic gains. A skilled and healthy workforce is critical not only for **better productivity** of an economy. It also reduces **excessive public spending** and helps in **greater capital creation**.

**Good governance** is another important aspect for **reaping demographic dividends**. It helps in creating a **healthy environment** for **increasing efficiency and productivity** of the population.

#### **What are the trends of population growth, size and composition?**

India had a **total fertility rate of 2.0 in 2023**. It is already at **replacement level fertility**. The population is on a **path toward stabilization**.

It is in **decelerated mode** until 2064, when it will become negative growth. The peak of India’s population size will be around **169.6 crore in 2063**.

There are greater prospects for **demographic dividend than a disaster** in India. It has 68% of the working age population in 2023. The country continues to have a **demographic window of opportunity** for the next 35 years to reap an **economic dividend**.

#### **How is demographic dividend helpful for India?**

A relatively younger population of India provides **higher support ratios**. There is **lesser disease, disability and caring burden**.

India’s opportunity must be looked at in comparison to the **population decline and ageing** across some countries that include Japan, China, the United States and other major economies. Most of them have been implementing policies to **improve birth rates**. However, these actions are largely ineffective.

India has the potential to become a **worldwide market for both production and consumption**, with lower manufacturing costs due to a relatively cheaper workforce.

Available demographic opportunity has the potential to boost per capita GDP by an additional 43% by 2061.

A **total fertility rate of less than 1.8** may not be **economically beneficial** for India. Therefore, **drastic population control methods** can induce forced population ageing. It would result in the nation “getting old before getting rich”.

2. [India becoming most populous nation – is it a bane or boon?](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**India becoming most populous nation – is it a bane or boon?**” published in **The Indian Express** on **28<sup>th</sup> April 2023**.

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

**Relevance:** measures needed to utilize rising population for growth

**News:** India has now become the world’s most populous nation by overtaking China. There have always been arguments regarding controlling population growth as high population acts a bane for the nation.

**What steps have been taken to control India’s population?**

**During the Emergency years**, an attempt was even made to force compulsory sterilization. **Vasectomy or tubectomy camps** were run in the larger interests of the nation.

**After China declared its One Child policy**, many among the Indian elite campaigned in favor of such a policy in India.

However, **the government of that time rejected the “one-child” policy** and launched “**Do Ya Teen Bas**” followed by “**Hum Do, Hamarey Do**” campaigns.

**How did population control begin in India?**

The change in the population discourse began when **both fertility and birth rates began to fall** in the socially advanced **states of Kerala and Tamil Nadu**.

This was caused **due to increasing literacy, education and health status of women**, among other factors.

Moreover, as per the **National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5)**, the total fertility rate (TFR) declined to 2.0 in 2019-21. This was marginally below the “replacement level fertility rate” of 2.1.

**What are the consequences of rising population?**

Rising population affects a wide range of areas such as economic policy, trade policy, internal and external migration, political demographics, demand for public services, the use of natural resources and inter-regional variations in growth.

India’s multilateral, plurilateral and bilateral trade agreements have been demanding access to overseas jobs and employment visas.

**This implies that Indians instead of becoming assets for India, are becoming assets for the economic growth of the US, Australia, Japan, etc.**

**How can the rising population become an asset for India?**

The Nobel Prize-winning economist, **Milton Friedman was invited by then Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru in 1955** to study the Indian approach to planning and offer his views.

**Friedman was not in favour of public investment in manufacturing**, but strongly advocated public investment in education.

He argued that in any economy, the major source of productive power is not machinery, equipment, buildings and other physical capital but it is the productive capacity of the human beings who compose the society.

Hence, **Friedman asked Nehru to invest in human capital** because an ill-educated, ill-equipped, socially and culturally backward people are an economic liability.

Whereas, educated, healthy, productive and capable people are a national asset.

**What measures can be adopted by the government to utilize its human capital?**

Expenditures that improve the productive capacity of human beings are usually not considered as investment in India.

Moreover, **out-migration of students has risen sharply over the past decade** and policy makers are not worried about creating a knowledge-based economy and society.

Therefore, **India needs to invest in its human capital including education** because a nation that cannot offer proper education to all will forever find population a bane rather than a boon.

# General Studies Paper – 2

General Studies - 2

1. [Our land records modernization initiative has a major gap to plug](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Our land records modernization initiative has a major gap to plug**” published in **Live Mint** on **24<sup>th</sup> April 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – E-Governance

**Relevance:** concerns associated with the process of land document registration.

**News:** The article discusses the steps taken by the government for digitizing land records and lacunae that still exist.

**What steps have been taken by the government for digitizing land records?**

**Read Here:** [Bhu-Aadhaar or ULPIN will digitise land records for efficient land usage — but incrementally](#)

However, the concern lies with the process of document registration of land.

**What are the concerns with the process of document registration of land?**

The process of document registration of land has not yet been digitized and it **relies on the outdated physical mode of registration**.

In India, most property documents must compulsorily be registered under the colonial **Registration Act, 1908**, failing which they cannot be admitted in court (in case of a dispute) as evidence.

Most states still require participants to present physically at the sub-registrar’s office to produce physical copies of papers and fulfil the offline criteria to acquire physical registration certificates. As a result, **registering documents at the sub-registrar’s office is a time-consuming process, taking two days or more just for submitting the paperwork**.

**What can be done to bring changes in the document registration process?**

The physical registration slows down the entire registration procedure. Hence, **there is a need to modernize the registration process** to facilitate the ease of doing business and of living by leveraging technological advancements.

Some state governments have started amendment of specific provisions of the Registration Act to introduce some form of an electronic registration process. However, there is no uniform approach across the country.

Hence, the **following amendments should be done in the Registration Act, 1908** – a) allow **online submission of documents and remote online appearance** of parties and witnesses, b) provision for the **electronic verification of parties**, c) allowing online exchanges of queries between parties and the registrar, d) allowing **registrars to issue electronic registration certificates and maintain a digital backup** of such records.

The amendments **must establish minimum standards for remote online registration to ensure that registration throughout India** is undertaken in a safe and secure manner.

This would facilitate **the creation of an integrated land registry for the country**.

Moreover, these amendments should be supported by further legal initiatives, **such as remote notarization and clarity on electronic instrument stamping**.

**Given the digital gap in India**, the government should also create a transition strategy of moving from physical to online registration.

**What can be the way ahead?**

**Document registration is a basic legal requirement**. Modernising this procedure will be a significant step towards the realisation of **Digital India’s Vision of presence-less, paper-less services**.



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### 2. When Law Creates Crimes – on Use of Section 144

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**When Law Creates Crimes – Instead of emergency use, police is deploying Section 144 to bring routine everyday situations under its purview, treating the entire population as potential criminals**” published in **The Times of India** on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – Governance – Criminal Justice System

**News:** Section 144 of the CrPC was imposed in parts of Bihar and West Bengal amidst violence erupting during Ram Navami processions.

**What is Section 144 of the CrPC?**

[Click Here to Read](#)

**What are some of the findings on imposing Section 144 in Delhi?**

As per the RTI response, 6,100 orders were passed under Section 144 by Delhi police during the one-year period.

This large number of orders suggests that Delhi police used Section 144 **as a tool in general situations as well, instead of using it just as an emergency instrument.**

As per the findings, **25% of the 5,400 orders were issued** to various private establishments to install CCTV cameras for surveillance purposes, such as ATMs and banks, owners of girls' schools/PGs/hostels, etc.

Further, **43% of the Section 144 orders were issued** to regulate a variety of businesses and services including recording and registering of documents.

These orders mandated landlords/property owners/ factory owners to furnish details regarding tenants/ laborer/servants before providing them with accommodation.

Moreover, **1.5% of the orders focused on** imposing a blanket restriction on unlawful assembly. Some of the orders issued under Section 144 even regulated activities such as the use of “special manjhas” while flying kites, bursting crackers, while other orders prohibited the consumption of tobacco in hookah bars, etc.

**What are some of the issues associated with the findings?**

**First, these orders treated the entire class of the population as potential criminals**, who require constant monitoring and surveillance. As a result, **everyday situations were brought under the purview of the state.**

**Second, Section 144 has been used to create a parallel surveillance network, with no legal accountability and zero oversight.**

**Third, a large number of these orders were issued again after the expiry of the two-month period, leading to a cyclical state of Section 144.**

The **Supreme Court has passed a series of judgments emphasizing that the use of Section 144 should be restricted and time limited.** However, this does not seem to be the reality on the ground, especially in Delhi.

Hence, it is time for a change and a need to rethink the place of Section 144, CrPC in our democratic polity.

### 3. A new troika for India's northeast region

**Source-** The post is based on the article “A new troika for India's northeast region” published in “The Hindu” on 24th April 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- International relations

**Relevance-** Regional cooperation for development of northeast

**News-** Recently, the third India-Japan Intellectual Dialogue was hosted by the Asian Confluence (ASCON), in Agartala. It showed that the current decade may produce path-breaking changes in the northeast, bringing the troika of Bangladesh, India and Japan closer.

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### **What is the current scenario of the northeastern region?**

The region comprising India's eight northeastern States is undergoing **dramatic change**. It has overcome several **security challenges**. It is now heading toward **economic development**. Political changes have been helpful.

There is **extensive web of linkages** with neighbouring Bangladesh. Japan has emerged as a **significant development partner** for both India and Bangladesh.

### **What are some facts about Matarbari Deep Sea Port?**

It is an important project on the **southeastern coast of Bangladesh**. It is being constructed with Japanese assistance and is scheduled to be operational in 2027.

A **recent ASCON study** envisages this port to be **"a game changer"**.

The **long-term vision** is for Bangladesh and the northeast to become a **hub and key industrial corridor** of this region.

### **What are the steps needed for the development of the northeastern region?**

**Increased connectivity** of roads and railways is important. But it is not enough without the creation of **regional industrial value chains**. Hence, **rapid industrialisation** in the sectors where the northeast enjoys **competitive advantage** assumes significance.

Roads and ports must be accompanied by **job opportunities**. It can come only from new industrial enterprises.

The northeast is blessed with **vast natural resources**. Its **strategic location** is an asset. There is a need to **create value chains and manufacture products** across diverse sectors. These include agro-processing, man-made fibers, handicrafts, assembly of two-wheelers, mobile phones, and pharmaceuticals.

### **What is the way forward for regional cooperation in the northeast region?**

Japan as a single investor in the northeast is unworkable. Indian companies too must invest. India must ease **restrictions on the flow of investments** from Bangladesh. The three governments should have **closer economic cooperation**.

India needs to facilitate the **better connectivity of Bangladesh** with other neighbours. India can assist Bangladesh in becoming an **integral part of the Act East Policy** by doing so.

When issues of **regional cooperation and integration** are discussed, BIMSTEC is neglected. This must change. The group must progress towards its vision of **establishing the Bay of Bengal Community**.

Second, the goal of **connecting South Asia with Southeast Asia** requires strong efforts. This leadership can come from the **triad of Bangladesh, India and Japan (BIJ)**. A **BIJ Forum** should be launched first at the level of Foreign Ministers.

#### [4. Behind the 'Russia tilt' – Unpacking India's 'national interest', more than a year after the invasion](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article **"Behind the 'Russia tilt' – Unpacking India's 'national interest', more than a year after the invasion"** published in the **Business Standard** on **24th April 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS – 2: Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests..

**Relevance:** About India's 'national interest' and the Russia-Ukraine war.

**News:** More than a year has passed since the armies of the Russian Federation launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine. In the past year, Russian ministers regularly interacted with India and vice versa. But similar interactions with Ukraine are rare.

### **How have India – Russia relations been shaped in the recent past?**

-India needs the Russians for oil, weapons and for their Security Council vote. Russia has increased its share of crude oil imports into India.

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*Note: A large proportion of this oil, after all, is being processed and then re-exported.*

**Read more:** [Old friends: on Russia-India bilateral ties and the Ukraine issue](#)

**What are the concerns associated with India-Russia ties in recent times?**

**Sustainability of India's energy purchase from Russia:** The People's Republic of China is building up the infrastructure required to increase its use of Russian fossil fuels. Once it is done, it can hurt India's heavy reliance on Russian supplies, especially in a crisis.

**India's excess reliance on Russian Weaponry:** According to experts, the current stock of Indian weapons platforms that are of Russian origin is over 80%. The major concerns of this are, **a)** India's military procurements might be threatened if Russia decided to replenish their domestic arsenal due to the ongoing Russia-Ukraine crisis, **b)** Experts questions the actual quality of Russian weaponry as their performance in the Ukraine war is not up to the expected level.

**Russia's support in the Security Council:** The closer Russia gets to China the less reliable a vote it will be in security council.

Despite these concerns, Russia can and will be central to India's military preparedness in the decades to come.

**Must read:** [China – Russia relations and its implications on India – Explained, pointwise](#)

**What are the challenges in maintaining India's 'national interest' at present?**

**Issues in maintaining Non-alignment:** Non-alignment worked during the Cold War because India was not a direct target of either Russia or The US. But, in a 21st-century Cold War might happen between The US and China. China is seen as a strategic rival by India, so it is harder to stay non-aligned.

**Limited Western help to India:** The West can and will do only a little for India in a moment of crisis. For instance, the Western countries did not collaborate well with India when Indian soldiers died on the Chinese border a few years ago.

**Must read:** [The Russia-Ukraine Conflict – Explained, pointwise](#)

### 5. [NCERT Textbook team members write: Curriculum has been rationalised for the times](#)

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

**"We Don't Get History. So, Let's Not Study It"** published in **The Times of India** on **24th April 2023**.

**"NCERT Textbook team members write: Curriculum has been rationalised for the times"** published in the **Indian Express** on **24th April 2023**.

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

**Relevance:** About the revision of NCERT textbooks.

**News:** The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has made 1,334 changes in 182 books to its syllabus for various classes.

**About the present revision of NCERT textbooks**

NCERT rationalisation exercise took place in 2020-2021. The NCERT took feedback from teachers from KVS and other schools and CBSE practitioners on the rationalised content across subject areas.

The details were made public for the benefit of schools in 2022-23. Schools accepted these changes and modified their curricula and assessment policies. After the books were released in the market for the year 2023-24.

**What are the recent changes in the NCERT syllabus?**

**Must read:** [Changes to the NCERT syllabus and associated issues – Explained, pointwise](#)

### What is the rationale behind the changes in NCERT textbooks?

**Addressing the learning gaps created during the Covid pandemic:** Various experts and committees, including the Parliament Standing Committee, have revealed that learning gaps have developed among students. Hence, to compensate for time loss and facilitate the speedy recovery in students' learning curves a revision of NCERT textbooks is necessary.

**Read here:** [Rationale and challenges associated with the changes to the NCERT syllabus](#)

### What are the criteria used by NCERT for the recent revision of textbooks?

**a)** Removing the overlapping of content amongst different subjects in the same class, **b)** Removing similar content in the lower or higher class in the same subject, **c)** Enable content that is easily accessible to children and does not require much intervention from the teachers can be learned through self-learning or peer learning, **d)** Removing content that is not relevant in the present context and **e)** Reducing difficulty levels.

### What is the response of the NCERT expert team to various media debates?

**Allegations about deleting the Mughal period are wrong:** Whatever is removed or rationalised has been included – either in the same subject in different classes or in a different subject in the same class. For example, the Class XII History textbook, “Themes in Indian History Part-II”, has another theme on the Mughals, ‘Peasant, Zamindars and the State, Agrarian Society and the Mughal Empire (16th and 17th centuries)’. This chapter covers important facets related to the society and economy of the medieval period. Similarly, the Class XI textbook, “Themes in World History” book refers to Babur, Akbar, and the construction of the Taj Mahal as well.

**Changes are not politically motivated:** The mention of Nathuram Godse’s caste in the Class XII History textbook was deemed inappropriate by the expert committee. The section “Controversies regarding Emergency” was also dropped.

The committee considered the developments related to the imposition of the Emergency, retained in the reprinted version, sufficient to give students the basic knowledge about the crisis of democratic order and abuse of power.

**Read more:** [NCERT textbook revision](#)

### What are the areas missed in the recent revision of NCERT textbooks?

The Industrial Revolution is a key historical development, but it is not mentioned comprehensively. Similarly, today’s climate crisis is also not mentioned exhaustively.

### 6. [Indian diplomacy and the horses of interest, morality](#)

**Source-** The post is based on the article “Indian diplomacy and the horses of interest, morality” published in “The Hindu” on 25th April 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- International relations

**Relevance-** Indian foreign policy

**News-** During her recent official visit to India, Ukraine’s First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs talked about the dichotomy of India’s pursuit of its interests in global affairs.

### What are criticisms of the West against the conduct of foreign policy by India?

There is wide variance between **India’s moral stand** and the **pursuit of national interests** in not condemning the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

India has been accused in the past of **contradictions** in its **prescriptions for the global community** and what it **pursues itself**.

India was severely **critical of U.S. actions** in Vietnam, the Anglo-French invasion of Egypt in 1956. But it maintained a relative **silence on Soviet operations** in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Afghanistan.

### **What is the basic difference between the Indian discourse on foreign affairs in earlier days and in current times?**

India's foreign policy principles were rooted in **contemporary World Order's principles**. Now, the inspiration flows from the **wisdom of ancient India**, with the claim that its worldwide application would contribute to the welfare of the planet.

Earlier Indian approach did not pay attention to national constituencies. **Combative language** was seldom used, especially at senior political levels. That has now changed.

