



9 PM

Compilation

22nd to 27th May, 2023

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

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General Studies Paper – 1

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General Studies - 1

1. [Social media genie is out of the bottle, and we are all trapped](#)

Source- The post is based on the article “**Vikram Patel writes: Social media genie is out of the bottle, and we are all trapped**” published in “**The Indian Express**” on **23rd May 2023**.

Syllabus: GS1- Society. GS3- Role of Media and Social Networking Sites in Internal Security Challenges

Relevance- Impacts of social media

News- The recent violence in Manipur is yet another example of the unravelling of the social fabric of our country.

How has social media contributed to increased polarisation in the world?

Smartphones have allowed a person to **check into the online world** at all times. Social media has drowned the person in a **virtual world** where ideas, lies and hate proliferate and get transmitted.

Our **disagreements about ideas** hardens our attitudes towards the other person or the groups. As the hate is reciprocated, the two sides move further apart. It leads to the **heart of darkness** when words escalate into **actual violence**.

Social media has **desensitised** us from its effects. Earlier, a common medium to express a critique was to write a letter. The process took time. A person could reflect on what they had written. It often leads to a **moderation of language**.

Besides, one never shared this letter with an unknown community of persons. Social media has not only contributed to the **deterioration of public discourse**.

Social media represents an **existential threat to democracy**. Democracy requires **dialogue** and respect to build **consensus and compromise** on contentious issues.

Social media has amplified the most **unpleasant aspects of human personality**. It is a tendency to be **narcissistic**. They think their opinions are the most important of all. They are **sociopathic**, and don't care less about the feelings of others.

What is the way forward to limit the impacts of social media?

The human brain is wholly unprepared for the **sudden and profound effects** of social media.

The situation is about to get worse with the new age ushered by AI.

The world's richest companies have done little to **control the misuse** of their technologies. Governments are not sure about their response to social media.

There is a need for a **citizen-led solution**. There is a need to replace **social media with social connectedness**.

We should opt for a world in which we cherish our **interactions with real people**, read newspapers with views from **all sides of the political spectrum** and rebuild the **social fabric** of our society.

General Studies Paper –2

General Studies - 2

1. [G7's climate wishlist, and the realities of efforts to cap warming](#)

Source: The post is based on the following articles

“G7's climate wishlist, and the realities of efforts to cap warming” published in the **Indian Express** on **22nd May 2023**.

“The end of ‘decoupling’?” published in the **Business Standard** on **22nd May 2023**.

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

Relevance: About Hiroshima G7 Summit.

News: Recently, Hiroshima G7 Summit occurred. At the summit, the G7 countries listed a set of milestones that need to be achieved for a realistic chance of containing the global rise in temperatures to within 1.5 degrees Celsius.

What are the key observations taken on the economic decoupling of China?

Dealing with China's growing economic power: The grouping agreed on “cooperation” to “support a more significant role for low and middle-income countries in supply chains”. So, they would “address non-market policies and practices designed to reinforce dependencies, and will counter-economic coercion”.

What are the climate-related decisions taken at the Hiroshima G7 Summit?

About peak greenhouse gas emissions: The G7 stressed the need for a global peak in emissions by 2025. As the G7 countries already achieved peak emissions, the summit asked all “major economies” to ensure that their individual emissions do not continue to rise beyond 2025.

Note: *The 2025 peak year is not mandated under the Paris Agreement or any other international decision. India has long made it clear that its emissions might grow in the next decade. China, the world's largest emitter, has also indicated that it would peak only towards the end of this decade.*

The biggest emissions year so far has been 2019 — about 55 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent.

About reaching Net-zero by 2050: The G7 reiterated its commitment to turn net zero by 2050, and asked all ‘major economies’ to attain net-zero status by that year. The recent WMO's State of the Global Climate 2022 highlights that the 1.5 degree Celsius threshold was likely to be breached, at least temporarily.

Note: *Scientists said that the world must become net zero by mid-century to meet the 1.5 degree Celsius target. China, Russia and Saudi Arabia have said that they would turn net-zero only in 2060, while India has set 2070 as the target.*

About ending fossil fuels: The G7 countries did not mention the deadline for fossil fuels. Instead, they were committed to accelerating the phase-out of “unabated fossil fuels” in line with 1.5 degree Celsius trajectories.

Read more: [About Hiroshima G7 Summit: In Hiroshima, En Route To A North-South Bridge](#)

How Europe, Japan and others have diluted their decoupling with China?

European Union: Europe sees decoupling being used by the US for inward-looking controls, subsidies and protectionism.

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Earlier, Europe was worried about dependence on China. But now, they recognise that the globalised European economy benefits more than most from trade ties. So, they are now trying to identify the specific areas where they need to insulate their economies from possible coercion or dependence,

Japan: Japan is far more careful about its criticism of China. This is because **a)** It is a neighbour of China, **b)** Japanese companies were the first targets of Beijing's economic coercion. For instance, Chinese rare earths exports to Japan were curtailed following a standoff at the disputed Senkaku Islands.

But now, they isolated their "US" and "China" supply chains and decoupled their businesses in Chinese supply chains. Both Japan and Korea are of this similar view. This is because North-east Asian nations think that their powerful conglomerates are being disadvantaged in the implementation of decoupling.

Read more: [G7 Summit Presents a Template for Indian Engagement With the West](#)

What are the implications of this shift towards a milder version of economic containment of China?

Integration with China is a clear path to prosperity: All the fast-growing economies have benefited from building supply chains that pass through China. Vietnam, Brazil, Indonesia and India have supply chains linked with China.

For example, China is Brazil's largest market, absorbing over a quarter of its exports. Similarly, over half of the value of Vietnamese exports now comes as foreign value-added and China is the largest single contributor to that.

So, India's demand for the multi-sectoral global decoupling of China might not yield adequate results.

2. [Judging jallikattu – Verdict upholds cultural sentiment, but animal rights, human safety matter too](#)

Source: The post is based on the article "**Judging jallikattu – Verdict upholds cultural sentiment, but animal rights, human safety matter too**" published in **The Hindu** on **22nd May 2023**.

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

Relevance: About traditional bull-taming sports.

News: The Supreme Court has recently upheld amendments made by Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Maharashtra to the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, to allow the traditional bull-taming sports of Jallikattu and Kambala, and bullock-cart racing.

About the case

A 2014 Supreme Court judgment banned the sport Jalli Kattu and upheld the activists' statement that any sport involving a physical contest between man and bull violates animal rights. But the State government amended the central Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, in its application to the State, and obtained the President's assent.

A Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court has now settled the issue, ruling in favour of jallikattu as a cultural event.

Must read: [Jallikattu: cultural practice or cruelty?](#)

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About the SC's decision to permit traditional bull-taming sports

Must read: [Supreme Court upholds Tamil Nadu law passed to overturn court's jallikattu ban](#)

What led to the SC's decision to permit traditional bull-taming sports?

This is because **a)** Fresh regulations minimise the game's potential for cruelty and pain which formed the basis for the 2014 judgment, **b)** The Court accepted the legislature's view that jallikattu is a sport conducted every year to follow tradition and culture.

What should be done?

The organisers as well as the respective governments should bear the burden to prevent the infliction of pain and cruelty on animals.

These traditional bull-taming sports pose a danger to both participants and spectators. So, the organisers have to mandate protective gear for the participants and strictly enforce rules for proper barricades to keep spectators safe.

3. [Solidarity for peace – The G-7 must build a global consensus on the world's challenges](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Solidarity for peace – The G-7 must build a global consensus on the world's challenges**” published in **The Hindu** on **23rd May 2023**.

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

Relevance: About Hiroshima G7 Summit.

News: Recently, Hiroshima G7 Summit occurred.

What are the key observations taken at the Hiroshima G7 Summit?

Japan brought all G-7 members with the EU leadership to the peace memorial for the victims of the 1945 atomic bombing. The grouping issued a special “**Hiroshima Vision Statement on Nuclear Disarmament**”.

The G-7 members issued a separate statement on Ukraine, hitting Russia with more sanctions, but failed to highlight a path towards dialogue and ending the war.

The members also recognised G-7's role in various areas. Such as transparent financing and debt sustainability for the developing world, compensating for the developed world's contribution to global warming and greenhouse gas emissions, etc.

But the summit failed to propose concrete measures to help defray these responsibilities.

Must read: [G7's climate wishlist, and the realities of efforts to cap warming](#)

What is G7?

Read more: [G7 – History and members](#)

What are the concerns raised against the G7 grouping?

Holds only Euro-American worldview: After G7 expelled Russia over its annexation of areas of Georgia in 2008 and then Crimea in 2014, its worldview has been contracted.

Read more: [About Hiroshima G7 Summit: In Hiroshima, En Route To A North-South Bridge](#)

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What should be done?

The G-7 must build a global consensus on the world's challenges and also include some of the world's largest economies (China and India) or the fastest-growing GDPs, or the biggest global energy providers.

4. [A wishlist for new Law Minister – On Legal Reforms](#)

Source- The post is based on the article “**A wishlist for new Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal**” published in “**The Indian Express**” on **23rd May 2023**.

Syllabus: GS2- Polity – Criminal Justice System

News- Recently Arjun Ram Meghwal was appointed as new law minister.

What are the reforms expected from the Law Ministry?

The task of the Law Minister involves a **reasonable knowledge** of the working of courts, **parliamentary affairs, and government counsel**. It requires **astute diplomacy** in dealing with judges and political demands.

There is a need to **reduce litigation** by the government so that the burden on the judiciary would be reduced.

There is an **alarming proportion of cases** with the government as a party in recent years. It needs to be reduced, particularly in the arena of service law where larger questions of law do not arise.

India should consider adopting some version of the **Crown Prosecution Service of the UK**. It allows for **independent assessment** of whether a case should lead to an **indictment and trial**.

Criminal justice system does not **objectively decide** whether material exists to oppose bail or frame charges. It is now **standard format** to treat the accused or the undertrial as a mortal enemy who must be stopped at all costs. This philosophy must be checked.

Another useful measure would be to **encourage and enhance mediation and plea bargaining**. To achieve this, the **National Litigation Policy of 2010** needs to be updated and made mandatory.

He should engage with the **technological initiatives** of our Chief Justice and offer the encouragement of his ministry. He should attempt some reform in this respect.

There is a lack of a **proper regulatory body** for lawyers. The **Bar Council of India** now comprises a group of individuals who have exceeded their elected terms. They devote little time to **regulate and reform**.

A few lawyers charge **exorbitant fees**. They are **unchecked by law**. In addition, lawyers lack **social security**. The Covid years heavily impacted the lawyers. The Ministry of Law should **overhaul the profession** to serve the people in a more meaningful manner.

5. [The new world – shaped by self-interest](#)

Source- The post is based on the article “**The new world – shaped by self-interest**” published in “**The Indian Express**” on **23rd May 2023**.

Syllabus: GS2- International relations

Relevance- Changing global order

News- A series of far-reaching events are shaping the 21st century.

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What are important lessons from the recent geopolitical events?

The first lesson from global reactions to the war is **geography still matters**. Proximity and the neighbourhood are considerably more important. We are living in a **hyper-globalised world**, but we are also **more local** than ever before.

Social media, trends in technology and politics, and other factors promoted **narrow spheres of interest**. India was concerned about the **Ukraine war and European instability**. But **Chinese aggression, Covid and the instability of Kabul** were more important for it.

The second lesson pertains to the [UN vote condemning the Ukraine war](#). 140 countries voted and condemned Russia. But, only a few **sanctioned Russia**.

Those sanctioning Russia today are **champions of globalisation and development**. Others are well within their rights to challenge the status quo.

It is often stated that India is **on the fence**. India is not on the fence. It is only **standing its ground**. It will choose its priorities just as every other country has done.

The recent visits by European leaders to China shows that **value-based frameworks** are untenable. Nations are **driven by self-interest** and the need to maintain **lucrative economic relations**. India is no different.

Even after Chinese hostilities on the Himalayan heights, **trade relations** matter for its economic needs. **Distance matters; interest matters** even more.

The third lesson derives from recent events. The [Covid-19 outbreak](#) saw the hijack of medical equipment and access to vaccines, and growing gaps in **treatment capabilities**.

When the pandemic struck, there was **no superpower**, there was **no great power**, and there was **no big power**. There were only **selfish powers**.

Similarly, the Afghan people were abandoned because it is important for higher powers to leave the country at a particular moment.

Chinese territorial incursions have provoked a range of **self-serving responses** from different actors. Some of these countries talk about defending democracy.

In a nutshell, there is **no moral high ground**. All that remains is the **ruthless pursuit of national self-interest**.

What is the importance of the global south in the present context?

If **meaningful international dialogue** is to be conducted, nations must **right-size** some of their **perceptions** about each other and themselves. In this context, Global South can be a possible **bridge between competing positions**.

But the “Global South” is a simple term, which does not show its **heterogeneity**. Very few countries would like to be categorised as “southern” as they continue to **rise and shape global systems**.

The organisation of the South over the next decade will have a far more profound impact than the West on the **global balance of power**, and on the **contours of the new world order**.

6. [The tussle over ‘services’ in Delhi](#)

Source- The post is based on the article **“The tussle over ‘services’ in Delhi”** published in **“The Hindu”** on **23rd May 2023**.

Syllabus: GS2- Issues and Challenges Pertaining to the Federal Structure

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News– Recently, a Constitution Bench headed by the Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud held that the Delhi government can make laws and administer civil services in the national capital.

In response, The President promulgated the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Ordinance, 2023 to make a fresh claim of power over the services in the capital.

What are the legal constitutional issues with the ordinance?

The Supreme Court had envisaged a **“neutral civil service”** for carrying out the day-to-day decisions of the Council of Ministers. The NCCSA attempts to bring civil service officers out of the **administrative control** of the elected Ministers.

The NCCSA negates the **intrinsic link** between **government accountability and the principle of collective responsibility** highlighted in the judgement.

The Ordinance, by creating the NCCSA, skirts the emphasis laid down in the judgement on the **“triple chain of command”** in the governance of Delhi.

The court had held that the civil services were **accountable to** the Ministers of the elected government, under whom they function. The Ministers were in turn **accountable to** the legislature, and the legislature ultimately to the people of Delhi.

The Ordinance also does not heed the **President’s own Transaction of Business Rules** of the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi, 1993.

As per Rules, on matters which fall within the ambit of the **executive functions** of the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi, decision-making is by the government comprising the Council of Ministers with the Chief Minister at its head.

Does the Ordinance go against the Supreme Court judgement?

The Ordinance is based on the argument that the Supreme Court has itself acknowledged the **superior authority of Parliament** to make laws for the national capital.

A review petition filed by the Centre in the Supreme Court claimed that Delhi is not a **“full-fledged State”** but only a Union Territory. The Parliament is Delhi’s **true legislature**. However, the May 11 judgement addresses this contention. It acknowledges that though Delhi is not a **full-fledged State**, its Legislative Assembly has power to **legislate upon** the subjects in the **State List and Concurrent List**.

The judgement says that the Delhi assembly has power to legislate upon subjects to give effect to the **aspirations of the people of NCTD**. It has a **democratically elected government** which is accountable to the people of the NCTD.

As per SC, Under **Article 239AA(3)**, NCTD was given legislative power which is similar to States. The Constitution created an **“asymmetric federal model”** with the Union of India at the centre, and the NCTD at the regional level.

The May 11 judgement had also referred to how the majority in a 2018 Constitution Bench judgement had held that the **concept of federalism** is applicable to NCTD.

The court had held that the executive power of the Delhi government was **“coextensive” with its legislative power**. The executive arm of the government covers all the subjects, including services, except public order, police and land.

