



9 PM

Compilation

4th to 9th September, 2023

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General Studies Paper – 1

General Studies - 1

1. Mark The Sea That Blows Hot & Cold

Source: The post is based on the article “**Mark The Sea That Blows Hot & Cold**” published in **The Times of India** on 4th September 2023.

Syllabus: GS1- Geography- Important Geophysical phenomena (El Niño)

News: The article talks about strange weather patterns this year. It asks if El Niño is really causing the Indian monsoon drought. It also points out that predicting monsoons is tricky due to things like global warming and specific sea-surface temperatures.

What is El Niño?

[Read here](#)

What's different in El Niño this year?

Typical El Niño Patterns: In standard El Niño years, the eastern Pacific gets warmer, leading to decreased rainfall in places like Indonesia.

Western Pacific Temperatures: This year, instead of being cooler, the western Pacific has temperatures that are slightly warmer than normal.

Western Indian Ocean Temperatures: Similarly, the western Indian Ocean is also warmer than what is typically expected during an El Niño.

Rainfall Anomalies: Contrary to usual El Niño patterns which cause rainfall deficits, the Indonesian Seas are receiving more rain.

Indo-Pacific Tripole: This year's sea-surface temperature patterns, termed the Indo-Pacific Tripole (It refers to the sea-surface temperature (SST) patterns across three key regions: the western Indian Ocean, the Indonesian Seas, and the Eastern Pacific.), are not consistent with what's usually seen during El Niño.

Impact on Indian Monsoon: The relationship between this year's unusual El Niño and the Indian monsoon remains uncertain and not fully understood.

What are the reasons for these differences?

Reasons for Differences in El Niño This Year:

Atypical SST Patterns:

Both the western Pacific and the western Indian Ocean are showing temperatures warmer than usual.

This deviates from the typical warm-cold-warm pattern of the Indo-Pacific Tripole expected during an El Niño.

Positive Rainfall Anomalies:

Contrary to usual El Niño conditions that result in rainfall deficits in the Indonesian Seas, there's an increase in rainfall.

Possible Influence of Global Warming:

A similar atypical pattern was detected in 2009, which was a drought year.

A study from 2012 indicated that this unusual El Niño pattern might overlap with global warming trends.

Unfamiliar Pattern:

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The observed pattern isn't commonly associated with El Niños.

It's challenging to determine if this unique pattern will become frequent in future El Niños or if there's another factor at play.

What are its implications for India?

Uncertain Monsoon Impact: The different Indo-Pacific Tripole pattern brings uncertainties about El Niño's effect on the Indian monsoon.

Forecast Challenges: The unexpected pattern emphasizes the need to predict specific sea-surface temperature patterns, not just the El Niño index.

Economic Preparations: The government has taken proactive measures, regulating exports of grains and onions in anticipation of potential effects.

Anxiety for the Remaining Season: With the unusual patterns observed, there's anticipation and concern regarding how the rest of the monsoon season will play out.

2. How G20 will strengthen India's building blocks

Source: The post is based on the article "Union Minister Pralhad Joshi writes: **How G20 will strengthen India's building blocks**– The meet could consolidate India's efforts to secure critical minerals' supply chains" published in "The Indian express" on 8th September 2023.

Syllabus: GS1- Geography- natural resources & GS2- International relations – global grouping

News: The article discusses the importance of critical minerals like lithium, cobalt, and rare earth elements for clean energy technologies. Global demand for these minerals has increased, but their supply chains can be unstable due to politics, trade, or natural events. India is focusing on enhancing its own production and supply of these minerals to reduce dependence on imports. The government has made policy changes to encourage mining and has formed international partnerships for mineral security.

What are Critical minerals?

Definition: Vital elements essential for modern technologies and clean energy transition.

Examples: Cobalt, lithium, silicon, graphite, and rare earth elements (REE).

Uniqueness: They have no viable substitutes, making them indispensable.

Applications: Foundational for technologies such as solar modules, wind turbines, and batteries.

Growing Demand: Key to the global shift towards green energy solutions.

Supply Chain Vulnerability: Influenced by trade policies, geopolitics, and natural events.

Importance for India: Essential not just for economic growth but also national security.

Why are critical minerals important?

Clean Energy Technologies: Critical minerals like cobalt, lithium, and rare earth elements are fundamental for green solutions.

Sustainability Targets: They play a key role in helping India achieve 500 GW of non-fossil power capacity by 2030.

Emission Reduction: These minerals support India's goal of reducing emissions intensity to 45% below 2005 levels by 2030.

Economic Growth: These minerals are essential for national economic health and security.

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No Substitutes: They have no viable alternatives, making them indispensable.

Tech Applications: Used in devices like solar modules, wind turbines, and batteries.

Global Demand Surge: From 2016 to 2022, the production of lithium grew by 240%, rare earth elements by 134%, and cobalt by 67%.

Modern Civilization: Termed as building blocks for today's society.

What efforts has India made to secure its future?

Focus on Critical Minerals: Recognizing their importance in clean technologies like solar modules, wind turbines, and batteries.

Policy Reforms: Amended the Mines and Minerals (Development & Regulation) Act, 1957 in 2015, 2020, 2021, and 2023 to bolster the domestic critical minerals sector.

New Auction Regime: Initiated in 2015, this system grants mining and composite licenses transparently and promptly.

Encouraging Exploration: The **National Mineral Exploration Trust (NMET)** supports the exploration of critical minerals. Private agencies are funded for these activities.

Provisions for Deep-Seated Minerals: The 2023 Act amendment included Exploration Licenses (EL) specifically for deep-seated and critical minerals.

International Partnerships: India joined the Minerals Security Partnership and formed agreements like the **Australia-India Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement**. They're also exploring opportunities in Chile and Argentina through **Khanij Bidesh India Ltd (KABIL)**.

G20 Leadership: Under India's G20 presidency, the country is emphasizing the importance of critical minerals for a sustainable future.

About Mines and Minerals (Development & Regulation) Act, 2023

Recent Amendment: This is the latest in a series of amendments since 2015 to promote mining in India.

Special Provision: The Act includes provisions for Exploration Licenses (EL) specifically for deep-seated and critical minerals.

Atomic Minerals: Six minerals, including lithium, were removed from the atomic minerals list.

Government Role: The central government is tasked with auctioning 24 critical minerals, but revenues go to the respective state governments.

Objective: Strengthen India's domestic mining, reduce import reliance, and ensure a sustainable supply of critical minerals.

Impact: The changes are expected to boost domestic exploration and production of essential minerals for clean energy technologies.

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3. Express View on caste in California- Law making caste-based discrimination illegal is a step forward. Prejudice must be brought into the light

Source: The post is based on the article “Express View on caste in California- Law making caste-based discrimination illegal is a step forward. Prejudice must be brought into the light” published in “The Indian express” on 8th September 2023.

Syllabus: GS1- Society

News: The article talks about California becoming the first US state to pass law SB-403, aimed at addressing caste-based discrimination. It points out that while many Indian-Americans embrace their culture in the US, some carry biases like caste prejudice. The article stresses the need to address these issues for a stronger Indian-American community.

Why did California introduce a law against caste-based discrimination?

Growing Awareness: California, being a progressive state, has often led in terms of legislation, addressing issues from pollution control to LGBTQIA+ rights.

Notable Incidents: In 2020, Cisco, a significant tech company, was sued by the state because two Indian managers allegedly discriminated against a Dalit engineer.

Influence of Other Regions: Earlier this year, Seattle recognized caste discrimination, signaling the urgency of addressing this issue on a broader scale.

Reflecting Community Voices: The law is a result of a larger conversation in the community and isn't just a top-down decision. It indicates that caste prejudices exist among some Indian-Americans in the US.

Promoting Justice: The law aims to challenge and address discrimination, ensuring that everyone, irrespective of their ancestry or caste, is treated fairly.

What are its impacts?

Recognition of Caste Issues: The law solidifies that caste discrimination is not just an Indian issue but is recognized and addressed in the US, specifically in California.

Validation for Marginalized Voices: The legislation provides a platform for Dalits and other marginalized groups to raise their concerns about caste prejudices in the US.

Influence on Other Regions: Following California's lead, other states or cities might consider similar legislation, as Seattle did by recognizing caste discrimination earlier.

Reflection for Indian-Americans: The law prompts the Indian-American community to introspect and confront prejudices they might have carried over.

4. Disappearing languages, vanishing voices

Source- The post is based on the article “Disappearing languages, vanishing voices” published in “The Hindu” on 8th September 2023.

Syllabus: GS1- Art and Culture

Relevance- Issues related to language

News- The article explains the loss of linguistic diversity across the world.

How is linguistic diversity across the world in decline?

A **mathematical model, featured in The Economic Journal**, predicts that within the next century, around **40% of languages** with fewer than 35,000 speakers will become extinct.

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The ILD reveals a **global decline in linguistic diversity** by 20% from 1970 to 2005. Regionally, indigenous linguistic diversity has seen a **60% decline in the Americas, a 30% drop in the Pacific region, and an almost 20% decrease in Africa.**

The index aims to analyse the **distribution of speakers** among all spoken languages globally.

A growing number of people worldwide are shifting towards just a handful of **dominant languages**, at the expense of smaller ones.

This trend has led to a **loss of linguistic diversity**, and resulted in the **eventual extinction** of some languages.

According to the **Linguistic Society of America**, many languages today have only **one living native speaker**.

Approximately half of the global population speaks **one of the ten most widely spoken languages** as their mother tongue. It poses a **significant threat** to language diversity.

What are the possible reasons behind loss of linguistic diversity?

The decline in language diversity and the extinction of languages are closely linked to **migration patterns**.

When people migrate to countries where a dominant language is spoken, they adopt that **dominant language** to access the **social and economic benefits**.

As a result, **first-generation migrants** typically become **bilingual**, the **next generation** may have a **weaker grasp** of their mother tongue. The **third generation** may no longer speak their mother language, even within the family.

India serves as an illustrative example. There is **increasing migration to English-speaking nations**. English currently boasts 340 million native speakers and over 1.2 billion second language speakers.

What are some facts about the Language Diversity Index (LDI)?

Language Diversity Index (LDI) calculates the probability that **two randomly selected individuals** from a population will have **different mother tongues**.

This index ranges from **0 (everyone shares the same mother tongue) to 1 (no two individuals have the same mother tongue)**.

Naturally, countries with a **smaller variety** of mother languages tend to have a **lower LDI**. Countries with a **greater diversity** of mother tongues have a **higher LDI**. For instance, the United Kingdom has an LDI of 0.139, compared to India's 0.930.

In terms of LDI, the three countries with the lowest rankings are Haiti (0.000), Cuba (0.001), and Samoa (0.002). The top three countries are Papua Guinea (0.990), Vanuatu (0.972), and the Solomon Islands (0.965).

What are the impacts of loss in linguistic diversity?

When these languages disappear, they take with them **elements of identity, culture, and indigenous knowledge**.

The extinction of languages leads to a **reduction in cultural diversity** and an increase in **cultural homogenization**.

What is the situation in India?

In a **2018 report by UNESCO**, it was highlighted that India is facing the **potential extinction of 42 languages**.

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UNESCO's criteria for potential endangerment classify any language spoken by **only 10,000 people** as being at risk. The majority of these endangered languages are spoken by **indigenous tribal groups** across India.

Way forward-

It is essential to **explore strategies** to halt the decline of languages on a global scale. Efforts should be made to **preserve some of the endangered languages**.

The **Linguistic Society of America (LSA)** is making commendable efforts to **study and document** these endangered languages. They are creating **video and audio recordings**, and written records of these languages, along with **translations**.

It is hoped that other institutions will **follow suit** and take action to **mitigate the disappearance** of languages in any way possible.

General Studies Paper –2

General Studies - 2

1. **One nation, one election plan: How the Constitution is amended, when do states get a say**

Source– The post is based on the article **“One nation, one election plan: How the Constitution is amended, when do states get a say”** published in **“The Indian Express”** on **4th September 2023**.

Syllabus: GS2- Indian Polity – Significant provisions of Indian constitution

News– The Centre has set up a committee to examine various aspects, both legal and logistical, for implementing the “one nation, one election” idea.

What is the process for amending the constitution?

Informally, changes to the Constitution occur through **judicial interpretation** and **established customs** derived from practice.

For instance, the **procedure for appointing judges** to the higher judiciary. The Constitution mentions a **“consultation”** between the President and the Chief Justice of India. The Supreme Court has construed this to **imply “concurrence.”**

Article 368 of the Constitution contains **procedure for amending the Constitution** –

1) Simple Majority: Several clauses of the Constitution can be modified through **legislative process** applied in passing regular legislation in Parliament. This entails garnering a majority vote from those **present and voting**.

Article 368 doesn't explicitly enumerate these **“less significant” clauses**. Such clauses are expressly exempted from the scope of Article 368..

Article 4 empowers Parliament to make alterations related to the organization of states. It requires a simple **majority** for amendment.

Actions such as **changing state names, admitting new states to the Union, and revising state boundaries** fall into this category.

2) Special Majority: Article 368 stipulates that the constitution amendment Bill must be passed by both Houses of Parliament with a **majority vote of not less than two-thirds of the members present and voting**.

According to **Rule 158 of the Lok Sabha Rules**, the term **‘total membership’** refers to the complete number of House members, irrespective of **any vacancies or absentees** at that moment.

3) Ratification by States: It necessitates not only a **special majority** for amendment but also requires **approval from the legislatures of at least half of the states**.

The provisions **mandating ratification** are explicitly outlined. These pertain to aspects related to the **federal nature** of the Constitution and are commonly referred to as **“entrenched provisions.”**

For instance, the **Constitution (Ninety-ninth Amendment) Act** established the **National Judicial Appointments Commission**. This Act was passed by both Houses of Parliament and ratified by 16 state legislatures.

In the 1992 Supreme Court case of **Kihoto Hollohan v. Zachillu**, the **issue of ratification** emerged as a crucial consideration. One of the challenges to the **constitutionality of the Tenth Schedule**, was that the amendment was not **ratified by the states**.