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar has pointed the **contradictions in western prescriptions** to the rest of the world in the context of the Ukraine war and the pursuit of its own interests. A few months after he became Minister, Mr. Jaishankar famously said in the U.S. that India's reputation was not made by a newspaper in New York.

Some Sangh Parivar intellectuals avoid the use of the word '**Vishwa Guru**' in their writings.

**Ancient Indian heritage** can show the path to lead the world out of its present troubles.

They lay stress on **Indian traditions of spiritual democracy, celebration of diversity, harmony with nature**, the framing of development policies for **interests of the poorest**, and the **idea of a world as a family**.

### **What are the contradictions in the ancient Indian approach?**

These principles were not the only ways of Indic thought about the world. For instance, there was the concept of a **lawless world** where the brave and powerful prevailed. It was part of the political idea contained in the term '**matsya nyaya**'.

There are questions whether these **Indic principles** were applied in reality. Ancient India history was also **full of turbulence and violence**.

### 7. Pending Bills, the issue of gubernatorial inaction

**Source**– The post is based on the article "**Pending Bills, the issue of gubernatorial inaction**" published in "**The Hindu**" on **25th April 2023**.

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

**Relevance**: Issues related to power of governor related to legislative matters

**News**- Recently, Tamil Nadu Assembly passed a resolution urging the President of India to fix a timeline for assent to be given to Bills passed by the Assembly.

### **Is it appropriate on part of the state to pass a resolution for informing the President about inaction of the governor on a bill passed by legislature?**

**Article 355** of the Constitution says that it **shall be the duty of the Union** to ensure that the government of every State is carried on **in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution**.

This article was meant to provide **justification for central intervention** in the States. But, its **scope and range** need to be widened.

The Constitution requires the Governor to act when a Bill is passed by the Assembly as per the options given in **Article 200**.

If he does not act in accordance with the Constitution, he is creating a situation where governance of the state is **not in accordance with constitutional provisions**.

In such a situation, the government of the State has a constitutional duty to **invoke Article 355** and inform the President about it. So, a resolution by the Assembly should be considered legitimate action.

### **What are the powers of the governor in respect of the Bill passed by assembly and presented to her?**

**Article 200** provides options to the Governor when a Bill is presented to him after being passed by the legislature. These options are: **to give assent; to withhold assent; to send it back to the Assembly to reconsider it; or to send the Bill to the President for his consideration**.

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In case the Assembly reconsiders the Bill as per the request of the Governor under the third option, he must give assent even if the Assembly passes it without accepting any of the suggestions of the Governor.

**Sitting on a Bill** passed by the Assembly is not an option given by the Constitution. The Governor, by doing so, is only acting against **constitutional direction**.

**What are issues regarding the governor's power to withhold assent to a bill passed by the state legislature?**

A plain reading of Article 200 suggests that the Governor can withhold the assent.

So, the question of crucial importance is whether the Governor can withhold his assent to a Bill in exercise of his **discretionary powers**. Or, whether he can do so only on the **advice of the Council of Ministers**.

Under **Article 154 of the Constitution**, the Governor can exercise his executive powers **only on the advice of the Council of Ministers**. So, there is a view that the Governor can withhold assent to a Bill only on ministerial advice.

But another view is that why the Council of Ministers should advise the Governor to **withhold assent** after the Bill has been passed by the Assembly. If the government wanted to repeal it after it became an Act, it could have it repealed by the House.

The government can also advise the Governor to withhold assent if it has second thoughts on the Bill after it has been passed.

Under the Indian Constitution, the exercise of the power vested in the Governor to **withhold assent** may not be confined to the Council of Ministers advising the Governor. But the larger question is why a Governor should be allowed to **withhold assent** when the Bill is passed by the Assembly.

A Bill is brought before the Assembly when there is some urgency about legislation. It may be a part of the **policy of the elected government**.

Under the constitutional scheme, the Governor is only a **constitutional head** and has **no real powers**. **Withholding assent** means the death of that Bill.

Thus, the Governor can negate the **will of the legislature**, and thereby negate the **will of the people**. The Constitution cannot be assumed to permit the Governor to do that.

### 8. [The problem with universal child rights: Cultural differences abound in how we raise children](#)

**Source-** The post is based on the article "The problem with universal child rights: Cultural differences abound in how we raise children" published in "The Indian Express" on 25th April 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Vulnerable sections of the population

**Relevance-** Issues related to children

**News-** The recently released film, Mrs Chatterjee vs Norway reminds us that child-rearing is deeply rooted in culture

**What are some facts about the UN convention on children's rights?**

The UN convention does not aim to impose a **global format on child-rearing or educational practices**. It intends to provide a **protective cover** for children from the consequences of **economic hardship, entrenched inequalities, and abuse of different kinds**.

**What are the issues raised by the film?**

It represents a young woman's struggle against a **prejudiced and arrogant bureaucracy** in Norway for her child.

In a progressive country like Norway, harsh treatment is provided to a young immigrant family from Bengal in this film for custody of her child. Norway is known for its role as a **peace broker**, its professed **commitment to feminism**, and its **progressive system of education**.

In countries like Norway, separation of children from parents whose lifestyle and practices raises concerns.

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Each culture has its **norms and practices** for raising children. What is normal in one culture may be vehemently disapproved of in another country.

It shows the vulnerability of children in a **globalised world**.

### 9. [India's evacuation diplomacy – Express View on Sudan crisis: Indian government's efforts to evacuate nationals are commendable](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Express View on Sudan crisis: Indian government's efforts to evacuate nationals are commendable**” published in the **Indian Express** on **25th April 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS – 2: Indian diaspora.

**Relevance:** About India's evacuation diplomacy.

**News:** India has begun ‘Operation Kaveri’ to evacuate around 4,000 nationals currently stranded in Khartoum and other parts of Sudan.

#### **About the present issue in Sudan**

Sudan, the third-largest country in Africa, is immensely rich in resources — from gold to fossil fuels. Sudan's strategic geography and inherent value have made it a target for exploitation by world powers, countries in its neighbourhood and also from local groups.

**Read here:** [Why are Sudan's army and paramilitary forces fighting each other?](#)

#### **What is the significance of India's evacuation diplomacy?**

Over the years, India has been adept at using its diplomatic skill and leveraging goodwill to ensure that Indians overseas are able to return to the country when they are faced with a crisis at their destinations, especially in West Asia and Africa. For example, ‘Operation Ganga’ was conducted in Ukraine to evacuate students and others from the conflict zone.

**Read more:** [Hakki Pikkis caught in Sudan conflict: Why this tribe of bird catchers travels to Africa from Karnataka](#)

#### **What should be done?**

The diaspora is a crucial part of the economy. Hence, India must continue to do evacuation diplomacy to protect the lakhs of Indians who work and live across the world.

The international community must do all it can to bring the warring parties in Sudan to agree to a ceasefire and ensure the transition that was promised in 2019.

### 10. [Evolution teaches children that change is an opportunity, erasing it from NCERT textbooks is huge disservice](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Evolution teaches children that change is an opportunity, erasing it from NCERT textbooks is huge disservice**” published in the **Indian Express** on **25th April 2023**.

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

**Relevance:** About the revision of NCERT textbooks.

**News:** The NCERT had recommended some “rationalisation” of the contents of high-school science textbooks.

#### **What are the recent changes in the NCERT syllabus?**

**Must read:** [Changes to the NCERT syllabus and associated issues – Explained, pointwise](#)

#### **What is the rationale behind the changes in NCERT textbooks?**

**Read here:** [Rationale and challenges associated with the changes to the NCERT syllabus](#)

**What are the science-related concerns raised with NCERT textbook revision?**

The revision removed nearly all references to concepts and methods for the study of biological evolution, and renamed the chapter on “Heredity and Evolution” as “Heredity.” The revision also removed Charles Darwin and his evolution concepts.

**What is the response of the NCERT expert team to various media debates?**

**Read here:** [NCERT Textbook team members write: Curriculum has been rationalised for the times](#)

11. [Ball Is In Courts – Bar councils’ argument that same-sex marriage is not SC matter goes against constitutional view of rights](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Ball Is In Courts – Bar councils’ argument that same-sex marriage is not SC matter goes against constitutional view of rights**” published in **The Times of India** on **25th April 2023**.

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

**Relevance:** Issues related to same-sex marriages

**News:** Recently, the Bar Council of India and state bar councils on asked the Supreme Court to avoid a decision in an ongoing hearing seeking legal recognition of same-sex marriages in India.

**What is the reason behind the bar council demand?**

The bar councils want the matter to be left to the legislature. This is because of the opinion that the law is essentially a codified societal norm reflecting the collective conscience of the people.

**Read more:** [Same-sex marriages: A matter for Parliament](#)

**About the case and Centre’s affidavit on legalising Same-sex marriages in India**

**Read here:** [Same-sex marriages can rock societal values: Centre](#)

**What are the issues in the centre’s affidavit on legalising same-sex marriages?**

**Read here:** [About legalising same-sex marriages: Inaction and intervention: On the handling of social issues](#)

**Does the Constitution always support majoritarianism?**

The Constitution is important in a democracy where the right to govern is decided by a parliamentary majority. But that does not mean that it always supports majoritarianism. For example, **a)** the triple talaq judgment of 2017 declared the practice illegal, and arguments of the “collective” wish of Muslim “communities” were rightly ignored, **b)** A constitutional bench struck down Section 377 of IPC and decriminalised consensual same-sex relations.

As a vision document, the Constitution is not constrained by social “norms” that usually change at a faster pace. Instead, it prioritises an individual’s fundamental rights.

The Constitution’s underlying principles are inconsistent with majoritarianism. It’s these constitutional principles that have protected laws aimed at social reforms against many social “norms”. For example, the Madras Temple Entry Authorisation Act, 1947, which opened access to all groups was upheld by the SC.

**What does the Constitution say about the case on legalising same-sex marriages?**

The Indian Constitution was ahead of its time. For instance, the universal adult franchise wholly ignored the regressive social views of that era. This is one of the Constitution’s greatest gifts. It needs to be nurtured. The ongoing hearing on same-sex marriages is a logical extension of that gift.

**Must read:** [Legalising Same-sex marriages in India and associated challenges – Explained, pointwise](#)



## 12. [So, Are People The Best Judge?](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “So, Are People The Best Judge?” published in **The Times of India** on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – Polity – Functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary

**Relevance:** concerns associated with the Basic Structure Doctrine.

**News:** It has been 50 years of the “Basic Structure Doctrine”.

**How did the Basic Structure Doctrine emerge?**

[Click Here to Read](#)

**What changed after the judgment of Basic Structure Doctrine?**

The basic structure doctrine gave the **keys of the Constitution from the Parliament to the Supreme Court**.

Initially, the Parliament had power to amend the Constitution, which ensured that the will of the people prevail.

However, with the judgment, the power to determine the basic structure lies with the Supreme Court and not with the Parliament.

**What are the concerns with the Basic Structure Doctrine?**

**Read Here:** [50 years of Basic Structure Doctrine – Explained](#)

**This doctrine conceptualizes a very different idea of India from the one the Constitution sets out. It prevents future Indians from designing their future India** while the doctrine has no basis in the Constitution.

The doctrine has created tough competition between the **constitution and democracy**.

**For instance**, the SC with its power of basic structure tries to protect the democracy. However, when courts overreach in interpreting the Constitution, governments find new and ingenious ways to come out of it.

Hence, **the basic structure doctrine has not been able to serve its purpose and the tussle between the court and the Parliament still remains**.

## 13. [SCO meet highlights China’s growing role in Inner Asia, India’s challenge](#)

**Source-** The post is based on the article “SCO meet highlights China’s growing role in Inner Asia, India’s challenge” published in “The Hindu” on 26th April 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Regional groupings and agreements

**News-** SCO meeting of defence ministers is taking place in New Delhi this week.

**What are the internal contradictions in SCO?**

Its ability to cope with the **intra-state and inter-state conflicts** among the member states is now under scrutiny. Russia’s war in Ukraine is raising questions about Moscow’s capacity to **sustain primacy** in its backyard.

**China’s rise** is increasing the prospects for Beijing’s emergence as the **dominant force** in inner Asia.

There are **internal conflicts** in the SCO. There are serious conflicts between India and China, Delhi and Islamabad, as well as Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

**Preventing conflict** between the member states and associates is a high priority for the SCO. But the forum’s record here is **not impressive**. Afghanistan’s internal instabilities have been a major driver for the SCO. But SCO was not able to play the role of the regional security arbiter. In January 2022, there was a major **internal upheaval in Kazakhstan**. It was not the SCO, but the Russian army that intervened to stabilize the situation.

There are issues between Central Asian regimes and Russia. Russian leaders have often dismissed Central Asian states as **artificial nations**.

**Vladimir Putin's vision of the Russian world** underlines Moscow's special responsibility to protect Russian minorities beyond its formal borders. No Central Asian neighbour has endorsed the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Russia is deeply entrenched within the Central Asian state system with **strong ties to local elites and security establishments**. Many Central Asians work in Russia and send valuable remittances home.

After Ukraine, the Central Asian states are looking to intensify their **diversification strategies** to reduce their reliance on Russia.

Kazakhs talk about "**multi-vector diplomacy**". Some regional actors are seeking to expand their influence in Russia's backyard. Turkey and Iran are two prime examples. There is also rising role of China in these countries

### **What are different viewpoints about China's growing influence in Central Asia?**

Some observers argue that **China's growing regional influence** will come at Russia's expense. Others point to the fact that Russia and China have drawn closer than ever before. They have little reason to quarrel over Central Asia.

**Moscow's muscle and Beijing's money** provide a sensible basis for their **strategic division of labor** in Central Asia. It will keep the Western powers out of the region.

A third argument agrees that China has no reason to replace Moscow as the **main power in Central Asia** in the near term. But it warns against underestimating Beijing's long-term ambitions in the region.

Beijing provides **explicit support to the sovereignty** of the Central Asian states. As per Chinese President Xi Jinping, China will continue to resolutely support Kazakhstan in protecting its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

### **What are options for India at SCO?**

Delhi's engagement with the SCO was premised on **Russian primacy** in the region and Moscow's support of **India's regional interests**. For India, a **strong and independent Russia** is critical for maintaining the **inner Asian balance**.

However, India is in no position to ensure **Moscow's strategic autonomy** from Beijing. That depends on **Russian strategic choices**.

India must now protect its own interests in SCO amidst a **rapidly changing regional power distribution** in China's favour.

### 14. [India's universities are coming apart, political class ignores damage caused by the exit of the ablest from the country](#)

**Source-** The post is based on the article "India's universities are coming apart, political class ignores damage caused by the exit of the ablest from the country" published in the "The Indian Express" on 26th April 2023.

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

**News-** The article explains the issue with academic leadership and governance challenges faced by Indian universities

### **What are issues with academic leadership in India?**

Appointment of academic leadership is guided by the expectation of **political allegiance**. There are few academics of **proven excellence** among the leadership appointments in India's public educational institutions.

Even the best leaders can achieve nothing if they are governed by **rigid externally set rules**. In India's higher education ecosystem, these rules appear mainly in the form of the **UGC guidelines**.

### **What are governance challenges faced by Indian universities?**

In India, **performance in teaching and research** is not subjected to a **professional review**. In the case of teaching, courses should be evaluated by students for content and delivery. They are a crucial means of assessing teaching. There is **absence of student evaluation**.

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**Research evaluation** is a more difficult task and existing methods remain contested. The current practice in India's universities based on the **UGC's Academic Performance Indicators (API) is flawed.**

**Scoring of publications** based on where a paper has been published is misleading for **judging the impact of research** on the **production of knowledge.**

Moreover, some of the activities counted under the API system are unnecessary. **Scoring of publications** puts a burden on India's universities in terms of time and resources.

A second area is **admission to courses of study and hiring of faculty.** Both student admission and faculty hiring requires a **minimum grade** and the **subject studied** for the previous degree. India's universities have **strict rules** on these matters. It causes **emigration of talent** to the universities of the West.

Many of India's public institutions are controlled by a **rule-bound bureaucracy** without the incentive to bring about a change.

**What is the way forward for improving the governance of Indian universities?**

The practice of **numerical scoring of research output** must be avoided for a more **holistic approach.**

**Global best practices** in the evaluation of academic performance are known. India should learn from the best aspects. It is the **rules governing research** rather than funding that is key to research output in Indian universities.

The UGC should leave this **matter of admission and faculty hiring** to academic bodies. There should be **external oversight** in the selection of faculty.

Universities are meant to engage in the **pursuit and dissemination of knowledge.** This requires an **unconditional commitment to free speech.** The university should not be made **hostage to the whims and ideologies of the state.**

Universities of the West have largely remained free of the state even when they receive public funds. It is the single most important reason for their success.

For the university, **neither infrastructure nor less stringent rules** can be a substitute for the **total freedom of expression.**

### [15. Rescue service – The Sudan evacuation highlights challenges India faces in conflict](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article **“Rescue service – The Sudan evacuation highlights challenges India faces in conflict”** published in **The Hindu** on **26th April 2023.**

**Syllabus:** GS – 2: Indian diaspora.

**Relevance:** About Sudan evacuation.

**News:** India has begun 'Operation Kaveri' to evacuate around 4,000 nationals currently stranded in Khartoum and other parts of Sudan.

**About the present issue in Sudan**

**Read here:** [Why are Sudan's army and paramilitary forces fighting each other?](#)

**About Operation Kaveri and Sudan evacuation**

**Read here:** [India launches Operation Kaveri to evacuate stranded citizens from war-hit Sudan](#)

**How India is coordinating with various countries in the Sudan evacuation?**

India has been coordinating efforts with other countries that have the most civilians and resources in Sudan. This includes the U.S., the U.K., the UAE and Saudi Arabia. These countries are coordinating on logistics, timing the evacuation operations, and even using Saudi and French planes.