For further reading- [Delhi Ordinance](#)

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7. [The paradox of BRICS, its new pathway](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**The paradox of BRICS, its new pathway**” published in “**The Hindu**” on **24th May 2023**.

Syllabus: GS2- Regional and global groupings

News- The article explains the journey of BRICS since its inception and current events related to the grouping.

What led to the formation of BRICS?

Jim O’Neil’s gave the concept of BRIC, a grouping of **four emerging economies** (Brazil, Russia, India, and China).

Two of its components joined hands with South Africa to **form IBSA** in 2003. China was keen to join it and managed to enlist South Africa’s support. But Brazil and India were not ready. They maintained that the forum was **open to democracies only**.

China played a **trump card**, and decided to bring South Africa into BRIC, thus turning it into BRICS. Soon, the new club overshadowed IBSA. IBSA has been unable to hold its summit since 2011. But BRICS has held **14 summits in the past 13 years**.

What is the progress of BRICS so far?

BRICS focused its attention on both **geopolitical and economic dimensions**. It has articulated a **common view** on **key global and regional issues**. It has also projected a **non-western view**.

It has strengthened the **multipolarity** and limited the **dominating influence** of the West.

On the economic front, it launched new initiatives.

These are the **New Development Bank; the Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA)**, a **financial mechanism** to protect against **global liquidity pressures**; and a **comprehensive programme to expand trade and investment cooperation**.

What are the challenges before BRICS?

China and Russia did not fully back other members’ bid to secure **membership of the UN Security Council**. So, they were disappointed.

In century’s second decade of the century, there was a **dramatic economic rise** of China and its **military assertiveness** increased. This disturbed the **group’s inner balance**.

The **post-Ukraine consolidation** of Russia-China cooperation, **economic issues** in South Africa that accelerates dependence on China, and **Brazil’s rightist policies** have generated new tensions.

Beijing’s push for a **common currency for intra-BRICS trade** is also symptomatic of the group’s inner troubles.

Why are so many countries willing to join BRICS?

19 countries are eager to join BRICS. China is pushing the expansion as a **strategic device** to extend its **global influence**.

The demand to join BRICS stems from ‘**fear of missing out**’ on the membership of a club that has some visibility.

Many realise that the doors of other groupings are closed to them. The clamour reflects prevailing **anti-western sentiments** and desire to create a **forum of the Global South**.

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What are options available before BRICS for entry of new members?

The next BRICS summit will be hosted by South Africa on August 23-24. It could take decisions on expansion and its criteria.

Three options are available: (1) A **mega expansion** that raises the membership from five to 21, thus surpassing the G-20.

(2) **Limited admission** of 10 new members, two each supported by an existing member.

(3) Admission of **only five new members**, one each supported by an existing member.

If the third option wins consensus, Argentina, Egypt, Indonesia, UAE and Bangladesh are the most likely states to be the new members.

8. [India@75, Looking at 100: How we can resolve the tribal health challenge](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**India@75, Looking at 100: How we can resolve the tribal health challenge**” published in “**The Indian Express**” on 23rd May 2023.

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

Relevance- Inclusive healthcare system

News– The article explains the issues of access of healthcare system for tribal communities

What are the achievements of India in the healthcare sector?

Since Independence, India has made **remarkable progress**. It has emerged as the world’s **fifth-largest economy** and a **leader in the digital realm**.

India, at various points, has demonstrated the ethos of **Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam — One World, One Family**. One example is India’s contribution towards the **global vaccination drive** during the pandemic.

Under “**Vaccine Maitri**”, India provided over **60 million vaccine doses** to neighbouring countries and other parts of the world.

What are challenges faced in the healthcare sector?

The challenge lies in building a healthcare system that caters to all communities.

For instance, tribal communities in India constitute 8.9% of the population. They remain the most **neglected and deprived** group in **access to healthcare**.

As per a report by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, the **mortality rate** in tribal areas is 44% higher than the national average, and **infant mortality** is 63% higher. This underlines the urgent need to **empower tribal communities** and ensure they receive **equitable healthcare access**.

The challenges they face are multifaceted — **lack of infrastructure, medical professionals, connectivity, affordability, equipment, insurance, funding**, and much more.

How can India build an inclusive healthcare system for tribal communities?

There is a need for **suitable investments, public policy and governance**, for making healthcare **affordable and accessible** to all.

Empowering tribal communities must be done **strategically**, keeping in mind their **traditions and other intangible heritage touchpoints**.

The health of communities is influenced by various factors. These factors differ significantly for tribal communities.

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They have a **communitarian social setup**, an **underdeveloped economy** dependent on forest resources and **unique geographic conditions**. As a result, their health outcomes necessitate a unique approach.

A **long-term solution** to the tribal healthcare challenge is **investing in medical colleges and training centres** across such remote areas.

These institutions can equip local healthcare providers with the **necessary skills and knowledge** to offer **quality healthcare services**. It has the potential to **bridge the gap in healthcare infrastructure** and provide **employment opportunities** for the local population.

The **capabilities of public partnerships** in redefining healthcare facilities and accessibility are important. Recently, NITI Aayog and UNDP highlighted initiatives that are **sustainable, innovative, impactful and replicable**.

One such initiative is the **Mera Baccha Abhiyan**. It aims to fight malnutrition through public participation in Datia district, Madhya Pradesh. As a result, the **malnutrition rate** in the district dropped by 17.5%.

The responsibility of providing healthcare for all our fellow citizens, lies both with private and government institutions. Through **inclusive leadership and investments in healthcare infrastructure** in tribal areas, India can **empower tribal communities**.

9. [Disregarding Constitution, court, citizens](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “**Disregarding Constitution, court, citizens**” published in “**The Hindu**” on **24th May 2023**.

Syllabus: GS2- Issues and Challenges Pertaining to the Federal Structure

Relevance- Constitutional issues related to NCT of Delhi

News– Recently, a Constitution Bench headed by the Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud held that the Delhi government can make laws and administer civil services in the national capital.

In response, The President promulgated the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Ordinance, 2023 to make a fresh claim of power over the services in the capital.

How the control over services by LG has impacted the administration in Delhi?

In 2015, when the Union Ministry of Home Affairs took away the Delhi government’s **control over services** and gave it to the Lieutenant Governor.

It impeded the Delhi government’s work. There were day-to-day problems in the **functioning of important departments** as secretaries were changed frequently. **Frequent transfers** of officials impacted the **consistency and efficiency in governance**.

Over two years, the Centre changed Delhi’s Health Secretary eight times and derailed the Delhi government’s relief efforts.

As the government had **no functional control** over services, it could not punish errant officers. Delhi witnessed the **highest number of vacancies** of teachers, doctors, engineers, clerks and other staff because of **personnel mismanagement**.

Several honest and efficient officials were often penalised for their merits and subjected to **punishment postings**. They had no clarity on whose directions they were to follow.

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The Services Department even refused to answer questions raised by MLAs in the Vidhan Sabha. Some senior officials even started skipping meetings called by Ministers. They **evaded answerability** for **delayed, inefficient and inadequate action**.

How did the ordinance passed by the centre disregard the spirit of the constitution?

The ordinance has disregarded the elected government in the matter of services. So, it reduces the value of the **citizen's vote and of cooperative federalism**.

It is an **institutionalisation of the Centre's tendency** to use the apparatus of Governor/LG to undermine democratically elected governments in States/NCT.

The Ordinance is an attempt to **disempower** opposition-run governments and **disenfranchise** the people.

For more reading –

[Tussle over services in Delhi](#)

[Supreme Court empowered Delhi government](#)

[10. Justice that also makes space for animal welfare](#)

Source– The post is based on the article **“Justice that also makes space for animal welfare”** published in **“The Hindu”** on **24th May 2023**.

Syllabus: GS2 – Indian Polity

News– The article explains the SC judgments on jallikattu and legal and constitutional issues related to animal rights

What was SC judgement on jallikattu in A. Nagaraja case?

It declared the **practice illegal**. SC held that bulls could never be **performing animals**.

They were anatomically **ill-suited for competition**. They were being forced into participating in a practice that caused them unnecessary pain and suffering. Any conduct of jallikattu breached the **Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960**.

What was the response of the Tamil Nadu government on SC judgement?

To overcome the judgement, the Government of Tamil Nadu, in 2017, introduced a series of **amendments to the 1960 Union law**. It ensured that jallikattu was altogether **exempted from the protections** that the statute offered.

The government said the law was made with a view to **preserving the State's tradition and culture**.

What was the response of petitioners who challenged the Tamil Nadu law in SC?

In **Animal Welfare Board of India vs Union of India** case, the validity of a Tamil Nadu law permitting the practice of jallikattu was challenged before SC.

First, petitioners claimed that the law had failed to **overcome the verdict in A. Nagaraja**, where *jallikattu* had been found unlawful.

They argued that the Government of Tamil Nadu lacked the **legislative competence** to amend the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act.

Third, they asserted that animals too must be treated as persons. So, jallikattu violates the **right to life under Article 21** of the Constitution.

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What is criticism against the SC judgement on Tamil Nadu law?

The Court's response to these arguments is **dissatisfactory and often contradictory**. This is especially true in its approach to **claims of personhood**.

The Court held that there is no precedent that provides fundamental rights on animals in India. It would be an **act of judicial adventurism** to confer rights on animals that are enjoyed by human beings.

As per SC, amending law can be tested for **reasonableness** that is contained in Article 14 of the Constitution. But that right too, cannot be invoked by any animal as a person.

It is difficult to understand the **rationale for this distinction**. The **right to equality** under Article 14 is conferred only on persons. Now, if animals are not persons, then surely the law cannot at the same time be **tested on Article 14**.

Despite these assertions, the judgement contains **no ensuing analysis** on whether the Tamil Nadu amendments are against the **requirement of equal treatment**.

On a reading of the Constitution, it can be implied that animals are not persons and therefore do not **enjoy fundamental rights**. But it does not mean that a law, which encourages **cruelty to animals**, be treated as **beyond judicial review**.

What is the way forward for preventing cruelty against the animals?

There is no need for seeing animals as persons and conferring on them a set of **justiciable rights**. There is a need to **change our conception of rights** to treat animal welfare as **intrinsic to our constitutional arrangement**.

The Supreme Court has routinely dealt with these types of issues. For example, it has held that a human being's **right to life** includes within its ambit a **right to live in a healthy environment, and a right to clean air and water**.

It can be argued that our own **right to lead a meaningful life** includes a **right to live in a society** that **respects and treats animals with equal concern**.

Deciding on issues of personhood might well be **Parliament's prerogative**. But our present **juridical structure** makes it impossible to treat the **advancement of animal welfare**.

It is our **collective obligation** to extend our commitment to justice not only to human beings but to animals too.

[11. India should adopt a tort law to strengthen its delivery of justice](#)

Source: The post is based on the article **"India should adopt a tort law to strengthen its delivery of justice"** published in **Live Mint** on **24th May 2023**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Governance – Important Aspects of Governance, Transparency and Accountability

Relevance: Need for tort law in India.

News: The article discusses the punitive damage and the need for tort law in India.

What is punitive damage?

Punitive damages are fundamental to legal structures worldwide because they prevent wrongdoing and ensure justice and accountability.

Punitive damages are imposed in addition to the actual damages suffered by victims and are frequently enforced in cases involving extreme negligence.

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US, China, Australia, Canada and the UK utilize this legal provision, to ensure accountability.

However, **India does not have the concept of punitive damages in its laws.** It has been mostly inclined towards compensatory damages rather than punitive damages. This highlights the need of tort law in India.

Why is a tort law needed in India?

Multiple instances such as structures collapsing, people inflicting harm on others, etc. are happening frequently in India. It is the common who suffers the most with these problems.

Therefore, a tort law is needed – **a)** to enhance legal provisions, protect the most vulnerable and ensure justice, **b)** it would ensure parties, including government entities, are held accountable for negligent actions, **c)** to raise expectations of civic responsibilities and promote more faith in the legal systems that protect society.

Moreover, inconsistent rulings on punitive damages by Indian courts in major incidents like the Uphaar cinema fire accident has highlighted the need for tort law.

The compensation provided in the Uphaar cinema case was very less compared to the recent Morbi incident. Therefore, there has been disparities in the compensation.

Hence, a tort law will streamline the legal landscape, providing a consistent approach to all civil wrongs, leading to better risk management and efficient use of resources.

What has been the history of tort law?

British period: In 1882, when the British introduced comprehensive codification of criminal, commercial and procedural laws, **tort law remained uncoded.**

The fourth law commission in 1879 emphasized the importance of having a torts law in India. This led to draft a Law of Torts for India in 1886. However, this draft never progressed to legislative action.

After independence: The First Law Commission of India's first report in April 1956 outlined proposals for legislation regarding the liability of the state in tort cases.

A bill based on the report was introduced in the Lok Sabha in 1967 and referred to a joint committee. Unfortunately, due to the dissolution of the Lok Sabha in 1971, the bill was not passed and has not been revived since.

What can be the way ahead?

Although some higher courts, including the Supreme Court, have granted punitive damages in specific cases, **they have also decreased damages in other instances, indicating inconsistency in the application of this principle.**

Therefore, a law of tort that extends its jurisdiction to courts including subordinate courts is crucial. **This would democratize access to justice** by making punitive damages a right available to all victims of civil wrongs rather than a few.

[12. Why improving on World Bank's Ease of Doing Business rankings might have hurt economies](#)

Source: The post is based on the article **"Why improving on World Bank's Ease of Doing Business rankings might have hurt economies"** published in **The Indian Express** on **25th May 2023**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Important International Institutions

Relevance: concerns with the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index

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News: The article explains the controversies and concerns associated with the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Report.

About World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index

[Click here to Read](#)

What were the controversies with the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) Index?

It was originally assumed that the ranking was based on many academic papers that studied these rankings and the economic performance of countries around the world.

It was also assumed that the improvements in Doing Business had a positive impact on the GDP of a country.

However, **these rankings did not accurately reflect the reality in many nations and could be easily manipulated by governments.**

For instance, India's rankings were based on data from just two cities — Mumbai and Delhi. However, the situation of EoDB in the nearby cities was somewhat different.

Further, India ranks shot up among the top 50 in the World Bank's EoDB rankings in 2018. The jump was despite the fact that India's GDP growth was suffering a sharp slowdown, leading to record unemployment.

These all issues raised concerns over WB's EoDB.

Read More: [The end of Ease of Doing Business Rankings: Reasons and implications – Explained](#)

What were other concerns with WB's EoDB?

A research paper found that the improvements in the EoDB rankings had a negative impact on a nation's GDP. This was contrary to the earlier assumption which thought an improvement in the rankings would boost GDP.

A negative impact on a nation's GDP was due to the fact that developing countries had more focus on the Doing Business score rather than implementing substantial reforms for their economy.

Further, **most of the earlier research looked at rankings instead of the country's scores on which these rankings were based.**

However, **the ranks did not accurately capture the improvement in the economy because ranks are relative and a country could rise or fall sharply despite not having improved as much, or at all.**

For example, New Zealand was ranked first for ease of doing business in the 2020 report with a score of 87.01. If New Zealand's score had fallen by 5, its rank would have dropped by 9 places.

In contrast, Sri Lanka was ranked 99th with a score of 61.8. If Sri Lanka's score had fallen by 5, its rank would have dropped 26 places.

Hence, there were many problems with WB's EoDB index. Due to which, it was suspended by the World Bank.