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The amendment aimed to **exclude the jurisdiction of courts** in matters related to the **disqualification process**. The Supreme Court invalidated this aspect of the amendment while upholding the **validity of the Tenth Schedule**.

What are entrenched provisions in Article 368? Article 368 lists six parts of the Constitution that have an additional safeguard for amending them. These are:

1. **Article 54 and 55**, dealing with the **election of the President** of India.
2. **Article 73 and 162**, dealing with the *extent of executive power* of the Union and states.
3. **Articles 124–147 and 214–231**, which deal with **powers of the Supreme Court and the High Courts**
4. **Article 245 to 255**, dealing with the scheme of **distribution of legislative, taxing, and administrative powers** between the Union and the states.
5. **Article 82-82**, dealing with the representation of states in Parliament.
6. **Article 368** itself.

2. Status of the Right to Information Act

Source– The post is based on the article “**Status of the Right to Information Act**” published in “**The Hindu**” on **4th September 2023**.

Syllabus: GS2- Governance

Relevance- Right to information Act

News– The article explains the undermining of the RTI Act by the government.

What are some facts about the RTI Act?

The **Right to Information Act of 2005** facilitated citizens in **acquiring information and data** from both Central and State institutions that are not **easily accessible** to the public.

This legislation enables any citizen to submit requests for **accessing data, documents, and other information** held by the government.

India’s RTI Act has often been recognized as one of the **most comprehensive laws** worldwide for granting **public access** to official records.

How amendments to the RTI Act have undermined it?

The Right to Information Act includes an **exemption** that prohibits the government from disclosing the **personal data of citizens**, except when there is a **compelling public interest** to do so.

The **Digital Personal Data Protection Act of 2023** has modified this exemption from a **qualified prohibition to an absolute prohibition**.

There are concerns that powerful public officials can **avoid accountability** by invoking this blanket ban on disclosing personal information.

Previous amendments to the RTI Act have also raised concerns. The **Right to Information (Amendment) Act of 2019** granted the Union Government **unilateral authority** to determine the **duration of service and salary** of information commissioners.

How else is the RTI Act undermined?

The **effectiveness of the RTI Act** also depends on the **subordinate rules** established by both the Union Government and State Governments.

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For instance, **payment methods** accepted by a public authority are left to the discretion of individual states.

Some states, like Tamil Nadu, don't accept **Indian Postal Orders (IPOs)**. These are checks that can be purchased at post offices and attached to an application for payment.

IPOs are typically the **most accessible payment method**. In contrast, **other payment options** can be less convenient or come with additional burdens.

Furthermore, **delayed appointments** to information commissions have also **eroded confidence** in the RTI framework.

Appeals can languish for months or even years before they are heard.

What is the effectiveness of online portals for filing RTI applications?

Online filing of RTI applications represents a significant step in eliminating certain obstacles. Citizens can simply submit their requests online and make payments using UPI.

However, several states do not have an **online RTI portal**. Many State Government agencies are often **not registered** on these portals.

The **Union Government's RTI portal** was launched in 2013. **Numerous public authorities** under the Union Government are listed on the portal. But, the **process of submitting applications** has become more cumbersome.

Previously, having an account on the RTI Online portal allowed citizens to have their **personal information pre-filled** in each application by default.

However, the option to create an account has now vanished. The site requires all users to **manually input** their details each time they file an application.

3. Measuring hunger across States

Source- The post is based on the article "Measuring hunger across States" published in "The Hindu" on 4th September 2023.

Syllabus: GS2- Social Issues- Issues related to poverty and hunger

Relevance- Issues related to hunger index

News- The article provides details about the State Hunger Index and performance of states in the State Hunger Index.

What are statistics related to the prevalence of hunger in India?

India continues to face significant challenges related to **food insecurity, hunger, and child malnutrition**. In the **2022 Global Hunger Index**, India was ranked 107th out of 121 countries, trailing behind Nigeria (103) and Pakistan (99).

According to the **2022 State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World report**, India is home to **224.3 million individuals** experiencing **undernourishment**. Furthermore, **disparities in food security and nutrition** are clearly evident across different states within India.

What are some facts about the State Hunger Index?

The Global Hunger Index (GHI) is determined using **four key indicators: the prevalence of calorie undernourishment, stunting, wasting, and mortality among children under five years of age, along with the under-five mortality rate**.

In contrast, the State Hunger Index (SHI) employs the same indicators, except for **calorie undernourishment**. It is replaced by assessing **body mass index (BMI) undernourishment** among the working-age population.

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To calculate the SHI, data for **stunting, wasting, and child mortality** below the age of five are obtained from the fifth round of the **National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5)**.

The prevalence of **BMI undernourishment** is computed using data from **NFHS-5 (2019-21) and Wave 1 of the Longitudinal Ageing Study in India (2017-18)**.

The SHI score is determined by combining the **normalized values** of these four indicators using methodologies recommended by the GHI.

The resulting SHI scores fall within a **range of 0 to 100**, with higher scores indicating greater hunger levels.

Scores below 10 indicate **low hunger**, 10-20 signify **moderate hunger**, 20-30 represent a **serious hunger** situation, 30-40 denote an **alarming hunger** level, and scores of 50 or above are classified as **extremely alarming hunger levels**.

What is the performance of states in the State Hunger Index (SHI)?

Bihar, Jharkhand, and Chhattisgarh achieved a **score of 35**, categorizing them as **'alarming.'**

Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Tripura, Maharashtra, and West Bengal all **scored higher** than the **national average of 29**. The performance of these states is comparable to that of countries in Africa.

Sikkim, Puducherry, and Kerala scored below 16. These states, along with Manipur, Mizoram, Punjab, Delhi, Arunachal Pradesh, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and Tamil Nadu, fall into the **'moderate hunger' category**.

The remaining states, scoring below the national average but above 20, face a **'serious hunger' issue**.

No state falls into the **'low hunger' category**. The impact of COVID-19 on the SHI is not accounted for here as **post-pandemic estimates** are not yet available.

What are the reasons for the worsening GHI score of India?

Over the past five years, India's GHI score has worsened primarily due to the rising **prevalence of calorie undernourishment**.

According to the **Food and Agriculture Organization**, the proportion of **calorie undernourishment** in India has been on the rise since 2017. It was **16.3% in 2020**.

India's **subpar performance in the Global Hunger Index (GHI)** is primarily linked to its significant rates of **undernourishment and child malnutrition**.

India fares poorly in terms of **child wasting**, even performing worse than several low-income African countries.

According to the NFHS-5, approximately one-third of children under the age of five in India experience **stunted growth and are underweight**, while one in five children faces the **issue of wasting**.

4. Court's order and the ASI survey are flawed

Source: The post is based on the article **"Court's order and the ASI survey are flawed"** published in **The Hindu** on **4th September 2023**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Society- diversity of India & GS2 – Polity – judiciary

News: The author discusses the Supreme Court of India's interpretation of the "Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991" in the Ram Janmabhoomi temple case and expresses concern

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about the recent Supreme Court decision allowing the Archaeological Survey of India to investigate the Gyanvapi mosque's origins. The author fears this could set a precedent for questioning the historical origins of many religious sites in India, potentially causing religious tensions and disputes.

What is the constitutional basis for the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991?

Constitutional Basis for the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991:

Preamble's Objective: The act aims to prevent the conversion of any place of worship and maintain its religious character as of August 15, 1947.

Defined by Supreme Court: The law addresses two primary concerns:

7. a) It bars the conversion of any place of worship, thereby addressing the future.
8. b) It mandates the upkeep of the religious nature of places as they were on India's Independence Day.

Specific Exceptions: Only the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid is exempted from this mandate.

Upholding Constitutional Values: The act was described by the Supreme Court as protecting and upholding the core values of the Indian Constitution.

Healing Past Injustices: The act sees independence from colonial rule as a foundation to rectify past injustices, assuring every religious community of the protection of their places of worship.

What was the recent controversy?

In August 2023, the Supreme Court did not stop a decision allowing the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to study the Gyanvapi mosque.

The author questions the purpose of this study since the mosque's religious nature has been established for centuries.

What are the implications of the recent Supreme Court decision on the Gyanvapi mosque?

Overlooked Precedent: The Supreme Court's decision seemed to overlook the binding precedent set in the Ram Janmabhoomi temple case, especially one Justice Chandrachud was part of.

Potential Character Change: There's an absolute bar against changing the mosque's character. Any Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) inquiry into its nature challenges this principle.

Futility of the Inquiry: The mosque has been a worship place for Muslims for centuries. The purpose and potential outcome of the ASI survey are questioned.

State Obligations: The decision disregards obligations the act placed on the state and every citizen.

Cultural Harmony at Risk: With elections approaching, this decision can cause misgivings in minority communities.

Setting a Precedent: This might open a Pandora's box where multiple sites could be questioned, further stirring religious tensions.

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5. How India has made the G20 more inclusive

Source: The post is based on the article “**How India has made the G20 more inclusive**” published in “The Indian express” on 5th September 2023.

Syllabus: GS2- International relation- Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India’s interests

News: The article talks about India’s leadership in the G20 presidency. It focuses on global unity, making changes to the global economy and finance, and involving regular people in discussing important global topics to make the G20 more inclusive.

How is India taking forward its stewardship of the G20?

Promoting Global Unity:

India introduced “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam” as the G20 slogan, emphasizing the interconnectedness of cultures and their shared responsibilities in the global family.

Democratizing the Global Economy:

India is championing the democratization and decentralization of the global economy.

Challenges like the US’s Inflation Reduction Act and the EU’s plans for a carbon border tax are viewed as moving away from the core principles of globalization, and India aims to rectify this.

Reforming Global Finance:

Recognizing the misalignment post-2008, India points out that most future global growth will come from emerging economies.

The goal is to ensure finance supports this growth, channeling resources where they are most needed.

Making G20 Inclusive:

India has transformed the G20 summit from a technocrat-centric summit to a more inclusive “people’s festival.” This shift includes a broader range of voices in discussions, focusing on global challenges like food security, health, and climate change adaptation.

Shifting Focus to the Global South:

Under India’s leadership, the G20 is recognizing the potential of the Global South. This promotes a vision of sustainable, digital, and inclusive growth, reframing the Global South as a leader in these areas.

How does India address previous G20 protests?

Engaging the Public: The focus has shifted to issues that matter to everyday people, like food, health, jobs, and climate change adaptation.

Democratic Global Governance: By democratizing the G20’s approach, India believes it can address and include concerns raised by past protesters.

Wider Involvement: The broader and inclusive approach has garnered support from various groups, even those led by the opposition, showcasing its non-partisan nature.

What does India’s G20 leadership mean for the Global South?

Reclaiming Identity: Under India’s G20 leadership, the Global South’s perception has shifted from being a mere beneficiary to a proactive growth leader.

Changing Narratives: India’s leadership has worked to ensure the Global South isn’t viewed pejoratively, highlighting its potential for green, digital, and equitable growth.

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Developmental Legacy: India's G20 presidency marks a pivotal shift, ensuring the Global South is the pathfinder for future global growth, emphasizing greener and inclusive solutions.

6. Who is afraid of the Basic Structure?

Source: The post is based on the article "Suhas Palshikar writes: **Who is afraid of the Basic Structure?**" published in **The Indian express** on 5th September 2023.

Syllabus: GS2- Polity – Indian constitution

News: The author is criticizing Subrata Mitra's ideas ('Let's debate Basic Structure', IE, August 28, 2023) about the Basic Structure Doctrine in India. This doctrine is about the key principles of the Indian Constitution. The author supports the doctrine because it safeguards personal freedoms and disagrees with Mitra's suggestion to discuss changing it.

What are the arguments in favour of and against revisiting the Basic Structure doctrine?

Arguments in Favour Revisiting:

Debatable Jurisprudential Basis: Mitra suggests that the Basic Structure Doctrine might have an uncertain legal foundation, making it worth revisiting.

Need for Clarity: There appears to be a lack of clarity regarding what exactly constitutes the Basic Structure. Mitra's call to debate can be seen as a request for better definition and understanding.

Executive Limitation: Mitra posits that the uncertainties in the doctrine might be hampering the powers and functions of the executive, restraining effective governance.

Electorate's Ability: The author mentions Mitra's belief in the electorate's capability to ensure accountability, hinting that a strong doctrine might not be essential if people can hold powers in check.

First Amendment Parallel: Mitra lauds the First Amendment for its progressive stance, implying that certain constitutional elements can and should be revisited for societal progress.

Against Arguments Revisiting:

Protection of Liberties: The author emphasizes that the doctrine is crucial in safeguarding individual liberties against potential executive and legislative overreach.

Historical Roots: Early debates on parliamentary sovereignty after India adopted its Constitution indirectly reinforced the need for the Basic Structure Doctrine.

Checks on Growing Executive Power: The author sees the doctrine as a necessary check against the increasing arbitrary power of executives worldwide.

Risk of Redefining Democracy: The article warns that revisiting the doctrine might pave the way for narrowing democratic space and ushering in authoritarian governance.

Potential for Misuse: Mitra's call to revisit the doctrine could be seen as a covert plea to rewrite the entire Constitution, which could destabilize India's democratic framework.

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7. 'India's Talent Pool A Force For National, Global Good'

Source– The post is based on the article “**India’s Talent Pool A Force For National, Global Good**” published in “**The Times of India**” on **5th September 2023**.

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

News– The National Education Policy 2020 is a comprehensive framework aimed at creating inclusive, well-rounded, and forward-looking education in India.

What are the focus areas of National Education Policy 2020?

Mother tongue- One of its primary objectives is to prioritize learning in a **student’s mother tongue**. It fosters a strong **conceptual understanding and clarity**.

This emphasis on mother tongue education is intended to **complement the use of link languages**. It is designed to ensure that students have **smooth educational journeys**.

Internationalization of higher education- The National Education Policy 2020 aims to position India as a **leading destination for advanced studies**

It is doing so by promoting activities such as **faculty and student exchanges, research collaborations, teaching partnerships, and the establishment of mutually beneficial MoU with foreign nations**.