The past experience of similar operations over the decades, beginning with the largest single civilian evacuation during the Gulf War in 1991 is helping in a quick evacuation.

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### What India should learn from the Sudan evacuation?

The Sudan evacuation once more highlights the particular challenges India faces in any conflict. -India has about 14 million non-resident Indians and more than seven million Indian tourists and travellers each year. So, there is practically no conflict today that does not affect an Indian citizen.

-Many NRIs are working in the most vulnerable jobs. For instance, nurses in Iraq or Yemen, students in Ukraine, labourers in Libya, Syria and Lebanon, etc.

### What should be done?

Parliamentary Standing Committee for External Affairs, in 2022 recommended the government to form a standard operating procedure, and a special force to deal with such crises. This must be considered by the government. Further, the procedure must be devoid of political grandstanding or finger-pointing.

India is admired for its reputation and ability to harness its resources in rescuing every single citizen in crisis times. That reputation must be maintained.

### [16. Bounty Is Curse – Sudan is another example of what happens to natural resource rich but politically mismanaged countries](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Bounty Is Curse – Sudan is another example of what happens to natural resource rich but politically mismanaged countries**” published in **The Times of India** on **27th April 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS-2: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India’s interests.

**Relevance:** About Sudan Civil War.

**News:** Sudan Civil War has highlighted the growing concern about regional instability.

### About the present issue in Sudan

**Read here:** [Why are Sudan’s army and paramilitary forces fighting each other?](#)

### About Operation Kaveri and Sudan evacuation

**Read here:** [India launches Operation Kaveri to evacuate stranded citizens from war-hit Sudan](#)

### What are the concerns associated with the Sudan Civil War?

-If Sudan heads the Libya way, it will see another dangerous flood of weapons in the Horn of Africa region. Further, it will give a huge fillip to an assortment of armed groups, including ISIS and al-Qaida affiliates.

### How Dutch disease led to Civil War in Sudan?

**Note:** *Dutch Disease in economics refers to a phenomenon wherein a country witnesses uneven growth across sectors due to the discovery of natural resources. This is because the chronic dependence on the export of these natural resources hollows out other sectors of the economy.*

Sudan Civil War is not just a straightforward power struggle between two branches of that country’s armed forces. It is also the expression of [Dutch disease phenomenon](#), which is afflicting multiple countries in Africa and beyond.

After South Sudan’s secession in 2011, Sudan’s economy was severely undermined by the loss of oil revenue which constituted more than 50% of the Sudanese government’s revenues and 95% of its exports. Thus, Sudan remains one of the poorest countries in the world with its 46 million people living on an average annual income of \$750 per capita.

Further, illegal extraction of natural resources by local warlords due to fragile governance-security structures is also there in Sudan,

**Read more:** [Rescue service – The Sudan evacuation highlights challenges India faces in conflict](#)

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### What should be done to come out of the Civil War?

Overall, failure to manage natural resources can have deep economic and security implications. In such conditions, the nation needs to take steps to come out of it. Such as Kazakhstan's National Fund which is financed by oil, gas and mineral revenues.

### 17. [Healthy reduction – Out-of-pocket health spends must fall faster](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Healthy reduction – Out-of-pocket health spends must fall faster**” published in the **Business Standard** on **27th April 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS-2: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health.

**Relevance:** About National Health Accounts report and its findings.

**News:** The latest data from the National Health Accounts for 2019-20 suggests that India is witnessing a steady fall in the average out-of-pocket expenditure (OOPE), or the amount patients spend themselves directly at the point of treatment.

### What are the key findings of the National Health Accounts report?

-From a high of 62.6% in 2014-15, OOPE fell to 47% in 2019-20.

-In the same period, government health expenditure rose from 29 to 41% of total healthcare expenditure.

-Private health insurance appears to have grown in this period, from 3.7 to 7%. Over a five-year timeline, this is a development in the right direction.

### What are the key observations of the National Health Accounts report findings?

There is a strong correlation between rising government health expenditure and falling OOPE. For example, the years between 2016-17 and 2017-18 saw an almost 10 percentage point drop in OOPE, in tune with an 8 percentage point rise in government expenditure.

Although the Ayushman Bharat scheme was introduced in the 2018-19 fiscal year, its impact on OOPE is yet to be determined.

**Read more:** [Out-of-pocket health spending still high, despite hike in government expenditure](#)

### What are the concerns associated with the National Health Accounts report?

**a)** The report figures pertain to the year before the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. So, it is reasonable to assume that much has changed in the three years, given the nature of the virus, **b)** Although the OOPE has reduced, Indians still spend far too much from their own pockets to pay health expenses. For example, OOPEs as a percentage of total healthcare expenditure for countries such as Indonesia, China and Malaysia were around mid-30s, **c)** Central and state governments still underspend on healthcare. Government health expenditure as a percentage of GDP between 2014-15 and 2019-20 rose only marginally, from 1.13% to 1.35%. But the per capita spend nearly doubled from ~1,108 to ~2,014.

**Read more:** [Healthcare in India has made great progress, but challenges remain](#)

### What should be done to reduce OOPEs further?

The aim is to raise health expenditure to 2.5% of GDP by 2025, and the Central government has stayed on this path despite fiscal constraints. As of now, state spending is just 4-5% of their total budget. An increase in allocation by states would help in making an appreciable difference to OOPEs.

**Read more:** [\[Yojana March 2023 Summary\] India's post-pandemic healthcare system – Explained, pointwise](#)

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18. [Remission Impossible – In Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, govt decisions on early release, paroles are huge blows against justice](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Remission Impossible – In Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, govt decisions on early release, paroles are huge blows against justice**” published in **The Times of India** on **27th 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 government’s flouting criminal justice procedures.

**News:** The existing Bihar Prison Manual has disallowed remission of convicts of terrorism, rape-cum-murder and murder of state officers. Bihar has recently amended the Bihar Prison Manual 2012 to remove the phrase “the murder of a public servant”. This facilitates the release of a murder convict for political reasons. This will also aid the criminalisation of politics.

**Read more:** [Remission or premature release of convicts: The injustice of exceptionalism](#)

**What are the other recent examples of government flouting criminal justice procedures?**

-The Supreme Court last week tightened up the Gujarat government and the Centre for their reluctance to share files on the early release of 11 lifers in the Bilkis Bano case for political reasons. The SC also remarked that the grant of remission showed “complete non-consideration for the gravity of the offences”.

-Recently, the Haryana government justified frequent paroles to Dera chief and rape-and-murder convict, claiming he wasn’t a “hardcore prisoner”.

**Read more:** [India’s battle for gender equality](#)

**What should be done?**

**Read more:** [Reviewing remission – SC should lay down norms for release of convicts on remission](#)

Remission if fairly applied is a chance at a second life. But, the government’s flouting criminal justice procedures are huge blows against justice.

19. [Poonch terror attack: It typifies the low-intensity conflict that Pakistan keeps persisting with](#)

**Source-** The post is based on the article “Poonch terror attack: It typifies the low-intensity conflict that Pakistan keeps persisting with” published in the “The Indian Express” on 27th April 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Bilateral groupings and agreements

**Relevance-** India and Pakistan bilateral relationship

**News** – Recently, five soldiers were killed in Poonch terrorist attack.

**What is Pakistan’s strategy in Jammu and Kashmir?**

The Pakistan strategy is **low-intensity conflict (LIC)**. It is characterised by **hybrid war**. Experience shows that there is little scope for a **clear-cut victory and defeat** in the low-intensity conflict in J&K.

A low-intensity conflict does not just disappear and provides **sufficient scope for a bounce back**. It is the people who ultimately decide their fate.

It need not be a Pulwama-type attack with dozens of fatalities. It is just something to **draw attention and an attempt to show the flag**.

**What is the immediate reason for the Poonch terror attack?**

**First**, is the **G20 Tourism Meeting at Srinagar** in the third week of May 2023. Pakistan’s aim is to **disrupt the event** and have it cancelled. The meet is an opportunity for India to showcase an **integrated J&K** to an important forum.

**Second**, and more complex event is the **SCO Foreign Ministers Meeting at Goa** on May 4-5. Pakistan’s Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto accepted the invitation for this meeting

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There is speculation Sino-Pak may **collaborate to embarrass** India if New Delhi cancels the invitation due to the Poonch attack. If it does not, Bhutto can embarrass India by making **awkward statements on Indian soil**.

### **What is the way forward for security management in Jammu and Kashmir?**

India must not do anything in a hurry. Foreign policy has been **well-handled**, and no major decisions are required when there is an **international strategic turbulence**, and nothing major is at stake.

**Recalibration** to balance out the attention between the northern and western borders will ensure **greater pragmatism and the proper security focus**.

The strategic community and the media must assume a **larger and more pragmatic role** instead of pressuring the government into any hurried decisions.

Operationally, the **area south of Pir Panjal** perhaps needs a review in terms of the **density of troops**. The terrain, the target's proximity to the LoC and a mix of population keeps the area in a state of higher vulnerability.

## 20. Virtual digital assets, India's stand and the way ahead

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Virtual digital assets, India's stand and the way ahead**” published in “**The Hindu**” on **27th April 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Governance

**Relevance:** Regulation of virtual digital assets

**News-** In a recent notification, the government extended the anti-money laundering provisions to virtual digital assets businesses and service providers.

### **What are some facts about the notification?**

Virtual digital assets platforms will now have to register as a **reporting entity** with the Financial Intelligence Unit-India. The unit is the national agency to strengthen India's efforts against **money laundering and terror financing**.

Reporting entity platforms such as CoinSwitch are now mandated to **implement know your customer, record and monitor all transactions**, and report to the Financial Intelligence Unit-India when any suspicious activity is detected.

### **Why is this a step in the right direction?**

Such rules are **already applicable** to banks, financial institutions and certain intermediaries in the securities and real estate markets. Extending them to virtual digital assets provides virtual digital assets platforms with a **framework to monitor and take actions** against malpractices.

A **standardisation of such norms** will make the Indian virtual digital assets sector **transparent**. It will also build **confidence and assurance** in the ecosystem. It will give the government **more oversight** on virtual digital asset transactions.

Such **risk-mitigation measures** are in line with **global guidelines** put forward by the International Monetary Fund and the [Financial Action Task Force](#).

Such guidelines acknowledge the role **Virtual Asset Service Providers (VASP)** play in **regulating and monitoring** the virtual digital assets ecosystem. VASPs are the most **efficient bridges and eyes for regulators** to effectively implement Anti-Money Laundering provisions.

This could also be the basis for India to reconsider its **tax treatment of virtual digital assets**. PMLA notification mitigates the most money laundering and terror financing risks. So, there is little reason for the **tax rates to be very high**.

There is an opportunity to bring virtual digital assets taxes **on a par with other asset classes**. Reducing tax rates will also help stem the **flight of capital, consumers, investments, and talent** and tackle the **grey economy for virtual digital assets**.

This is also significant due to India's presidency of the G-20. The finance track of the G-20 is discussing the establishment of a **global regulatory framework for virtual digital assets**. India's leadership and experience is key here.

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There is also an opportunity to consider the **steps taken by other G-20 nations**. In Asia, Japan and South Korea have established a **framework to license VASPs**.

### 21. The challenge of reviving a sense of fraternity

**Source-** The post is based on the article “The challenge of reviving a sense of fraternity” published in “The Hindu” on 27th April 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Polity

**Relevance-** Ideals and principles contained in constitution

**News-** The article explains the importance of the principle of fraternity for Indian democracy.

#### **How did the ideas of the constitution take shape before independence?**

The Constitution of India was drafted by the Constituent Assembly. The idea was initially proposed in December 1934 by **M.N. Roy**.

It became an **official demand of the Indian National Congress in 1935** and was officially adopted in the **Lucknow session in April 1936** presided by Jawaharlal Nehru.

#### **What are Ambedkar ideas about fraternity?**

Fraternity means a sense of **common brotherhood** of all Indians. It is the principle which gives **unity and solidarity to social life**. It is a difficult thing to achieve.

Without fraternity, equality and liberty will not be very useful. Fraternity has been most forgotten in our Constitution and in our electoral process.

The idea of fraternity is closely linked to that of **social solidarity**, which is impossible to accomplish without **public empathy**.

#### **What are the duties in the Indian constitution that emanates from the principle of fraternity?**

The text of the Constitution explains the implication of other **principles and the duties arising** from them. But it is not the case with fraternity.

Article 51A evaded it except by **Article 51A(e)**. This article refers to the duty of every citizen to **promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood** amongst all the people of India.

As per Sir Ernest Barker, a distinction has to be made between the **psychological fact of common emotion and the political principle of fraternity**.

Fraternity is a **dubious word**. It may be used to denote **both emotion and principle**. But it is perhaps generally used to denote **emotion rather than principle**.

#### **What are Ambedkar's ideas about working for democracy in India?**

Democracy is prone to **change form and purpose**. Its purpose in our times is the welfare **of the people**. It is a method of **government by discussion**. It brings **revolutionary changes** to the economic and social life of people without bloodshed.

Following are some of the requirements to maintain it:

- There must not be **inequalities in society**.
- There must be **equality of law as well as equal protection of law**, and observance of **constitutional morality**.
- There must be no **tyranny of the majority** over the minority.
- A functioning **moral order in society and a public conscience** are essential.

#### **What is the real situation of democracy in India?**

The ground reality is different. **Inequalities** continue to persist and so do those emanating from the caste system.

The **democratic opposition** has progressively declined in substance. **Equality in law** does not necessarily mean **equal protection of the law**. There is little regard for **constitutional morality**.



**What is the way forward for the success of democracy in India?**

India has **immense diversity**. There is also an unfortunate legacy of violence at birth that persists and takes different forms. There is a need for **constitutional principles in individual and collective terms**.

A sense of fraternity is needed as an **essential virtue**. This cannot be merely in **formal terms**. It has to be **imbibed individually and collectively**. It has to be described as moral **and spiritual content**.

There is a need to invest in our democracy with this **moral content at the individual and collective levels**. It has to take the shape of an imperative.

22. [About setting up new nursing colleges: Why it is good to have more nurses](#)

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

**“Why it is good to have more nurses”** published in the **Indian Express** on **28th April 2023**.

**“Machines For Health – Policy emphasis on medical devices is welcome. But manufacturing needs many more industrial parks”** published in **The Times of India** on **28th April 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS-2: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health.

**Relevance:** About setting up new nursing colleges and policy for medical devices.

**News:** Recently the government decided to set up 157 nursing colleges and announced a new policy for medical devices. The move will add more than 15,000 nursing seats.

**About the government’s decision**

**Read here:** [Cabinet approves the Policy for the Medical Devices Sector](#)

**What is the rationale behind new nursing colleges and policy for medical devices?**

**Lack of nurses for population:** The WHO recommends three nurses for a population of 1,000 people. According to official estimates, India currently has less than two nurses for 1,000 people. A private report last year mentioned that the number of allied healthcare professionals needs to go up eight times to meet the country’s needs in the next 25 years.

**Lack of enough investment:** China and India have roughly similar population sizes. India’s medical technology market is about 20% of that in China. Moreover, only 15% of medical devices consumed here are made domestically.

**What are the advantages of new nursing colleges and policy for medical devices?**

**Address the skew in nursing colleges:** More than 40% of the country’s nursing colleges are located in Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh are getting a major share of the new nursing colleges.

**Ensure enough manpower for new initiatives:** The government has been giving emphasis to setting up hospitals and medical colleges, including AIIMS, in many places to address regional imbalances. The private sector has also been increasing its footprint in the healthcare sector. These hospitals will require a regular supply of nurses.

**Enhance the revenue-generating capacity of potential migrants:** Migrant nurses have been, for many decades, a major source of remittance. These professionals are much sought after in hospitals in Europe, the Americas and West Asia. So, investing in nursing education will only enhance the revenue-generating capacity of Indians.

**Make medical devices affordable:** Getting policy, particularly making manufacturing right, will help in making healthcare more affordable. Any policy that increases the domestic scale and efficiency of diagnostic devices will address affordability issues in healthcare provision.

**What more should be done?**

**Ensure proper training:** a) India needs to equip these new nurses with enough skill sets required in a medical setup, b) India should facilitate proper communication training to avoid hostility between patients and healthcare professionals, c) India should equip caregivers with knowledge

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of the rapidly changing technologies in medical care, and **d)** Nursing institutes in the country currently do not provide nurses with adequate training to take up leadership positions. Hence, it should be provided.

**Collaborate with states:** The Centre at present support for four medical parks. But this is inadequate. Similarly, domestic manufacturing faces a challenge on account of high costs. All the challenges can be reduced if both states and the Centre work together to establish industrial parks for medical devices. With this, critical infrastructure expenses can be shared. The domestic market size in 2020 was \$11 billion. The government hopes that the medical devices policy will push it up to \$50 billion by 2030.

### 23. What the wrestlers' protest says about power and politics in India

**Source-** The post is based on the article "What the wrestlers' protest says about power and politics in India" published in the "The Indian Express" on 28th April 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Vulnerable sections of the population

**Relevance-** Issues related to women sports person

**News-** The top national- and international-level wrestlers to once again sit on a protest dharna at Jantar Mantar. They are accusing the WFI President of sexual harassment of women players.

**What are the issues faced by women sports persons that are depicted by the current events?**

The State and its agencies are the **biggest violators of the law**, especially the laws enacted to ensure the rights of women.