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13. [Why improving on World Bank's Ease of Doing Business rankings might have hurt economies](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**Ties that bind – The Modi visit to Australia adds to the bipartisan strength of growing bonds**” published in **The Hindu** on 25th May 2023.

Syllabus: GS 2 – International Relations

Relevance: India and Australia bilateral relations

News: The Prime Minister of India is on a three-day visit to Australia and had bilateral meetings on various issues.

What were the issues discussed in the bilateral meeting?

The meeting included – **a)** opening an Australian consulate in Bengaluru and an Indian consulate in Brisbane, **b)** an agreement on Migration and Mobility, **c)** the finalisation of terms of reference for an India-Australia Green Hydrogen Task Force, **d)** Defence and security ties, cooperation on renewable energy, and critical minerals were also part of the discussions, **e)** the need to sign a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement by December was also discussed.

Despite their differing stances on Russia's invasion of Ukraine and western sanctions, **they found continuing and common cause on maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific**, and dealing with an aggressive China.

Further, the PM also addressed a large gathering of the Indian-origin community and he said that the “real reason, the real power” behind the bilateral relations came from people of Indian-origin in Australia.

Issues related to activities of other groups and conflicts associated with the people of Indian origin were also discussed

The PM reiterated his worries over vandalism and attacks on community facilities and temples with pro-Khalistani, anti-India, and anti-Modi writings.

Must Read: [India-Australia relations: Challenges and Significance – Explained](#)

What lies ahead for India and Australia's bilateral relationship?

Any attack on an Indian consulate is a valid bilateral concern. However, India must also put its attention to attacks by Australian citizens on Australian citizens and Australian property.

Any such attack definitely raise concerns and worries for India. However, **highlighting them in the bilateral meeting would not lead to further strengthening of ties between the two nations.**

It would also not serve the interest of **three D's (Democracy, Diaspora and Dosti)**, which according to the PM bind the two countries.

14. [The UK a tax haven?](#)

Source- The post is based on the article “**The UK a tax haven?**” published in the “**Business Standard**” on 25th May 2023.

Syllabus: GS2- International relations. GS3- Economy

Relevance- Issues related to tax evasion, financial crimes and money laundering at global level

News- The article explains the issues of UK providing safe tax haven for high net worth individuals and extradition issues between India and UK

How is the UK a tax haven for high net worth individuals?

There are reports that wealthy families from Russia, China, and India buy **expensive residential and commercial properties** in London. They store **huge amounts of capital** in the UK's overseas territories.

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According to a **British Broadcasting Corporation report** on August 3, 2022, some Russians and other high net-worth foreigners have used “**English Limited Partnerships**” to hide the identity of the true owners.

The following study of the “**Independent Commission for the Reform of International Corporate Taxation**” is about how the UK’s laws and practices result in tax evasion

A **Financial Times article** suggests that there are benefits in setting up trusts in the UK’s overseas territories. The **confidentiality about the assets** motivates them to deposit large amounts in these tax havens.

The UK’s overseas territories which are popular with tax evaders are the **British Virgin Islands, Guernsey, Gibraltar, and the Cayman Islands.**

What are extradition issues between India and the UK that are related to people accused of financial crimes in India?

Currently the UK is harbouring high-profile Indians who have allegedly committed **financial fraud** in India. This is despite an **India-UK Extradition Treaty.**

One of several hurdles in getting criminals under Indian law back to India is that the offences committed in India must also be crimes in the UK.

Further, the **European Convention on Human Rights** does not allow extradition to jurisdictions where a prisoner may be held in **degrading conditions**, or may be tortured.

Lalit Modi, Vijay Mallya, and Nirav Modi have been accused or found guilty of financial fraud in India and have evaded extradition from the UK to India.

What are the financial crimes committed by these people?

Kingfisher Airlines have defaulted on borrowings of over **8,000 crore**. It was sourced from several public-sector banks between 2004 and 2008.

Kingfisher Airlines was also reported to have **deducted 10% tax at source** from its employees, as required by Indian tax law, but **did not credit** these amounts to the government account

Nirav Modi obtained **fraudulent letters of undertaking** to misappropriate about 14,000 crore from Punjab National Bank.

Why is it an appropriate time to raise the issue of extradition of people accused for financial crimes in India with the UK?

In the May 2023 Northern Ireland council elections, the **Sinn Fein party** emerged with 31% of the vote, the highest. Sinn Fein and its supporters would like Northern Ireland to **reunite with the rest of Ireland.**

A **unified Ireland** may happen in another 10 years or less and all of Ireland may become part of the European Union. Scotland may leave the UK. It may join the EU.

India should focus on concluding a **broad-based trade in goods, services, and investments agreement** with the EU and delay discussions on any **India-UK trade agreement.**

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15. Govt, Gendered – on gender parity in civil services

Source: This post is based on the article “**Govt, Gendered**”, published in **The Times of India** on 25th May 2022.

Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 2, Social Issues

News: Women got the top four spots in the Civil Services Exam 2022. It shows the improvement in women participation in the administration.

Moreover, women candidates recommended for appointment to various elite government services like IAS and IPS have overall risen from 24% to 34% since 2018.

The improvement in gender equality in public administration has been an important metric for a more responsive and accountable government to diverse public interests.

It shows that gender parity among civil servants is within reach.

However, India is still lagging in the equal employment across all levels, sectors and positions in government – especially its highest offices.

What are the challenges in the equal participation of women on the important positions?

First, Although, first woman foreign secretary appointed in 2001 and the first woman finance secretary in 2011. India has never had a woman cabinet secretary.

Second, a 2021 UNDP global report on gender equality in public administration reports that women’s share of top leadership in India is only 12% compared to 29% in Singapore, 40% in Australia and 53% in Sweden.

Third, Gender equality becomes more important due to rising deficit between the required number of officers and the vacancies. A parliamentary committee reports the deficits between authorised and actual IAS strength at 57% in J&K and 31% in Jharkhand.

Fourth, mindset of reformers needs to change. Committee on civil service reforms’ 2004 report advocates enabling “women in the higher civil service to play their roles effectively as mothers and wives”. Instead of encouraging women to care for families, a more equal culture of care work in the senior bureaucracy must be encouraged.

16. A ‘middle kingdom’ dawns on India’s west

Source: This post is based on the article “**A ‘middle kingdom’ dawns on India’s west**”, published in **The Hindu** on 25th May 2022.

Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 2, International Relations

News: In the recently concluded 32nd Arab League Summit held in Jeddah, all 22 Arab states participated after 12 years, and Syria was readmitted. The summit shows the changing geo-political environment in the Arab region.

The “**Jeddah Declaration**” of the summit was moderate. It although adopted a pro-Palestinian agenda but refrained from mentioning Israel by name.

It did not discuss any Iran-related issues and called for stopping foreign interference in the domestic affairs of Arab countries.

It also opposed all support for the formation of armed groups and militias.

How is Saudi Arabia’s rise causing the geo-political changes in the Arab world?

Saudi Arabia’s economic strength is a significant advantage in its quest for Arab supremacy. Its GDP grew by 8.7% in 2022, and its oil income reached a record \$228 billion, giving it considerable influence over OPEC and OPEC+.

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The rise of the Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman as the main arbiter of the Arab world's agenda has been a key factor. He held triple summits in Riyadh with the Chinese President.

Saudi relations with Iran were normalised. It resulted in reduced in Yemen, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq

By reconciling with Iran through Chinese mediation, but without a U.S. nod-and-wink, Riyadh has asserted its diplomatic autonomy.

Direct ties with Iran have also reduced the importance of Qatar, Iraq, Oman and Pakistan as intermediaries.

Saudi's animosity with Israel has been replaced by ambiguity as it has still not joined the Abraham Accords but improved the relations with Israel.

In recent weeks, Saudi Arabia has hosted peace talks among warring factions in Sudan.

What are the challenges in front of Saudi?

It still needs for a more mature and consistent foreign policy. For example, Jamal Khashoggi episode in 2018 got it into many issues.

Potential friction in its ties with the UAE and Qatar.

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's likely anointment as the next Saudi king may disturb its internal stability.

What should be the course of action for India?

India should acknowledge this geopolitical shift, realign its strategy, and vigorously pursue its national interests.

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman should be re-invited for the India visit, postponed last year.

Synergise the bilateral Strategic Partnership Council at various levels.

Indian should raise participation in various projects under the Kingdom's ambitious "Vision 2030".

17. Why do judges recuse themselves?

Source: The post is based on the article "**Why do judges recuse themselves?**" published in **The Hindu** on **26th May 2023**.

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

Relevance: About Recusal of Judges

News: Supreme Court judge Justice M.R. Shah has recently refused to recuse himself from hearing a plea by former IPS officer Sanjiv Bhatt.

Why do judges recuse?

[Click Here to Read](#)

The practice of recusal originates from the basic concept of due process of law, that no one shall be a judge in his or her own case.

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What is the procedure for recusal?

There are two kinds of recusals — **1)** an automatic recusal where a judge himself withdraws from the case, **2)** when a party raises a plea for recusal highlighting the possibility of bias of the judge in the case.

The **decision to recuse rests solely on the conscience and discretion of the judge and no party can compel a judge to withdraw from a case.** If a judge recuses himself, the case is listed before the Chief Justice for allotment to an alternate Bench.

Do judges have to record a reason for recusal?

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There are different views regarding the declaring the reason for recusal.

For instance, Justice Kurien Joseph in the NJAC judgment, believed that giving reasons for recusal is the constitutional duty of a judge while Justice Madan Lokur was of the opinion that citing reasons for recusal is unwarranted.

The Delhi High Court recently ruled that no litigant or third party has any right to intervene, comment or enquire regarding a judge's recusal from a case.

What rules has the Supreme Court laid down for recusal?

In **Ranjit Thakur versus Union of India (1987)**, the SC said that if a party has a reasonable belief that a judge may be biased in a case, the judge should consider recusing themselves to ensure impartiality and fairness in the judicial process.

In the **Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association versus the Union of India (2015)**, the court observed that where a judge has a pecuniary interest, no further inquiry is needed as to whether there was a 'real danger' or 'reasonable suspicion' of bias.

Further, Justice Arun Mishra in *the Indore Development Authority versus Manoharlal and Ors (2019)* held that a judge who has recused himself from hearing a case in the smaller bench is not disqualified from being a part of the larger bench for the same case.

Do foreign countries have laws related to recusal of judges?

US: The U.S. has a well-defined law on recusals. Such rules are also codified. In the US, there are three grounds for recusal — **1)** financial or corporate interest, **2)** a case in which the judge was a material witness or a lawyer, **3)** and a relationship to a party.

UK: The 'real danger' test was adopted as the applicable standard for the recusal of judge. However, after its criticism, a new test was formulated, where the standard laid down was to look at the likelihood of bias from the perspective of a fair-minded and reasonable observer.

Note: *The "real danger" test is a legal standard used to establish if a decision-maker has a high possibility of bias, requiring their recusal from a case in order to maintain the fairness and integrity of the proceedings.*

[18. A funding solution for developing nations' climate challenge](#)

Source- The post is based on the article "A funding solution for developing nations' climate challenge" published in "The Indian Express" on 26th May 2023.

Syllabus: GS2- International relations. GS3- Environment

Relevance- Global cooperation for climate change

News- The G20 has set up a high-level committee to suggest reform of multilateral development banks (MDBs) so that they are fit for purpose in the contemporary global scenario

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What are challenges associated with climate financing for developing countries?

Money estimates annually for greening in developing countries are in the **range of \$2-3 trillion**. These are **relatively manageable figures**. **Annual global savings**, coming mostly in the developed world, is around \$20 trillion. But, they are beyond the **domestic capacities** of developing countries.

For example, in India, solar and wind energy attracted investments **worth \$66 billion** in the last eight years. But, this requirement will increase manifold.

India will require **around \$1.15 trillion in the next eight years** to install 450 GW of renewables by 2030, for infrastructure of **transmission and storage, Green Hydrogen push** and increase the share of electric vehicles.

A total investment of \$1.15 trillion is the estimated requirement, with the **debt requirement** being around **\$850 billion** and **equity roughly \$300 billion**.

The \$850 billion debt requirement alone is **more than a quarter of the total loans** of all commercial banks in India. Moreover, these requirements will have to compete with **other developmental and individual priorities**.

Other domestic financing routes such as bonds, pension funds and insurance funds have **limited prospects** for clean-tech segments. They are concentrated in **high-quality assets**, that is, AA+ rated assets.

The **gap of around 40-60%** of the **total debt requirement**, can only be filled by foreign sources. But developed countries are reluctant to provide funding.

What are solutions for climate financing for the developing world?

Global MDBs can be **particularly instrumental**. They can provide **interrupted flow of private capital** in the developed world for green projects in developing countries.

This can be done by the creation of an **International Foreign Exchange Agency** linked to the WB. It will provide **hedging support** for foreign exchange borrowings by **green projects** in developing countries.

Large-scale pooling of projects and currencies coupled with reinsurance is an alternative to insurance. It can considerably lower the costs of **foreign borrowed capital** for green projects in the private sector in developing countries.

Residual risks could be covered by sovereign support from developed countries.

The idea of a **foreign exchange agency** is operational in a small manner between Europe and West Africa. But the requirement is for something on a **truly large scale** covering **several currencies** and reaching the largest populations in developing countries.

How will the G20 be helpful in climate financing?

The G20 committee should accord a **high priority to climate financing**. Unlike many other areas of divergence in the present geopolitics, **climate change** has **multi-partisan consensus**.

This must be leveraged at the MDBs with an agency or any other **appropriate mechanism** taking care of the **currency risk**. This is a **relatively low-cost option for global well-being**. It could be piloted during **India's G20 presidency**.

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19. An ordinance, its constitutionality, and scrutiny

Source- The post is based on the article “An ordinance, its constitutionality, and scrutiny” published in “The Hindu” on 26th May 2023.

Syllabus: GS2- Issues pertaining to federalism

Relevance- Constitutional issues related to NCT of Delhi

News- Recently, the President of India exercised legislative power to promulgate “The Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Ordinance, 2023”. The ordinance negates a Constitution Bench judgement of the Supreme Court of India

What are points given by SC while interpreting Article 239AA(3)(a)?

The Legislative Assembly of the NCTD has jurisdiction over entries in **List II and List III**, except for expressly **excluded entries of List II**.

The executive power of NCTD is **co-extensive with its legislative power**. It shall extend to all matters with respect to which it has power to legislate. The Union of India has executive power only over **three entries in List II**.

Consequently, executive power over **“services” (entry 41)** can be exercised exclusively by the Government of the NCTD.

What are the issues related to constitutionality of ordinance?

Ordinance has inserted **entry 41 of List II into Article 239AA(3)(a)**. Therefore, it has expanded the scope of **excepted matter from three to four**.

This needs for amending **Article 239AA(3)(a)** of the Constitution. The power conferred on Parliament under Article is to make fresh laws and not to **amend Article 239AA(3)(a)** of the Constitution.

Article 239AA(7)(a) confers power on Parliament to make laws for **giving effect to or supplementing the provisions** contained in various clauses of Article 239AA. Such a power cannot be used to amend Article 239AA(3)(a) of the Constitution.

As per Article 239AA(7)(b), Parliament’s law making under **Article 239AA(7)(a)** shall not be considered an amendment of the Constitution. Therefore, altering the scope of Article 239AA(3)(a) requires **constitutional amendment** under Article 368.

Consequently, the ordinance to expand the **scope of excepted matters in Article 239AA(3)(a)** is void. It amounts to a **colourable exercise of power**. **Article 123** is no substitute for **Article 368**.