For instance, IIT Madras and IIT Delhi have already signed MOUs to establish their foreign campuses in Tanzania and Abu Dhabi, respectively.

Fostering **collaboration between industry and academia** is another key focus of the National Education Policy.

The objective of creation of the **National Research Foundation** is to facilitate research within academic institutions.

The government is dedicated to ensuring a **business-friendly environment and conducive atmosphere for research activities**.

India has established **educational partnerships** with major countries, including the United States, Australia, Japan, and Europe.

Initiatives such as the **Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (iCET) and the Quad Fellowship** are actively promoting increased collaboration in high-technology areas.

Standardization and skill development- Standardization plays a crucial role in aligning India’s education system with **global standards and skills**.

Under the National Education Policy, the **National Curriculum Framework for School Education** has been introduced. It sets **specific learning standards, content, pedagogical methods, and assessment criteria**.

Similarly, a **National Credit Framework** has been established to encompass various academic practices within a **credit bank**.

Skill development has been integrated into the **school curriculum**. It has become an integral part of the **credit framework**.

What is the potential of skill development for India?

India boasts a young population. It has over **600 million people aged between 18 and 35**, and approximately **65% of them under the age of 35**.

Leveraging this **demographic advantage** and nurturing a **multi-disciplinary, multi-skilled, critically thinking, and future-ready workforce** is the top priority.

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India is currently experiencing a remarkable shift in the fields of **skill development and entrepreneurship**. It is the **third-largest startup ecosystem globally** and has over **100 unicorn startups**.

This trend is not limited to major cities. Smaller towns are also contributing to **India's innovation and startup landscape**.

Individuals equipped with both education and skills can play a pivotal role in today's **knowledge-based economy**.

They have the potential to make significant contributions to **nation-building** through **groundbreaking innovations, scientific discoveries**.

8. Not A Job For Quotas

Source– The post is based on the article “**Not A Job For Quotas**” published in “**The Times of India**” on **5th September 2023**.

Syllabus: GS2- Polity

Relevance- Issue of reservation

News– Recently, protests were held in Maharashtra over reservation demand for Maratha community.

What are the issues with the current system of reservation?

Governments are resorting to the use of reservations for **politically influential groups**. The strategy to build **electoral alliances** and address the **challenging employment situation**.

These short-term tactics often lead to **long-term adverse consequences**. Consider the situations in **Tamil Nadu and Karnataka**. In these states, governments near the end of their terms made **ill-conceived changes** to existing **reservation policies**.

In Tamil Nadu, in 2021, the government introduced **internal reservations for the Vanniyar community**. However, this move was struck down by the Supreme Court because it lacked the necessary **data-based justification**.

In Karnataka, recent **adjustments to reservations** have also faced **legal challenges**. The Supreme Court expressed concerns about their validity.

The **legal framework** governing reservations has consistently stressed that caste should merely be an **initial criterion** for **assessing backwardness**. It must be complemented by **data on other pertinent factors**.

However, governments frequently overlook these aspects. Once such policies are adopted, future administrations invest **substantial political capital** in **seeking compromises**.

This strategy neither generates **employment opportunities** nor is free of **associated costs**.

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9. C Raja Mohan writes: At G20, the end of old multilateralism – and the beginning of a new order

Source: The post is based on the article “C Raja Mohan writes: At G20, the end of old multilateralism – and the beginning of a new order” published in “The Indian express” on 6th September 2023.

Syllabus: GS2- International relation- Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India’s interests

News: The article discusses the decline of post-Cold War multilateralism, with Russia and China’s growing conflicts causing challenges. It also highlights India’s growing role in shaping new regional and global partnerships, as seen in recent summits in Jakarta and Delhi.

Why is the post-Cold War era of global cooperation weakening?

Russian Conflicts: Russia’s aggressive actions, particularly the annexation of Ukraine’s Crimean Peninsula in 2014 and its ongoing conflict with Ukraine, have caused significant strain on international relations.

China’s Territorial Ambitions: China’s tensions with neighboring Asian countries, including disputes with India, Japan, the Philippines, and Vietnam, have become sources of concern.

Economic Leverage: China has tried to use the world’s dependence on its economy for political and strategic gains, causing distrust.

Change in Chinese Policies: Xi Jinping’s reversal of policies from the 1980s, which aimed for a peaceful periphery and shared prosperity, has negatively impacted regional and global institutions.

How is Asia responding to China’s actions?

Security Institutions: New security groups like the Quad, which includes India, the US, Japan, and Australia, have been established to counterbalance China’s influence.

AUKUS Pact: The AUKUS alliance, consisting of Australia, Britain, and the US, has been formed as a direct response to China’s increasing military presence.

Questioning ASEAN’s Role: China’s aggressive territorial expansion has led to doubts about the effectiveness of ASEAN-led regional institutions in ensuring stability.

Bilateral Ties: Many Asian countries are strengthening bilateral relationships to deter China’s unilateral moves. For example, the trilateral compact between the US, Japan, and South Korea aims to bolster security in Northeast Asia.

Economic Diversification: Nations like Japan and the US are trying to reduce their economic dependence on China by diversifying trade partnerships.

How is India’s role evolving?

Central Player: India is emerging as a pivotal figure in shaping both regional and global dynamics, highlighted by its active participation in forums like the Indo-Pacific Quadrilateral Forum.

G20’s Evolution: India is pushing for the G20 to address the concerns of the Global South, signaling its desire to play a more substantial role in global economic discussions.

Shifting Alliances: Historically aligned with Moscow and Beijing for a multipolar world, India’s focus has shifted due to China’s increasing assertiveness, leading it closer to nations like Australia, Japan, and the US.

Embracing the Indo-Pacific: India has adopted the Indo-Pacific concept and rejuvenated the Quad alliance to counterbalance China’s influence in the region.

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What are the features of India's new multilateral approach?

Quad Collaboration: At the Jakarta summit, Indian's PM emphasizes that the Quad complements ASEAN's efforts and promotes regional stability.

Re-globalisation Focus: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar advocates for a diversified, democratic globalisation, moving away from a China-centric production model.

Collective Solutions: Despite challenges in multilateralism, India continues to seek collective solutions, focusing on diverse issues like modernising the global tax regime.

Global South Concerns: India prioritizes the concerns of the Global South in the G-20 agenda, aiming to enhance cooperation between developed and developing nations, rather than reviving old confrontational politics.

10. Xi Jinping skipping G-20 Summit a deliberate signal to India, West

Source: The post is based on articles

"Xi Jinping skipping G-20 Summit a deliberate signal to India, West" published in The Hindu on 6th September 2023 and

"No middle ground – Xi's decision is a lose-lose" published in Business Standard on 6th September 2023.

Syllabus: GS 2 – International Relations – Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests

Relevance: concerns with Chinese President skipping the G20 summit

News: Recently, Chinese President Xi Jinping has decided to skip the G20 Summit in Delhi for the first time. Instead, Chinese Premier Li Qiang, the second-ranked leader, will attend the Summit, which is a departure from the usual protocol.

China has also not officially provided any specific reason for this.

What may be the probable reasons behind Chinese President skipping the G20 summit?

Tensions with India: China is unhappy with the current status of its bilateral relations with India, specifically India's position that achieving normalcy in broader relations requires resolving the situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

China's decision to skip the summit might be linked to the 2020 border clashes and the ongoing border dispute. **The release of a new map by China recently further escalated tensions.**

Additionally, **China may not want to see India's G20 presidency succeed**, given India's growing international influence, both strategically and economically.

Domination of the West: China's decision to skip the G-20 Summit shows its preference for forums like BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), where it has more influence.

However, this strategy faces challenges, as BRICS is already diverse, and it hasn't achieved significant results since its formation.

Skipping the summit might also be aimed at reducing the G20's influence, which China sees as Western-dominated and less appealing. The absence of the Russian President at the G-20 could also put China under more scrutiny.

Another possible reason for Xi's absence could be to avoid addressing Western leaders' questions regarding China's support for Russia.

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Politicization: China is unhappy with the politicization of the G-20. It believes that the G-20 should focus solely on economic matters and not get involved in political issues like the conflict in Ukraine.

What may be the consequences of China's decision?

China's absence at the G20 summit reduces its significance. India's presidency at G20 has held discussions on issues like reforming multilateral development banks and addressing debt sustainability in low- and middle-income countries.

China's cooperation in this regard was critical, as it considers its loans to low-income nations commercial.

Skipping G20 summit could also harm China's global standing and image as an emerging superpower, making it less predictable and reliable on the global stage.

What is the way ahead?

India will need to engage with China beyond the G20 and accept that diplomatic relations are unlikely to improve soon.

Economic risks due to dependence on Chinese imports remain, so India should carefully handle military and diplomatic issues while decreasing reliance on Chinese imports.

11. DIY India – The government's ₹13,000cr proposal to train artisans is a step towards self-reliance

Source: The post is based on the article “DIY India – The government's ₹13,000cr proposal to train artisans is a step towards self-reliance” published in *The Times of India* on 6th September 2023.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Government Policies & Intervention

Relevance: About PM Vishwakarma Scheme

News: Skilled workers like plumbers and carpenters have become difficult to find in India because many leave for better opportunities abroad.

Additionally, **there's a lack of a DIY (Do It Yourself) culture among the middle-class Indians**, unlike in the West where people do minor repairs themselves.

Hence, to address this issue, the government is planning to launch a ₹13,000 crore scheme, known as **PM Vishwakarma Scheme**.

What is the scheme about?

The scheme will train artisans in various manual crafts, including carpentry. It will be **launched for five years** on Vishwakarma Jayanti (September 17).

In the first year, six lakh families will benefit, with one member receiving a subsidized ₹2 lakh loan to learn a specific craft.

This initiative hopes to supplement the country's skilled workforce and **promote the Gandhian idea of dignifying manual labor**.

Read More: [Licence To Skill – GOI's scheme for craftspeople is a good idea but its success critically depends on finding markets and Vishwakarma scheme will aid 30 lakh artisan families](#)

What are the concerns associated with the scheme?

There is a concern that, like many IIT and other institution graduates, **these artisans might also leave for better opportunities abroad, leading to a “Brain Drain” issue**.

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Hence, this situation highlights the **importance of self-reliance**; as the saying goes, “If you want a job done, you have to do it yourself.” **Like charity, Atmanirbharta begins at home.**

12. The implications of expansion of BRICS

Source– The post is based on the article “**Not A Job For Quotas**” published in “**The Hindu**” on **6th September 2023**.

Syllabus: GS2 – International Relations – Regional and global groupings

News– The 15th BRICS summit in Johannesburg announced that the five-member grouping had invited six new members from West Asia; Egypt and Ethiopia from Africa, and Argentina from Latin America.

What are some significant positive aspects about the grouping?

Since 2009, BRICS has convened **annual summits** and is supported by numerous **ministerial and expert meetings**.

It has established two significant institutions. First is the **New Development Bank (NBD)**, which provides development assistance. Second is the **Contingent Reserve Arrangement**, designed to aid countries facing **short-term balance-of-payments challenges**.

The NBD has already funded **96 projects with a total value of \$33 billion**.

What is the main agenda of BRICS countries?

BRICS member countries have shared discontent with the **Western-dominated international institutions** that emerged after World War II. These include the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations and, the World Trade Organization.

The United States has led the **Western alliance** in both **political and economic spheres**.

BRICS challenges this **Western-led world order** by promoting **economic and political cooperation** among its member states,

It is establishing institutions outside of **Western control**, and advocating strongly for **comprehensive reforms** to accommodate the **interests of emerging economies**.

The Johannesburg Declaration explicitly states that the members “**strategic partnership**” aims to achieve “**a more representative, fairer international order**.”

How recent expansion of BRICS makes the group more influential?

The recent expansion of BRICS’s membership collectively wields significant **economic influence** within the enlarged organization.

With the proposed expansion, BRICS will represent **46% of the world’s population**. Its **share of global GDP** will rise from **31.5% in PPP terms to 37%**. It is surpassing the **GDP share of the G-7**, which stands at 30.7%.

The five core BRICS members currently account for **23% of global exports and 19% of global imports**. With the addition of new members, these figures will **increase by 3.7% and 3%, respectively**.

The most significant impact will be on the energy sector. The five original BRICS members currently contribute to **20% of the world’s oil production**. This share is set to **increase to 42%**.

What is the geopolitical importance of BRICS expansion?

Countries from West Asia are already **closely intertwined** with BRICS members.

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China and India receive **35% of Saudi Arabia's oil production**. Russia, a major oil supplier to China and India, is exploring Brazil as a market. Despite **U.S. sanctions**, Iran has considerably increased its **oil production**, and most of it going to China.

Egypt and Ethiopia play essential roles in the **strategically vital Horn of Africa and the Red Sea region**. Argentina holds the position of being the **second-largest economy in Latin America**.

The recent additions to BRICS, especially those from West Asia, align well with the group's **political and economic framework**.

Since 2020, both Saudi Arabia and the UAE have pursued **independent foreign policies**, distancing themselves from **U.S. influence**.

Saudi Arabia has pursued **de-escalation**. It has **engaged in dialogue** with various countries, including Turkey and Iran. It made China-brokered accord with Iran in March this year.

The UAE has **normalized relations** with Iran and is expanding its **maritime presence** across the **Gulf, the Gulf of Aden, the Red Sea, and the Horn of Africa**.

Iran's inclusion in BRICS is significant. It opens opportunities for enhanced **regional economic cooperation** and the revitalization of **long-dormant north-south connectivity projects**, including the **Chabahar port**.

What are major takeaways from Johannesburg Declaration?

The Johannesburg Declaration predominantly emphasizes **intra-BRICS cooperation and collaboration** with other developing nations.

The member nations have agreed to promote the use of **local currencies in trade and financial transactions** between BRICS countries and other trade partners.

The Declaration demonstrates **shared viewpoints** among its members on various **political matters**, such as the **United Nations' significance, regional issues in West Asia, the conflict in Ukraine, and global terrorism**.

13. The case for elections in Jammu and Kashmir

Source– The post is based on the article **“The case for elections in Jammu and Kashmir”** published in **“The Hindu”** on **6th September 2023**.