The obstacles faced in initiating the **process of seeking justice** are so daunting that the majority opt out after their initial efforts.

There is **blatant misuse of official position** and **use of muscle power** by the accused to intimidate and silence those speaking up.

There is a **lack of political will** to implement the law on the part of the state. This ensures that justice is **neither certain, nor speedy and almost denied**. The result is that perpetrators of violence against women are never punished.

It highlights the situation in the **institutional set up** of the Wrestling Federation of India.

The **top sports bodies** in India are dominated by politicians or their scions. The violators use their **political clout** to bully the complainants into silence.

There are **threats to life, character assassination and everyday harassment and disrespect** for women sports persons who file complaints. This is in clear violation of the **2013 POSH Act and Vishaka Guidelines**.

When complaints lodged by international players meet with such a fate, it gives the **wrong signal** to remain silent to other women who suffer such violation of their rights.

### 24. Darwin must stay in Indian school textbooks

**Source-** The post is based on the article "**Darwin must stay in Indian school textbooks**" published in "**The Hindu**" on **28th April 2023**.

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

**Relevance:** Issues related to pedagogy and curriculum

**News-** The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) dropped Darwin's theory from the examination syllabus for Class 9 and 10 students in the academic year 2021-22 Darwin's theory explains the origin of human beings.

**Why are the shortcomings in our approach to teaching Darwin theory?**

The first thing that is neglected is the **influence of other people** on Darwin.

Darwin was strongly influenced by **geologist Charles Lyell's Principles of Geology**. Lyell studied glaciers, volcanoes and fossils, and proposed the concept of "**gradual geological change**". Geological objects today result from minute changes accumulating over a period of time.

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**Lamarck, the French naturalist** proposed his own **theory of evolution** before Darwin. It also portrayed evolution as a process that included accumulation of changes over time. Darwin seems to invoke the same **Lamarckian theory of use and disuse**.

Darwin was influenced by **social beliefs of his times**. Darwin's theory was an **extension of laissez-faire economics**. The term was conceived by economist Adam Smith and developed by Thomas Malthus. It referred to self-interest and free competition in the marketplace.

Malthus also propounded a theory of population in 1798. He claimed that humans compete for limited resources until a catastrophic event leads to a decline in their population.

Darwin was greatly influenced by **Malthus' ideas of competition** in an environment with limited resources. Thus, only those living beings survive that carry variations that give them an edge over others.

Another grave omission in the teaching of the theory of evolution is the **consequent use of his theory** both by others and Darwin himself.

For instance, Herbert Spencer's idea of "survival of the fittest", proposed in 1864, coalesced eventually into a philosophy called "**social Darwinism**".

In his later book, *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*, Darwin claimed that men have evolved to be naturally more intelligent since they have had to continuously use their mental power.

**Why must students and teachers in school concern themselves with the above aspects of Darwin's theory?**

These examples carry **crucial insights** into science in both the **historical and contemporary world**.

Science is shaped by the **social and cultural beliefs** of its times, to which it also actively contributes.

These examples remind us that science is a **messy affair** that requires **caution alongside curiosity, creativity and imagination**.

### [25. Why Pratap Bhanu Mehta is wrong about social justice politics and caste census](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article "**Why Pratap Bhanu Mehta is wrong about social justice politics and caste census**" published in the "**The Indian Express**" on **29th April 2023**.

**Syllabus**: GS2 – Government policies for vulnerable sections of society

**Relevance**– Issues related to caste politics

**News**– The article challenges the ideas represented by Pratap Bhanu Mehta Mehta in his article "**Mirage of social justice**" in **Indian Express**.

**What are the P.B. Mehta arguments against social justice?**

Social justice enhances "**social divisions**". The social justice discourse has focused too much on the **distribution of public resources based on caste identities**.

He calls for recognising the **ethical issues of discrimination** and creating **effective institutions** to address caste inequities.

Mehta terms the Opposition uniting around social justice as a politically unwise idea. It may bring **short-term gains but undermine long-term goals**.

**What are counterpoints to P.B. Mehta arguments against social justice?**

Caste-based oppression creates **material conditions**. This materiality of caste inequality is produced in **economic, socio-cultural and political areas** through **electoral-political machinations**.

Social justice has relevance because of **increasing poverty** and disturbing **trends of inequality**. Marginalisation of groups neglected for hundreds of years can be a **fulcrum for unity amongst opposition parties**.

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The most basic understanding of social justice is the struggle for **equitable division of opportunities, privileges and larger representation in institutions.**

The denial of social justice in India is largely a product of the **ideology of Hindutva.** It portrays caste as a **troubling but natural aspect** of Indian society. It is denied by policy neglect and political silence.

### **What is the dominant discourse on caste in India?**

The dominant discourse on caste in India has been characterised by a reluctance to acknowledge the **scale and severity of caste-based violence and discrimination.** The failure to recognise caste injustice is a product of a **wider culture of denial and impunity.**

The dominant discourse on caste proposes that **universal remedies** like creating effective institutions can address caste injustices. Often, these remedies are proposed by voices that lack self-reflexivity on their own caste privilege.

**Quotas and reservations** that provide opportunities for **historically disadvantaged communities** are perceived as a form of **reverse discrimination** by members of dominant castes. It shows the lack of a **sense of social justice** and displays an **exaggerated sense of entitlement.**

### **How can the dominant discourse on caste be challenged?**

Countering the dominant discourse on caste needs a **sustained and concerted effort to raise awareness** about the **realities of oppression.** There is a need to **challenge the impunity** of those who perpetrate caste-based violence and discrimination in various forms.

The political neglect of **caste-based inequalities** can only be countered by a **recognition of its historical and political dimensions.** **Political commitment** is necessary to challenge the **structural barriers** that create caste-based oppression.

**Electoral politics** is the arena where **majoritarian politics** has to be challenged, resisted and defeated.

There is a need to challenge the **culture of members of dominant castes,** who are often in **positions of power and influence.** They propose **universal remedies** and deride social justice as merely a slogan without acknowledging their own caste-based privilege.

As per a section of the ruling elite supported by the mainstream media, caste census shall **lead to casteism.** Such fear-mongering needs to be addressed **philosophically and by citing the data.**

## 26. Two-sided triangle – on Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) ministerial summit

**Source:** The post is based on an article “**Two-sided triangle**” published in **Business Standard** on **29<sup>th</sup> April 2023.**

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – India and its Neighborhood – Relations

**Relevance:** Comprehensive National Power (CNP) of India, Pakistan and China

**News:** The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) ministerial summit is going on in Delhi. India, Pakistan and China are its members among others.

The article discusses **Comprehensive National Power (CNP)** of each of the three countries post-2014 decade.

### **What is CNP?**

CNP takes into account a combination of a lot of factors such as the size and growth of the economy, the strength and cohesion of society, and the firepower and quality of the military, to trade and soft power.

CNP is also defined by how a nation affects their friends, adversaries, and neighbours.

### **How is the CNP of Pakistan?**

**Pakistan is today the weakest** it's been since the eve of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. The economy is bankrupt, and the **growth rate for this year is only 0.5 percent.**

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The income gap between Pakistan and not just India, but all of the Subcontinent, is widening. It's ruled by a coalition government.

Further, **Pakistan's support for Taliban and its ideological victory in Afghanistan has left it without any support from other countries.**

Even, **the Gulf Arabs have moved on** from their commitment have no patience for Pakistan and its demands.

Due to this, **Pakistan is now merely a vassal state of China.** It now has to compete with other powerful vassal state of China such as Russia.

Hence, Pakistan is left with only one card to play, **i.e., India.** It keeps the Indian military engaged along the western borders which is valuable to China.

**How is the CNP of China compared to India?**

**China has witnessed growth in almost all the areas** including technology, trade, military power, social cohesion and rising global stature.

This has enabled **China to close the gap with the US and the larger Western power, and increase the gap with the rest, especially India.** Further, the war in Ukraine has made Russia more dependent on China.

Whereas, **India on no parameters of CNP have narrowed the gap with China.**

India has grown phenomenally in many areas, but the inherited gap is too much with China, that even if India grows faster now, the distance between the two will increase.

**China's economy is more than five times India's** and even if Chinese growth slows down to less than half of India's, the gap will still rise.

China has also stretched India's militarily along both frontiers and India has no option except to deploy its military along the borders.

However, **India's CNP when compared to the previous years has improved.** India's is a remarkable success story of a country becoming so enormously powerful long before it became rich.

**Must Read:** [SCO meet highlights China's growing role in Inner Asia, India's challenge](#)

**What is the way ahead for India?**

**India faces a strategic challenge of the triangulation between China and Pakistan.**

Therefore, India needs to take efforts to close its growing gap with China while defending itself from China and Pakistan.

### [27. The women's reservation Bill cannot wait any longer](#)

**Source-** The post is based on the article "**The women's reservation Bill cannot wait any longer**" published in "**The Hindu**" on **29th April 2023.**

**Syllabus:** GS2- Polity

**Relevance:** Women in politics

**News-** It is disheartening to witness that even 75 years after Independence, Parliament lacks substantial representation of women, with women holding just 14% of the seats.

**What are the contributions of women in the field of politics?**

Women played a crucial role in India's fight for independence, by organising demonstrations, leading rallies, and raising awareness. There were **numerous female representatives** in the Constituent Assembly as well.

Just a decade ago, three of India's largest States, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, and Uttar Pradesh, were in the spotlight for being **led by women Chief Ministers.**

While Sushma Swaraj led the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Sonia Gandhi served as both President of the Congress Party and Chairperson of the United Progressive Alliance. Also, India had its **first woman President**, Pratibha Patil around the same time.

### **What have been the major developments in India related to women representation in politics?**

The discourse on women's reservation in India originates from the **pre-Independence era**. Several women's organisations demanded **political representation for women**.

In 1955, a **government appointed committee** recommended that **10% of seats** in the Lok Sabha and State legislative assemblies should be reserved for women.

During the 1980s, the demand for women's reservations gained momentum. The **National Perspective Plan for Women (1988)** recommended that **30% of seats** in all elected bodies should be reserved for women.

This recommendation was reiterated in the **National Policy for the Empowerment of Women**, which was adopted in 2001.

In 1993, the **Panchayati Raj Act** was amended to **reserve 33% of all seats** in local government bodies for women.

In 1996, the **Women's Reservation Bill** was introduced in the Lok Sabha. The Bill proposed to reserve one third of seats in the Lok Sabha and State legislative Assemblies for women. However, facing strong opposition from some political parties.

It gained more momentum again in the early 2000s. On March 9, 2010, the Bill was approved in the Rajya Sabha.

### **What are the global examples of women representation in politics?**

Around the world, women leaders are **outperforming their male counterparts**.

The **Scandinavian countries** have implemented policies and governance structures that support **gender equality and women's empowerment**. It includes **women's representation in political and leadership positions**.

Moreover, countries led by women have **best policies and governance practices**. The deep scars in Rwanda, from the genocide, are being healed by a leadership that comprises women. This has also resulted in **key social reforms**.

Norway implemented a quota system in 2003 that required 40% of seats on corporate boards to be occupied by women.

### **What is the way forward for proper representation of women in politics?**

Babasaheb Ambedkar was of the opinion that the progress of a community can be measured by the **degree of progress which women have achieved**.

Women have been waiting for too long for their **right to govern**. Women's leadership qualities are not hidden from anyone. So, the **denial of opportunity for political representation** represents grave injustice.

As India strives to become a Vishwa Guru, it can not overlook the **pivotal role women can play in nation building and development**. The **women's reservation Bill** must be passed.

### 28. Mann Ki Baat: A conversation that millions of Indians look forward to

**Source-** The post is based on the article "Mann Ki Baat: A conversation that millions of Indians look forward to" published in "The Indian Express" on 29th April 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Polity and Governance

**Relevance-** Public communication by leadership

**News-** Pm Modi is going to address the 100th episode of Maan Ki Baat programme.

### **Why has the medium of radio been chosen by PM Modi for the exchange of his ideas?**

Radio is an **intimate story-telling medium**. There cannot be a more **potent instrument** for **exchange of ideas** between the country's Prime Minister and the people of his country.

AIR's reach is also large, with about 600 channels carrying the programme.

Many world leaders have realised the power of radio — Winston Churchill, Franklin Roosevelt and other presidents of the United States of America.

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### What is the importance of the Maan Ki Baat programme?

Youth, especially students and lifestyle issues of our competitive times have been a regular focus of Mann Ki Baat. The Prime Minister had dedicated one complete episode in February 2016 to the topic of facing exams in a **stress-free manner**.

People who faced **tremendous pressure themselves and excelled**, such as [Sachin Tendulkar](#), Viswanathan Anand and CNR Rao, featured in this episode. They gave valuable, simple tips to students.

The Prime Minister went on to write the **best-selling book, Exam Warriors**, on the same topic. These turned into bestselling books for students.

From the girl child to student stress, from cleanliness to coming out of depression, the Prime Minister has often utilised Mann Ki Baat as a platform to make society speak to itself by speaking to him.

**Mann Ki Baat and Swachh Bharat** are connected in more ways than one. Swachh Bharat was launched on October 2, 2014, and the first episode of Mann Ki Baat went on air the very next day, on October 3, 2014.

For PM, Mann Ki Baat has been one of the most important platforms in strengthening the **cleanliness mission** and making it a more **people-driven movement**.

### 29. [How to make India pandemic proof](#)

**Source-** The post is based on the article “How to make India pandemic proof” published in “The Indian Express” on 29th April 2023.

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

**Relevance-** Issues related to pandemic

**News-** Covid19 has exposed the weaknesses in the world’s health systems.

### What are the pandemic threats for the world?

Climate change is giving rise to **new pathogens**. **Zoonotic diseases** are spilling over from animals to humans, causing over a million deaths each year.

A silent pandemic is waiting to happen. It is **antibiotic resistance**.

### What are steps taken by India to prepare itself for the next pandemic?

In October 2021, India launched its flagship programme to prevent, prepare and respond to pandemics. It is the **Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM)**.

It seeks to fill the **gaps in health systems and institutions** at both the national and state level. It will need to be **overseen at the highest levels**.

India has also brought several ministries — including health, animal husbandry, forests, and biotechnology — under the Principal Scientific Advisor. This was one of the major shortcomings during the pandemic.

More recently, the foundation for the **National Institute for One Health** in Nagpur was laid. The institute will identify **hotspots for endemic and emerging zoonotic diseases**.

India is now **augmenting surveillance** in 20 cities. Municipal corporations are mandated to identify the most vulnerable areas and provide early alerts. India is also expanding its **network of research laboratories** to cover all **respiratory viruses of unknown origin**.

After the 2015 MERS outbreak, South Korea used **mobile technology and Big Data** to trace contacts and built a strong capacity for diagnosis. India has also begun these exercises.

The clinical trial network set up under the **National Biopharma Mission** is a positive step toward improving **access to affordable new vaccines and drugs**. Similarly, the ICMR’s initiative to establish a **biorepository for clinical samples** will be a national and global asset.

### What is the way forward to counter the threat of future pandemic?

The need of the hour is a holistic **“One Health” approach** that addresses the health of people, animals and ecosystems together.

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The rise of new pathogens has highlighted the **importance of genomic surveillance**. There is a need for wider testing of wastewater and samples from incoming ships and aircraft. These surveillance systems will also need to be extended to other South Asian countries.

**Antibiotic resistance** will have to be tracked and **powerful awareness campaigns** are needed to promote their rational use.

For surveillance, private hospitals and clinics will need to be brought under a **common platform** and data placed in the public domain. The **Ayushman Bharat Digital Health Mission** can facilitate this.

In villages, **strong partnerships** will be needed with communities, dairy cooperatives, and the poultry industry to identify new infections.

During the pandemic, Indian manufacturers produced vaccines, test kits, therapeutics, masks and other items at very **competitive prices**. The **partnerships** between research bodies and manufacturers will need to be **sustained and enhanced**.

### 30. [None too soon: On Governor's and the judiciary's reminder on Bills](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “None too soon: On Governor's and the judiciary's reminder on Bills” published in **The Hindu** on **29th April 2023**.

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

**Relevance:** About the challenges associated with the power of the governor.

**News:** The Supreme Court has reminded Governors that the Constitution expects that a decision to return a Bill to the State Assembly for reconsideration should be made “as soon as possible”.

#### **About the case**

The Telangana Governor's apparent inaction on several Bills made the State to approach the Court.

In the meantime, the Bills have been cleared by the Governor. Based on this, the Court disposed of the petition. But kept open questions that arose from the issue for consideration in an appropriate case.

#### **About the SC's remarks on the governor's power to return a Bill**

The expression ‘as soon as possible’ contains significant constitutional content and must be borne in mind by constitutional authorities.

This effectively means it would be constitutionally impermissible for Governors to hold on to Bills indefinitely without communicating their decision to the House.

The Court's observation addresses the issue of delay, but it does not address the issue in granting assent.

**Read more:** [The question of justiciability of the Governor's assent to Bills in India](#)

#### **What are the concerns associated with the powers of the Governor in India?**

**Note:** *The Governor have the discretionary power to withhold assent or return a Bill for reconsideration. In the Constituent Assembly, it was explicitly clarified that returning a Bill was to be done only on advice.*

-There are three clear problems associated with **Article 200**, which deals with assent to Bills. Such as **a)** there is an absence of a time limit for acting on Bills, **b)** The scope for reserving a Bill for the President's consideration against the advice of the Cabinet and **c)** The claim that the Governor can kill any Bill by declining assent.