Besides, when the Supreme Court interprets the law, the same is **binding on all courts and authorities** in India **in terms of Articles 141 and 144**, respectively. Articles 141 and 144 cannot be negated by Article 123 without a constitutional amendment.

The **aid and advice** of the Union Council of Ministers to the President could not **override Article 144**. The basis of the Court judgement is Article 239AA(3)(a). To alter this basis, a **constitutional amendment** is necessary.

20. The maritime ‘Great Game’: Why Delhi needs to bolster the Andaman and Nicobar Command

Source- The post is based on the article “The maritime ‘Great Game’: Why Delhi needs to bolster the Andaman and Nicobar Command” published in the “The Indian Express” on 26th May 2023.

Syllabus: GS2- International relations

Relevance- Maritime diplomacy

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News– The article explains the importance of ANC Command for controlling aggressive behaviour of China

How is China increasing its maritime presence in the Indian ocean?

Since 2013, China has been building **artificial islands in the South China Sea**. It has created over 3,000-4,000 acres of new land atop reefs and rocks. Three such **maritime outposts** have been provided with runways and harbours as well as guided-missile batteries.

China's island strategy has two objectives. It wants to develop a capability to **monitor all traffic** that moves under or above the sea. It is termed "**maritime domain awareness**".

With **surveillance facilities** and fortifying them, a nation can project power over a huge oceanic expanse.

Why are Andaman and Nicobar commands strategically important?

The Andaman and Nicobar (A&N) group of 572 islands are important for India in **projecting power, exert influence, or strike friendships** in its eastern neighbourhood.

In 2001, India placed all Armed Forces located in the A&N Islands, including the Coast Guard, under the unitary command.

The objective of this unitary command was to ensure **defence of the territory, waters, airspace and the exclusive economic zone** of the islands. It was to safeguard the eastern areas of the Indian Ocean and establish an **air defence identification zone** over the islands.

By the turn of the century, all our South East Asian neighbours were becoming **cautious of China**. They expected that India would assert **regional influence** by positioning substantial forces with trans-national capabilities in the A&N.

ANC was also the "crucible" for testing the **feasibility of "jointness"** for armed forces. Gradually, the ANC became a **well-oiled, efficient and functional joint command**.

During the 2004 tsunami, the ANC provided humanitarian assistance and disaster relief to the people of these islands.

How little attention has been given to ANC after its formation?

It was considered that any **overt show of force** by India in the Bay of Bengal would be considered by neighbours as "**muscle-flexing**". Hence, it was undesirable.

The ANC model and framework has not been replicated anywhere else. The latest **theatre command** model under consideration recommends the abolition of ANC and its absorption by the **Eastern Naval Command**.

21. PM Modi's Australia visit: Love in Sydney

Source: This post is created, based on the article "PM Modi's Australia visit: Love in Sydney", published in Indian Express on 26th May 2023.

Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 2 – Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India

Context: Recently, Indian PM's Australia visit concluded.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Australia in November 2014 – the first Indian PM to do so in nearly 30 years. Before that, Australia hadn't been a main focus for India, especially during and after the Cold War. The disagreement over India's nuclear test made the relations worse in the 90s.

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Even though a meeting of the Quad (India, Australia, Japan, and the US) got cancelled, PM Modi still went to Sydney. Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has visited India and will visit again for a G20 meeting.

Read more – [Ties that bind – The Modi visit to Australia adds to the bipartisan strength of growing bonds](#)

What are the strengths of India Australia's present relations?

First, for the first time since India became independent, it shares common interests with Australia in Asia and its surrounding waters.

Indians make up more than 3% of the Australia's population and will soon reach one million. Indian PM Modi was heartfully welcomed by Indian diaspora there.

A new "Migration and Mobility" agreement will make it easier for people to move between the two countries.

Opening new consulates in Brisbane and Bengaluru will also strengthen the ties.

What are the issues between India and Australia?

Read here – [Ties that bind – The Modi visit to Australia adds to the bipartisan strength of growing bonds](#)

22. Data In The Dock – on National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG)

Source: The post is based on the article "**Data In The Dock – A little-noted flaw in the judicial system is the recording of incomplete & wrong information. This skews calculation of disposal rates, especially for old cases**" published in **The Times of India** on **27th May 2023**.

Syllabus: GS 2- Functioning of judiciary

Relevance: About the pendency of cases in the courts

News: The National Judicial Data Grid (**NJDG**) shows that 1,03,712 cases in the courts are more than 30 years old. This highlights the concerns over pendency of cases in the courts in India.

What is the situation of the pendency of cases in India?

Out of 1,03,712 cases, the two oldest civil cases are from 1952 and the oldest criminal case today is from 1958. This shows the grim situation of the legal system in India that plaintiffs/defendants may even die awaiting justice.

Recently, **the India Justice Report 2022 ranked states** under four heads – police, prisons, judiciary and legal aid. **Under judiciary**, West Bengal ranks the worst among major states.

In 2017, **the junior law minister informed Parliament** the oldest civil case was in Rajasthan HC filed in 1956 and the oldest case filed in Madras HC was of 1952.

However, both the information was incorrect which also shows the need to correct data in e-court records.

The law minister further informed Parliament recently that there were no cases (civil or criminal) more than 50 years old pending before the Supreme Court. However, **HCs have cases (civil plus criminal) more than 50 years old**.

Therefore, it seems unlike SC, **HCs and district courts haven't focused on clearing old cases despite the 11th finance commission** providing additional resources for fast-track courts meant to clear old cases.

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Must Read: [Pendency of Cases of Constitutional Importance – Explained](#)

What can be the way ahead?

The funds for fast-track courts cannot alone solve the problem. **There is also a need to focus on resolving the pendency of cases along with providing performance-linked resource-flow.**

Further, **e-courts work through a case information system (CIS)**. Therefore, under CIS, there is a need for a monitoring system, which should monitor the clearance of old cases by the judges.

Moreover, **metrics in NJDG are based on case disposal with no special emphasis on old cases**. Hence, emphasis in NJDG should be put in clearance of old cases along updating the correct data /information about the cases.

23. A fountainhead of the people's hopes and aspirations

Source- The post is based on the article "A fountainhead of the people's hopes and aspirations" published in "The Indian Express" on 27th May 2023.

Syllabus: GS2- Polity

News- India is set to witness a historic moment with the inauguration of the new Parliament House on May 28. We finally have a new structure in independent India.

What is the importance of the new Parliament building?

It reflects the **vision and aspirations** of a country that has evolved significantly since 1947. The new building will be another extension of the existing Parliament complex to signify the **spirit of change and continuity**.

The old building gave direction to independent India, while the new one will witness the making of India as **'Aatmanirbhar Bharat'**.

What are the changes made in the old building?

The main Parliament House, inaugurated in 1927, consists of the **circular-shaped structure**. Two more floors were added to this building in 1956 to accommodate more staff and other offices.

The need for yet more office space led to the construction of the **Parliament Annexe** in 1975. In 2002, the **Parliament Library** was added to the complex. For similar reasons, an **extension of the Parliament Annexe** was constructed in 2016.

What are the challenges faced due to the old building of Parliament?

Despite the new constructions in the Parliament, the need for **modern facilities** in the main Parliament House remained unfulfilled.

There is a **shortage of space** inside the Parliament House. It had to be **retrofitted multiple times**, which left little space for further improvements.

The inner ceilings of both the Chambers and the Central Hall were provided with **safety nettings** to prevent any tiles and plaster from falling down. There are **multiple wirings** for computers, air conditioners and security gadgets.

The Presiding Officers of the past have also emphasised the need to find a **better solution**. In 2012, the Speaker, Meira Kumar approved a **high-powered committee** to look for an alternative complex.

In 2015, the Speaker, Sumitra Mahajan, wrote to the Minister for Urban Affairs to have a **new Parliament building with modern facilities**.

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What are major changes in the new Parliament for meeting the needs of current times?

The new building is more **spacious, energy-efficient, and accessible**. It has the most updated technology, which makes it well-equipped for **future needs** as well.

In the new building, we will be able to **accommodate various languages** with **state-of-the-art facilities** for simultaneous interpretations. There are better features for **audio-visual communication** as compared to the existing Parliament.

Better gadgets, access to an e-library, and important reports will be **easily accessible** for members from their seats. This will enhance the capacity of legislators and **improve the efficiency** of the Secretariats of Parliament.

The building has **publicly accessible museum-grade galleries and a Constitution Hall** that showcases India's age-old history of democracy.

Adequate functional space and modern facilities for the members will contribute to reducing friction and enabling serious discussions. As this complex expands, each member will have their own **dedicated space** for interacting with people from their constituencies.

How does the new Parliament inspire for a better future?

The inauguration of a new Parliament building presents an opportunity to seriously **introspect on our parliamentary conduct** to make Parliament **more efficient and productive**.

The trend of **increasing disruptions and deadlock** is antithetical to the demand for politics for **complex governance challenges** of our time.

It would work as a lighthouse to guide us in our ambitious journey to build **'Ek Bharat, Shrestha Bharat.'**

24. Sedition and its roots in rudeness as an offence

Source- The post is based on the article "Sedition and its roots in rudeness as an offence" published in "The Hindu" on 27th May 2023.

Syllabus: GS2- Polity

Relevance- Issues related to offensive speech and sedition

News- On March 30, the Lahore High Court annulled the offence of 'sedition' in the Pakistan Penal code.

Around the same time in India, the police registered a series of complaints in Delhi and in Ahmedabad, and also arrested several people, for posting anti-government posts.

How does the logic of sedition under section 124 influence our legal apparatus?

Section 124A seeks to criminalise words that bring "into **hatred or contempt, or excite disaffection**" towards the government. A challenge is pending before the Supreme Court. Yet, the logic of the law of sedition still survives.

Pakistan uses the **law of blasphemy**. India, which is secular and does not criminalise blasphemy. But, it has punishment provisions for **hurting sentiments**. The state recently arrested actor Chetan Kumar for his tweet on Hindutva.

Its **defining logic** has already transplanted itself into several different provisions of law that **criminalise speech**.

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How social relationships have an impact on our understanding of offensive speech?

Socially, we have always understood *badtameezi*(rudeness) not in terms of the contents of speech, but rather in terms of **who spoke and to whom**. An older person may criticise a teenager but the *badtameezi* occurs only when the teenager answers back.

This **understanding of offensive speech** applies in the same hierarchical way to all **social relationships**. It's always the security guard, the domestic worker, or the street vendor who is *badtameez*.

Modernity and capitalism have long been imagined breaking such hierarchies. But it is not true in substance.

How is the understanding of offensive speech reflected in power relations?

The state through its officials has appropriated a top position in **hierarchy of social positions**. Thus, the lowest state functionary addresses the citizen in the **most commanding voice**, as if it was natural.

Law-and-order issues arise only when the policeman is challenged. But, it never arises in the policeman's own **arbitrary commands** to the citizenry.

In present times, this **relationship of power** is more explicitly **extended to political power**. The use of law often shows these **social-political relations of power**. It is increasing now.

How is understanding of offensive speech reflected in the legal system?

The practice of prosecuting speech offences is influenced by an understanding that '**offensive speech**' emanates from those who are either inferior in established **social/political hierarchies**.

Consequently, offences are framed mostly against those who challenge **political or social power** and its attendant narratives. In the event, prosecution usually follows the **logic of badtameezi, or sedition**. It focuses mostly on content.

India has **entrenched hierarchical relations**, most prominently in the form of caste. Our **understanding of violence** is influenced by this understanding.

Speech is made prosecutable depending on whom it targets. It points to the **entangled relationship of law and society**. Prosecutors attack certain speech as grave and damaging to someone's reputation while tolerating other violent speech as innocuous.

What are some facts about the Supreme Court pronounced judgement in the Media One case?

which addresses the **logic of sedition**. It struck down the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting's decision to not renew the broadcast licence for the channel on grounds that it was a **threat to national security**.

The Court said that the critical views on policies of the government cannot be termed **anti-establishment**. The use of such a terminology represents an expectation that the press must **support the establishment**.

The action of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting by denying security clearance to a media channel produces a **chilling effect on freedom of speech**, and on **press freedom**.

The restriction on the freedom of the press compels citizens to think along the same tangent. A **homogenised view** on issues that range from socio-economic policy to political ideologies would pose **grave dangers to democracy**.

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The state is using **national security** as a tool to deny citizens remedies that are provided under the law. This is not compatible with the **rule of law**. **National security claims** cannot be made out of thin air.

25. US's new visa policy: What explains the US visa 'threat' to Dhaka?

Source: The post is based on the article “**What explains the US visa ‘threat’ to Dhaka?**” published in the **Indian Express** on **27th May 2023**

Syllabus: GS 2 – India and its neighbourhood relations.

Relevance: About US's new visa policy.

News: A new visa policy was announced by the US “to support Bangladesh’s goal of holding free, fair and peaceful national elections.” Under this policy, the US can impose visa restrictions on individuals and their immediate family members if they are responsible for undermining the democratic election process in Bangladesh.

Note: *Earlier this month, the US announced the same policy in Nigeria.*

What led to the formulation of the US's new visa policy?

This is due to **a)** Bangladesh Prime Minister’s authoritarian approach, **b)** The formulation of a draconian Digital Security Act, **c)** Declaring the newspaper found by the Ramon Magsaysay awardee Matiur Rahman, as anti-national, and **d)** the government’s crackdown on Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and former PM citing its links to Islamist parties and alleging corruption at the top.

What is the view of Bangladesh’s government and the opposition to the US’s new visa policy?

The opposition in Bangladesh said that **a)** The policy will play a supporting role in holding the next polls in a fair and credible manner, **b)** The policy will change the diplomatic ties between Bangladesh and the United States,

The government on the other hand said that the US was seeking regime change in Bangladesh and demands such visa policy should not be applied arbitrarily in a non-objective manner.

What will be the implications of the US’s new visa policy?

The US is the biggest destination for Bangladesh’s garment exports, and Bangladesh is the third-largest exporter of garments to the US after China and Vietnam. The industry is the backbone of the country’s economic growth.

A (Generalized System of Preferences) GSP-Plus status with the US and Europe for its ready-made garment exports is crucial when Bangladesh graduates out of the least developed country category in 2026. Bangladesh’s government is working hard for this tag. But the new policy might hamper its recognition.

What is the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP)?

Read here: [Generalized System of Preferences \(GSP\)](#)

How does the US’s new visa policy impact India’s ties with Bangladesh?

Over the last few years, the US and India were seen as acting in tandem in Bangladesh, especially as their security objectives converged. But the US position on the Bangladesh elections could complicate India’s diplomacy in Bangladesh.

This is because India prefers the present government as It **a)** acts swiftly on security concerns of India, **b)** signed land transit rights to the Northeastern states, **c)** provides security assurances and **d)** signed a favourable coal power deal to an Indian company.

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Read more: [Recent Developments in India-Bangladesh Relations – Explained, pointwise](#)

26. [Junta Connection – For Manipur, India must revisit its Myanmar policy](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Junta Connection – For Manipur, India must revisit its Myanmar policy**” published in **The Times of India** on **27th May 2023**

Syllabus: GS 2 – India and its neighbourhood relations and GS 3: Security issues – Internal Security.

Relevance: About Manipur unrest and Junta rule in Manipur.

News: The Union Minister has pitched for dialogue and promised to deal a fair hand to all stakeholders in still-tense Manipur. Last week, both the government of India and Manipur told the Supreme Court that troubles began with the crackdown on poppy cultivation in Manipur hills by illegal immigrants from Myanmar.

What are the reasons behind the unrest in Manipur?