Syllabus: GS2- Indian Polity

News– Jammu and Kashmir has not conducted legislative elections in the past nine years. The most recent Assembly election occurred in 2014, and the last elected government was dissolved in June 2018.

What are the issues with recommendations of the Delimitation Commission appointed for Jammu and Kashmir?

The recommendations raised two concerns. It allocated six out of seven new seats to Jammu and only one to the Valley. This is deviation from the **democratic principle of equal representation**.

Despite the Valley having **56.15% of the State's population**, it was assigned **47 seats**. Jammu was assigned **43 seats**, even though it had **43.85% of the population**.

The commission's redrawing of political constituencies resulted in the **concentration of minority voters** in fewer districts or their dispersion across multiple districts. It has affected their **voting strength**.

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Changes in residency rules also contributed to an **imbalance in constituencies**. Before 2019, **non-permanent residents** were not eligible to vote in Assembly elections.

Following the alteration of Article 370 and the repeal of Article 35A, anyone **“ordinarily resident”** in the former State became **eligible to vote**.

It includes those who had been residents for more than 15 years, those who had studied in the region for more than seven years, and those **registered as migrants** by the Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner.

What are some facts about new proposed bills for introducing reservation in the J & K assembly?

The **Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2023**, allocates two seats for ‘Kashmiri migrants’ and one for individuals displaced from Pakistani-held territories of Jammu and Kashmir. These three seats will be filled by **nominees of the Lieutenant-Governor**.

The **Constitution (Jammu and Kashmir) Scheduled Tribes Order (Amendment) Bill, 2023**, is the second Bill. It includes the Pahari community and several small tribes in Jammu and Kashmir’s list of Scheduled Tribes.

This change allows Paharis to compete for **reserved seats** that were previously dominated by **Gujjars and Bakerwals**.

The third Bill is the **Constitution (Jammu and Kashmir) Scheduled Castes Order (Amendment) Bill, 2023**. It adds the Valmiki community to Jammu and Kashmir’s **list of Scheduled Castes**.

The fourth Bill is the **Jammu and Kashmir Reservation (Amendment) Bill, 2023**. It includes 15 more **other backward classes**, such as West Pakistan refugees and Gorkhas.

What are concerns about their practical implementation of these Bills?

Pandit migrants have been elected **without reservations** for many years, even during times of insurgency and after their exodus. They may not require reserved seats but instead need **security** when elected.

Gujjars accept Pahari reservation as long as it doesn’t **encroach on their quota**. But, they have received no such assurance.

Long-term residents like **refugees, Gurkhas, and Valmikis** should be **entitled to vote**. But, the question remains whether the former group needs a **reserved seat**.

Due to these gaps, the Bills can create **voter polarisation** along caste and community lines in a region with diverse castes and communities.

In Muslim-majority areas, there is concern that the **number of their representatives** will decrease.

In Jammu, there is suspicion that **new reservations** are aimed at creating additional support for the Bharatiya Janata Party, particularly in areas where the party’s influence is waning.

Why is holding elections in Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh necessary?

Most people are now eager for a prompt Assembly election. The **centrally-directed administration** in Jammu and Kashmir have led to **higher unemployment rates and loss of land and resource rights**.

Meanwhile, discontent is growing in Ladakh, where the **powers of the elected Hill Councils** have been greatly reduced by the Lieutenant-Governor’s office. Here too, the **demand for Statehood** is gaining momentum.

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Holding an Assembly election before the end of the year can help **rebuild confidence**, as past experience has shown.

The Atal Bihari Vajpayee administration conducted elections in 2002, during a period of **significant insurgency**. However, that election marked the beginning of 12 years of **peace-building**, with two free and fair elections.

In contrast, the attempt to **manipulate the 1987 election** resulted in over a decade of **armed conflict**.

14. India, that is Bharat: How the Constituent Assembly chose

Source– The post is based on the articles

“**India, that is Bharat: How the Constituent Assembly chose**” published in “**The Indian Express**” on **6th September 2023**.

“**India or Bharat-Why not Both**” published in “**The Times of India**” on **6th September 2023**.

Syllabus: GS2 – Indian Polity

Relevance- Renaming of the country

News– Recently the President’s invite for the G-20 dinner mentioned the “President of Bharat” instead of “President of India”. This has reignited the debate whether India should be renamed as Bharat.

The first debate on Article 1 was to begin on November 17, 1948. However, on the suggestion of Govind Ballabh Pant, the discussion on the name was postponed to a later date.

What were the arguments in favour of giving prominence to Bharat over India in constituent assembly?

Reminder of colonial Past – The use of India over Bharat was seen as a **reminder of the colonial past**.

Use of Bharat would symbolise actual independence – India name for the newly independent nation did not signify the actual independence. Members who supported the name Bharat took Irish constitution example. **Irish Free State was one of the few countries in the modern world which changed its name on achieving freedom** and the fourth article of its Constitution refers to the change in the name of the land.

Name of the country as India was foreign imposition – Clinging to the word ‘India’, showed that we are not ashamed of having this insulting word which has been imposed on us by alien rulers.

Name Bharat was befitting to our history and our culture – **Vishnu Purana** and **Brahma Purana** mentioned ‘Bharat’. Seventh-century Chinese traveller **Hiuen Tsang** had referred to the country as Bharat.

What are the arguments against renaming of name India as Bharat?

Cumbersome process – Renaming of names of government institutions to corporate institutions. This will be a cumbersome and tiring process.

Renaming of name would be **against the non-theocratic and inclusive state** that India symbolises.

Renaming of names will not serve much purpose as all **institutions have already Bharat names** in their **Hindi usage** like the RBI and IITs.

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Renaming of names is a means of **political polarisation** between the **elite-non-elite, urban-rural and south-north states**. It is being used to counter the emerging coalition of I.N.D.I.A by the ruling party.

However, Dr. Ambedkar reminded the House several times that the civilisational debate was unnecessary since the name Bharat was not opposed by members. Dr. Ambedkar was **apprehensive of such debates** on the name of the country. He was focussed more on development path the country should take.

15. Bridging the malnutrition gap, the Bemetara way

Source: The post is based on the article “**Bridging the malnutrition gap, the Bemetara way**” published in “The Hindu” on 7th September 2023.

Syllabus: GS2- Governance- Welfare scheme for vulnerable section & issue relating to development and management of social sector/services related to health.

News: The article talks about the significance of nutrition counseling and monitoring in India, showcasing the success of the “Potth Laika Abhiyaan” program in Bemetara, Chhattisgarh. This program substantially decreased malnutrition rates in specific children within nine months.

Why is nutrition security still a challenge?

Government Initiatives: Despite measures like mid-day-meals, the Public Distribution System, and POSHAN Abhiyaan, malnutrition persists.

Knowledge Gap: Many individuals lack the correct knowledge about proper eating and feeding practices.

Myths and Misconceptions: Misbeliefs about food, combined with increased access to highly processed foods, hinder proper nutrition.

Inconsistent Counseling: While various awareness programs exist, nutrition counseling hasn't been uniformly implemented across states.

What's happening in Bemetara?

Unexpected Malnutrition Levels: Despite its agricultural richness and relative affluence, Bemetara has a high number of Severe Acute Malnourished (SAM) children. As of December 2022, there were 3,299 SAM children, a figure mirroring that of Naxal-affected areas like Bastar.

Core Issue: The primary problem isn't a lack of food access but insufficient knowledge about proper feeding practices.

Potth Laika Abhiyaan Introduction: This is a nutrition counseling program in place in 72 of the most affected Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) within Bemetara. It operates with technical support from UNICEF, Chhattisgarh. It involves teaching parents about balanced diets, handwashing, and dispelling myths, and local leaders take part while home visits track children's progress.

Program Details: Ground staff from Health and Women and Child Development departments provide nutrition counseling. Every Friday, parents of SAM and Medium Acute Malnourished (MAM) children receive guidance in local language. They learn about balanced diets, the importance of handwashing, and are corrected on food-related myths.

Community Involvement: Local leaders, including sarpanchs and religious heads, have taken part in these counseling sessions. There are also door-to-door visits to monitor the progress of targeted children.

Significant Outcomes: Due to this approach, Within nine months, from December 2022 to July 2023, 53.77% of targeted children improved their nutritional status.

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What should be done to ensure nutrition security in India?

Expand Nutrition Counselling: Given the success in Bemetara, nutrition counselling needs to be consistently implemented across all states.

Uniform Implementation: States should uniformly institutionalize and implement nutrition awareness and counselling.

Training Field Staff: Proper training in nutritional counselling is essential for field staff to effectively guide communities.

Robust Monitoring: Alongside counselling, regular monitoring of children's nutrition status is crucial.

Replicate Successful Models: Programs like Poth Laika Abhiyaan, which brought significant improvements in Bemetara, should be replicated in other districts and states.

Address Myths: Awareness campaigns should target and dispel dietary myths and misconceptions.

16. PM Narendra Modi writes: G20 will reach the last mile, leave no one behind

Source- The post is based on the article “PM Narendra Modi writes: G20 will reach the last mile, leave no one behind” published in “The Indian Express” on 7th September 2023.

Syllabus: GS2- Global groupings

Relevance- G20

News- The article explains how Indian G20 presidency can contribute towards a better world.

How the world order after pandemic has undergone significant transformations compared to the pre-pandemic era?

There is an increasing acknowledgment of the necessity to transition from an **emphasis on GDP** towards prioritizing the **well-being of individuals**.

There is a heightened acknowledgment of the significance of **resilience and dependability within global supply chains**.

There is a united call to **enhance multilateralism by reforming international institutions** on a global scale.

How India is promoting the voice of global south as the President of G20?

The **Voice of Global South Summit** had representatives from 125 countries. It marked one of the primary initiatives during our Presidency. It served as a significant effort to collect insights and concepts from the **Global South**.

Indian Presidency witnessed the **largest-ever involvement of African nations** and advocated for the **inclusion of the African Union** as a permanent member of the G20.

How India G20 presidency can contribute for betterment of human lives across the world?

The **Chennai High-Level Principles (HLPs)** for a **Sustainable and Resilient Blue Economy** are primarily focused on preserving the health of our oceans.

Indian presidency will pave the way for the establishment of a **global network** dedicated to **clean and environmentally friendly hydrogen**, complemented by the creation of a **Green Hydrogen Innovation Center**.

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In 2015, India introduced the **International Solar Alliance**. Now, through the **Global Biofuels Alliance**, India will extend our support to **facilitate energy transitions** that align with the principles of a **circular economy**.

The **democratization of climate action** is essential to propel the movement forward. Individuals can make lifestyle decisions with consideration for the **planet's long-term well-being**. India has influenced the world with **Lifestyles for Sustainable Environment (LiFE)**.

Ensuring **food and nutritional security** becomes paramount due to climate change. Millets can play a pivotal role in achieving this goal while promoting **climate-smart agriculture**.

During the **International Year of Millets**, India has introduced millets to **global culinary preferences**. Additionally, the **Deccan High-Level Principles on Food Security and Nutrition** offer valuable guidance in this regard.

Technology holds transformative potential, but it must also be inclusive. India has demonstrated in recent years how technology can be harnessed to **reduce inequalities**.

The vast number of individuals worldwide who lack access to banking services or digital identities can achieve **financial inclusion** through the utilization of **digital public infrastructure (DPI)**.

DPI, have garnered global recognition. Now, through the G20, India aim to assist developing nations in **adopting, creating, and expanding DPI**.

India's status as the **fastest-growing major economy** is not coincidental. Our **straightforward, scalable, and sustainable solutions** have empowered marginalized and vulnerable populations to participate in our development journey.

Across various sectors, Indian women have taken **prominent roles**. They have shifted the narrative from **women's development to women-led development**.

During our G20 Presidency, India is actively working to bridge the **gender digital divide**, diminish disparities in **labor force participation**, and promote greater involvement of women in **leadership and decision-making roles**.

What should be the way forward for G20 to ensure sustainable development?

This year marks the **midpoint of the 2030 Agenda**. There is growing concern that progress toward the SDGs is lagging behind.

The **G20 2023 Action Plan on Accelerating Progress on SDGs** will guide the future direction of the G20 in terms of SDG implementation.

Many nations in the **Global South** are in different stages of development. It is essential that climate action is pursued in tandem with these **development stages**.

Aspirations for **climate action** should be accompanied by **tangible steps in climate finance and technology transfer**.

It's imperative to shift from a **purely restrictive approach to a more constructive approach** that emphasizes actions to **combat climate change**.

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17. Kota suicides: Our children on the brink

Source– The post is based on the article “**Kota suicides: Our children on the brink**” published in “**The Indian Express**” on **7th September 2023**.

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

News– Kota is getting attention due to high incidence of student suicides over the past decade or longer, with over 100 young lives lost during that period. This year city has recorded 23 suicides.

What are statistics related to suicide among young people?

Suicide is the leading cause of death among individuals aged 15 to 30, making India the global leader in this age group.

According to the National Crime Records Bureau, in 2020, a student committed suicide **every 42 minutes**. It equated to **34 student suicides daily**. During the same year, 11,396 children below the age of 18 tragically took their own lives.

What are the causes behind increasing tendency among students towards suicidal thoughts?

It reveals the neglect of our society in addressing the **emotional needs and vulnerabilities** of our children.

Suicidal thoughts or actions result from a **complex interplay of various factors**. It includes **biological, socioemotional, cultural, political, and issues related to social justice**.

For young individuals, this complexity can manifest as **developmental differences, parental and family expectations**, and the **discrimination or marginalisation** based on caste, religion.

Why suicidal tendencies among students in Kota are on rise?

The coaching industry in Kota is estimated to be valued at a **staggering Rs 12,000 crore**. It prioritises its **interests over student well-being**.

Its primary concern is to extract **maximum benefits** from the thousands of students and their families, both financially and in terms of achieving exceptional results.

These results provide them with **poster children** for their full-page advertisements in national newspapers to attract more students.

To **enhance competitiveness**, they intensify the pressure through **frequent testing**, sharing the scores with parents, giving **preferential treatment to high-achievers**, and ignoring those students who struggle.