-**Article 163** (Discretionary power) evades the primary rule that the Governors function on the ‘aid and advice’ of the Cabinet. Further, there is also a clause that prohibits any inquiry into whether a particular matter fell within their discretion or not.

These provisions give abundant scope for conflict between the government and Governor's office.

**Read more:** [Issues Related to the Office of Governor – Explained, pointwise](#)



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### What should be done?

These rules should be changed, either by amending the Constitution or through an appropriate Supreme Court verdict. So that misuse of discretion can be kept in check.

### 31. [Wrestling Injustice – Protests are integral to a democracy – and vital](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Wrestling Injustice – Protests are integral to a democracy – and vital**” published in **The Times of India** on **29th April 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Vulnerable sections of the population.

**Relevance:** Issues related to women sports persons.

**News:** The top national and international-level wrestlers are once again protesting to express their dissatisfaction with the sexual harassment complaints from women players.

### About the issue

**Read here:** [Wrestlers in SC against Delhi Police: What the law says about filing of FIR in sexual harassment cases](#)

### What does the wrestlers’ protest say about power and politics in India?

**Read more:** [What the wrestlers’ protest says about power and politics in India](#)

### Are protests legal in India?

Protests are inherent to democracy. No grievance redressal mechanism can be perfect. In a democratic framework, a protest is the default option to express deep dissatisfaction.

A protest is a symptom of an underlying problem. It also acts as a pressure relief valve.

### What should be done?

Indian Olympic Association president PT Usha, said that the wrestlers protesting in public are sullyng the image of the country.

Protests don’t affect a country’s image. So, the IOA should make a sincere effort to understand wrestlers’ fear and address the issue.

# General Studies Paper – 3

General Studies - 3

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1. [Is the supremacy of the U.S. dollar under threat?](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Is the supremacy of the U.S. dollar under threat?**” published in “**The Hindu**” on **24th April 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Economy

**Relevance:** External economy

**News-** The topic of dedollarisation seems to be in discourse. Dedollarisation refers to the deposing of the U.S. dollar from the reserve currency status it enjoys globally.

**What are the arguments given in support of dedollarisation?**

The U.S. dollar has depreciated against most major currencies. It has **declined by more than 10%** in the past six months against the euro. Also, the **price of gold** has increased in the past six months despite the fact that the Federal Reserve raised interest rates relentlessly.

Russia and China are **buying large amounts of gold**. It has been cited as the reason for the increase in its price. The **sanctions levied by the U.S. and its allies** against Russia are responsible for it.

Countries would prefer to distance themselves from a currency **weaponized** by the government to serve a **geopolitical agenda**.

**What are the arguments against dedollarisation?**

The dollar depreciation against the euro and other currencies was preceded by a **significant appreciation** in the dollar during recent interest rate increases.

The Federal Reserve considered a pause after the **collapse of the Silicon Valley Bank**. The depreciation in the dollar can be linked to the **temporary financial instability** and the slowing down of interest rate hikes.

The sanctions levied by the U.S. against Russia are **not unprecedented**. The U.S. has a **history of imposing sanctions** on countries. Therefore, it is not logical to assume that the current sanctions against Russia would cause dedollarisation.

**Why does the dollar still enjoy the status of reserve currency?**

**Chinese policies**– The argument of the dollar being dumped in favour of the Chinese yuan is cited due to rise in Chinese lending and China’s **dominant export sector**. Countries borrowing from China are beholden to them. Example is Sri Lanka.

Furthermore, China does not allow the yuan to **float freely** against other currencies. It is said to engage in **exchange-rate manipulation** by routinely devaluing its currency.

China has **controlled capital flows** and does not allow its citizens and firms to leave the country freely. Chinese authorities banned Bitcoin because citizens dumped the yuan in favour of the cryptocurrency.

China’s **export dominance** stems from its significant **labour capital**. However, China’s population growth is declining. Thus, China does not currently pose a strong challenge to the U.S. **dollar’s dominance**.

**Openness of the US economy**– The United States enjoys **unparalleled investor confidence** because it is seen as an open **society and democracy**.

The open market is an **attractive haven for investors** across the world who prefer **liquidity, minimal capital control and minimal political influence**.

A real contender for world reserve currency would have to be an **open society comprising democratic values**.

An autocratic government with **strict capital controls, opaque foreign exchange policies and restrictions on conducting business** cannot overthrow the U.S. dollar.

### 2. [India has a crucial role in setting international statistical standards](#)

**Source-** The post is based on the article “India has a crucial role in setting international statistical standards” published in the “Live mint” on 24th April 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Important international institutions

**News-** Recently, India was elected to the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) after a gap of two decades. The membership is for a term of four years, beginning from January 2024.

#### **What are some facts about the United Nations Statistical Commission?**

The UNSC was **established in 1947**. It is the **highest body** of the **global statistical system**. It brings together the chief statisticians of member states from around the world.

It is the **highest decision making body** for **international statistical activities**. It is responsible for setting **statistical standards** and the development of concepts and methods. It also includes their implementation at the national and international level.

They also enable **comparability across countries** through various indicators such as Gross Domestic Product, Gross Value Addition, employment-unemployment statistics, price statistics, health accounts, tourism accounts, environment accounts.

#### **What are the contributions of India to the United Nations Statistical Commission?**

Two prominent statisticians from India have chaired the Commission. The first Indian to hold its chair was **P.C. Mahalanobis**. He was **followed by V.R Rao** who chaired the 19th session in 1976.

Mahalanobis made **path-breaking contributions** to the UNSC during its formative years. He created a **sub-commission on statistical sampling**. It paved the way for the **application of sample surveys** in various fields of official statistics.

Rao **strengthened the statistical organisations** of many developing countries, especially for carrying out household sample surveys. He chaired the only session of the UNSC **held outside a UN duty station** at New Delhi in 1976.

#### **Which issues related to the accounting system need the consideration of the United Nations Statistical Commission?**

One of the most important items on the agenda will be the **finalization and implementation of the System of National Accounts (SNA) 2025**.

SNA refers to the **framework** adopted by UN member countries for the **formulation of national accounts**. It is the **basis for estimation of GDP, GVA and other macroeconomic aggregates**.

The current estimates of National Income are based on **SNA 2008, with 2011-12 as base year**. Emerging economies like India are in a disadvantageous position because of **non-measurement** of certain economic activities, like **unpaid work by women**.

The **women's labour participation rate** in India is just about 20%, compared to about 70% in the US, UK and other developed countries.

A majority of women are engaged in economic activities, such as family labour in agriculture. This **remains unaccounted for**.

With the **internet and rapid digitalization**, the **basic structure of production, consumption and expenditure** has changed since the SNA 2008. This has changed the **production, consumption and expenditure patterns**.

Digitalization has resulted in a shift from **physical to online transactions**. It has given rise to **new types of economic activities** that are beyond the old SNA framework.

**Digital intermediary platforms** have emerged. The **Gig economy** has independent service providers who source their work from these platforms, such as bicycle couriers, and cab drivers. Currently, their **value addition** remains outside the system's accounting ambit.

Similarly, there are a few products and services which are **beyond SNA 2008**, like data and digital services provided by enterprises.

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There are other important issues relating to the **measurement of our well-being** and the **impact of climate change**. There is a need to incorporate these economic activities into the revised SNA of 2025.

### 3. [Quantum leap – New mission can lead to benefits across sectors](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Quantum leap – New mission can lead to benefits across sectors**” published in the **Business Standard** on **24th April 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS – 3: Science and Technology – Indigenization of technology and developing new technology.

**Relevance:** About National Quantum Mission.

**News:** The government’s recent announcement for National Quantum Mission (NQM) for 2023-24 through 2030-31 is a fillip to R&D in quantum tech.

#### **About National Quantum Mission**

**Read here:** [Cabinet approves National Quantum Mission to scale-up scientific & industrial R&D for quantum technologies](#)

#### **What is quantum computing, and what are its applications?**

Its various applications include,

- In theory, a quantum computer could deliver accurate meteorological projections, perform seismic data analysis, analyse protein folding, etc.
- Quantum computers could potentially break most current encryption, by quickly solving the mathematical problems on which modern cryptography is based.
- Quantum technology can lead to benefits across fields as diverse as communications, health, financial sector, energy management, drug design, as well as aerospace and military applications.

**Must read:** [Quantum computing technology and associated applications – Explained, pointwise](#)

#### **What is the significance of quantum entanglement?**

**Read here:** [Quantum Jump: GoI does well to fund R&D in computing’s next revolution](#)

#### **What are the various characteristics of Quantum computers?**

- Quantum computing uses quantum bits, or qubits. A conventional bit is based on an electrical current being switched on or off, which enables binary calculations. A qubit can be both on and off at the same time. This allows a quantum computer to perform far more calculations with far fewer qubits.
- Special materials and rare helium isotopes are used to manage cooling and shielding, quite apart from specialised semiconductors allowing for quantum logic gates.
- Quantum applications in the related fields of communications and cryptography depend on another quantum property — “Quantum entanglement”.
- Cryptographically secure communications can be generated by separating two entangled particles. Moreover, by sharing entangled particles as keys, communications become unbreakable.

#### **What are the concerns associated with quantum computing?**

**a)** Quantum computers are prone to far higher levels of error, **b)** Superpositions (where a qubit is both on and off) can collapse quickly, **c)** The software programming is different, and requires excellent error control and management, **d)** Researchers have found it hard to maintain physically stable configurations, **e)** Quantum computers require huge installations which must be housed in super-cold, seismically stable places since even passing trucks can cause errors through imperceptible tremors and **f)** Developing quantum technologies need extensive research into the design and synthesis of superconductors, novel semiconductor structures, and materials with complex topological structures as well as new software.

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### 4. [Why urea rules India's farms](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “Why urea rules India's farms” published in **The Indian Express** on **25<sup>th</sup> April 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Agriculture inputs

**Relevance:** concerns associated with the use of urea.

**News:** The efforts of the government such as launching **Nano Urea and coating all indigenously manufactured and imported urea with neem oil** have not been successful in reducing the urea consumption.

**What do the current statistics say about the use of urea?**

**Sales of urea crossed a record 35.7 million tons (mt) in the fiscal year 2022-23.**

After neem-coating was fully enforced from December 2015, consumption of the urea dipped in the initial two years. However, the trend reversed from 2018-19.

**Urea sales in 2022-23 were about 5.1 mt higher than in 2015-16 and over 9 mt than in 2009-10.**

All other fertilisers, except single super phosphate (SSP), have registered much lower increases or even declines.

**What is nutrient-based subsidy (NBS) and why hasn't it been successful?**

**Read Here:** [About NBS](#)

The data reveals worsening of nutrient imbalance, with **urea consumption rising by over a third since 2009-10.**

This has been **due to a slower rise in the prices of urea.** The price increased only by 16.5%, after the introduction of NBS.

The current government has also **brought back price controls on DAP.** Companies are not allowed to charge more than Rs 27,000 per tonne.

These reasons have led to an increase in the sales of fertilisers in the fiscal year 2022-23.

**What are the harms of using excess fertilizers?**

Fertilisers are essentially food for crops. They, like humans, need nutrients for growth and grain yield.

Initially, **the crop yield on the use of fertilisers was good**, especially during the Green Revolution. However, with the time, **crop yield response to fertiliser use has more than halved.**

**For example**, 1 kg of NPK nutrients yielded 12.1 kg of cereal grains in India during the 1960s, but only 5 kg during the 2010s.

Further, as per recent research, the Nitrogen Use Efficiency (**NUE**) in India has fallen from 48.2% in 1962-63 to 34.7% in 2018. The 34.7% NUE was below the global average of 45.3% and 53.3% for North America in 2018.

**Note:** *NUE refers to the proportion of N applied mainly through urea that is actually utilised by crops to produce harvested yields.*

**What can be the way ahead?**

**First**, the consumption of urea can be reduced **by increasing its prices.** However, it is not easy due to political reasons.

**Second**, instead of increasing prices, efforts may be put **towards improving NUE.** This will enable farmers to harvest the same or more grain yields with fewer bags.

**Nano Urea** is also primarily aimed at boosting NUE. **For instance**, a single 500-ml Nano Urea bottle containing just 4% N can effectively replace at least one 45-kg bag of regular 46% N urea.

**Third**, the government should also make **incorporation of urease and nitrification inhibitors compulsory in urea.**

These are chemical compounds that inhibit the activity of **urease** (a soil enzyme that breaks down urea into ammonium and further to ammonia) and **nitrifying bacteria** (that convert ammonium to nitrate), making more N available to the crops.

**Source:** **The Indian Express**

### 5. [Why Dollar's Losing Its Shine](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “Why Dollar's Losing Its Shine” published in **The Times of India** on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Economy – Money and Banking

**Relevance:** measures taken adopt alternatives to dollar dominance

**News:** Countries around the world are looking for an alternative to the weakening US dollar.

**What are the alternatives being adopted?**

Central banks of most countries are now **buying gold as an alternative to dollars**. As per the estimate, gold currently accounts for a record 33% of monthly global demand.

This buying boom has helped push the price of gold to near record levels, more than 50% higher than what predicted by models based on real interest rates.

Moreover, **countries like Russia, China, Brazil and India** are also looking for a new currency to challenge the dollar. Their goal is to trade with one another directly, in their own coin.

**Why are these countries looking for alternatives to dollars for trading?**

**Global trade has been based on the dollar since the end of World War II.** However, the US has used its dollar dominance against countries to put financial sanctions.

As per the report, **30% of all countries now face sanctions from the US, the EU, Japan and the UK**, which has gone up from 10% in the early 1990s.

The recent one is sanctions against Russia for its invasion of Ukraine. This cuts off Russian banks from the dollar-based global payment system.

**This implied that in future any developing nation could be a target.**

**What are other measures being taken to promote non-dollar-based trading?**

**The Philippines and Thailand** are now looking to non-dollar-based trading. **India has also been discussing with the UAE** the idea of conducting non-oil trade in rupees.

Further, **dollar as forex reserves has also seen decline since the launch of Russia sanctions**. As per the report, **the dollar share of central bank reserves is down to 47% from 73% two decades ago**.

Further, there are many central banks that are looking to launch their own **digital currency**. The number has tripled since 2020, representing 95% of the world's gross domestic product.

**Many are testing these digital currencies for use in bilateral trade** which again is a challenge to dollars.

**What does this imply for the US?**

The shift from the dollar to other forms of currencies in trade increases risk for America.

This is because a dominant dollar matters for the US economy as **high demand for the currency tends to lower the cost of borrowing abroad**, which is a privilege for America.

Moreover, among the top 20 developed economies, **America now has the second highest fiscal and current account deficits**. Further, **the country's ability to pay its debts is also slipping**, as its reliance on foreign funding keeps growing.

Hence, **the shift from the dollar towards other currencies will affect overall America's economy**.

### 6. [Next step for the infotech boom](#)

**Source-** The post is based on the article “Next step for the infotech boom” published in the “Business Standard” on 25th April 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Indian Economy

**News-** The article explains the growth of infotech industry in India

**What are major reflections from the present status of the infotech industry in India?**

The **long-term vision of science and technology development** in the Nehru era of planning created a capacity to keep track of technology developments.

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The **rapid expansion of engineering education** became the basis for **India's global comparative advantage** in medium-skill service supply.

### **What was the policy focus of the government in the 70s and its impacts?**

The policy focus in the 1970s shifted on public sector companies to **manufacture hardware for defence, space and atomic energy**, as a part of the **self-sufficiency strategy**.

The public enterprises developed the skills required for **specific needs**, mainly for **governmental applications**. It had a limited impact on the economy. The high tariffs on hardware imports constrained the development of the service industry.

### **How did the policy focus of the government after 80s change the status of the infotech industry in India?**

The change made in the mid-1980s in the infotech service industry has an **economy-wide impact**. The new policies announced by the Rajiv Gandhi-led government in 1984.

The tariffs on hardware imports were **substantially reduced** and **software technology parks** were established. They provided **satellite links** to major IT developers, and enabled them to **directly transmit** the work done in India abroad.

### **What are the other factors responsible for growth of the infotech industry in India?**

The big change occurred towards the end of the last century. Computer programmes designed with **two-digit year numbers** had to be modified in a time-consuming process to take **four digit year numbers**.

The Indian software service companies could do this at low cost because of their **low worker wages levels**.

Software exports from India **increased nearly 2.5 times** in dollar terms **between 1998–1999 and 2000–2001**

Another change that generated new options for the Indian software service firms was the **establishment of the euro currency**. It required similar tedious changes in computer programs. Since then, the India software service industry has become **a key global player** in the trade in software services and internet technology-enabled services. Its **annual exports** have grown from around **\$3 billion in FY2000 to \$181 billion in FY2022**.

### **What is the way forward for future growth of the infotech industry in India?**

A greater presence on the **frontiers of infotech development** and **better integration into the needs of the national economy** will decide the future of IT industry

The industry is a **major global player** but not yet a **major innovator**. The **R&D spending** of the major companies is about 1% of turnover. It is way below the levels for **global internet players** not just in the developed world but also in China.

With **artificial intelligence (AI)**, India's **cost advantage in low-cost services** will be eroded unless it itself becomes a major player in AI and other new technology developments.

This will require substantially **greater investment in R&D** by both the government as well as infotech companies.

There are other areas that are becoming more important, like **cloud computing**. Most users in India are dependent on foreign suppliers of cloud services.

It is also necessary that the infotech service industry increases its **focus on domestic sales**, which at present are just a **little above 20% of their turnover**.

The potential and the need for domestic sales will increase with the development of an **open access digital framework** by the government, with assistance and cooperation with private sector software pioneers

This **digital public network** includes Aadhaar, the Unified Payments Interface (UPI), and new developments like the **Open Credit Enablement Network (OCEN)** and the **Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC)**.