Must read: [What is behind Manipur’s widespread unrest?](#)

What will be the impact of Manipur unrest on regional security?

Must read: [Manipur unrest and its impact on regional security – Explained, pointwise](#)

What is the role of Myanmar in the Manipur unrest?

Since the Myanmar coup in 2021, India has avoided any criticism of the junta’s actions. This includes airstrikes on the domestic population. This forced refugees to flood across the border into India where many share ethnic kinship ties. So, the civil war in Myanmar is having direct repercussions on India’s Northeast.

What should be done to control the Manipur crisis?

India should recalibrate ties with the junta. The junta needs India’s support against powerful insurgents like the Arakan Army and is also wary of getting trapped with China. Further, all democratic forces in Myanmar are ready to side with India, viewing China as the junta’s main sponsor.

India should use this leverage and get the junta to halt its operations in the border regions this will control the flow of refugees into India.

General Studies Paper –3

General Studies - 3

1. [Understanding a human pangenome map](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**Understanding a human pangenome map**” published in **The Hindu** on **22nd May 2023**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Science and Technology

News: A pangenome reference map has been built using genomes from 47 anonymous individuals from Africa, the Caribbean, Americas, East Asia, and Europe. The article explains its relevance.

What is genome and genome sequencing?

Read Here: [Explained: The complete human genome, and what it tells us](#) and [Genome sequencing](#)

The genome is an identity card like Aadhaar, which is unique for every individual.

What is a reference genome?

When genomes are newly sequenced, they are compared to a reference map called a reference genome. This helps to understand the regions of differences between the newly sequenced genome and the reference genome.

Reference genome was first built in 2001. It **helped scientists discover thousands of genes linked to various diseases and better understand diseases like cancer at the genetic level and design novel diagnostic tests.**

However, the reference genome had many gaps and errors. It was also not representative of all human beings as it was built using mostly the genome of a single individual of mixed African and European ancestry.

Therefore, to address these gaps and errors, scientists have developed the pangenome map.

What is a pangenome map?

The pangenome is a graph unlike the earlier reference genome which was a linear sequence.

The graph of each chromosome resembles a bamboo stem, with nodes where sequences from all 47 individuals come together, indicating similarity.

The internodes, which have different lengths, represent genetic variations among individuals from different ancestries.

The researchers used long-read DNA sequencing technologies to create complete and contiguous chromosome maps in the pangenome project.

Longer reads technology helps to assemble the sequences with minimum errors and read through the repetitive regions of the chromosomes which are hard to sequence with short-read technologies used earlier.

However, even though pangenome map is error free, it does not represent all of human diversity.

Why is a pangenome map important?

Even though two humans are more than 99% similar in their DNA, there is still about a 0.4% difference between them.

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Hence, a **complete and error-free human pangenome map will help understand these differences and explain human diversity better.**

It will also help **understand genetic variants in some populations**, which result in underlying health conditions.

The present map does not contain Indian genome sequences. However, it will help in mapping Indian genomes against the error-free and full reference genomes known till date.

Future pangenome maps incorporating high-quality genomes from diverse Indian populations, including endogamous and isolated groups, will provide insights into disease prevalence, facilitate the identification of new genes associated with rare diseases, and aid in the discovery of novel drugs to combat these diseases.

2. [These 'forests' are disturbing balance](#)

Source: The post is based on the article **“These ‘forests’ are disturbing balance”** published in **The Times of India** on **22nd May 2023**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Environment

News: The article explains concerns associated with forest development corporations (FDCs) and measures needed to address them.

What are Forest Development Corporations (FDCs)?

FDCs were established by states with the aim to raise industrial plantations of teak, eucalyptus, bamboo etc., to enhance the production of forest produce, to restore the productivity of degraded forest areas, etc.

However, FDCs are using these monoculture plantations for financial exploitation.

Monoculture plantations are not only harmful to tiger conservation, but also play no role in climate change.

What are the concerns with FDCs in different states?

Maharashtra: Maharashtra has leased out 6% of the total forest area to the Forest Development Corporation of Maharashtra (**FDCM**). FDCM commercially extracts about 50,000 cubic metres of timber annually, **causing substantial environmental damage.**

Moreover, FDCM takes high-quality miscellaneous forests, which act as food security and habitat for tigers, and removes these for teak plantations.

However, the monoculture practice of FDCM has become outdated **because dense mixed forests are more important to maintain biodiversity and ecological balance.**

Monoculture practice harms biodiversity in the long run while miscellaneous forests provide maximum food availability for wildlife in fruits, leaves and grass, and shrubby canopy throughout the year.

Miscellaneous/mixed forests have the highest capacity to hold herbivore populations and carnivores.

Kerala: Kerala Forest Development Corporation (**KFDC**) used to focus on community-based ecotourism and earned revenue through pulpwood and teak. However, it had to discontinue pulpwood plantations after the Forest Conservation Act, 1980.

Therefore, for KFDC, it would be better to focus on carefully planned ecotourism and impart proper training to the dependent community.

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Along with these initiatives, **riverine vegetation must be promoted near the water bodies, and trees must be replaced with timber.**

Telangana: In Telangana, **eucalyptus dominates most of the plantations.** Out of 33,000 hectares of forests leased out to Telangana State Forest Development Corporation (TSFDC), eucalyptus is spread over 22,000 hectares.

This monoculture practice has depleted the soil health. Therefore, to overcome the issue, TSFDC has opted for other plantations like red sanders and sandalwood.

TSFDC is also focusing on ecotourism including botanical gardens in Hyderabad, resorts in backwaters and national parks.

What can be the way ahead?

Various state Forest Development Corporation (FDCs) are focusing on monoculture practices which are harmful for both the ecosystem and the environment.

According to the experts, deadly monoculture plantations act as 'green deserts' that have the least capability of mitigating climate change.

Therefore, FDCs should focus on growing trees on wastelands to increase forests area along with opting diversification of plantations. It should also plant those trees which can be economically as well as environmentally useful for the state.

3. India as a Quad-led biomanufacturing hub

Source: This post is created based on the article "**India as a Quad-led biomanufacturing hub**", published in The Hindu on 22nd May 2023.

Syllabus Topic: GS paper 3- Science and technology –

News: The Quad (Australia, India, Japan, and the United States) created a Critical and Emerging Technology Working Group in March 2021. However, the potential for Quad cooperation in biotechnology is not yet fully utilized.

The creation of a Quad-led biomanufacturing hub in India could bolster this cooperation .

What is Bio-manufacturing?

Biomanufacturing involves the use of living systems, especially microorganisms and cell cultures, to generate molecules and materials on a commercial scale.

This technology can revolutionize the global industrial system. An estimated 60% of the physical inputs to the global economy are potentially producible by this method.

Challenges in creation of Quad-led biomanufacturing hub in India?

Dominance of China in small-molecule active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) is a concern.

Scaling up the biomanufacturing sector in India necessitates improving the quality of its workforce.

While India has many life science professionals, they often lack access to cutting-edge technology and training.

What is the potential of creation of Quad-led biomanufacturing hub in India?

India aims to become a leading biomanufacturing hub and has plans to increase its fermentation capacity tenfold to 10 million litres in the next three to five years.

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India's National Biotechnology Development Strategy envisions the country as a "Global Biomanufacturing Hub" by 2025.

The U.S. has significant funding capability, while all three (Japan, Australia, and the U.S.) have advanced biotechnology innovation ecosystems and intellectual property. India, on the other hand, has skilled manpower and the potential to provide affordable scale.

India is also an ideal choice to host the biomanufacturing hub due to its existing infrastructure, low-cost pharmaceutical manufacturing expertise, and available workforce.

The proposed hub can facilitate technology transfer, connect investors, and establish a biomanufacturing fund administered through the Quad.

The hub can also harmonize language, regulations, and data-sharing regarding biomanufacturing to secure supply chains for Quad nations and facilitate international collaboration.

4. [Adopt a single-window e-portal to ease land acquisition in India](#)

Source: This post is created based on the article "[Adopt a single-window e-portal to ease land acquisition in India](#)", published in Live Mint on 22nd May 2023.

Syllabus Topic: GS paper 3 – Land reform in India

Context: The global shift towards a China-plus-one strategy and the Indian government's push for industry diversification align well with the current economic landscape.

Progressive schemes like the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) and the construction of state-of-the-art infrastructure are accelerating industrial growth.

With India being one of the fastest growing major economies, the domestic demand is booming, and the economy appears to be on solid ground.

What is the Role of Manufacturing in Economic Transformation?

Manufacturing is key to India's prosperity. Experience from every advanced economy in the world clearly shows that manufacturing delivers high quality, well-paying jobs for large numbers of people.

Currently, about 40% of India's workforce is engaged in agriculture, which contributes only around 16% of the total GDP. It's essential to transition this excess labour into the expanding manufacturing sector.

The potential for India to become a global manufacturing hub is high, however, challenges like land acquisition are hurdles.

What are the steps taken for land reforms in India?

1. The Indian government has made significant strides in digitizing land records and related documentation, which provides a strong foundation for further improvements.
2. A unified online portal for land transactions, minimizing the role of intermediaries, can simplify the process significantly.
3. Speeding up the land acquisition process is also crucial for operationalizing auctioned mines, thereby ensuring a domestic supply of raw materials for the manufacturing sector.
4. The implementation of a digital land sale system, appreciating the importance of speed and scale, would be a significant step forward for the nation.

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5. [Undo The Un-Liberalised Remittance Policy](#)

[Why2k Question – Will withdrawing ₹2,000 notes smoke out the crooked? Unlikely. The crooked economy's much more inventive](#)

Source: The post is based on the article **“Why2k Question – Will withdrawing ₹2,000 notes smoke out the crooked? Unlikely. The crooked economy's much more inventive”** published in **The Hindu** on **22nd May 2023**.

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

Relevance: About RBI's decision to withdraw Rs 2,000 notes.

News: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to withdraw the Rs 2000 denomination banknotes from circulation.

Why has the RBI withdrawn Rs 2,000 notes?

Must read: [Why has the RBI withdrawn Rs 2,000 notes?](#)

What are the concerns highlighted by experts on RBI's decision?

Creates confusion: The circular said the notes “will continue to be legal tender” while also telling the public to “utilise the time up to September 30 to deposit and/or exchange”.

Does not reduce the black market: People who play with very large sums of money does not depend only on bundles of currency notes. Gold is enjoying a superior premium ever since the pandemic. Further, black marketers also prefer dollars.

Does not address unaccounted cash: The recent SBI circular has said that none of its branches will ask for documents and there are reports that deposits/ exchanges by one person can happen several times a day, and any number of times till the deadline. This is not addressing the unaccounted cash holding.

6. [It's time to ensure safer skies](#)

Source: The post is based on the article **“It's time to ensure safer skies”** published in **The Hindu** on **23rd May 2023**.

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

Relevance: About Mangalore air accident and aviation sector.

News: It has been 13 years since an aircraft crashed in Mangalore resulting in the deaths of 158 people. But investigation agencies have still not identified the reasons for such accidents and provided corrective steps.

About the PIL on the Mangalore runway

In 1997, a Bangalore-based NGO filed a public interest litigation (PIL) in the Karnataka High Court regarding the second runway in Mangalore airport. The NGO warned, “The inevitable consequence could be that the plane will come crashing down the hillsides from a height of 80-100 metres...”

But the High Court dismissed the PIL and the Supreme Court has said that the “Government shall comply with all applicable laws and also with environmental norms.” The government agencies also did not comply with laws or norms.

About the Mangalore air accident

All these led to the loss of 158 lives in 2010 when AIE 812 crashed on landing in Mangalore. The aircraft overshot the runway, plunged down the hillside as the petitioners had warned, and burst into flames. The reports found that the aircraft crashed into the illegal concrete structure on which the Instrument Landing System Localiser antenna was mounted.

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The International Civil Aviation Organization asked India to ensure that all localiser structures were frangible. But, in Mangalore airport, the structure was replaced with steel girders.

About the reform committee and its recommendations

The Ministry of Civil Aviation constituted the Civil Aviation Safety Advisory Council (CASAC) after the Mangalore crash. The focus was on critical runways, such as in Mangalore and Calicut.

The CASAC pointed out

a) There is a failure of the court of inquiry report in identifying serious errors and taking corrective steps, **b)** The failure to provide the mandatory Runway End Safety Areas (RESA) at Calicut could result in fatal accidents on the runway if any aircraft touched down late at high speed. So, the committee recommended having RESA at both ends, **c)** The narrow service road would prevent quick rescue by rescue and firefighting vehicles.

But the Ministry and the DGCA ignored the CASAC observations.

Read more: [Indian aviation industry: Potential and challenges – Explained, pointwise](#)

What are the other issues diminishing India's aviation sector?

India is inducting a large number of aircraft into our skies without the minimum number of qualified professionals to man critical stations such as cockpit, ATC and engineering. Further, the low availability of pilots leads to the available pilots being fatigued in their work. This is bound to lower the safety standards in India.

So, now it is time for the court to pick up these issues and suggest reforms.

7. [The economics of climate change in India](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “[The economics of climate change in India](#)” published in **The Indian Express** on **23rd May 2023**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Climate Change

Relevance: Impact of climate change on the Indian economy

News: Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has released a report titled “[Report on Currency and Finance: Towards a Greener Cleaner India](#)”. The report highlights the impact of climate change on India's economy and measures needed to address them.

How has climate change affected India?

There has been **change in temperature and precipitation pattern in India**.

As per the RBI report, the **annual average temperature in India has been increasing gradually**.

The south west monsoon has also become unpredictable. The annual average rainfall in India has gradually declined while intense wet spells as well as dry spells have increased in India.

India is relatively more exposed to floods and storms than droughts and heatwaves. Such incidences pose significant risks to agricultural production and food price volatility.

How vulnerable is India to climate change?

India's diverse topography exposes it to varying temperature and precipitation patterns, which in turn makes the country susceptible to extreme weather events. These events have implications for the Indian economy. (Chart 1)

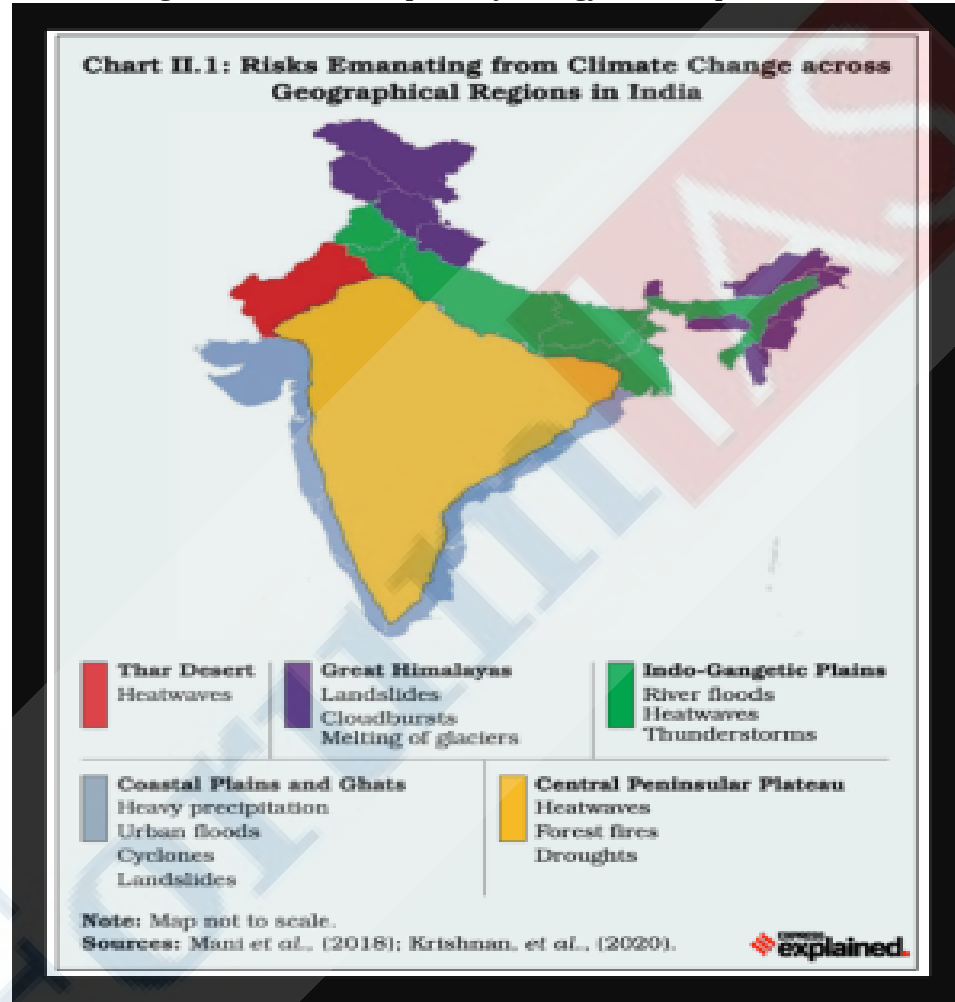
At present, **major economic activity happens in the services sector** as against the agriculture and allied sectors in India.