Helpless students find themselves trapped in 12-hour daily schedules, seven days a week, without any **respite or relief**. They have no one to turn to when they experience **distress and self-doubt**.

There are no mechanisms to **accommodate individual differences**, no **safe spaces** for students to **share and support** each other, and no **compassionate, nurturing** faculty members who will mentor students.

How is the government paying more attention towards mental health issues?

Prior to the onset of COVID-19, the annual budget allocated to the **National Mental Health Programme** was a mere Rs **40 crore**. However, it has now increased **more than threefold to Rs 134 crore** for the fiscal year 2023-24.

The government of Rajasthan has taken **proactive steps** to address the crisis in Kota and has pledged to **investigate and implement solutions**.

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What should be done?

Impulsive reactions and superficial solutions, such as installing fans with springs, using CCTVs, and resorting to punitive measures against scapegoats, will not lead to **sustainable improvements**.

There is a need for a more **profound and sustained** commitment **involving all stakeholders**, including parents, educators, influential institutions, policymakers, professionals, individuals with personal experiences, and young people.

18. Chandrayaan 3 success: India's role in democratising space

Source– The post is based on the article **“Chandrayaan 3 success: India's role in democratising space”** published in **“The Indian Express”** on **7th September 2023**.

Syllabus: GS2- International relations

Relevance- International law related to outer space

News– The article explains the the issues related to consideration of space as “global common” and explain the international laws related to concept of “commons”.

Is outer space considered a “global common”?

Some individuals firmly reject the notion that outer space meets the criteria of a **“global common”**.

Others contend that it should be classified as “global common” in order to secure the **freedom of access and benefits** for developing nations.

The concept of “global commons” can be examined from **two perspectives**.

First perspective- It is related to **geopolitical prespective**. From these viewpoints, security institutions worldwide recognize **domains beyond national borders** as crucial **connecting channels for the international order**.

These domains include the **high seas, airspace outside a nation's territory, and outer space**,

Some nations also acknowledge outer space as a critical for maintaining their **security** while upholding **international law**.

In essence, open access is vital for a nation's **security and economic interests**.

Second perspective- The term “global common” is sometimes perceived as **restrictive**, primarily due to the **economic and commercial implications** associated with shared resources.

This perspective raises concerns about the **potential overuse** of these resources by some parties at the expense of others.

What is the meaning of term “global commons”?

The term “global common” is used to refer to areas on Earth that fall **outside the jurisdiction of any single nation**.

This concept is built upon the legacy of **Grotius's idea of “mare liberum” (free sea)**, which aimed to preserve the **freedom of access and benefits for all**.

The United Nations recognizes four “global commons,” including the high seas, the atmosphere, Antarctica, and outer space.

What the intrenational laws says about the concept of “commoms”?

The concept of “commons” is often linked with notions of **shared ownership, public governance, or usage limitations**.

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Additionally, “commons” is occasionally connected with the **concept of the “common heritage of mankind” (CHM), as articulated in Article 11(3) of the Moon Agreement of 1979.**

CHM introduced a **territorial status** in which **celestial bodies** are not subject to **national appropriation**. Their fruits and resources are considered the **property of all humankind**. The principle of CHM extends **beyond outer space**.

In 1970, the UN General Assembly passed a **non-binding resolution** declaring that “the **seabed and ocean floor**, beyond the **limits of national jurisdiction**, along with the resources of the area, are the **common heritage of mankind**.”

This principle was incorporated as **Article 136 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea in 1982**.

In 1957, the United States and the Soviet ensured the **adoption of UN General Assembly Resolutions 1721 A&B (XVI)** on December 21, 1961.

Subsequently, they **consistently adhered** to its provisions. All nations with space capabilities have continued to adhere to this **established precedent**.

The principles outlined in the **Outer Space Treaty of 1967** have evolved into **customary international law**.

Way forward for India-

India is currently at a significant juncture. It presenting an opportunity to actively shape the the **future international framework** for the **management of space resources**.

This process would necessitate a thorough examination of the **Moon Agreement of 1979 (MA)**, which entered into force in 1984.

India has **signed the MA but ratification is pending**. It is also signatories to the **Artemis Accords**.

India has a history of **robust international cooperation** in space programs. It has engaged in both multilateral and bilateral collaborations with advanced spacefaring nations, as well as those aspiring to advance their capabilities.

India should now play a role in shaping an international framework for managing space resources.

19. India, US and the China anxiety- For Delhi and Washington, the other's China choices matter

Source: The post is based on the article “Modi-Biden meet: **India, US and the China anxiety- For Delhi and Washington, the other's China choices matter**. They must address each other's concerns” published in “The Indian express” on 8th September 2023.

Syllabus: GS2- International relation- Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests

News: The article discusses concerns in India and the US about each other possibly getting too close to China (called G2-A2 concerns). This could affect their own strong partnership. Both countries need to communicate better about their China relations to maintain trust and strengthen their alliance.

What are G2-A2 concerns?

G2-A2 concerns refer to anxieties in both India and the US regarding each other's potential closer ties with China, potentially sidelining their bilateral partnership.

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Origins:

India noticed US cabinet trips to China and changes in US-China rhetoric.

The US observed India's high-level meetings with China and India's agreement for BRICS expansion.

Historical Context:

India recalls the US's move towards China in 1971, feeling left out.

India believes the US didn't do enough to deter China's militarization of the South China Sea.

The US remembers the Sino-Indian cooperation in the 1950s, which went against US interests.

The US feels India was hesitant about joining the Quad to avoid provoking China.

Recent Events:

Commentators criticize each country's outreach to China, viewing it as a sign of desperation or weakness.

Developments like the Trump-Xi and Modi-Xi summits between 2017-2019 added to these apprehensions.

Implications:

There's a fear that if one country gets closer to China, it may negatively impact India-US ties and constrain options in the Indo-Pacific and globally.

What can India and the US do to strengthen their partnership?

Strengthening the India-US Partnership:

No-Surprises Rule: Both should keep each other informed about their significant interactions with China. For instance, Delhi and Washington can establish a regular briefing schedule on interactions with China.

Public Messaging: Enhance public communication so that China doesn't dominate the narrative. For example, joint press releases can clarify the shared perspectives of India and the US on crucial issues.

Focus on Trends: Pay attention to overall patterns of interaction rather than isolated incidents. Such as investing more in research to understand each other's historical and current views on China and Asia.

Boost Non-China Partnership Drivers:

Strengthen other aspects of their relationship not solely based on China-related concerns. Like, enhancing trade, cultural exchanges, or technological collaborations.

Adopting these measures can help India and the US solidify their ties, ensuring more robust mutual trust and collaboration.

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20. Finding Seoul in the Indo-Pacific

Source– The post is based on the article “**Finding Seoul in the Indo-Pacific**” published in “**The Hindu**” on **8th September 2023**.

Syllabus: GS2- Bilateral groupings and agreements

Relevance- India and South Korea bilateral relationship

News– The historic Camp David summit in August this year among the leaders of the United States, Japan, and the Republic of Korea (ROK) marks the new beginning of the strategic partnership among the three traditional allies.

What is the significance of Camp David summit?

This meeting signifies a crucial step in **repairing relations** between Seoul and Tokyo. It reflects a mutual recognition of the **changing regional security dynamics** by these three countries.

This development, in conjunction with other alliances like **AUKUS, the Quad, and the CHIP 4 Alliance** could lead to a strengthened **U.S.-led alliance structure in East Asia**. This structure reflects the **multipolar nature of the contemporary international system**.

The summit has the potential to redirect South Korea’s **strategic approach in the Indo-Pacific region**. This includes improved relations with Tokyo, alignment with the **American perspective on China**, and increased **engagement in the Indo-Pacific**.

This shift in strategy indicates a departure from **Seoul’s traditional stance** of avoiding any actions that might upset China.

Previous South Korean governments were hesitant to **openly acknowledge** the challenges posed by China.

There is a strong desire within South Korea to join the **Quad grouping**. South Korea has expressed interest in joining the Quad for some time. But, there were concerns about Tokyo supporting its bid due to **historical grievances**.

The Camp David summit may have **altered this dynamic**. It is possible that South Korea may seek membership in a **Quad Plus configuration** in the coming year.

There is a **renewed enthusiasm for foreign policy** in Seoul today. President Yoon Suk Yeol has declared that the **primary goal of his foreign policy** is to establish South Korea as a “**global pivotal state**.”

South Korea’s **engagement with the U.S. and Japan, support for Ukraine, recognition of the China challenge**, and a desire to play a more **significant role in the Indo-Pacific** all reflect this new vision.

Why is South Korea a natural partner for India in the Indo-Pacific?

Firstly, South Korea’s **location in the Indo-Pacific, its proximity to China**, and its status as a **U.S. ally** align well with **India’s strategic interests**.

Secondly, both countries share concerns about the **rise of China** and its attempts to **unilaterally reshape the Asian security landscape**

Thirdly, South Korea can serve as an **important regional partner** for India, as India’s **alignment with the U.S.** reaches unprecedented levels, and concerns about **China’s intentions and power** grow.

What should be the focus areas to enhance their relationship?

At the **political and diplomatic levels**, they should explore the possibility of organising an **annual summit** involving their Foreign Ministers and establish a **2+2 format dialogue**.

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Additionally, **reciprocal visits** by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Yoon Suk Yeol to each other's countries could further strengthen ties.

They might even consider negotiating a **joint initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology** (iCET). It can involve South Korea, Japan, India, and the U.S.

In the realm of defense, there is potential to **enhance their partnership**. South Korea's capacity to meet India's **defense requirements** within the **framework of India's 'Make in India'** program should be leveraged.

For instance, the **K9 Vajra, a 155 mm self-propelled howitzer** produced by L&T with technology from South Korea's Hanwha Defense, exemplifies this cooperation.

Another avenue for collaboration is in the nuclear **field**. India has encountered challenges in importing nuclear reactors due to concerns related to its **nuclear liability law**.

South Korea has a successful track record in providing **cost-effective and expedited nuclear reactors** to countries like the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia. India could contemplate purchasing **South Korean-built reactors** to expand its reliance on nuclear energy.

21. India should quit the Brics

Source: The post is based on the article "India should quit the Brics" published in **Business Standard** on **8th September 2023**.

Syllabus: **GS 2 – Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests**

Relevance: **concerns for India after the expansion of BRICS**

News: The upcoming G20 summit in New Delhi marks the end of India's presidency and holds significance for two key reasons, despite the group's limited achievements since the 2008 financial crisis.

What are the reasons that make the G20 significant?

First, the Prime Minister has turned the G20 presidency into a significant domestic issue, engaging the entire nation in preparations to highlight India's global importance.

Second, India faces a strategic choice with the BRICS expansion. The group was not very effective before, but with new members, many of whom are close to China, India now needs to be careful about its foreign policies.

Additionally, Brics+ is becoming more political, with China taking a central role and showing a stronger anti-Western stance. Therefore, India needs to consider its position in the group and ending its membership might be better for India.

Why should India discontinue being part of the BRICS grouping?

Economic Issues: Originally, the BRICS was economically strong, but in 2023 it isn't as strong as it used to be. **Some, like China and Russia, are still wealthy, but that doesn't guarantee power.**

China's growth has slowed, and Russia has become weaker due to prolonged wars. Argentina is on the edge of a financial crisis while South Africa faces high unemployment and other issues.

Egypt needs help from the International Monetary Fund, and even Saudi Arabia and the UAE are in trouble because of climate change, which will reduce the value of their oil.

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Hence, **most BRICS+ countries have seen their economic strength decline, except for India, which is still growing.** Since India no longer fits in well with the other BRICS members, it should consider leaving.

Political Issues: BRICS+ is becoming more political as it's leaning towards China and against Western nations, **contradicting India's neutral foreign policy.**

Additionally, most new BRICS+ members are autocracies, except for Argentina and Ethiopia. Given this increasing political orientation and India being a democracy, **it should consider leaving the group dominated by autocratic nations.**

Global Governance Issues: The current international order led by the US and G7 isn't working well anymore. Multilateral financial institutions also don't give emerging countries like India enough say.

Although India seeks a new world order, it doesn't match China, Russia, or Saudi Arabia's vision within BRICS+.

The other BRICS members aim to reduce the US dollar's dominance and offer different resources to poorer nations. However, these goals suggest a new world order based on the dominance of China.

So, **shifting from US to Chinese dominance doesn't seem beneficial for India,** as it would support China's goals in BRICS+.

Must Read: [BRICS-Plus – Significance and Implications– Explained](#)

What can be the way ahead?

The G7 is outdated, and BRICS+ isn't a good choice. **Hence, to prove its rising influence, India should leave BRICS. At the same time, to support positive alternatives, India should focus on making the G20 successful.**

22. [GOI must consider a law that mandates a cooling-off period before retired judges take another job](#)

Source: The post is based on the article **“Perception Matters – GOI must consider a law that mandates a cooling-off period before retired judges take another job”** published in **The Times of India** on **8th September 2023.**

Syllabus: **GS 2 – Indian Polity – Functioning of the Judiciary**

Relevance: **About cooling-off period**

News: The Supreme Court dismissed a plea by the Bombay Lawyers Association for a cooling-off period for SC and HC judges before accepting political appointments, although such regulations exist for retired bureaucrats.

What are the regulations on cooling-off period for retired bureaucrats?

In 2021, the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) directed state organizations to take vigilance clearance before offering post-retirement positions to bureaucrats in order to avoid hiring officials who have pending cases.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has also mandated a three-year cooling-off period for its retired employees in 2018.

Despite this, there have already been many discussions made regarding the cooling-off period.

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What discussions have taken place regarding the cooling-off period?

The concept of a cooling-off period for retired bureaucrats, judges, and constitutional post holders before entering politics or taking private jobs has been widely discussed.

In 2013, the Election Commission sought to prevent civil servants and police officers from immediately entering politics after retirement.

However, the government rejected the proposal, citing concerns about violating their constitutional rights.

The Supreme Court has also consistently declined to intervene, dismissing similar petitions in 2014 and 2022. Therefore, the government should consider the Supreme Court's suggestion to enact a law on this matter.