Access to digital frameworks has shot up with the growing number of **smartphone and internet users** and **bank deposit holders**.



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The infotech service companies must now see themselves as a **major domestic supplier of services** and not just as **globally competitive exporters**.

### 7. [Batting for borrowers – Penal levy on loan defaulters should not be usurious](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Batting for borrowers – Penal levy on loan defaulters should not be usurious**” published in **The Hindu** on **25th April 2023**.

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

**Relevance:** About penal levy on loan defaulters.

**News:** The Reserve Bank of India recently released the draft guidelines on ‘Fair Lending Practice’ as there is an increase in retail lending in recent years. The draft circular regulates penal charges on loan defaulters.

#### **What is the rationale behind regulating penal levy on loan defaulters?**

The industry’s share of outstanding bank credit had shrunk to about 24% as of February 2023, from over 43% in 2014-15. The personal loans had surged to 30%, from just 19% eight years ago,

There are times when lenders have levied a penal interest over and above the contracted rate of interest when borrowers delay repayment or default. This is done despite the RBI allows the credit provider to reprice the loan in case a borrower’s ‘credit risk profile’ has changed.

Earlier, the penal levy was focused on solely fostering credit discipline among borrowers. But in practice, the penal interest turned into a revenue enhancement tool.

Such as **a)** Some entities were charging ‘excessive’ rates of penal interest, **b)** Lenders had been capitalising the penal interest, thereby increasing the principal amount that the borrower would ultimately have to repay.

Thereby, lenders seek an unduly profit from borrowers’ defaults. So, the RBI has issued a draft circular for regulating penal charges on loan accounts.

#### **How did the RBI’s Fair Lending Practice aim to reduce the penal levy on loan defaulters?**

-The penal charges should be recovered separately and must not be added either to the principal outstanding or the rate of interest charged on the loan.

-Lenders can follow the normal process for compounding the outstanding primary interest.

-Lenders have the freedom to set the quantum of penal charges proportional to the default or non-compliance with the terms of the loan contract beyond a preset threshold.

-The penal charges levied on individual borrowers cannot be at a rate higher than a similar charge applicable to corporate borrowers.

-The penal charges must be communicated upfront when finalising every loan and unfailingly reiterated to the borrower in every subsequent reminder for loan repayments.

Overall, the move will benefit small borrowers, individual borrowers, and others.

### 8. [The government shouldn’t be running a fact-check unit](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**The government shouldn’t be running a fact-check unit**” published in the **Livemint** on **25th April 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS – 3: role of media and social networking sites in internal security challenges.

**Relevance:** About amendments to IT Rules.

**News:** Recently, the government of India has notified the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Amendment Rules, 2023.

#### **What are the salient provisions of the IT amendment rules?**

**Read here:** [IT Ministry notifies body to flag ‘fake’ content about govt](#)

#### **What are the concerns associated with amendments to IT Rules?**

**State’s rejection of ground reality:** A private survey has shown that the health department’s management information system (MIS) missed more than 75% of infant deaths in Maharashtra.

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This survey led to the formation of the Abhay Bang committee which proposed recommendations for proper measuring. Later, Maharashtra became the first state to launch a child nutrition mission in 2005. The State's model of using community health workers to monitor and treat newborns was eventually scaled up across rural India.

If Maharashtra had a state-run fact-check unit, then the government will dismiss the private report as false. This will **diminish the progress of society**.

**Restrict public access to data:** Since only government officials have access to certain kinds of government data, the government data might be inaccessible to the public. For instance, analysts prefer to use the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) data rather than Employees Provident Fund Organization (EPFO) data. This is because the anonymized respondent-level PLFS data is publicly available, unlike the EPFO database.

**Read more:** [Express View on IT Rules amendments: Government sets itself up as judge, jury and executioner](#)

**What are the advantages of amendment to IT Rules?**

**Read here:** [Amendment to IT Rules and regulating fake news – Explained, pointwise](#)

At a time when India is trying to emerge as a viable and democratic alternative to China, India need to reconsider the amendments.

### 9. [On the Code on Social Security for platform-based gig workers](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**On the Code on Social Security for platform-based gig workers**” published in “**The Hindu**” on **26th April 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Employment

**Relevance:** Issues related to gig economy workers

**News**- The Ashok Gehlot led Rajasthan government has recently announced the Rajasthan Platform-based Gig Workers (Registration and Welfare) Bill, 2023.

**What are legal issues related to gig-economy workers?**

**Definition of employee**– The three new labour codes passed by Parliament recently acknowledge platform and gig workers as **new occupational categories**. But the current laws do not see them as **future industrial workers**.

Working **in factories, the duration of time needed on a factory floor, and associated issues** are recognized as the parameters for defining an ideal worker under most labour laws. This has not shifted much.

The Code on Wages, 2019, tries to expand this idea by using ‘wages’ as the **primary definition of ‘employee’**. **Wage relationships** are an important part of the informal economy.

**Legal guarantees**-Platform delivery people can **claim benefits, but not labour rights**. This distinction makes them beneficiaries of State programs. This does not allow them to go to court to demand **better and stable pay, or better regulations**

This also means that the government or courts cannot pull up platform companies for their **choice of pay, or duration of work**.

In the **Code on Social Security, 2020**, platform workers are now eligible for benefits like **maternity benefits, life and disability cover, old age protection, provident fund, employment injury benefits**.

However, eligibility does not mean that the benefits are guaranteed. None of these are **secure benefits**. These benefits will depend on the **political will** at the Central and State government levels and how unions elicit **political support**.

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### 10. Welcome to the brain economy: Technology will change the way we look at labour, capital and skills

**Source-** The post is based on the article “Welcome to the brain economy: Technology will change the way we look at labour, capital and skills” published in “The Indian Express” on 26th April 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Employment

**Relevance-** Changing nature of employment

**News-** The article explains the emergence of brain economy and its impact.

#### **How has the nature of labour changed?**

The nature of labour has changed drastically since the mid-19th century — **from body to skill to brain.**

Physical labour required no education, skill-based labour required higher education, training and expertise. Brain-based labour is about **rapid innovation and creation, driven by technology.**

No industry will be **immune from technology** in the global brain economy. Retail, agriculture, automobile, finance, energy, manufacturing, healthcare, education, sports and entertainment will be driven and reshaped by technology and brain power.

Technology will not be limited to software, artificial intelligence and data analytics. It will spread rapidly across brain sciences, quantum computing, genetic engineering, 3D printing, nanotechnology and combinations.

The search for **perfection in technology** and its related issues is an illusion. Technology will keep evolving and the **new generation of technology** will solve the problems of earlier generations. First generation vaccines saved billions of lives from Covid.

#### **What is the way forward for the success of the brain economy?**

There is a need to abandon **outdated stereotypes** of **evil corporations, sinful profits and inhuman technology.**

The **myth of man vs machine** needs to be ended. Technology doesn't destroy jobs. It **creates jobs, liberates people and drives social progress.**

Advances in technology in the brain economy will always be a couple of steps ahead of politicians, bureaucrats, policies and laws. We will have to learn to deal with it.

There will be issues of concern like **market dominance** by corporations and **exploitation of legal loopholes.** There will be **ethical dilemmas** regarding technological choices. **Regulation and oversight** are essential. But these need to be **pragmatic, not dogmatic.**

There is a need to widen the definitions of **progressive, intellectual and civil society.** These definitions can't remain confined to a closed group of liberal arts professors, activists and NGOs.

**Technology illiteracy** impedes understanding, perpetrates falsehoods and obstructs progress. A clear understanding of technology is an important issue.

Scientists, technologists, businessmen, entrepreneurs and corporations must also be present at the **discussion table.** **Collaboration** is the key.

The **education architecture** of the country needs to be revamped. Students and teachers in primary and secondary education need to be equipped with technology. **Failures in experimentation and creation in schools** should be celebrated.

**Multidisciplinary research universities** should be created on a war footing. Courses in **different aspects of technology** must be made mandatory for all liberal arts programmes, just like liberal arts courses should be made mandatory in all science and technology departments.

#### **What will be the nature of the brain economy?**

The concerns of the employees in the body economy revolved around **low wages, job tenure and exploitation.** The concerns of the employees in the skill economy are **skill relevance, flexibility and work-life balance.**

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In the brain economy, they will question the company's impact on the **environment, gender parity, wealth sharing and other social issues**.

There could be many failures. Every successful innovation is built on a **graveyard of failures**. We will have to get used to it.

Many corporations will be a **combination of brain, skill and body**. Amazon, for example, has brains that create new offerings, skills that maintain their vast data centres and bodies that deliver packages to homes.

The focus will be on the **complete elimination of the body** and the **gradual replacement of skills** through technology. The accompanying job losses will have to be offset by the creation of new types of jobs.

Many brains will operate outside the **ambit of corporations**. The scale and scope of **open-source innovation** will continue to expand. It will give rise to a **"societal brain"**. India's digital public goods revolution is an example of this.

The **relationship between capital and labour** will change. Capital exploited physical labour and invested in skills. It will now partner with the brains.

The **balance of power between capital and labour** will become more symmetric. But markets will create inequality by assigning exponentially differential values to body, skill and brain.

### 11. Get real with targets – on foreign trade policy

**Source:** The post is based on the article **"Get real with targets"** published in **Business Standard** on **26<sup>th</sup> April 2023**.

**Syllabus:** **GS 3 – Economy – Industrial Policy**

**Relevance:** **concerns associated with** the foreign trade policy 2023.

**News:** The government announced a new foreign trade policy last month.

#### **What are the concerns with the new foreign trade policy?**

The new policy has set a target of achieving **exports of goods and services worth \$2 trillion** by 2030.

Therefore, in order to meet the target of \$2 trillion by 2030, a compound annual growth rate (**CAGR**) should be 14.61 percent during this seven-year period.

This means the share of goods and services exports in India's gross domestic product (**GDP**) should increase from 23 percent in 2022-23 to over 28 percent in 2029-30.

However, **the CAGR for exports of goods and services in the last 10 years was a little less than 6 percent**. Therefore, in such a scenario, these aspirational targets look challenging.

**Must Read:** [India's New Foreign Trade Policy \(FTP\) and its significance – Explained](#)

#### **What are the drawbacks of establishing such an export target?**

**Unachievable Targets:** The foreign trade policy in 2015 had set a target of 11.6 percent CAGR from \$466 billion (merchandise goods and services) in 2013-14 to \$900 billion 2019- 20.

However, **the actual performance during the period** of the 2015 policy was a disaster, with exports between 2014-15 and 2019-20 showing a CAGR of just 2 percent.

Therefore, the government has not learned from experience and has again set the export target in the new foreign policy.

**Overtaking Roles:** It has been argued that the government should not get involved in setting export targets because exports are done by companies not by the government.

Instead, **the government's job should be to create a conducive environment for higher exports through a supportive policy**.

**Lack of Accountability:** The government set fiscal deficit target and it is held accountable for that because a fiscal deficit target is all about how the government goes about raising its revenues and spending on various schemes.

Whereas **exports have to be achieved by exporters** and hence the job of meeting a target should be seen as a success or failure on the part of the exporting community.

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Hence, **these kinds of targets free the government from being held accountable.**

**For instance**, nobody was held accountable for the failure of the foreign trade policy of 2015 in meeting the exports target of \$900 billion to be achieved by 2019-20.

**What can be the way ahead?**

**First**, the government should not worry about setting targets for exports and instead, it should **focus on ways domestic policies are framed to make exports more competitive.**

Additionally, **attention should be paid to how exchange rate regulations** may benefit exporters by bringing them closer to the real effective exchange rate and **how import tariffs can be reduced** effectively to lower exporters' costs.

**Second**, if the government wants to set a target, it should not be for a period of five or seven years. **The target should be annual**, which could be monitored at the end of the year, and based on the performance, the goals could be revisited.

### 12. Turning the clock back – on Liberalised Remittance Scheme

**Source:** This post is created based on the article “**Turning the clock back**” published in **Business Standard** on **26<sup>th</sup> April 2023**.

**Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper 3- Indian Economy, Liberalisation

**Context:** In the recent times, government has tightened the restrictions on how Indians can remit money overseas.

Post-1991 reforms, Liberalised Remittance Scheme, or LRS was introduced. It permitted individuals to send \$250,000 out of the country, in a calendar year.

The limit was reduced to \$75,000 in 2013 as a macro-prudential measure. However, this limit was gradually restored to earlier \$250,000.

This policy depicted confidence in the Indian economy's strength, rupee's float and the sustainability of the country's external account.

However, in recent years, this policy has been reversed. The government has systematically tightened the restrictions on how individuals can remit money out of the country.

**What are the changes introduced linked to the outward remittances?**

**First**, the finance bill of the last session of the parliament has increased the TDS on remittances to 20% from the earlier 5%.

**Second**, Purchases done through the credit card abroad are also being sought to be brought into the regulatory net by the government.

**Third**, Furthermore, Reserve Bank of India has set a 180-day limit on any funds sent outside the country. Within this period, the funds either should be invested in any instrument or repatriated.

The funds in the foreign deposit accounts will not be considered an investment.

**What are the implications of tightening of outward remittances?**

Due to repatriation of the money, it will cycle back in the economy. It will lead to an increased transaction cost.

Globally, restrictions on remittances are seen as a sign of insecurity among policymakers about the direction of the economy.

It reduces the freedoms to Indian investors, where and how they like to invest.

High levels of restrictions for such transfers will increase the incentive for evasion or the return of illegal and opaque systems.

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### 13. [Laws should keep pace with fast evolving technologies](#)

**Source:** This post is created based on the article “**Laws should keep pace with fast evolving technologies**” published in **Live Mint** on **26<sup>th</sup> April 2023**.

**Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper 3 – Awareness in the fields of IT

**Context:** Recent developments in the field of AI are conflicting with Europe’s GDPR.

Recently, discussions on regulating artificial intelligence (AI) have raised concerns about privacy. Many experts believe that AI technologies, like Large Language Models (LLMs), may not meet the strict privacy requirements of Europe’s General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Since GDPR is considered a global standard, this could impact AI technology deployment worldwide.

#### **What are the conflicts between GDPR and Large Language Models?**

GDPR emphasizes obtaining individual consent before collecting and processing personal data. LLMs, however, training data is gathered from the web, which potentially includes personal information without consent. GDPR allows data collection without consent if there is a “legitimate interest,” but it is difficult to argue that LLMs are a “necessity” in this context.

Moreover, GDPR principles of data minimization and retention restriction allows collection of that much personal data which is required to achieve a specific purpose. The collected data should be removed after that. This principal conflicts with LLMs’ reliance on vast and indefinite data availability for continuous model refinement. only so.

Lastly, users could also share their personal info with Conversational AI solutions. It becomes a part of the learning cycle and becomes part of the AI model. It also risks gathering personally identifiable information, potentially violating GDPR.

#### **What should be the course of action?**

Recently, many European country regulators are investigating the matter of privacy involved in the OpenAI’s use.

However, considering these issues, some suggest re-examining our present legal frameworks to better align with new technologies like LLMs and generative AI.

As past technological advancements have also prompted legal changes, it is crucial to strike a balance between innovation and privacy without forcing new technologies to comply with outdated frameworks.

### 14. [The right to litigate – Use of legal remedies to limit nature’s exploitation is at the core of democracy](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**The right to litigate – Use of legal remedies to limit nature’s exploitation is at the core of democracy**” published in **The Hindu** on **26th April 2023**.

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

**Relevance:** About coal-fired plants.

**News:** The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has recently registered a case against an environmental lawyer and his organisation for violating Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) provisions. The CBI has said that they are using foreign funds to encourage litigation that will stall existing and prospective coal-fired plants in India.

#### **About India’s climate ambitions**

As a signatory to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and various key agreements, India has undertaken initiatives to gradually reduce reliance on fossil fuel sources and become ‘net zero’ by 2070.

India has consistently endorsed reports by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) that mentions the urgency of ensuring global temperatures do not exceed 1.5°C of pre-industrial times. Thereby necessitating that global net anthropogenic CO<sub>2</sub> emissions decline by about 45% from 2010 levels by 2030.

### Can India continue to operate coal-fired plants?

Under the principles of 'Common and Differentiated Responsibility', India has maintained its right to rely on coal plants in the interim as it is still a developing economy.

The actual cost of renewable sources (solar, wind and nuclear) remains much more than that of fossil-fuel power.

**Read more:** [Phasing Out Coal in India – Explained, Pointwise](#)

### About India's upcoming coal-fired plants and challenges in execution

India has 28.5 GW of coal power capacity planned and 32 GW of plants are under construction. But a majority of their commissioning has been delayed due to

**-Insufficient environment clearances, land acquisition, and redevelopment and rehabilitation-related problems.**

**-Rulings by the National Green Tribunal and lack of adherence to norms prescribed** mainly under provisions of the Environment Protection and related legislation.

**-Funding for new coal plants is increasingly difficult** with multilateral funding agencies refusing to fund such plants.

**Read more:** [Coal crisis in India – Explained, pointwise](#)

### Is using legal remedies to limit the operation of coal-fired plants wrong?

No. In India, many coal plants run inefficiently and rely on lenient environmental curbs as they are critical to India's power needs. In this situation, using legal remedies to limit the industrial exploitation of nature and ensuring just compensation is at the core of a civilised democracy.

### 15. Plastic ban failure – Managing plastic waste needs a multi-pronged strategy

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Plastic ban failure – Managing plastic waste needs a multi-pronged strategy**” published in **The Hindu** on **26th April 2023**.