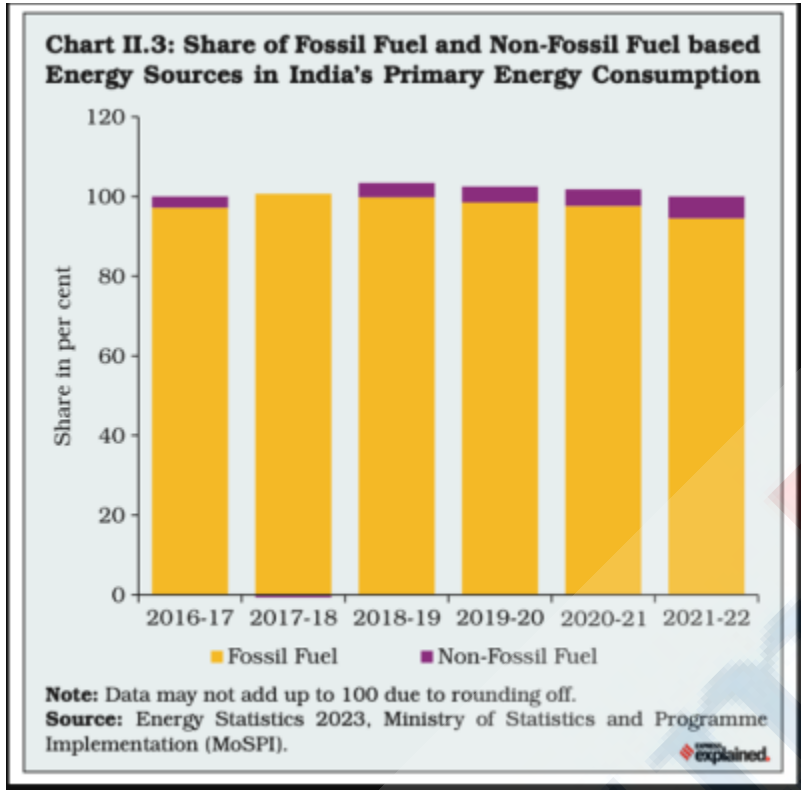
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This has significant implications for carbon emissions because services are globally considered to be emission-light with relatively lower energy intensity of output.

Whereas, **metal industries, electricity and transports are the highest emission-intensive sectors**, together accounted for around 9 percent of India's total GVA in 2018-19. (Chart 2)

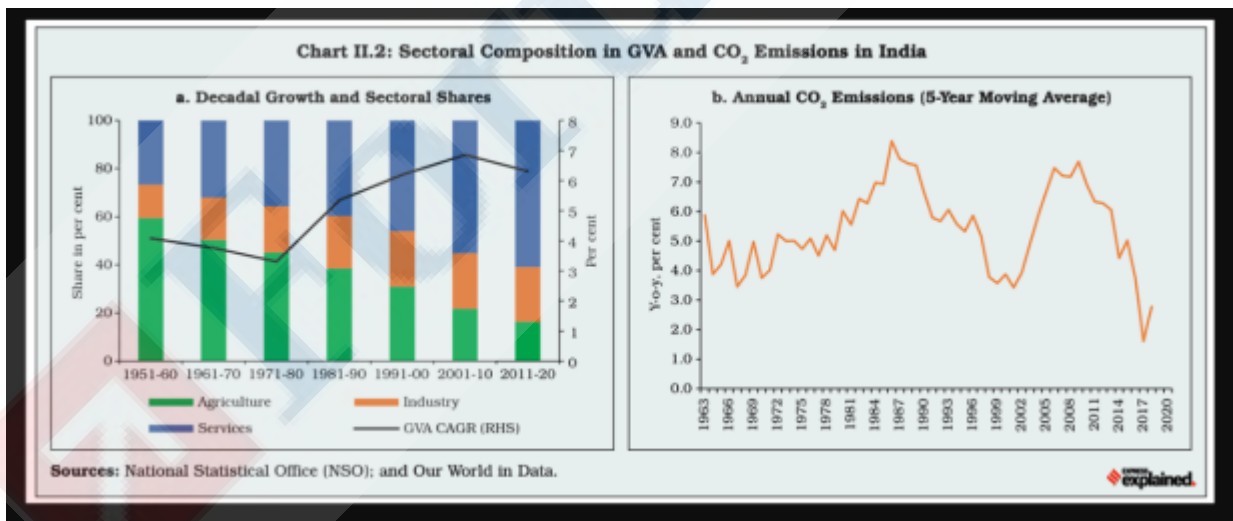
Therefore, fossil fuels have a large share in India's primary energy consumption and this needs to change. (Chart 3)





(Chart 3)

(Chart1)



(Chart 2)

Source: All Images from The Indian Express

What is the macroeconomic impact of climate change on India?

Climate change can adversely impact both the supply side as well as the demand side. It can stroke inflation, reduce economic output, trigger uncertainty and change consumer behaviour.

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Some of the findings of impact of climate change on India are:

- **According to Niti Aayog in 2019**, around 600 million of India's population are facing severe water stress, with 8 million children below 14 years in urban India at risk due to poor water supply.
- **The World Bank in 2020** said that India could account for 34 million of the projected 80 million global job losses from heat stress associated with productivity decline by 2030.
- **The IPCC Working Group in 2022** stated that India is one of the most vulnerable countries globally in terms of the population that would be affected by the sea level rise.

Further, if the shift towards becoming a low-carbon economy is too rapid, it could also damage a country's financial stability.

Are policies effective in providing some solutions?

Impact on GDP: Policy actions will have a negative impact on India's GDP. Global scenarios of "current policies" and "nationally determined contributions (NDCs)" have the highest negative impact on output, whereas rapidly moving towards Net Zero by 2050 will hit GDP.

Impact on Inflation: Moving towards net zero by 2050 will spike inflation far more in the immediate future than continuing on current policies.

Therefore, **these trade-offs will become sharper as India tries to achieve the twin goals of achieving net zero emissions by 2070 and becoming an advanced economy by 2047.**

8. The challenge of AI

Source: The post is based on the article "**The challenge of AI**" published in **Business Standard** on **23rd May 2023**.

Syllabus: **GS 3 – Artificial Intelligence**

Relevance: concerns with Artificial Intelligence (AI)

News: The rapid emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) software has led to a widespread debate across the world on its potential impact on the economy and security.

What are the potential impacts of AI on economy and security?

Economy: Generative AI with a substantial creative capacity will impact the current employment levels in software and business-processing services because the services they sell can easily be done by AI-based programmes.

AI also provides a tool for less proficient workers to narrow the gap with more able ones. **For example**, a worker with poor English-language skills could use AI to become as useful as an English language-educated worker.

Security: There are many security challenges like – **a)** AI-powered surveillance systems could infringe on privacy rights, **b)** AI-automated cyberattacks and **c)** AI-powered weapons to target and attack humans. **AI can also deepen the impact of fake news, fake voices and hacking.**

Moreover, AI based drones can be made to attack a particular type of target, where the drones would be free to choose a specific target that meets the programmed criteria.

However, **any such effect of AI can only happen with human interventions because AI software lacks human type of judging skills** to evaluate situations and make decisions accordingly.

Must Read: [Generative AI \(Artificial Intelligence\): Benefits and Challenges – Explained](#)

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What can be done to control the misuse of AI?

There has been growing consensus on establishing a regulatory regime for creating and using AI. **For instance**, the **G7** proposes to set up a [Working Group](#) for this purpose and the **EU** is on the way to formulate [regulations](#).

Countries are also looking to regulate the basic design of AI apps to control the risks of misuse. However, if this is done, then AI can be misused for political gains.

For instance, China has introduced controls on AI development which involve prior official approval of AI apps before they are released and also require them to ensure consistency with the “core values of socialism”.

Therefore, **this type of politicization should be avoided because the internet remains the strongest base of our freedom and democracy.**

What should be the stand of India on AI?

India must work to build local competence to develop AI because it is the technology of the future.

However, the foundation of the main part of AI is a language model. This poses a major challenge for India in developing AI because it is a multilingual country.

Moreover, AI services require very large server systems and it is emerging technology. Therefore, **India should get involved in industry because this will improve the chances of India in holding a significant presence in the AI market.**

What lies ahead?

AI will have the same impact like the computer age that liberated us to focus on a higher level of intelligence activity but also exposed us to anonymous frauds.

Hence, the main task is to prepare our children for the huge opportunities AI provides and ensure that the risks are kept manageable.

9. [Burden of proof – on Proposed regulation for unlawful trades](#)

Source: This article is based on the article “**Burden of proof**”, published in **Business Standard** on **23rd May 2023**.

Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 3, Industries and Industrial policy

News: Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has released a consultation paper “Prohibition of unexplained suspicious trading activities”.

This paper outlines the proposed regulations to tackle issues like insider trading, front-running, and pump and dump scams.

What are the challenges faced by regulators in the financial market associated with trading?

Some of the offences like the following are difficult to prove, like:

- **Front-running trades based on “material non-public information” (MNPI).** For example, an employee of mutual fund company can know about a deal in advance and place trade in their personal account.
- **Insider trading on the basis of unpublished price-sensitive information (UPSI).** Like company results, change of management.

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- **Pump and dump schemes** involve buying a stock and spreading rumours about good news in that company to “pump up the price”, and then “dump” shares by selling them at a profit.

Regulators face difficulty in proving guilt of the perpetrators, due to evasive tactics used by such as mule accounts, layering funds, and sharing transfers through a complex web of entities.

Mule accounts are used to earn profits. There is no apparent connection between the owner of the account and the perpetrators. Coordination is carried out through encrypted services such as WhatsApp.

In 2022, around 5,000 suspicious trading alerts were generated, involving 3,588 unique entities, but SEBI could not find conclusive proof of communication of UPSI or MNPI in most instances.

How the proposal tackles this issue?

If SEBI highlights a suspicious trading activity and believes MNPI or UPSI was involved, it can start a presumptive proceeding against the parties concerned. The burden of proving the allegations wrong will on the parties.

However, the challenge is that the burden of proof cannot be placed upon the accused. It can lead to many problems. Instead of such regulations, the regulator should strengthen its surveillance and evidence-collection methods.

10. [Strangers & Secrets – spy scandal in DRDO](#)

Source: This article is based on the article “**Burden of proof**”, published in **Times of India** on **23rd May 2023**.

Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 3, Internal Security

News: Recently, a DRDO scientist, allegedly fell for a Pakistani “honey-trap”. He is accused on spying for enemy country.

The accused had access to over 50 DRDO establishments, including laboratories, and headed an R&D division overseeing India’s missile launcher programmes.

What are the cyber threats faced by military infrastructure of India?

First concern is the integrity of hardware, which is largely **not manufactured in India**.

Second concern is **human error**. Over the last six years, more than 20 serving and retired army staff were reportedly arrested for allegedly spying for Pakistan’s ISI. “Honey-traps” is one of the methods used to lure.

What are the guidelines issues by DRDO?

The army has issued a circular warning personnel against posting or forwarding official communication on WhatsApp and storing data on devices at home.

Similarly, DRDO has also suggested not to entertain unknown numbers, avoid chats with unknown people, and not to share information.

What more can be done?

Train all military and defence research staff on how to check the IP address of any stranger chatting in a friendly manner. Also, make it mandatory for them to immediately report such encounters.

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11. [The unsung hero – After five years, it seems GST has begun to show sustained growth even as it has many weaknesses and policy challenges](#)

Source: The post is based on an article “**The unsung hero – After five years, it seems GST has begun to show sustained growth even as it has many weaknesses and policy challenges**” published in **Business Standard** on **24th May 2023**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Indian Economy – Fiscal Policy, Growth and Development

Relevance: problems with the different tax collection.

News: The article highlights the different trend in the tax collection rate in India.

What has been the trend in the tax collection post-Covid?

Direct Tax: Direct Tax bounced back with a growth rate of 49 percent in 2021-22 and again with 18 per cent in 2022-23 after suffering a decline of almost 10 percent in 2020-21.

GST: Growth in GST collection in 2019-20 was 4 percent but collection fell by 7 percent in the first Covid year of 2020-21. However, the growth rate increased to 31 percent in 2021-22 and 22 percent in 2022-23.

How has the GST collection been compared to the Direct Taxes?

The recovery in GST collection has been better than the increase seen in direct taxes.

In 2018-19, **direct taxes accounted for 6.01 percent of GDP**. In 2021-22, this share was still below the pre-Covid level at about 6 percent and moved up marginally to 6.11 per cent in 2022-23.

Why hasn't direct tax collection done well?

Corporation tax collection has fared. Its growth was at 41 percent in 2022-23. However, **personal income tax, which did well in 2021-22 (43 percent up), saw a decline of about 6 percent in the next year.**

This was the major cause for direct tax collection to perform poorly compared to the GST.

Why has there been an increase in the collection of corporation tax compared to the personal income tax?

Since 2015, **corporation tax rates have been steadily reduced almost every year**, and these reductions are **related to the phase-out of exemptions**. In 2019, the reduction was significant for new companies as well.

Companies have also bounced back with higher profits immediately after the end of Covid.

These all have led to the healthy rate of corporation tax collection.

What does the recent trend in personal income-tax collection imply?

Personal income-tax collection has been a cause for concern for the finance ministry.

In 2020-21, **the ministry tried to introduce an alternative exemption-free taxation regime** to widen the tax base and improve collection. However, due to various problems, the scheme hasn't been effective.

Further, the recent attempts of the finance ministry to levy a 20 percent TCS could be seen as a mechanism to boost its personal income-tax collection. However, such an attempt is a sign of short-sighted taxation policy.

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What has caused the improvement in the collection of GST?

- **a)** e-invoicing and procedural simplification, **b)** better compliance procedures, **c)** the rising inflation rate and **d)** the rise in import duties, have all made GST collection higher.

GST collection also saw the tax's share in GDP going up. The share of GST in GDP was 6.22 percent in 2018-19. After this share fell in the Covid period, it once again rose to 6.65 percent in 2022-23.

What are the challenges with GST collection?