Must Read: EC Needs A Smart Focus – Cooling-off periods are impractical in social media age

What can be the way ahead?

Judges in constitutional courts deal with fundamental rights, political disputes, high-stakes policies, and constitutional matters, therefore, it becomes necessary to maintain impartiality.

In this regard, a post-retirement cooling-off period can further enhance public trust and perception of the judiciary.

In a world where politics is polarized with complex policies, a law mandating a cooling-off period for retired judges is becoming increasingly important.

23. The case for decoupled elections

Source: The post is based on the article “The case for decoupled elections” published in **Business Standard** on 9th September 2023.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Indian Polity – Comparison of the Indian Constitutional Scheme with that of Other Countries

Relevance: comparison between the Indian system and the European Union's

News: The article provides a comparative analysis of the Indian system and the European Union.

What are the differences between the Indian system and the European Union (EU)?

States: India has 28 states and 8 Union Territories, while the EU comprises 27 countries.

Official Languages: The EU has 24 official languages, whereas India recognizes 22 languages in its Eighth Schedule and has at least 35 more seeking recognition.

Population: India's population is about 3.5 times larger than the EU's, with around 450 million people.

Income: India has a higher GINI coefficient with a GINI of 36 in 2019, whereas Germany and France have lower GINI coefficients (32 and 30, respectively), while Bulgaria and Lithuania have higher ones (39 and around 36, respectively).

Currency: The EU has a common currency used by 20 nations, with the option for seven more to join if they meet the Maastricht or Convergence Criteria.

Trades: The EU functions as a common market, allowing the free movement of goods and people across member countries. Labor rights include automatic residency rights, and goods can be sold anywhere within the union.

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Political System: In the EU, each nation has its own political system, laws, and elections with varying polling methods. **The EU mandates a secret ballot.** Voting systems range from first-past-the-post to proportional representation or ranked voting.

Each nation also maintains its own parliamentary system and enacts its own laws.

The EU is governed by the European Parliament (EP) in Strasbourg, France. **EP members are directly elected by citizens of member states every five years** using secret ballot and proportional representation.

The EP has a key role in voting on laws, negotiating on behalf of the EU, overseeing joint institutions, questioning the central bank on monetary policy, and establishing cross-zone commissions.

After the EP passes legislation, member nations must harmonize their local laws with the EP laws. **This is similar to India's federal system, where states can make their own laws but must align them with parliamentary legislation.**

However, **EU member states have more flexibility compared to Indian states in this regard.**

National Elections: EU member nations hold separate national elections from European Parliament (EP) elections, allowing them to prioritize local issues over pan-national matters.

India follows a similar approach, keeping state elections separate from Lok Sabha elections to maintain a clear focus on local concerns and avoid overshadowing by national considerations.

Taxes and Policies: Member states can set their income tax rates, with varying slabs. Indirect taxes are locally decided but must adhere to EU-approved value-added tax (VAT) levels.

The European Central Bank sets policy interest rates and utilizes other monetary policy tools as necessary.

24. Continental Shift? Why it's not quite Asia's century yet

Source: The post is based on the article "Continental Shift? Why it's not quite Asia's century yet" published in **The Times of India** on **9th September 2023**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – International Relations – Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests

Relevance: About the term Asian century

News: During the recent visit to Indonesia for the Asean-India and East Asia summits, PM Modi described the 21st century as the 'Asian century.'

What is the significance of the term Asian century?

The term gained popularity in the 1990s when East Asia was seen as a model for rapid economic growth.

Today, **Asia leads the world in economic growth and has the largest middle class. Three of the world's top five economies are also located in Asia.**

Moreover, the term goes beyond economic competitiveness, as it also includes **cultural richness because of the presence** of three of the world's oldest river valley civilizations.

However, some don't agree with this idea and argue that Asia is not a natural bloc but rather a creation of European geographers.

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They argue that there is lack of overlap between the economy of central Asian republics and East Asian economy. **They also argue that Asia lacks the hegemonic power that** the United States had in the 20th century.

Therefore, it is not wise to portray 21st century as the 'Asian century'.

Must Read: India's dilemmas in an Asian century and What is Asian centrality?

What is the way ahead?

The Indian Prime Minister has called for the need to build a rules-based order in Asia, which is seen as a challenge to China's growing influence.

China also faces significant resistance to its leadership in Asia, turning the continent into a place of competing ideas.

Therefore, even though **Asia stands out as the world's most economically active region with strong trade connections, the idea of the 'Asian century' still remains to be fully achieved.**

25. An overhaul, the criminal law Bills, and the big picture

Source– The post is based on the article **“An overhaul, the criminal law Bills, and the big picture”** published in **“The Hindu”** on **9th September 2023**.

Syllabus: GS2- Indian Polity

Relevance- Important bills and acts

News– The central government has introduced three Bills in Parliament in August called the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023, the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023 and the Bharatiya Sakshya (BS) Bill, 2023.

What are provisions in BNSS on registration of FIR and conducting inquiry?

The BNSS includes a provision regarding the **registration of cognisable offenses** at any police station, **regardless of the location** of committed offense. This practice is known as recording a **First Information Report at Zero**.

A new provision has been introduced to allow for a **preliminary inquiry** to determine the presence of a **prima facie case**.

This should be done even when the information suggests the commission of a **cognisable offense** punishable with **imprisonment between three to seven years**.

This diverges from the **Supreme Court's ruling in Lalita Kumari versus Govt. of Uttar Pradesh (2013)**. SC mandated the **mandatory registration of an FIR** when a cognisable offense is disclosed.

This clause has both advantages and disadvantages. Parties in dispute may reach a **compromise** within the **14-day timeframe** allotted for a **preliminary inquiry**. But, the police might misuse this period to avoid registering even valid cases.

What are provisions in BNSS related to arrest of accused and issues related to them?

All **provisions of the CrPC on arrest** have been retained in the BNSS.

A new clause stipulates that for **offenses** carrying a **sentence of less than three years of imprisonment**, an arrest can only be made with **prior permission** from the Deputy Superintendent of Police. It is for individuals who are **infirm or aged over 60**.

The new Codes allow for **handcuffing in** at least a dozen categories of persons accused of serious offenses, including terrorist acts, murder, rape, acid attacks, or offenses against the state. This is likely to aid the police in **securing the custody** of such individuals.

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However, the **enabling section** guiding handcuffing remains unchanged. It states that “the person arrested shall not be subjected to **more restraint** than is necessary to **prevent his escape.**”

Therefore, the investigating officer will still need to **justify handcuffing** based on the **potential for escape or physical harm** when these criminals are presented before the court.

The new Sanhita introduces a requirement for a **forensic expert** to visit the crime scene and **collect forensic evidence** in cases where the punishment is more than **seven years of imprisonment.**

However, the new code has recognized the **practical limitations** of **limited forensic infrastructure** at the ground level. State governments have been granted a maximum of five years to implement this provision.

The Sanhita promotes the use of **audio and video recording** during various stages of investigations, including searches. However, the preferred **use of smartphones**, as recommended, has its limitations.

In the case of **Shafhi Mohammad vs. The State Of Himachal Pradesh (2018)**, the Supreme Court directed the Ministry of Home Affairs and states to establish **facilities for the videography and photography** of crime scenes during **police station-level investigations.**

What is criticism against BNSS code?

The ban on the two-finger test in cases of rape is not explicitly included in the Code. The Supreme Court has declared in the **Lillu @ Rajesh & Anr vs. State Of Haryana (2013)** case that this test is **unscientific** and violates the **dignity and privacy** of rape victims.

Regarding the disclosure of the **identity of rape victims**, the provision allowing **authorization to the next of kin** when the victim is a minor needs reconsideration.

This is because the **Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act** exclusively addresses this issue and does not include a similar provision.

The Supreme Court, in the case of **Nipun Saxena vs. Union Of India (2018)** expressed reservations about **delegating such authority** to the next of kin.

One provision in the Sanhita that has drawn criticism is the **extension of the period of police custody** beyond the 15 days stipulated in the CrPC.

This extension allows the police to **re-interrogate** an accused individual if **additional evidence** surfaces during an investigation.

What are some positive aspects of the BNSS code?

The Sanhita proposes broadening the scope of judicial inquiry into **suspicious deaths** to include **dowry-related deaths.**

A useful addition that could have been included in the Sanhita relates to **videography and photography of post-mortems**, especially in cases of **custodial deaths or deaths resulting from encounters.**

The **Supreme Court and the National Human Rights Commission of India** have consistently urged states to comply with such directives.

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26. India's G20 presidency has been a landmark- The voice of emerging powers must be heard

Source: The post is based on the article “Manjeet Kripalani writes: **India's G20 presidency has been a landmark- The voice of emerging powers must be heard**. India's G20 presidency is the first step on that course” published in “The Indian express” on 9th September 2023.

Syllabus: GS2- International relation- Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests

News: The article discusses India's role in the G20 Leaders' Summit, highlighting its achievements as the G20 President. It underscores India's leadership in health and digital inclusion. The article also touches on global challenges, the G7's resistance to change, and emerging powers seeking greater influence in global decision-making.

How has India's role as G20 President impacted the global stage?

Pandemic Leadership: India emphasized pandemic preparedness during its G20 presidency, becoming a model for other nations after effectively managing the Covid-19 crisis.

Digital Influence: India's push for digital public infrastructure, such as the Unified Payments Interface, has expanded to nearly two dozen countries, setting a global trend.

Geopolitical Balance: Amid the Russia-Ukraine conflict, India maintained neutrality, effectively balancing relations with major global players like Russia and the U.S.

Democratizing G20: India's presidency democratized the G20 process, emphasizing inclusivity and bringing the discussions closer to its citizens by hosting in different cities.

Promotion of Multilateral Cooperation: With initiatives like involving the African Union in the G20, India is fostering broader global collaborations.

What are the main G20 challenges?

Russia-Ukraine War: The conflict has created divisions among G20 members, with countries forced to pick sides or maintain neutrality.

Differences between G7 and G20: The G7, a subgroup within the G20, often pulls in a different direction on key issues. For instance, while the G7 might have a unified stance, other G20 members seek equitable decisions on debt and climate commitments.

Digital Inclusion: India's initiative of digital public infrastructure like the Unified Payments Interface faces resistance, especially from U.S. private entities and Chinese state companies.

Financial Reforms: The G20 faces challenges in reforming the multilateral financial architecture, with differences in opinions among its members.

Energy and Climate Commitments: While the need for action on climate change is unanimous, the methods and commitments vary among members.

What recent global changes impact the G20's direction?

Geopolitical Tensions: The absence of China and Russia from the G20 summit highlights underlying global tensions.

BRICS Expansion: The growth of the BRICS nations is reshaping global dynamics.

India's Lunar Landing: This achievement highlights the rising technological and scientific capabilities of emerging nations.

Ukraine Conflict's Economic Impact: The war has caused distortions in food and energy markets, affecting global trade and economics.

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What's the future of G20?

New Presidencies: After India, Brazil and South Africa will lead the G20, emphasizing health, digital inclusion, and financial reforms.

IBSA Collaboration: The India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) grouping will enhance G20's focus on health, debt relief, and climate goals.

African Union Inclusion: India's proposal to include the African Union in the G20 is expected to be accepted, diversifying the group's representation.

Shift Towards Global South: G20 is likely to increase its association with the Global South, which has historically been excluded from major global processes.

Dialogue Platform: Despite disagreements, the G20 will remain a key forum for dialogue and cooperation, adapting to a world in transition.

27. India's G20 opportunity: Internet shutdowns hamper Digital India promise

Source: The post is based on the article "India's G20 opportunity: Internet shutdowns hamper Digital India promise – it's time to commit to ending them" published in "The Indian Express" on 9th September 2023.

Syllabus: GS2- International relation- Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests & GS3- Science and tech- Awareness in the fields of IT.

News: The article discusses India's contradictory digital landscape. While India has a high number of internet users and leads in digital innovation, it also frequently shuts down the internet, affecting millions. As India hosts the G20 Summit, it should commit to consistent internet access, matching international digital rights standards.

How India's digital progress contradictory?

India's digital progress presents a picture of contradictions:

Impressive Rankings: India stands second in terms of active internet users and possesses the second-largest social media user base. This showcases the country's rapid embrace of the digital age.

Internet Shutdowns: Contradicting its digital growth, India has imposed the most internet shutdowns globally for five consecutive years. In 2022 alone, the internet was shut down 84 times.

Cutting-Edge Technology: While India is advancing with efforts in 5G and even 6G prototypes, a significant portion of its population still uses outdated 2G technology.

Aadhaar Debates: The digital ID system, Aadhaar, is praised for its unique benefits. However, it has faced criticism for privacy concerns and connectivity issues, which sometimes prevent basic services like obtaining rations or making UPI payments.

What has the G20 discussed about digital inclusion?

Digital Public Infrastructure: The G20 DEWG led discussions on Digital Public Infrastructure, recognizing its importance in modern societies.

Digital Inclusion Priority: One of their primary areas of discussion was "Digital Inclusion — Connecting the Unconnected", emphasizing the importance of bringing connectivity to all.

Inclusivity in Planning: The G20 DEWG document pushes for inclusivity to eliminate barriers. This aims for the empowerment of end-users and focuses on last-mile access.

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Emphasis on Human Rights: The same document accentuates the need for a human rights-centric approach at every stage, from planning to operation.

How can India realign with global digital standards?

End Internet Shutdowns: With 84 shutdowns in 2022, India should reduce these to uphold consistent internet access and match international standards.

Honor International Commitments: India's signing of the G7 "open societies" joint statement in 2021 against "politically motivated shutdowns" should be adhered to, removing any qualifiers.

Strengthen Digital Infrastructure: While India pushes for 5G and 6G, efforts should be made to upgrade the vast population still on 2G.

Address Aadhaar Concerns: Addressing criticisms of Aadhaar, especially concerning privacy and connectivity, will ensure better service delivery without interruptions.

Act on G20 DEWG Recommendations: India should implement the recommendations of the G20 DEWG, focusing on human rights, inclusivity, and consistent high-quality connectivity.