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

**Relevance:** About Plastic ban failure.

**News:** Even nearly 10 months after the ban on single-use plastic products, their use is still rampant in most parts of the country. This shows the plastic ban failure.

**Must read:** [Ban on Single-Use Plastic – Explained, pointwise](#)

### What is the present status of the plastic ban?

Some of the bulk consumers of single-use plastic materials have switched to their biodegradable alternatives. However, most other producers, sellers, and consumers use and throw plastic, particularly thin carry bags, stuff as usual. For instance, **a)** A recent **anti-plastic drive carried out in Kerala** led to the confiscation of 25 tonnes of proscribed plastic material, **b)** Delhi's 100-day “beat plastic campaign”, which culminated on Earth Day on April 22, has resulted in the seizure of over 14,000 kg of outlawed plastic items, **c)** Delhi is now the largest producer of plastic waste among all the metropolitan cities in the country.

There has been hardly any noticeable improvement in the system of collection and safe disposal of discarded plastic materials. Thereby, aggravating the menace of plastic pollution.

**Read more:** [Ineffective implementation: Ban on single-use plastic is not working](#)

### What is the reason behind the Plastic ban failure?

**a)** The implementation of the rules was left to the states and their pollution control boards. But they have not discharged their functions responsibly, **b)** The Centre which displayed remarkable determination at the time of promulgating the ban, failed to take up follow-up action, **c)** The Centre has not taken the states along for putting in place an effective legal framework for plastic waste management, **d)** Many state's plastic waste management norms remain only on paper. For instance, Delhi framed the Plastic Waste Management Rules way back in 2019, still, these rules are not yet notified, **e)** Inadequate availability of their cost-effective alternatives, and **f)** Less investment on research and

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development for suitable substitutes for use-and-throw plastic goods. Similarly, the government also has not offered any fiscal or other incentives for this purpose.

**Read more:** [Why a ban on single-use plastics won't help](#)

### **What should be done to ensure a proper ban on single-use plastic?**

The government needed a well-advised multi-pronged strategy to address plastic pollution in its entirety. This should focus right from production to retrieval and appropriate recycling or disposal of the plastics.

### 16. [Maharashtra heatstroke deaths: Protecting the vulnerable this summer](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “Maharashtra heatstroke deaths: Protecting the vulnerable this summer” published in the **Indian Express** on 27th April 2023.

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

**Relevance:** About the impact of heatstrokes.

**News:** Recently, fourteen people died from heatstroke while attending a government award function in an open space in Navi Mumbai. The IMD has predicted a hotter summer this year. So, India has to take steps to prevent many deaths from heat strokes this year.

### **What are heatstrokes, and what are their implications?**

**Note:** In 2010, heat waves in Ahmedabad took more than 800 deaths. In response, Ahmedabad became the first city to start a threshold-based Heat Action Plan in 2013.

**Read more:** [Heat strokes in India: Reasons and Impacts – Explained, pointwise](#)

The IMD now predicts the temperature level for the next five days in more than 500 cities and all districts of India.

### **How can heat strokes be fatal?**

**Read here:** [In Maharashtra heatstroke deaths, the critical factor of humidity](#)

### **About the history of heat strokes**

**Global level:** Heat stroke deaths have plagued various armies for centuries. More recently, devastating heat waves occurred in Chicago in 1995 and the European heat wave in 2003.

**Indian level:** Traditionally, most cultures in India have words to describe heat stroke — such as “loo” in Hindi and other languages. As Indians are used to hot weather and the country has several other pressing tasks. So there has been a weak national commitment.

**Read more:** [HAPless In Heat – As extreme summer temperatures hit many parts of India, are govts thinking of vulnerable groups?](#)

### **What are the ideal solutions for heat waves?**

**Prepare individual HAPs:** The World Meteorological Organisation has declared that the past six years have been the hottest globally, indicating the increasing pace of global warming. Hence, it is imperative that all cities, districts and villages in India prepare for heat waves.

For this, each city and district should appoint a “heat officer” who will ensure that the heat action plan is prepared and implemented. The plan has to be revisited every year and revised when new features are required to protect people.

**Role of local government:** The local city or district governments have to take the historical temperatures of the cities and issue a red alert if it is in the 99th percentile, an orange alert if it is in the 95th percentile and above, and a yellow alert if it is the 90th percentile and above.

Encourage people to carry water while going out and cover their heads or use an umbrella to prevent direct exposure to sunlight.

**Long-term solutions:** Long-term measures like the greening of cities by increasing the tree cover, painting roofs white (cool roofs) to reflect sunlight and heat, and use of low-energy cooling devices such as fans and coolers will also help to reduce the effect of increasing heat.

**Prepare heat wave mortality data:** India needs to correlate the daily all-cause mortality with daily temperatures for the last 15-20 years. India also needs to capture and analyse all-cause



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mortality and hospitalisation in every city and correlate it with daily maximum and minimum temperatures. This will inform authorities if mortality and morbidity are within the usual limits. Overall, systematic steps are required to protect people from heat wave-related mortality and morbidity. This requires inter and intra-departmental coordination and top-level commitment.

**Read more: [Heatwaves & Cool Heads – We shouldn't panic about summer extremes, because there are well-understood solutions. The trick is to implement them smartly](#)**

### 17. [The third-gen web is about public good](#)

**Source-** The post is based on the article “The third-gen web is about public good” published in “The Hindu” on 27th April 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Awareness in the field of IT and computer

**News-** A 2021 report by the U.S.- India Strategic Partnership Forum states that the third-gen web will be crucial for India to realise its \$1.1 trillion digital asset opportunity by 2032.

#### **What are some facts about the third-generation web?**

Some experts term the third-gen web as ‘**Web3**’, while others use the term ‘**Web 3.0**’.

Web3 is **decentralised, privacy-oriented, blockchain-driven and crypto-asset friendly**.

Web 3.0 upholds the **property of the ‘semantic web,’** which is powered by AI. Semantic web has the ability to **recombine information** available on different websites to **generate new content and knowledge resources** that are more authentic and creative.

Followers of Web 3.0 claim that their version has **robust capability on the data analytics front**. So, it will create far **better search engines**.

Web3 seeks to radically transform the manner in which data is **generated, monetized, shared, and circulated**. It advocates **decentralized data storage systems**.

Web3 has file-sharing systems such as the **Interplanetary File System** which are **cryptographically protected**. It is more **secure and capable** of functioning without the Internet and blockchains. In this manner, Web3 seeks to overcome the **data storage barriers of blockchains**.

Web3’s boldest element is the **strategic role assigned to non- custodial wallets**. It functions as **digital passports** for users to access **blockchain-enabled transaction platforms**.

These wallets aid the creation of an **ownership economy**. Here, creators themselves control their content. Fundamentally, they work as digital **proof of identity**.

Web3 seeks to replace **micro-economic organizations** with **decentralized autonomous organizations**.

At a more macro level, it seeks to create a **distributed economic system**. Here, special classes of native digital tokens and cryptocurrencies would form the **media of monetary circulation**.

#### **How can India benefit from the third-generation web?**

Design-related innovations of India’s handicraft industry are not protected by **Intellectual Property rights**. The digital tokens minted by Web 3 platforms would enable our handicraft enterprises to **secure their innovations**.

Web 3-based instruction tools enable the **rapid dissemination of grassroots innovations** from master artisans to fellow members. It would **improve the economic fortunes** of craftsmen and artisan communities in north-east, western and peninsular India.

India’s major **digital public infrastructure push** and the large-scale **deployment of Internet of Things (IoT)** in rural development projects offer major possibilities for deploying Web 3 in rural areas.

There has been a **rapid rise in community data**. But this resource remains largely untapped due to a lack of data **analytics capabilities at the community level**. This limitation can be overcome by **Web3 analytics systems**.

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Web 3.0 can also yield insights from large volumes of **community data**, generated by **IoT-enabled development programmes** such as the Jal Jeevan Mission.

Web 3.0's natural advantage of facilitating **'analytics at the edge'** provides considerable scope for mapping the water use habits of communities.

Similarly, **early warning systems for floods** will improve with Web 3.0 due to **data analytics facilities** being obtained at the sub-basin level. Thus Web 3.0 will have a **transformative role** in regionally disadvantaged areas.

India's **National Blockchain Strategy 2021** proposes to explore **tokenization and apply blockchains solutions** for development programmes. A third-gen web strategy can be helpful in achieving it.

### 18. Our budget speeches capture the evolution of government policy

**Source:** The post is based on the article **"Our budget speeches capture the evolution of government policy"** published in **Mint** on **27<sup>th</sup> April 2023**.

**Syllabus:** **GS 3 – Budgetary allocation**

**Relevance:** **About the evolution of focus areas in the Budget speech**

**News:** The article discusses the focus areas of budget speeches from the 1990s to the present time.

Budget speeches provide a broad outline of the government focus areas and policies, they are going to follow in the near future.

#### **What are the focus areas of the budget speeches from the 1990s?**

The budget speeches in India have focused on eight broad themes – **(i)** infrastructure, **(ii)** technology and innovation, **(iii)** social security, **(iv)** human development, **(v)** food and agriculture, **(vi)** demographics, **(vii)** fiscal policy and **(viii)** boosting national income.

#### **How did some of these focus areas evolve during the course of the budget speeches over the years?**

**Infrastructure:** The announcement of infrastructure projects such as new railway lines, national highways, rural roads and port development has been a key part of the budget speeches.

Budget speeches of past decades talked of building basic infrastructure like roads and ports whereas **now speeches emphasize on connecting and building synergies between existing infrastructure**, freight corridors, logistics, etc.

India's gross fixed capital formation (**GFCF**) as a share of GDP (at current prices) has grown from 23% in the 1990s to 28% in the 2000s and to 30% in the 2010s. **GFCF is expected to be 29% of GDP in 2022-23.**

**The central government aims to double its capital expenditure** to 3.3% of GDP in 2023-24 from an average of 1.7% of GDP in the 2010s.

**Technology and Innovation:** Over the last 30 years, the central government has steadily adopted advancements in digital technology to improve administration and the delivery of welfare services.

**The share of electronic payments in total retail payments (in value terms) is estimated to have grown from 11% to 86%.**

**Climate Change:** There has been focus on adapting and mitigating the dangers of anthropogenic climate change in the recent budget speeches.

Efforts to fight climate change increased in the early 2010s and this decade's budgets extensively talk about increasing solar generation capacity, lowering carbon emissions and encouraging sustainable mobility.

**Demographics:** There has also been focus on using the word urban more than rural. It is because **the proportion of India's population living in urban areas has increased from 25% to 35% over the last three decades.**

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Similarly, the mention of items relating to food and agriculture has declined, although budget speeches continue to appeal to 'farmers' as before.

**Social Security and Human Development:** The delivery of welfare remains a critical component of budget speeches.

The emphasis on human development through health and education has grown within welfare services, whereas **the emphasis on social security such as pensions and food appear to have diminished.**

The most recent budget laid emphasis on skilling and training across industries.

**Must Read:** [Union Budget 2023-24: Key Highlights – Explained](#)

**What lies ahead?**

Since 2019-20, the government's narrative has become more focused on building infrastructure, fostering digitization and ensuring targeted welfare delivery.

Given that India is still developing into an economic power, **it is important to continuously monitor and assess the Center's performance on these fronts.**

### [19. Why have Maoists killed again — and why do they repeatedly attack in Chhattisgarh?](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article **"Why have Maoists killed again — and why do they repeatedly attack in Chhattisgarh?"** published in **The Indian Express** on **27<sup>th</sup> April 2023.**

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Internal Security – Naxalism

**Relevance:** About Left-Wing Extremism (LWE)

**News:** Ten personnel of the Chhattisgarh Police's District Reserve Guard (DRG) and the civilian driver of their vehicle were reported killed in an IED attack by Maoists in the Dantewada district of Chhattisgarh.

**Why have the Maoists carried out the attack in Chhattisgarh now?**

The CPI(Maoist) carries out Tactical Counter Offensive Campaigns (TCOCs) between February and June every year, in order to inflict casualties on security forces.

This period is chosen because with the onset of the monsoon in July, it becomes difficult to conduct offensive operations in the jungles due to tall grasses and overflowing nullahs.

**What is the current situation of Left-Wing Extremism (LWE) in the country?**

According to the government, **Maoist violence in the country has gone down by 77% since 2010.** The number of deaths has also come down by 90%.

The government has cut the number of districts declared to be Naxal-affected from over 200 in the early 2000s to just 90 now, and claims that **the geographical spread of violence is actually restricted to just 45 districts.**

**What is the situation of Maoists in Chhattisgarh?**

**It is the only state in the country where Maoists continue to have a significant presence and retain the capability to conduct big attacks.**

According to government data, in the last five years (2018-22), **Chhattisgarh accounted for more than a third of all Maoist-related violence in this period.**

However, the numbers of deaths of security forces personnel have risen as well as fallen in this period.

**Why does Chhattisgarh continue to remain troubled by Maoists?**

Special forces of the local police were raised in Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Odisha and Jharkhand to fight with Maoists. They played an important role in making these states rid of Maoists.

However, **Chhattisgarh did not have any such special forces by that time.** Due to which, Maoists from other states moved to Chhattisgarh. This made Chhattisgarh a concentrated zone of Maoist influence.

Moreover, **the lack of roads in the interiors of Bastar has hampered security forces' activities.**

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There is also **minimal presence of the administration** in the interiors of South Bastar, allowing Maoists to continue their influence in the region.

**Must Read:** [Tackling the Maoists: On left-wing extremism](#)

**How has the Centre responded to help Maoists affected states?**

The Centre has supported LWE states through **CRPF**, Security Related Expenditure (**SRE**), Special Infrastructure Scheme (**SIS**) and **Special Central Assistance** for building infrastructure such as roads in LWE districts.

**In Chhattisgarh**, the CRPF has increased its presence by opening new camps in the jungles of South Bastar.

CRPF has also raised a **Bastariya Battalion in Chhattisgarh**. The recruits for this battalion are taken from the local population, who know the language and terrain, and could generate intelligence.

Further, Centre is pushing for the **erection of mobile towers in the interiors**, which would help the local people connect with the mainstream, and also generate technical intelligence.

The Centre has also used the National Investigation Agency (**NIA**) and the **Enforcement Directorate** to target CPI(Maoist) cadres, leaders, and supporters in order to stop their finances.

### 20. Performance of SEBI: Sebi at age 31. Or is it 35?

**Source:** The post is based on the article "**Sebi at age 31. Or is it 35?**" published in the **Business Standard** on **28th April 2023**.

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

**Relevance:** About the performance of SEBI.

**News:** Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) recently unveiled a new logo on the occasion of its 35th anniversary. However, the Sebi Act came in 1992, which is only 31 years ago.

**About the history of SEBI**

The journey of SEBI can be seen as emanating from the G S Patel committee of 1984. In 1988, a non-statutory SEBI was constituted, through an administrative resolution of the Government of India. In 1992, Parliament passed the SEBI Act.

Significance of SEBI's formation: **a)** The statutory SEBI of 1992 is the first regulator in India to be legislatively autonomous in the area of human resource and finance, **b)** SEBI was the first of the full and modern regulators in India.

**About the performance of SEBI**

**No market scams:** Since the Ketan Parekh scandal of the early 2000s, there have been no serious market scams under its watch.

**Impressive rise of Market capitalisation:** The gross domestic product to market capitalisation ratio, which was 0.123 in 1989-90 had risen to 1.115 in 2021-22.

**Other areas:** Such as assets under management of mutual funds, the total number of dematerialised accounts, dematerialised turnover, number of derivatives contracts, etc, have all grown exponentially.

Financial reforms also played a role in these improvements primarily through **(a)** the reduction of capital controls and **(b)** the emergence of equity market liquidity and market efficiency.

**What are the challenges SEBI need to work upon?**

**Issue with the turnover ratio:** The turnover ratio (TR) is calculated by dividing the trading volume of the latest one year by the current market capitalisation.

The baseline adopted for the turnover ratio is of 2003-04. In 2003-04, the trading volume of the spot market was ~11.86 trillion and the turnover ratio was 1.34. In 2022-23, the corresponding values were ~25.8 trillion and 0.54.

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Over this 20-year period, the turnover ratio of the Indian equity spot market actually went down. This requires fresh thinking about the functioning of SEBI and the exchanges.

### What more should be done?

**Focus on market performance:** Financial economic policy should focus less on the market capitalisation of the equity market, and more on the extent to which the securities markets are deep and liquid. The key attributes of this are market depth, market resiliency and market efficiency.

Overall, India needs to create better regulations governing the working of the equity market to generate better liquidity and market efficiency.

### 21. [Finance is the binding constraint in efforts to fight climate change](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Finance is the binding constraint in efforts to fight climate change**” published in **Live Mint** on **28<sup>th</sup> April 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Environment – Climate Change

**Relevance:** concerns associated with climate finance

**News:** Countries around the world are adopting climate mitigation technologies to tackle climate change. However, climate finance still remains a hindrance towards adopting such technologies.

### What are different climate mitigation technologies being adopted and what are the concerns associated with them?

**Renewable Power:** The most mitigation technologies being adopted are solar, wind, hydropower, etc. The cost of solar panels, wind turbines, storage batteries and other components have declined dramatically such that the cost of renewable power is now comparable to fossil-fuel based power.

However, **despite the low cost of renewable power, renewable energy still accounts for only around 15% of global power generation.**

**Green Hydrogen:** The cost of [green hydrogen](#) has been dependent on **the cost of electrolyzers**, which has come down, making green hydrogen commercially viable and attracting large-scale corporate investment, including in India.