- **a)** too many rate slabs persist with no moderation in the rates of several items, **b)** the exclusion of petrol and diesel from the GST ambit, **c)** the phase-out of the compensation cess is also unresolved.

Hence, the current phase of healthy GST growth could be an opportunity for the government to address the long-pending problems with the GST.

12. [On copyright infringement and AI](#)

Source- The post is based on the article “**On copyright infringement and AI**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 25th May 2023.

Syllabus: GS3- Issues related to intellectual property rights

Relevance- Copyright related issues

News- The recent decision of the U.S. Supreme Court in the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts Inc. versus Goldsmith et al. has added more unpredictability to the process of being exempted from copyright infringement liabilities.

To what extent does copyright law protect artists?

Copyright law protects the work of diverse artists. It provides a **set of exclusive rights** for artists over their **creative output**. This includes controlling the manner in which others **reproduce or modify** their work.

However, these exclusive rights are **balanced with the rights of the users** of such work. It includes other artists who might want to build on or comment on them. There are **diverse exceptions** under the copyright law.

What is exempt from infringement liability?

Different jurisdictions follow **different approaches to exceptions**. Some countries, particularly those in continental Europe, adopt the ‘**enumerated exceptions approach**’.

The **use of copyrights** needs to be specifically covered under the statute for considering it as an exception to **copyright infringement**.

Some others, including the U.S., follow an **open-ended approach**. It does not specify exemptions beforehand. Instead, they have guidelines about the types of uses that can be exempted.

The U.S. courts primarily consider **four factors** when determining whether a particular use can be considered to be an instance of fair use.

These factors are the **purpose and character of the use; the nature of the copyrighted work; the amount and substantiality of the portion taken by the defendant, and the effect of the use on the potential market of the plaintiff's work**.

The U.S. courts have been giving the highest importance to the first factor.

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This **open-ended approach** to exceptions provides U.S. copyright law **considerable flexibility and strength** to deal with challenges posed by emerging technologies.

However, it has a **major limitation**. There is no way to know whether an activity will be exempted from liabilities until after litigation.

What is the AWF case?

Lynn Goldsmith photographed the famous musician Prince in 1981. One of those photos was licensed in 1984 to *Vanity Fair* magazine for use as an “artist reference”.

The licence specifically said the illustration could appear once as a full-page element and once as a one-quarter page element, in the magazine’s 1984 November issue. *Vanity Fair* paid Ms. Goldsmith \$400 for the licence.

It hired Andy Warhol to work on the illustration. Mr. Warhol made a silkscreen portrait of Prince using Goldsmith’s photo. But while the licence had authorised only one illustration, Mr. Warhol additionally created 13 screen prints and two pencil sketches.

In 2016, Condé Nast, which publishes *Vanity Fair*, approached the Andy Warhol Foundation (AWF) to reuse the 1984 illustration as part of a story on Prince.

But when they realised that there were more portraits available, they opted to publish one of them instead. As part of the licence to use it, they paid \$10,000 to AWF. But they paid nothing to Ms. Goldsmith.

When the AWF realised that Ms. Goldsmith may file a copyright infringement suit, it filed a suit to declare that it had not committed infringement. Ms. Goldsmith then counter-sued AWF for copyright infringement.

What are the findings of the US Supreme Court?

The majority of judges of the US Supreme Court concluded that there may be a situation where an original work and secondary work have **more or less similar purposes** and the secondary use is of a **commercial nature**.

Then, the first factor related to purpose and character of the use may not favour a **fair-use interpretation** unless there are other justifications for copying.

Both Ms. Goldsmith’s photos and Mr. Warhol had more or less the same purpose to portray Prince. The majority said that copying may have helped convey a **new meaning or message**. That in itself did not suffice under the first factor.

How does this affect generative AI?

The implications of the court’s finding are bound to ripple across the visual arts at large.

The majority position could challenge the manner in which many **generative artificial intelligence** tools, such as ChatGPT4, MidJourney, and Stable Diffusion, **have been conceived**.

The majority’s reliance on the **commercial nature of the use** may also result in **substantial deviation from the established view** that the commercial nature of the use cannot negate a finding of fair use.

What may be its implications on Indian copyright law?

There may not be any **direct implications** for Indian copyright law. The **framework of exceptions** in India is different.

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India follows a **hybrid model of exception** in which fair dealing with copyrighted work is exempted for some specific purposes under Section **52(1)(a) of the Copyright Act 1957**. India also has a **long list of enumerated exceptions**.

13. [India's G20 presidency can show the way on disaster management](#)

Source- The post is based on the article **“India’s G20 presidency can show the way on disaster management”** published in **“The Indian Express”** on 25th May 2023.

Syllabus: GS3- Disaster management

News- A second meeting of the Disaster Risk Reduction Working Group will be held in Mumbai between May 23-25. This is an opportune time to focus and deliver on the goals of disaster risk reduction.

How are G20 nations vulnerable to disasters?

The G20 nations have **large exposure**, and risk from **asset concentration**. They are vulnerable to natural disasters. In the current **World Risk Index**, four out of the top 10 vulnerable countries are G20 nations.

The combined **estimated annual average loss** in the G20 countries alone is **\$218 billion**. It is equivalent to **9% of the average annual investment in infrastructure** made by them.

What is the importance of disaster risk reduction? Disaster risk reduction measures can play an important role in preventing such losses. Reducing risk can be achieved mainly by **reducing vulnerability and exposure** to risk through some measures. These are **better economic and urban development choices and practices, protection of the environment, reduction of poverty and inequality**.

Disasters can set back **development gains**. Hence, risk reduction is an important strategy if a country's economic ambitions are to be realised.

Setting up **early warning systems**, undertaking **periodic risk assessments**, constructing **disaster-resilient infrastructure** are important strategies.

What were the five priorities outlined in the first meeting of the Disaster Risk Reduction working group?

Coverage of **early warning systems** to all.

Focus on **disaster and climate-resilient infrastructure**.

Improving **financing frameworks** for national **disaster risk reduction**.

Improving **systems and capabilities for response** to disasters and application.

Ecosystem-based approaches to disaster risk.

How is India contributing to disaster risk reduction?

PM Modi's **10-point agenda** outlined after the adoption of the **Sendai Framework**, guides the country in the implementation of the framework.

India has transformed the way the government finances **disaster risk reduction** and made targeted efforts to reduce losses from disasters.

The **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure** is presently chaired by India and the United States.

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The creation of the **new workstream under the G20** is reflective of the prime minister's commitment towards **disaster preparedness**.

What is the importance of G20 for disaster risk reduction?

The recently concluded high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the **midterm review** of the implementation of the **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030** mentions the importance of **G20's efforts** in the implementation of the **Sendai Framework**.

The G20 provides a broader platform to drive **global goals on disaster risk reduction**. The perspectives that G20 as a group will bring to the table would be unique.

For example, any talk about **risk financing** will not be merely about additional financial resources. It will also include more **efficient, effective and predictable** financing mechanisms.

The **Working Group on Disaster Risk Reduction** is an opportunity for the G20 to take a lead in the implementation of the Sendai framework over the next seven years.

14. [Eyes In The Sky: How IAF Secured India's Air Dominance](#)

Source- The post is based on the article "**Eyes In The Sky: How IAF Secured India's Air Dominance**" published in "**The Times of India**" on 25th May 2023.

Syllabus: GS3 – Internal Security

Relevance- Capabilities of defence forces

News- The article explains the history of evolution of use of early warning systems by the Indian Air Force.

What is the historical background of deployment of early warning systems by the Indian Air Force?

The British Royal Air Force deemed radars **too advanced and "unnecessary"** for IAF. It left behind **damaged and sabotaged equipment**.

After Independence, IAF decided to rebuild its **radar capability**. A mobile radar set recovered from sabotaged equipment was **christened No 1 Radar Unit** and moved to Palam. It became the first-ever Signal Unit in IAF. By 1949, six more sets were **operational**. These served predominantly as **early warning radars**.

In 1949, IAF ordered **five static Sector Operations Centres (SOC)** from Marconi UK. These were intended to replicate the **British hub and spoke air defence setup**.

The first SOC was established in Delhi in 1954. By 1962, IAF had set up **five SOCs** at Delhi, Ambala, Jodhpur, Barrackpore and Bombay.

IAF's Air **Defence Ground Environment System philosophy** was to protect Delhi, Bombay and Calcutta and have protection along the western boundary via SOCs at Ambala and Jodhpur.

However, the **insufficient number of radars** did not provide any defence in depth. Vital areas, except Delhi, were covered with a maximum of 80-170 km of early warning. It gave fighter aircraft less time to react.

The 1962 war led to more **significant changes**. Immediately after the war, **modern equipment** was acquired from the US and USSR.

Western nations also conducted "**Exercise – Shiksha**" in India in November 1963, which included training as well as two mobile radar units. This led to IAF contracting **six US-made Star Sapphire radars**.

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The USSR also agreed to provide **SA-2 surface-to-air missiles and the P-30 radar**. SA-2 units were deployed in Chandigarh, Ambala, Calcutta, Delhi and Baroda, while twelve P-30 radars were stationed nationwide.

However, IAF had only operationalised **two P-30s and one Star Sapphire** when the 1965 war broke out. 230 SU at Amritsar was one of the two P-30s operational. It played an important role in both wars with Pakistan.

How has the landscape of the early warning system drastically changed after 2010?

On September 14, 2010, IAF launched the **Air Force Network (AFNET)**. It replaced its **old communication network** which used the **tropo-scatter technology** of the 1950s with a **dedicated fibre-optic wide area network**. It offers **encrypted, and secure bandwidth**.

Building on the AFNET backbone, IAF rolled out the **Integrated Air Command and Control System or IACCS**. It has provided for **automated control and monitoring** of air operations by linking **real-time feeds** from defence and civil sensors throughout the country.

To ensure all-weather surveillance, IAF has ordered **indigenously built radars** to augment the IACCS feed. These are now in **advanced stages of deployment** along critical regions.

The **integration of IACCS with AWACS, UAVs and surface-to-air missiles** has improved the ability to launch fighter aircraft against hostile targets promptly.

15. [Green bonds and guarantees: Key tools to contain global warming](#)

Source: This post is based on the article **“Green bonds and guarantees: Key tools to contain global warming”**, published in **Live Mint** on 25th May 2022.

Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 3, Environment and Climate Change

Context: The article discusses the need for adequate financing to facilitate a fundamental transition from fossil fuel-based to non-fossil fuel-based production in order to mitigate global warming.

The transition from fossil fuel-based to non-fossil fuel-based production requires scientific knowledge and technologies like green hydrogen and renewable energy.

Technologies such as green hydrogen, are commercially viable, as of now, but not implemented at the required scale to prevent catastrophic global warming.

The main hurdle in their adoption is Finance, not technology.

What are the challenges to financing of green technologies?

The issue of legacy and responsibility: For more than 30 years since the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit of 1992, emerging market and developing economies (EMDEs) have been demanding that the ‘polluter pays’ principle should apply globally. It is because developed countries have played a major role in the present pollution, so they must pay the fine for that now. However, this demand has not received any attention yet.

Huge deficit: The required investment in clean energy projects for effective mitigation is estimated at \$5 trillion per year, against the available \$ 1.4 trillion. Multilateral development banks (MDBs) alone cannot fill the massive financing gap, as their collective mobilization capacity is limited.

Financing through bonds: Thematic bonds, including green bonds, have grown annually at a phenomenal rate, and the volume could reach \$5 trillion by 2025. However, only a small percentage of thematic bonds have flowed to EMDEs.

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What can be the course of action?

- MDBs can provide insurance and risk guarantees to attract foreign investors and mitigate perceived risks.
- EMDE governments should develop green bond frameworks, strengthen ESG mandates, and create demand for thematic bonds.
- India has taken positive steps in issuing a green bond framework and successfully issuing local currency bonds.

16. [A decade of reformist action has catalysed the emergence of India](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “**A decade of reformist action has catalysed the emergence of India**” published in **Mint** on **26th May 2023**.

Syllabus: **GS 3 – Indian Economy – Growth & Development**

Relevance: measures taken to boost Indian Economy

News: The current PM is set to complete nine years. The article explains various measures taken by the current government to boost the economy of India.

What measures have been taken by the government?

First, the National Infrastructure Pipeline, the 33% capex hike in the current Budget and the Gati Shakti scheme are the important initiatives taken to strengthen infrastructure, boost market competitiveness and fortify growth. The **asset monetization programme and NaBFID** would greatly help to unlock capital for infrastructure financing.

Second, the government is promoting a manufacturing transformation through its **Atmanirbhar Bharat** plan of self-reliance and **PLI scheme**. Further, efforts in improving the ease of doing business and facilitating corporate exits, introduction of GST and reduction in corporate tax, with skill development, FDI reforms, etc. will make **India a hub of manufacturing and exports**.

Third, India has allowed FDI in many sectors such as retail, civil aviation, defence equipment, space, insurance, nuclear energy and others. This has made **India a preferred FDI destination**.

India has also signed economic cooperation and trade agreements with countries such as the UAE and Australia, and negotiations are underway with the UK, EU and Canada, among others, to expand global ties.

Fourth, the government’s **Start-Up India initiative** has catalysed a startup culture and built a strong and inclusive ecosystem for entrepreneurship in the country. Today, **India has the world’s third-largest startup ecosystem**.

Fifth, the PM has aimed at digitizing India and fostering the emergence of a digitally empowered society and knowledge-based economy. This has been achieved through the **Digital India initiative**.

Sixth, sustainability and green growth has now become an important component of the government’s overall development plan. India is among the few countries that has set an ambitious goal of net-zero carbon emissions by 2070.

India is also the third largest producer of renewable energy, with the potential to emerge as the global hub for green hydrogen.

Seventh, schemes such as Jan Dhan Yojana, Ujjwala Yojana, Kisan Samman Nidhi, Ayushman Bharat Yojana, etc. are important initiatives taken to uplift the needy and promote **social empowerment in the nation**. The govt. was also appreciated for efforts in making Covid vaccines available even to the most vulnerable.

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In addition to the above, **the government has also brought in multi-dimensional reforms and taken many initiatives**, in partnership with major stakeholders, in diverse areas to promote competitiveness, promote inclusion and enhance growth.

What more measures are required to improve India's economy?

There are more actions required by India such as – **a)** prioritizing the infrastructure development along with the effort to improve ease of doing business, **b)** reduce the cost of doing business through factor market reforms, lower the costs of energy and capital and **c)** focus on improving health, education and skills, among others.

The current G20 presidency enables India to showcase its leadership in tackling various challenges and setting agenda globally.

17. [Why banning new coal-run power plants is a good idea](#)

Source- The post is based on the article “Why banning new coal-run power plants is a good idea” published in “The Times of India” on 26th May 2023.

Syllabus: GS3- Energy

Relevance- Thermal energy

News- The government is contemplating a ban on setting up new coal-based power stations. The plants which are already under construction will be allowed to continue.

Why is the move surprising?

The government has also said that in order to meet the **power demand in 2029-30**, an **additional capacity** of about **16,000 MW of coal-based capacity** would be required. It is over and above the capacity of about **27,000 MW already under construction**.

The need for **additional capacity of 16,900 MW** has been cited in the report of the Central Electricity Authority (CEA) called **Optimal Generation Capacity Mix**. It was released recently.

In fact, there are **two versions of this report**. The first was published in January 2020 and the second in April 2023.

Why does the government feel that the additional capacity of about 16,000 MW of coal-based capacity may not be required?

There are primarily two reasons.