28. G20's well being challenge

Source: The post is based on the article "G20's well being challenge- G20 countries must find ways to share good practices for overcoming the health challenges faced by women, children, and adolescents" published in "The Indian express" on 9th September 2023.

Syllabus: GS2- Social issue- Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health. GS2- International relations- Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests

News: The article discusses the challenges faced by women, children, and adolescents in G20 countries due to factors like Covid-19, conflict, climate change, and cost of living. It stresses the need for G20 leadership in improving their health and well-being for global economic growth. The solutions include better financing, data systems, early childhood investment, and global cooperation.

What challenges are faced by women, children, and adolescents in G20 countries?

The "Four Cs": They are impacted by Covid-19, conflict, climate change, and the rising cost of living.

Climate Displacement: 80% of those displaced due to climate emergencies are women, highlighting gender-specific challenges.

Preventable Deaths: Almost 2 million deaths occur yearly among these groups in G20 countries. Many are avoidable with proper care and resources.

Economic Inequalities: Women continue to earn less than men, even with similar education, pushing many into poverty.

Healthcare Shortfalls: Numerous countries can't maintain pre-pandemic health spending levels, affecting the health of these vulnerable groups.

Environmental Impact: Climate change caused over 1,50,000 deaths in 2000, with children bearing 88% of this burden.

What role does G20 play?

Population Representation: G20 countries encompass two-thirds of the world's population, making their decisions highly impactful.

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Economic Power: They represent approximately 85% of the global GDP, granting them immense economic leverage in international matters.

Digital Health Drive: Under G20's watch, India launched digital health strategies, leading to the registration of a billion people for vaccine monitoring and distributing 1.78 billion Covid-19 doses.

Addressing Climate Impact: Recognizing the critical link between climate and health, G20 is spearheading initiatives to mitigate the negative effects of the climate crisis on public health.

Promotion of Collaboration: The G20 encourages countries to cooperate, share best practices, and collectively address challenges.

What actions are suggested for G20?

Prioritize Health and Well-being: The G20 must make the health and well-being of women, children, and adolescents a permanent fixture on its action agenda.

Increase Financing: They should prioritize cross-cutting financing to strengthen health systems, improve access to health services, and address social factors like poverty and gender inequality.

Develop Robust Data Systems: Strong data systems are needed to monitor and effectively implement policies and programs.

Promote Research and Health Tech Development: G20 countries should advance research and development of new health technologies and vaccines.

Invest in Early Childhood: Emphasize investing in the early years, promoting family-friendly policies and universal social protection.

Tackle Youth Unemployment: Focus on skills development for adolescents, promoting digital literacy, and environmentally conscious growth.

29. Eastern hedge – on India and ASEAN relationship

Source– The post is based on the article “**Eastern hedge**” published in “**The Hindu**” on **8th September 2023**.

Syllabus: GS2- Regional and global groupings

Relevance- India and ASEAN relationship

News– Recently Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited the Indonesian capital of Jakarta for the annual India-ASEAN summit.

What are the challenges faced by the world today?

As per the UNCTAD in its ‘Global Trade Update’ on June 21, the outlook for worldwide trade in the latter half of 2023 is gloomy due to a series of **negative factors**.

These factors include reduced **global economic forecasts**, **ongoing inflation**, **financial vulnerabilities**, and **geopolitical tensions** taking center stage.

Food insecurity has been exacerbated by the **conflict in Ukraine**, the effects of **climate change**, and the various **policy responses to combat inflationary pressures** at the national level. The **potential onset of an El Niño** further complicates the situation.

What were the important developments during the summit?

The joint statement issued by leaders during the ASEAN-India summit, titled ‘Enhancing Food Security and Nutrition in Response to Crises,’ underscores the collective concern felt within the region regarding the heightened global food insecurity.

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This insecurity has been exacerbated by the conflict in Ukraine, the effects of climate change, and the various policy responses to combat inflationary pressures at the national level.

How India positioned itself at the ASEAN summit?

Modi emphasized the importance of a post-COVID-19 **world order governed by rules** and advocated for a **free and open Indo-Pacific**.

It was clearly aimed at certain members of the **Asian bloc** who are growing increasingly concerned about **China's recent assertiveness** in the South China Sea.

The Prime Minister's implicit message to ASEAN members is that India is a **dependable, long-term strategic and economic partner** that has no **territorial ambitions**.

India also aimed to position itself as a voice that amplifies the **concerns of the Global South**.

What are trade related issues between two countries?

For India, **trade relations** with eastern economies have **grown in volume** but have shown **significant imbalances**. Imports are far exceeding India's exports.

The **widening trade deficit** and concerns that Chinese products are **exploiting lower tariffs** under the FTA to enter the Indian market have contributed to a **review of the agreement**. It is expected to be completed in 2025.

30. Change the playbook, repatriate Indian children

Source– The post is based on the article “Change the playbook, repatriate Indian children” published in “The Hindu” on 9th September 2023.

Syllabus: GS2- Vulnerable sections of the population

Relevance- Issues related to children

News– The article explains the issues of children who are taken away from their migrant parents by authorities in advanced countries.

What are issues related to the process of confiscation of children by foreign authorities from migrant parents?

A migrated family in a high-income country finds themselves in a **troubling situation** where they are **accused of mistreating** their children.

These allegations surface through the child's struggles in **adapting to a foreign environment** at school and when parents seek **medical care** for an injured or ill child.

The ensuing **legal process** is **heavily biased**. Assessments carried out by social workers who hold **cultural biases** against the family.

As a result, the parents **lose custody** of their children. They are subsequently placed in **foster care** for their entire childhood.

Contact with the parents is **severely restricted**. It is often limited to just one hour every few weeks in a dismal contact centre. Over time, the child becomes **completely estranged** from their parents.

What are the issues faced by children who are taken away from their parents?

These children are entrusted to local foster parents who do not share the **same ethnic or cultural background** as the child's family of origin.

Consequently, these children lose their **sense of identity**. They fail to establish **meaningful connections** with either their host country or their extended family back home.

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When they eventually leave foster care, they are left feeling **doubly alienated**. They are not considered citizens of the country where they reside, and they lack **significant ties** to their country of origin.

Way forward-

A more **compassionate and humane solution** for such children would involve their **safe return** to their home country, rather than leaving them in the **custody of a foreign state**.

Foreign nations should move beyond **self-righteous perspectives**. They should conduct **genuine investigations** into parents' claims of **cultural bias and unfair trials** within their **child protection systems**.

The fate of these children should be considered from a **broader perspective**, rather than merely focusing on their **place of residence**.

31. The New Look In New Delhi

Source– The post is based on the article “**The New Look In New Delhi**” published in “**The Times of India**” on **9th September 2023**.

Syllabus: GS2- International relations

Relevance- Multilateralism in Indian foreign policy

News– The article explains the different phases of multilateralism in Indian foreign policy and key elements of multilateralism in the present context.

What are different phases of multilateralism for India?

First phase– India's history of **multilateral engagement** can be divided into **four distinct periods**. The first phase saw India's **unwavering commitment to the United Nations**. However, this approach came into conflict with the **realities of the Cold War**.

Second phase- It involved India's participation in the **Afro-Asian conference in Bandung** and the **formation of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)**.

NAM served as both a **diplomatic shield and an ideological framework**. It helped India to position itself between the **competing influences of Moscow and Washington**.

However, NAM **proved ineffective** when put to the test. During the 1962 conflict with China, many African and West Asian nations **aligned themselves** with Beijing.

Third phase- The **post-Cold War era**, marked by **India's economic liberalization** in 1991, ushered in a **third phase of multilateralism**. India was a participant in the creation of the **BRIC group**.

The Quad originated during the tenure of U.S. President George W. Bush. It was inspired by the impressive **joint response** of the four Quad nations' navies to the **Asian tsunami disaster**. President Bush decided to **formalize this cooperation**. It gave birth to the **Quadrilateral Security Dialogue**, later known as the **Quad**.

However, during its initial phase, the Quad faced **geopolitical challenges**. China strongly opposed it. Australia withdrew from the group, and India found itself **standing alone** as the **main proponent** of the initiative.

Fourth phase- The Modi government represents the latest phase of India's approach to multilateralism. It involves several key elements.

What are key aspects of the new phase of multilateralism by India?

There is a **deliberate shift** away from the **Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)**. Prime Minister Modi has not physically attended a **single NAM summit**.

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There is an effort to **reshape post-Cold War groupings** to counter **China's expanding influence**. In the most recent BRICS summit, India attempted to resist Beijing's plans to transform BRICS into an **alternative to the Group of Seven (G7)**.

The Quad has taken the **forward-looking turn**. Its primary focus is on ensuring that China does not dominate in **strategic technology**.

Another aspect of India's approach involves the establishment of a series of **small, specialized minilateral groups**, each addressing a **single issue**.

These minilaterals aim to address **gaps in the existing international order**, which has been marked by a loss of legitimacy in the West due to **internal crises**.

Additionally, these efforts respond to the **incapacity of current international organizations** to address **urgent global crises**, especially in the context of climate change.

The **International Solar Alliance** garnered substantial interest from developing nations. It has prompted India to transform it into a permanent entity.

The **Climate Disaster Resilience Initiative** emerged from India's **genuine concerns** that the West was neglecting **climate adaptation efforts**.

At the recent G20 summit, India is actively working on restructuring the entire **multilateral development bank system** to redirect its focus toward **green finance for the Global South**.

India is also planning the establishment of a **new multilateral body**, capitalizing on its **digital successes**. It is known as the **One Future Alliance**.

India is collaborating with Western countries on many of these initiatives. Much of this new multilateralism will ultimately be financed by **Western development agencies**.

This could be the most **critical geopolitical aspect** of India's **current phase of multilateralism**.

What are the challenges for the new phase of multilateralism by India?

India still has a long way to go before it can assert itself as a **rule-maker on the global stage**.

The **International Solar Alliance** has encountered challenges in **maintaining its vision**. It is shifting its focus more toward **aid projects** than setting **global standards**.

The **Climate Disaster Resilience Initiative** is still in its early stages. The success of the **One Future Alliance** may be challenging to achieve, as governments tend to be cautious when presented with **digital initiatives**.

General Studies Paper –3

General Studies - 3

1. The impact of food on climate

Source: The post is based on the article “**The impact of food on climate**” published in **Business standard** on 4th September 2023.

Syllabus: GS3- Agriculture- food crisis & Environment- climate change

News: The article talks about how agriculture affects climate change, comparing big industrial farming with small subsistence farming. It focuses on the problems caused by methane emissions from livestock and rice farming. It also notes that global policies avoid these problems because of strong meat and farming industries.

How does agriculture and the food we eat contribute to changes in the world's climate?

Agriculture and food consumption significantly affect the world's climate:

Emissions from Food Production: In 2018, the food we produced was responsible for 11% of global greenhouse gas emissions.

Livestock's Role: About 40% of these emissions come from livestock digestion. For example, the digestion process in cattle releases methane, a potent greenhouse gas.

Waste and Manure: Livestock manure, either applied to fields or discarded, adds 26% to the emissions, mainly in the form of nitrous oxide.

Use of Fertilisers: Synthetic fertilisers contribute an additional 13% to the emissions.

Rice Cultivation: Growing rice, especially in waterlogged fields, results in methane emissions, accounting for 10% of agricultural emissions.

India's Livestock: With the largest livestock population, India's methane emissions from livestock digestion constitute 8% of its total greenhouse gases.

Why are farmers the first victims of climate change?

Farmers are the first victims of climate change due to:

Cost and Infrastructure: The increasing cost of agricultural inputs, combined with the lack of public infrastructure like irrigation, adversely affects their livelihood.

Food Import: With rising food costs, governments often import from intensive farming systems, pushing local farmers out of competition.

Extreme Weather Events: Farmers are directly impacted by events like floods, droughts, pest attacks, and unseasonal cold and heat, leading to lost crops and income.

Double Impact: While dealing with the challenges of changing climate, they also grapple with the pressure from industrial-agricultural models.

How does industrial farming differ from subsistence farming?

Scale and Setup: Industrial farming is large-scale with factory farms, while subsistence farming involves smaller landholdings.

Purpose: Industrial farms produce for a broader market, whereas subsistence farming mainly serves personal or local consumption.

Chemical Usage: Industrial operations use vast quantities of chemical inputs, whereas subsistence farming often uses fewer or organic inputs.

Ownership: Industrial-agriculture can be corporate-driven, contrasting with the individual ownership in subsistence farming.

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Livestock Handling: In industrial farming, livestock is often kept in large, concentrated numbers for mass production. In contrast, subsistence farmers typically have fewer livestock, crucial for their personal sustenance and local economy.

How is the international community reacting to emissions from the agriculture sector?

UN's Stance: The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) hasn't strongly addressed food production's impact on climate.

Netherlands' Initiative: When the Netherlands tried to reduce nitrous oxide emissions, requiring major changes in farming, it faced massive protests, even leading to governmental changes.

New Zealand's Proposal: The country considered a "burp" tax based on cattle numbers and feed, but faced resistance. As a result, the proposal was deferred.

Agriculture vs. Meat: Globally, confronting the meat industry's impact on emissions remains challenging, with its influence comparable to the fossil fuel sector.

2. Unabated global warming will wipe penguins off this planet

Source: The post is based on the article "**Unabated global warming will wipe penguins off this planet- All species deserve to survive regardless of their utility to humans**" published in "Live Mint" on 4th September 2023.

Syllabus: GS3- Environment- climate change

News: The article talks about how global warming is making sea ice melt sooner in Antarctica. This is causing baby emperor penguins to die. It says we should save animals even if it doesn't help humans directly.

Why are penguins in danger?

Global Warming: The main threat is global warming causing early sea ice melting in Antarctica.

Breeding Challenges: Emperor penguins need sea ice to breed and raise their chicks. Without stable ice, chicks face risks:

Drowning: Chicks aren't ready to swim until December. Melting ice leads to their premature exposure to water.