**However, despite this, the rollout of green hydrogen on a scale is just starting.**

**Carbon Capture and Sequestration (CSS):** [CCS technologies](#) are needed to capture carbon and store it till it can be broken down for commercial use.

However, **existing CSS technologies are very expensive.** Much investment is required in R&D to reduce costs before CSS technologies become commercially viable.

**Carbon Sink:** Terrestrial and underwater forests are the natural carbon sinks that contain the carbon load in the atmosphere. But the level of emissions has gone far beyond the capacity of natural ‘carbon sinks’ to absorb the additional carbon load.

Hence, to lower the ambient carbon load and eventually reverse global warming, **it is necessary to invest heavily in R&D to create technologies that synthetically imitate and improve the capacity of natural carbon sinks.**

These all imply that vast amounts of capital are required to successfully address the climate crisis.

As per the [Emission Gap Report 2022](#), the current annual investment in climate finance of about \$571 billion needs to rise to at least \$1.7-2 trillion.

### What measures can be taken for climate finance?

**First, Global public sector finance** can be considered to finance global public goods.

However, the report of the G20-appointed Committee to Review the Multilateral Development Banks’ (MDBs) Capital Adequacy Framework indicates that **MDBs may at best generate additional assistance of \$1 trillion for all purposes. There is doubt even over this amount.**

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**Second**, Private capital may be relied upon and may act as an alternative to public capital. However, **most of this capital originates in advanced countries and would not easily flow to tropical developing countries.**

**Third**, along with private capital flows, **developing countries must focus on creating a suitable ecosystem** including universally accepted concepts, definitions and standards for climate finance, appropriate rating systems and technical assessment methodologies.

**Fourth**, developing countries will also require **de-risking of such private capital flows, along with its attendant moral hazard.** MDBs can play a crucial role by providing credit guarantees.

### 22. [Not by 'Vande Bharat' alone](#)

**Source-** The post is based on the article "Not by 'Vande Bharat' alone" published in "The Hindu" on 28th April 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Infrastructure

**Relevance-** Issues related to railway

**News-** The article explains the overemphasis on Vande Bharat trains

#### **What are the issues with railways in India?**

The **Annual Plan outlay** of the Indian Railways was ₹1,09,935 crore in 2016-17 in the last Railway Budget. It has increased to ₹2,60,200 crore in the Budget for 2023-24. This is an **increase of 137%**

unprecedented levels of investment to build rail infrastructure are a welcome development. But these investments must translate into **concrete progress towards capacity building.**

There are issues related to **passenger and freight traffic.** The **rail share of freight** carried was reduced from 51.5% in 2008-09 to 32.4% in 2018-19 for leads over 300 km. Almost the entire increase in volume of traffic carried by rail over the decade 2008-09 to 2018-19 has been in **short lead traffic.**

55% of the increase was through the transport of just one commodity, that is coal. The higher levels of traffic being achieved is not accompanied by **diversification of commodities.**

There are issues related to **punctuality.** Published statistics for punctuality usually are above 90%. But these figures are adjusted and only the **destination arrival time** is considered.

More than a decade ago, an exercise was undertaken to know the status of all passenger trains in the Indian Railways network on a real time basis. The punctuality of all passenger-carrying trains at any given time hovered around 60%.

#### **What is the way forward to improve the performance of the Indian railway?**

The **National Rail Plan 2030** envisages raising the rail share in freight traffic *vis-à-vis* roadways from 27% to 45% by 2050. It calls for raising the **average speed of goods trains** to 50 kilometres per hour from the present 25 kmph and **reduction in tariff rates** for freight by up to 30%.

There is a need for a **radical shift in punctuality.** Stations in the Indian Railways network can be **remodelled to 'international standards.** **Japanese Railways** reckon the punctuality of their high-speed trains in seconds. The Indian Railways should aim to be at least within five minutes of the scheduled time.

There is a need to move away from the **traditional concept of destination punctuality** and evolve an **index of punctuality** that will also reflect the punctuality at select intermediate stations. With developments in IT and data analytics, this should be possible.

The government should consider tabling an **annual report on the performance of the Railways** in Parliament on the **lines of the annual Economic Survey** prepared by the Finance Ministry ahead of the General Budget.

23. [Should India consider phasing out nuclear power?](#)

**Source-** The post is based on the article “Should India consider phasing out nuclear power?” published in “The Hindu” on 28th April 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Energy

**Relevance-** Issues related to nuclear energy

**News-** The article explains the relevance of nuclear power for future energy needs.

**What is the global scenario of nuclear energy?**

The use of nuclear power is **rising even in Europe and the U.S.** China has been surging ahead on nuclear power.

South Korea’s new president has changed the **energy policy** and committed to increasing the share of nuclear power in the country’s energy mix to **30% by 2030.**

**Japan is restarting nuclear reactors.** 10 have been restarted following years of inspection and upgrading safety systems.

The U.K. has said that without scaling up nuclear power, it won’t be possible to **decarbonise the electricity sector.**

**What is the outlook for nuclear power, especially when solar and wind power are becoming far more popular?**

Nuclear will have to be included in a **mix of energy sources.** It is **firm, dispatchable power,** while wind and solar are **intermittent or variable.** Some people say batteries will be the answer. But batteries are very **expensive and have an environmental impact.**

unless something can displace it entirely. There is no firm alternative to coal power to date.

Resistance to nuclear energy is also driven by fears about **safety, nuclear proliferation.** Some of those remain, but a lot has been diminished, partly post-Ukraine. The nuclear industry is moving towards **‘passive safety’ designs.**

Older designs required **active cooling pumps.** But, new systems will **gradually and gracefully control temperature,** even if power fails. There are also coal mine disasters, transport disasters, and local air pollution.

Another challenge is **cost.** That is an area of worry, because of **cost overruns.** But now there are new designs like **small modular reactors.** There is a belief that this will address the **cost structure** quite a bit.

**What are safety issues regarding radioactivity from spent fuels and nuclear liability issues?**

One of the things that need to be realised is the **amount of fuel.** Kudankulam requires only 25 tonnes of low enriched uranium fuel over a year.

Compared to it, coal plants of similar capacity require approximately five million tonnes of coal, and coal **produces ash.** Power plants in the country have **huge ash ponds.** Ash also contains many **heavy metals,** which are detrimental to the water source.

Regarding nuclear liability, it is not money. But in case of an accident, the supplier of components to the nuclear plant is exposed to **various liabilities, including criminal liability.** That is something which basically no Western company will accept.

**What are the steps needed to be taken for proper use of nuclear energy potential in India?**

India has very **limited growth potential** for hydropower because of **conserving biodiversity and the costs of rehabilitating and compensating landowners.**

The alternative to coal is nuclear power. India has **210 gigawatts of coal capacity,** and it produces 73% of electricity of India. Nuclear is only around 3.2%. Business **as usual** cannot continue.

One of the major reasons for the lack of growth in nuclear power is because of **monopoly.** All reactors are operated by the **Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited.** There is a need for a **civilian nuclear programme.**

Other government companies like the NTPC should be allowed to produce nuclear power. To achieve **‘net zero’ by 2070,** there is a need for **100 gigawatts by 2050.**

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There is a need for a **combination of small modular reactors and large reactors**, but it cannot be done by one company. It has to be done by **multiple companies**.

### **What is the way forward for the energy sector in India?**

There is a need for a **range of options**. Energy is not going to be the one thing that solves all our problems. It's going to be a **mix of supply side and demand side**. There is a need for a **portfolio of technologies** within the nuclear sector and outside the nuclear sector.

The energy policy should be about **enabling frameworks** for all technologies. It should not be a bet for one technology.

### 24. [Wrong Number: Life Isn't Math](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article **“Wrong Number: Life Isn't Math – When policymakers privilege numeracy skills over other learning aptitudes, they don't recognise that lived experience & people's stories are key variables in any analysis”** published in **The Times of India** on **29<sup>th</sup> April 2023**.

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

**Relevance:** concerns associated with numerical data

**News:** UK prime minister Rishi Sunak has proposed making the study of mathematics compulsory for all students in England up to the age of 18.

### **Why has the UK PM made mathematics compulsory?**

**There is a popular sentiment in the UK that says it is all right to be bad in mathematics.**

Therefore, he thinks that low skill in mathematics has kept his country from surging ahead.

However, his views that a strong hold in mathematics is required for a country's growth is erroneous.

### **Why are the views of the UK PM regarding mathematics is incorrect?**

**Numeracy and prosperity don't always go together. For instance,** the world's richest economy, the United States, ranks 38 globally in mathematics.

**In terms of numeracy,** the UK ranks above Germany but below China, yet Germany has a higher GDP per capita than Britain while China's GDP per capita is lower.

Therefore, for a country to progress, there is also other factors responsible rather than having only numerical skills.

Moreover, as per **John Maynard Keynes**, a great economist, mathematical economies are a mixture of numbers that intend to hide the complexities of the real world.

### **What are the concerns with mathematical numbers in an economy?**

**Mathematics has done a lot of good in policy making but it has also created a profession where numbers matter more than lived experience.**

**For example,** in measuring poverty, everything depends on what statistics tell us regardless of whether these figures reflect the real world.

**For measuring poverty in India,** it was decided to include the basket of consumption in the calculations of poverty.

However, there was a need to distinguish in the consumption basket between items that people earn and items they get as dole.

This is because a rise in the consumption level signifies poverty removal. However, a rise in the dole is also a relief for the poor but it does not get calculated.

Therefore, even if dole increases the numbers signifying poverty removal won't change. **This is how numbers play a role in calculation but does not represent the real world.**

A similar concern with the number is that the **National Sample Survey's data on rural India is unhelpful for a farmer.**

**As per NSS,** a farmer is defined as “a person who possesses some land and is engaged in some agricultural activities on that land during the last 365 days”.



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The word **'during'** used in the definition not only keeps out the rural landless but also obscures the fact that most farmers rarely farm most of the time.

**Such definitions make numerical data collecting easier, but they distort the picture of rural India** by exaggerating the number of farmers and agricultural households.

### **What is the way ahead?**

It is not wise to simply rely on the numerical data and propose numeracy as the only way to prosper for a country and the people. **Real world experiences are more important than just numerical skills.**

### 25. IPL, an opportunity to bat for climate action

**Source:** The post is based on the article **"IPL, an opportunity to bat for climate action"** published in **The Hindu** on **29th April 2023**.

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

**Relevance:** About the environmental footprint of IPL.

**News:** The 16th edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL) has started. IPL has contributed significantly to India's economy through sports tourism, employment generation, and infrastructure development. An event as big as the IPL also has a significant environmental footprint.

### **About the environmental footprint of IPL**

Large-scale sporting events such as the IPL have a complex and multifaceted impact on the environment.

**Overall Emissions:** For the IPL, studies estimate that a single match produces emissions in the range of 10,000 tCO<sub>2</sub>e to 14,000 tCO<sub>2</sub>e (or tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent). Over a season, this figure can reach up to 750k tCO<sub>2</sub>e to 900k tCO<sub>2</sub>e.

To contextualise these emissions, it would take tropical forests the size of Singapore over a whole year to absorb these emissions.

**House emissions:** Emissions assessments show that the emissions generated by sports venues only account for about 5% of their total. Whereas digital viewership during events such as the IPL contributes to more than three fourths of the total emissions footprint.

**Other emissions:** Data centres are the second most significant contributor to emissions during IPLs. Spectator travel, luxury accommodation, and backup generators round up the list of top five emitters.

The lack of reliable data on carbon emissions hinders the ability to plan and execute effective policies.

**Read more:** [India's Strategy for Net Zero – Explained, pointwise](#)

### **What are the impacts of climate change on cricket?**

The impact of climate change is being felt across multiple aspects of cricket.

**Changing weather patterns** are affecting players, spectators, and ground conditions. For example, a 2019 report by the World Cricket Committee found that climate change is altering the sport's landscape, impacting the length of the cricket season, and disrupting the playability of pitches.

**Impact of heat waves:** Increasing intensity of heat waves and worsening air quality in India have raised concerns for player safety during some of the matches.

**Note:** In 2018, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) signed an agreement to implement the concept of 'zero waste' or 'green protocol' to reduce wastage from cricket stadiums.

### **Why India should focus on IPL to reduce its environmental footprint?**

**a)** The IPL's broad social platform can influence attitudes towards sustainability and reach out to people from all backgrounds and areas, **b)** By promoting education and awareness around environmental issues, the IPL can encourage a healthier, more sustainable lifestyle, **c)** An event

as big as the IPL is an opportunity to build awareness about the Net Zero transition, expanding on existing efforts and accelerating the journey to Net Zero.

**Read more:** [Achieving Net Zero by 2070 and the Associated Challenges – Explained, pointwise](#)

### **What more India should do to reduce the environmental footprint of sports events?**

**Properly measure the emissions and track its reduction:** India should adopt climate tech and leverage existing tech advancements should be used to properly measure the environmental footprint of sports events. This data can be used to set targets, track progress, and select cost-effective alternatives.

**Change the data centre:** A transition to renewable energy sources for the data centres and data streaming infrastructure can reduce the IPL's carbon emissions by over 10%.

**Encourage public transportation:** The government and sports authorities should incentivise and use of public transport to and from stadiums. This can help reduce travel emissions by as much as 85% in sports events.

**Change at the domestic level:** Simple changes such as replacing LCD screens in homes with energy- efficient LED displays can reduce the emission from each TV screen by 35%- to 40%. This will result in as much as a 20% reduction in the overall carbon footprint of such highly televised sports tournaments.

### [26. Renewable targets outstrip policy enablers](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article **“Renewable targets outstrip policy enablers”** published in the **Business Standard** on **29th April 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS-3: Energy

**Relevance:** About renewable energy targets.

**News:** Indian renewable energy project developers are facing progressively higher hurdles each year. This raises the question of whether India needs new targets or supportive policies.

#### **About India's previous renewable energy targets**

India set a previous target in 2015 for variable renewable energy installations (VRE) of 175 gigawatts (GW) by 2022. This included 100 GW from solar power, 60 GW from wind power, 10 GW from bio-power and 5 GW from small hydro power.

#### **What is the performance of India on previous renewable energy targets?**

According to the government, at the last count, VRE capacity totalled around 122GW, or 30% of the 412 GW of installed power capacity in the country.

Another research points out that only around 68% of the 175 GW target was achieved. Nearly 24 GW of solar and hybrid tenders were issued between 2020 and 2021 but only 13-15 GW of capacities were installed in 2022.

#### **About India's updated renewable energy targets**

India set a new tendering target of 250 GW of renewable energy by the financial year 2027-28. This is over twice the yearly bids that have been called for in the past to set up solar facilities and wind farms.

Most of the record 50 GW of renewable tendering annually over five years will comprise solar, with an all-time high of 10 GW allocated for wind capacity.

**Note:** India has around 82 GW of renewable capacity addition at various stages of implementation and about 41 GW under tendering stage. This includes 64 GW of solar, 42 GW of wind power and around 11 GW of biomass power.

**Must read:** [Year End Review 2022- Ministry of New and Renewable Energy](#)

What are the present challenges associated with renewable energy generation?

## OUT OF ALIGNMENT

- New Delhi, this month, set a new tendering target of 250 Gw of renewable energy by financial year 2027-28
- India's lofty targets are also increasingly colliding with a volatile global environment, higher financing costs and supply chain issues
- What industry needs are policy enablers, grid upgrades and incentives for green financing rather than a focus on installations
- Nearly 24 Gw of solar and hybrid tenders were issued between 2020 and 2021 but only 13-15 Gw of capacities were installed in 2022
- Besides lower supply of modules from China, slow installations reflect the imposition of ALMM (Approved List of Models and Manufacturers) on bids after April 2021 and basic customs duty of 40 per cent on modules
- A rise in module prices by 10-15% last fiscal from a year earlier sent capital costs higher by 20-25%, Crisil data shows
- Existing installations were helped in no large part by low cost module imports from China, low import taxes and a freedom to source modules from anywhere in the world

Source: Business Standard

- Variable renewable energy tenders issued annually in India have fallen by 30% since 2019.
  - There are high import taxes and other barriers such as mandating domestic sourcing of solar panels.
  - Lower supply of modules from China, and slow installations indicate the imposition of the ALMM (Approved List of Models and Manufacturers) regime and basic Customs duty of 40% on modules and 25% on cells.
  - High taxes have also impacted capital costs. For instance, there is a rise in module prices by 10-15% last financial year from a year earlier and increases capital costs higher by 20-25%.
  - Distressed discoms will not be able to absorb such high tariffs in a price-sensitive market such as India.
  - The long-term benefits of manufacturing most things locally are also debatable. The programme focus on import barriers and local sourcing rather than on innovation and productivity.
  - India's targets are also colliding with a volatile global environment, higher financing costs and supply chain issues.
- If India is trying to get to net zero by 2070, and generate half of its electricity from non-fossil fuels, then the 50 GW a year of tendering goal needs to be supported by policy measures. \

Read more: [A renewable energy revolution, rooted in agriculture](#)

**What should be done to bring renewables back on track?**

The industry needs **policy enablers, grid upgrades and incentives for green financing** rather than a focus on installations.

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Instead of announcing new goals, the government should **study the reasons** behind India's missing targets and the reason for the slowdown in renewable additions.

The government needs to **ramp up grid infrastructure** to enable the evacuation of high renewable capacity.

India should include **streamlining procedures** and **reducing bureaucratic hurdles** such as using e-tendering platforms and reaching out to more local and international companies.