The first reason is the demand for power in 2029-30 in the second report is based on the **20th Electric Power Survey (EPS)** whereas the first report looked at the estimates of the **19th EPS**. The demand for power in 2029-30 in the **20th EPS** is somewhat **more conservative**.

The **19th EPS** had projected a peak demand of **340 GW in 2029-30** whereas the figure indicated in the **20th EPS is 334 GW**. Similarly, the energy demand for the **19th and 20th EPS** are 2,400 BUs and 2,313 BUs, respectively.

Historically, **CEA's power demand projections** are known to be exaggerated. The government feels the **actual demand in 2029-30** could be even lower than the **projections in the 20th EPS**.

The **changing shape of the load curve** is the second reason. Traditionally, in India, there have been **two peaks in a day**. The **evening peak** is usually higher than the morning though there are **seasonal variations**.

The **evening peak** occurs at around 7 pm. We had to rely on **coal-based capacity** for meeting it as **economically viable storage options** were limited.

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However, the **evening peak** is actually occurring at about 4 pm in the last two to three years. This peak can be met through solar power. Hence, it can lower the need for coal-based capacity.

Why in the second version of the CEA report, the required capacity for coal-based stations in 2029-30 has come down?

This decrease is because of a **major change in policy** relating to the retirement of units after they complete 25 years.

This version mentions that about **2,121 MW of coal-based capacity** would be retired by 2030 whereas the earlier version of this report stated that about **25,000 MW of coal-based capacity** would be retired by 2030.

The government probably feels it would be a good idea to carry on with old plants even after they have **completed 25 years of operation**.

The **station heat rate** of well-maintained plants does not get **adversely affected with age**. The **transmission links** are already there and the **coal linkages** are maintained.

18. [PM Modi's Australia visit: Love in Sydney](#)

Source: This post is created, based on the article “**PM Modi's Australia visit: Love in Sydney**”, published in **Indian Express** on **26th May 2023**.

Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 3 – Mobilisation of resources

Context: India's medium-term growth outlook looks weak due to declining real investment into India.

Recently Reserve Bank of India (RBI) governor said the growth rate for 2022-23 might be more than the expected 7%.

However, the medium-term outlook of India's growth is not very encouraging due to the level of investment coming into India. The RBI in its latest monthly bulletin has reported that gross FDI in 2022-23 declined by 16.3 per cent year-on-year to \$71 billion.

FDI at net level declined by over 27 per cent to \$28 billion, driven by lower gross inflows and a rise in repatriation.

Manufacturing, computer services, and communication services witnessed the steepest decline.

In terms of investment sources, the decline was led by the US, Switzerland, and Mauritius.

However, one positive trend in investment is that India was the second-largest recipient of FDI in semiconductors, after the US.

What are the reasons behind declining investment?

Big companies won't be willing to expand due to Slow or below-trend global growth.

The hardening of global financial conditions.

The start-ups are finding it difficult to raise funds.

The inflation rate in advanced economies, particularly the US, is still higher than the target.

Large corporations leaving China, are not making India their destination.

What are the challenges of declining FDI?

Foreign multinationals bring technology, which increases overall efficiency in the economy. It will have effects on economic growth and jobs.

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FDI is by definition for the long run, it provides stability to external accounts.

What steps can India take?

India has ample foreign exchange reserves; therefore, it won't be a high risk for India.

Policymakers should focus on increasing the ease of doing business in India.

Government should review the trade policy, to see if it is obstructing the FDI into India.

19. [Why Tesla makes in China, not in India](#)

Source: This post is created, based on the articles:

“Why Tesla makes in China, not in India”, published in **Business Standard** on **26th May 2023**.

“Don't Just Musk Up”, published in **The Times of India** on **26th May 2023**.

Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 3 – Industrial Policies in India

Context: While China's local Electric Vehicles manufacturers are doing well, India's indigenous companies are still struggling to scale up EV development in India.

Chinese carmaker BYD is giving tough competition to Tesla in the field of Electric Vehicles manufacturing.

An article from South China Morning Post highlighted how BYD sold 1.86 million electric and hybrid cars in 2022, which is 42% more than Tesla.

A report by JD Power puts Tesla as only the 10th most desirable electric vehicle brand in China, behind natives such as BYD, Xpeng, Nio, and Li Auto.

What is status of EV manufacturing in India?

India has two main homegrown car manufacturers: Tata Motors and Mahindra and Mahindra.

Tata Motors is the leader in electric cars, but their numbers are small compared to BYD. Mahindra had an early start in electric cars but hasn't made much headway. Other companies like Maruti Suzuki have shown interest in hybrid vehicles and are planning to launch electric vehicles in the future.

Why is Tesla no manufacturing in India?

Due to the slow progress of local manufacturers, it seems not to be threatened due to loss of EV market in India.

The earlier plans of Tesla to bring Model 3 to India could not be completed due to some issues:

First, it wanted India to reduce their import duties on the EVs. Which was not accepted by the government.

Secondly, the government wanted Tesla to manufacture in India, instead of China.

Although Tesla has shown interest to set up in India, but it is not going to be very soon.

What are the challenges faced by India in EV production?

Recent changes to FAME-II are expected to increase a customer's acquisition cost.

Batteries, which account for about 40% of an EV's total value, are predominantly produced in China.

Chinese, Korean, and Japanese companies control the processing of materials in the battery supply chain.

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What can be the course of action for India?

India needs to look beyond Production-Linked Incentives (PLIs). For instance, the US recently introduced substantial subsidies to stimulate the EV supply chain.

India's potential lithium reserves can give it advantage in becoming a battery manufacturer, but it requires policy changes.

20. Economics that looks at the lower half of the pyramid

Source: The post is based on the article “**Economics that looks at the lower half of the pyramid**” published in **The Hindu** on **26th May 2023**

Syllabus: GS3- Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

Relevance: About economic inequalities and economic policies.

News: Recently, the Global Solutions Summit was conducted in Berlin.

What are the key takeaways of the Global Solutions Summit?

The Global Solutions Summit is an international conference aimed at addressing key policy challenges facing the G20 and G7 and other global governance fora. The theme of this year's summit was “Realigning Societies: Towards a sustainable, inclusive, and common future”.

The think tanks of the G-20 and other countries at the summit called attention to global problems of climate change, increasing economic inequalities within and among countries, and the effects of the financial and trade sanctions imposed by the most powerful nation, which affects the other 85% most of all.

What are the implications of economic inequalities?

Divisions among the economic “haves” and “have nots” are changing the political dynamics around the world. For instance, the economic disparity forces both the left and right of the political spectrum and has gained strength in all countries.

The G7 countries represent only 15% of the world's citizens. But they autocratically and undemocratically force other governments representing 85% of the people to turn into a democracy.

How does free market capitalism change socialist economies over time?

After the global depression, economies were reformed towards “socialism” in the last century. They aim to rebalance incomes and wealth. For example, Many European countries adopted a socialist model while maintaining their cultural traditions. Similarly, the U.S. introduced social security, increased taxes to raise resources for the government, and introduced laws enabling labour unions within enterprises.

The economic ideology of free markets in the 1980s struck at the base of socialist economies. Free market capitalism is founded on the principle of liberty in the economy, with rights for everyone to use their properties as they will. Free market economy models do not have much place for “socialist” values of equality and fraternity.

Further, the objectives of reforms imposed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank on countries whenever they needed economic assistance required the undoing of socialist reforms made earlier.

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How does private sector involvement limit government spending?

Ronald Reagan once said the “government is not the solution..., it is the problem.” He followed a policy which required governments to reduce their budgets and taxes to make more room for capital markets. “Subsidies” for the poor became bad, while “incentives” for investors were good.

The private sector is not expected to subsidise the cost of its services. Therefore, economic reforms favouring the private sector have increased economic precarity even in rich countries.

With the spread of financial capitalisation, an elite class of global citizens and multinationals emerged. They are residents in many countries but they avoided paying taxes in any. Thereby reducing government spending.

What should be done?

The model of economic growth that has guided national and international policies since the 1990s will not create healthy democracies.

-Economics needs urgent reform to **progress towards universal social, and ecological well-being.**

-Instead of focusing on the ease of doing business and the reduction of risks of financial investors, the **Ease of living of the poorest citizens and the reduction of economic disparity** must be the principal measures of good governance.

-Indian economists must **rethink the economic policies and concentrate on the requirements of the lower 50% of the people** in the pyramid, and not trust wealth to trickle down on its own.

21. [Who's afraid of Amul?](#)

Source: The post is based on the article “Who's afraid of Amul?” published in **The Indian Express** on **27th May 2023**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth

Relevance: About Milk cooperatives

News: Tamil Nadu CM has requested Union Home and Cooperation Minister to direct Amul to cease encroaching upon the milk-shed region of the Tamil Nadu Cooperative Milk Producers' Federation (Aavin). However, his demand is unreasonable.

Why is the demand of Tamil Nadu CM unreasonable?

First, Amul and Aavin are farmer-owned and professionally-managed dairy cooperatives. Hence, it isn't desirable for any minister or bureaucrat to intervene in the business operations of such organisations.

The urge to control and reduce cooperatives to the govt. departmental undertakings also goes against the spirit of liberalization. Ease of doing business shouldn't be only limited to large corporations.

Second, the entry of **Amul in Tamil Nadu will benefit both farmers as well as consumers.** It will benefit the state's dairy farmers by buying their milk and benefit consumers by offering choice other than Aavin.

However, **the only loser might be Aavin**, because it had a situation of both monopsony (single buyer) and monopoly (single seller).

Hence, the entry of Amul will force Aavin to become more efficient, pay farmers better and work towards retaining consumers.

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Must Read: [Amul vs Nandini threatens to limit choices for consumers](#)

What is the way ahead?

Amul has been present in Telangana and north Karnataka for about ten years, but it hasn't really made an impact against locally produced cooperative and private dairy brands.

Therefore, state governments should permit the entry of new brands since doing so will promote healthy market competition and will offer greater choice to consumers.

22. [Unchecked Kashmir box](#)

Source- The post is based on the article "Unchecked Kashmir box" published in the "Business Standard" on 27th May 2023.

Syllabus: GS3 – Internal Security

News- Recently, the meeting of third Working Group of G20 on Tourism was held in Srinagar.

What are the major developments during the event?

The outcome was significantly positive in **political and strategic terms**. 17 of the 20 G20 countries attended, including four of the P-5, all of Europe. indeed, the largest Muslim nation, Indonesia.

But we also should look for **complexities and unfinished projects**. The absence of the three important Arab nations was a significant setback. Only one of these, Saudi Arabia, is a G20 member. The other two are invitees. This needs to be noted.

Saudi Arabia and India have improved relations in the past 15 years. Oman has had the oldest friendly ties with India. Egypt was also absent. President el-Sisi was the Republic Day chief guest this year.

Pakistan made a lot of efforts. Pakistan achieved **partial success**. But, it served a purpose for Pakistan. It was a reminder to India. The issue is far from settled for a section of the world matters for India.

It's also an instrument in the hands of China to **triangulate India through Pakistan**. It was also a reminder that India should not declare victory too soon.

What are the developments after constitutional changes in J&K on August 5, 2019?

Much has been achieved on the ground, especially in the Valley, from **law and order to infrastructure building**. The most **politically, strategically and internationally** significant of these is the continued Union Territory status.

Four years after the shift, the "state" continues to be ruled directly by the Centre and the **political process** would still be held in abeyance.

India has not held **fresh elections after constitutional changes**. If this doesn't happen in the near future, it is a letdown. A letdown not just for the people of Kashmir but the **larger Indian cause** as well.

Why are conducting elections in J & K important?

In late 1980s, separatist insurgency actively backed by Pakistan began. By 1991, when P V Narasimha Rao took charge and began cleaning up the mess.

Pakistan had been able to fully **internationalise** the issue. Pakistan's campaign was **three-pronged: Violation of human rights, the state being under military occupation, and denial of democracy and the right to self-determination**.

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Rao countered it with **greater confidence and moral strength**. As per him, there was no justification for any **plebiscite** when the Kashmiris were voting in increasing numbers to elect their own governments.

His greater confidence came from the fact that India had begun **holding fair elections** in Kashmir unlike the fixed ones in the past.

Rao also countered pressures on human rights by setting up the **National Human Rights Commission** and lifting the ban on foreign journalists visiting the state.

What should be the best course of action for India on J&K?

Today, India is **much stronger** than under Rao. First it is the **economic power**. **Geo-strategic changes**, the **rise of China**, a **warring Russia**, and the Indian **embrace of the US** have all placed India in the sweetest spot in history yet.

This is the time and opportunity to push the **planned and promised moves**. Not when this cycle might turn. In global affairs, the **balance of power**, alliances, all shift constantly.

India has worked hard at earning this **sweet spot**. None of the world powers and significant nations is raising any questions about the changes to Kashmir's constitutional status. But it is **risky and unnecessary** to get complacent.

The idea that Jammu & Kashmir can be governed from New Delhi for eternity is tempting. The five countries who abstained reminded us that they still see **Kashmir as a "dispute"**.

Even the US passes resolutions asserting that all of Arunachal Pradesh is part of India, rejecting Chinese claims. But it is **silent in Ladakh**.

The next step for India should be, to **restore statehood** to Jammu & Kashmir and allow the **resumption of robust political activity**.

23. India as 'developed country' by 2047: Attainable goal, or chimera?

Source- The post is based on the article "India as 'developed country' by 2047: Attainable goal, or chimera?" published in the "Business Standard" on 27th May 2023.

Syllabus: GS3- Growth and development

Relevance- Development prospects of India

News- The Narendra Modi government has set before the country the goal of attaining "developed country" status by 2047.

What are prospects for India to achieve the status of developed country by 2047?

Various **development indicators** exist. These are **income level, health and education standards, quality of life, availability of work, levels of poverty and inequality, technological attainments**.

India is well short of the required levels on such indicators. So the goal set for the next quarter-century is ambitious.

The **per capita income** of the country should grow more than five-fold in 24 years. It calls for annual growth of 7%. Indeed, very few countries have sustained such rapid growth for a long stretch. On a **realistic assessment**, India will not be **"high-income" in 2047**.

Getting to the **"very high" human development** category could be easier. The pace at which the country has improved its score on the human development index over the last quarter-century is impressive.

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Sustaining that rate should help India improve its index score from the current 0.633 to the **“very high” category threshold** of 0.800 by 2047.

Another indicator is the share of **hi-tech items** in a country’s **exports of manufactured goods**. India has a 10% share, about the same level as Brazil and Russia. The global average is 20% and China’s figure is 30%.

In terms of **research output**, India’s total has been growing rapidly. It now ranks fourth in quantity. But it is only ninth in terms of the **number of citations** of such research.

China’s citation level is five times higher. Much efforts are needed to achieve the level of developed-country average on such indicators.

For **tracking poverty numbers** in an aspirational India, the **“extreme poverty” benchmark** of \$2.15 per day was applied when India was a **low-income country**. It is not appropriate for the **lower-middle income country** that India has become.

The benchmark for such countries is **\$3.65 per head per day**. By that measure, hundreds of millions are poor today. The benchmark for **upper-middle income countries**, when India gets there, would be even higher, at **\$6.85 per day**.

Would it be a unique thing if India achieves the status of developed country by 2047?

India would be far from unique if it did achieve **“developed country” status by 2047**. More than 80 countries are already classified by the World Bank as being high-income, whereas India is still **lower-middle income**.

More than 65 countries are ranked by the **UN Development Programme** as having attained **“very high” levels of human development**. India is still in the **“medium” category**.

The country also remains some distance away from **eliminating multidimensional poverty**. If it got there in 2047, India would be very much a late-comer.