Freezing: In 2010, after an unusual rainstorm, wet chicks froze before their feathers matured. Hundreds died as observed by geographer Peter Fretwell of the British Antarctic Survey.

Breeding Failures: Research from **Nature Communications, Earth and Environment** revealed alarming data:

In the Bellingshausen Sea, 19 out of 62 colonies failed to breed last year.

Penguins need consistent successful breeding. Young penguins have a high mortality rate, so continuous failures threaten colony survival.

Why should we care about penguins?

Natural Ecosystem: Penguins help us understand the balance and intricacies of the natural world.

Indicator Species: Their struggles signal broader environmental issues, like global warming.

Food Chain Impact: Losing sea ice affects krill, the base of the food chain in the Southern Ocean. This could lead to a collapse in fish populations that humans rely on for food.

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Intrinsic Value: As highlighted by Rachel Carson's "Silent Spring," creatures enhance life on Earth in intangible ways. Their mere presence adds to the world's richness.

Legacy for Future: Protecting penguins ensures a diverse and vibrant ecosystem for future generations.

3. Current green transition solutions disregard social and political realities, both international and domestic

Source: The post is based on the article "**Current green transition solutions disregard social and political realities, both international and domestic**" published in **The Indian Express** on 4th September 2023.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Environment – Clean Energy

Relevance: challenges in achieving green energy transition

News H.L. Mencken's quote, "For every complex problem, there is an answer that is simple, clear, and wrong," applies to the green energy transition. However, the solution provided for green energy transition falls short in addressing the issue effectively.

What solutions have been proposed for the green energy transition?

The solutions provided for the green transition include electrifying industrial and transportation systems with green energy, cutting generation and storage costs through technology, upgrading infrastructure, and implementing innovative financing.

However, **these solutions may not be sufficient to** prevent global temperatures from exceeding 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels because they overlook international dynamics and domestic political and social factors.

What are the international, social and political factors associated with shifting towards green energy transition?

First, global leaders recognize climate change as a global issue requiring global solutions, but **governments are promoting resource nationalism by** encouraging green energy investments within their borders.

For instance, the US Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 offers \$365 billion in incentives, while Europe and **India (PLI schemes)** also have similar schemes.

Second, the green energy transition will **have distributional consequences in the form of winners and losers**. Those who lose their job may resist the transition, so **governments need to make choices on how to distribute the costs and benefits**.

Moreover, the lack of governance institutions in green energy transitions is also a major problem.

What factors contribute to the absence of governance institutions in the green energy transition?

First, the term "green energy transition" lacks clarity as it implies a complete shift from fossil fuels to clean energy, which is not the case. **The transition will be gradual, with fossil fuels still prominent in the energy mix**.

For instance, the shift from coal to oil in the 20th century provide that coal was not completely replaced.

Moreover, **according to a recent IMF data**, governments provided \$1.5 trillion in fossil fuel subsidies in 2022.

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Additionally, when factoring the hidden costs associated with air pollution and global warming, **this support amounted to approximately 7.1% of global GDP**. This justifies the dependence on fossil fuel for energy security and economic growth.

Second, a divide has emerged between China and the West due to their differing strengths. **While China dominates the supply of essential minerals, the West dominates in advanced technology.**

Both sides aim to avoid dependence while recognizing their interdependence. As a result, they are opting for a “de-risking” approach rather than complete “decoupling.”

Must Read: [Financing the Green transition: initiative and challenges – Explained](#)

What is the way ahead?

There’s an urgent need to expedite the energy transition by **creating institutions that promote** global cooperation, skill development, technology transfer, and conflict resolution.

4. Onward, sunward – Aditya-L1 gives India’s space programme one more boundary to push

Source: The post is based on the article **“Onward, sunward – Aditya-L1 gives India’s space programme one more boundary to push”** published in **The Hindu** on **4th September 2023**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Science & Technology – Space Missions

Relevance: About Aditya L1 Mission

News: Recently, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has launched the Aditya-L1 Mission. It is India’s first space mission dedicated to studying the sun.

About Aditya L-1 Mission

Aditya-L1 will study the sun from the L1 Lagrange point, which is 1.5 million kilometers from Earth.

It aims to study the sun using seven instruments, which include both remote-sensing and in situ tools.

It will study the nature of the solar wind, which affects space weather and spacecraft components **and the coronal heating problem**, which involves explaining why the sun’s upper atmosphere is much hotter than its surface.

Its findings could have a major impact on the understanding of space weather and the evolution of stars.

Read More: [Not Just Moon: Isro’s Aditya-L1, India’s first Solar mission, reaches spaceport](#)

What is the way ahead?

Aditya-L1 may seem simple mission, but it presents significant challenges that will test both the Indian space program and the national solar physics community.

Moreover, after Chandrayaan-3’s successful landing, this mission is important for evaluating ISRO’s ability to study the Sun.

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5. Emerging countries need women-led climate action

Source: The post is based on the article “**Emerging countries need women-led climate action**” published in “The Hindu” on 5th September 2023.

Syllabus: GS3- Environment – climate change

News: The article discusses how climate change disproportionately affects women, especially in low-income countries. It also emphasizes the importance of women’s education, training, and inclusion in climate policy decision-making for effective adaptation and mitigation.

Why are women in developing and less developed countries more vulnerable to climate change?

Dependence on Natural Resources: Women in these countries often rely on natural resources for their livelihood, making them directly affected by climate shifts.

Poverty: Women are more likely to live in poverty than men. This financial strain limits their ability to adapt to environmental changes.

Responsibility for Basic Needs: Women, especially in rural areas, are tasked with fetching water, food, and fuel. Climate change makes these tasks more difficult, increasing their daily burdens.

Agriculture’s Impact: According to the ILO, over 60% of working women in southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa are in agriculture.

Land Ownership: Despite being key in food production, women own only about 10% of the farming land.

Exposure to Disasters: According to a UN study, 80% of those displaced by climate-related disasters are women and girls.

How can investing in women help?

Adaptation to Climate Effects: Educating women aids in navigating climate change impacts. For instance, SEWA in India teaches women sustainable farming in shifting climate patterns.

Resource Management: Training women ensures better sustainable practices for agriculture, water, and energy.

Strengthening Livelihoods: By empowering women with knowledge and resources, they can better financially support themselves, especially against climate-induced threats.

Promotion of Sustainable Practices: Investing in women’s training in eco-friendly farming ensures a more sustainable approach to agriculture and food security.

Why is women’s participation in decision-making vital?

Unique Perspectives: Women, especially from vulnerable communities, bring firsthand experiences that can guide effective climate strategies.

Address Gender-specific Issues: As noted by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), after disasters like the 2015 Nepal earthquake, women faced trafficking risks. Their inclusion can ensure such issues are addressed.

Promotion of Equity: Gender parity in decision-making ensures all voices are heard, leading to more comprehensive solutions.

Effective Adaptation and Mitigation: Programs like the Gender and Climate Change Development Programme in South Asia emphasize the importance of women’s voices for successful climate change strategies.

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6. The need to build sovereign AI capabilities

Source– The post is based on the article “**The need to build sovereign AI capabilities**” published in the “**Business Standard**” on **5th September 2023**.

Syllabus: GS3- Science and technology – Indigenization of Technology and Developing New Technology.

Relevance- Issues related to AI development in India

News– The article explains the issue of building sovereign AI capabilities by India

What is the potential of AI?

AI and deep learning are increasingly used in recent years across various applications, like **e-commerce recommendations and self-driving cars**.

The emergence of **Generative AI**, including models like ChatGPT, DALL-E from OpenAI, Bard from Google has ushered in a new era.

Generative AI models can generate fresh **content from unstructured data, provide coherent responses to natural language queries, and propose solutions and ideas**.

These solutions have potential to **transform fields** ranging from drug discovery to the creation of video and audio content. This technology is likely to have a more profound impact on the **global economy and society**.

What are challenges for India in developing its own capabilities in AI?

Numerous Indian companies, like Tata Consultancy Services and Infosys have embraced **Generative AI**. But, none of them have developed their own **foundational AI models**.

Indian technology firms and even the Indian government have primarily concentrated on the **applications of AI**. However, focusing exclusively on applications would be a mistake.

Establishing **AI capabilities like Generative AI models**, will pose a significant challenge for India due to its late entry into this domain.

In the United States, both **university research institutes and technology giants** like OpenAI, Google have invested substantial resources in **cutting-edge AI research**.

In China, companies like Baidu and SenseTime, along with numerous startups, have created their **own Generative AI models**.

In European countries, many firms and research institutions in France, Germany, and other European nations are developing their **own transformer and other AI models**.

Even in South Korea, internet giant Naver is entering the **AI research arena**.

What should be done?

India should also invest in the capacity to create **indigenous foundational AI models**. Furthermore, India needs to commence research into the **next frontier of AI**, known as **General AI**.

India must formulate a **clear plan** and execute it **effectively**. One option is for the Indian government to take the lead and establish a **national AI computing center**.

Another approach, is similar to the **original charter of OpenAI**. It involves **collaboration** between influential Indian IT firms to fund an **AI research institute**.

This **cooperative model** would require setting aside **market rivalries** to focus on the **long-term common good**.

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It is imperative for the government to **formulate policies** that can attract the most brilliant Indian minds currently engaged in AI research in the United States or Europe back to India.

China's AI research program has incentivized highly talented Chinese engineers and AI researchers who in US or European universities to work in China.

The Indian government must **formulate strategy** to attract the best Indian AI talent to return from Silicon Valley and US universities.

The government should consider **enacting new legislation** related to **copyright and data usage, granting primary rights over non-personal data** generated within the country to Indian entities.

7. Rethinking growth – Economic growth policies

Source– The post is based on the article “**Rethinking growth**” published in the “**Business Standard**” on **5th September 2023**.

Syllabus: GS3 – Indian Economy

Relevance- Issues related to growth and development

News– The article explains the issues with the current paradigm of economic policymaking.

Why should economic growth not be the central focus of economic policymaking?

Growth is undeniably important. But, pursuing growth as an abstract objective lacks **coherence and direction**.

History has shown that governments have achieved the most success in achieving growth when the focus was on **overarching goals**, rather than treating growth itself as the **primary objective**.

For instance, the **internet's emergence** stemmed from the need for satellites to communicate with each other. Due to its widespread adoption, **digital gross domestic product** has been growing at a rate 2.5 times faster than **physical GDP** over the past decade.

Presently, too many **non-financial firms** allocate more resources to **share buybacks and dividend distributions** than to investments in **human capital, machinery, and research and development**.

These practices diminish the **resources available** for **reinvesting in employees**. It increases the gap between those who **control capital** and those who do not.

Financialization often prioritizes **value extraction and short-term profit maximization** over **creating value** for the betterment of society as a whole.

What should be the focus areas of economic policymaking?

Promoting **inclusive growth** requires a departure from the **financialization of economic activities** and a renewed commitment to **investing in the real economy**.

It is essential to recognize that workers are the **true value creators**. Their interests should be prominently featured in discussions concerning **income and wealth distribution**.

It's essential to recognize that **investment-led growth and workers' rights** should not be seen as **conflicting priorities**. Striking a **balance between corporate engagement and a dedication** to workers is crucial.

It's important to understand that the economy cannot naturally evolve in a **socially desirable direction** without intervention. The government has a vital role to play.

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A **new thinking** is required to achieve growth that is “**smart**” and **environmentally sustainable and inclusive**.

Governments should establish **economic policy roadmaps** with **well-defined objectives** based on what matters most to both people and the planet.

Support for businesses should be contingent on their commitment to making **new investments** that lead to a **greener and more inclusive real economy**.

For instance, consider the **United States’ CHIPS and Science Act**. It seeks to boost the **domestic semiconductor industry**. This law prohibits the use of funds for **share buybacks**.

Governments must also make targeted investments in their **own capabilities, tools, and institutions**.

The outsourcing of **critical capacities** has undermined their ability to **adapt to evolving needs and demands**. It has reduced their capacity to generate **purposeful growth**.

Governments need **appropriate capacities and competencies** to **effectively mobilize resources and collaborate with business**.

A **mission-oriented industrial strategy** necessitates a **symbiotic relationship** between the public and private sectors.

8. The tax base is growing – government shouldn’t waste the opportunity

Source: The post is based on the article “**The tax base is growing – government shouldn’t waste the opportunity**” published in “The Indian express” on 6th September 2023.

Syllabus: GS3- Indian economy- Mobilization of resources

News: The author discusses the growth in India’s tax base, with more individuals and companies paying taxes, even during slow economic growth. However, despite the increased tax base, the tax to GDP ratio remains stable due to tax rate reductions and other policy decisions, leaving the government with limited additional revenue for its development goals.

What are the reasons for the growth in India’s tax base?

Direct Taxpayer Growth: Companies paying tax surged by 43% from 7.46 lakh in 2014-15 to 10.7 lakh in 2022-23. Individual taxpayers saw a 65% jump from 5.38 crore to 8.9 crore.

Small Taxpayer Inclusion: A significant portion of new taxpayers earn under Rs 5 lakh, making them an essential segment of the expanding tax base.

GST’s Appeal: Active GST payers increased from 1.2 crore in 2019 to 1.4 crore by 2023. The benefits of GST registration, like input tax credits, may have driven more businesses to pay direct taxes.

Formalization of Firms: Approximately 22% of Indian firms are now formally engaged in tax-paying activities.

Economic Expansion & Formalization: The growth in the tax base can be attributed to the economy’s growth. The formalization of the economy has made tax evasion tougher.

Diverse Taxpayer Profile: Not all taxpayers are active in the workforce. Retirees and those earning from interests or rentals also contribute, suggesting a broadened tax base beyond just the active labor force.

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What are the challenges still present in India's tax system?

Lower Tax Revenues: Despite a broader tax base, the government has limited room to spend due to constrained tax revenues.

Stable Tax to GDP Ratio: The growth in the number of taxpayers hasn't translated into a proportionate increase in the tax to GDP ratio.

Impact of Tax Cuts: The corporate tax rate was cut from 30% to 22%. The resulting revenue loss was Rs 1.28 lakh crore in 2019-20 and Rs 1 lakh crore in 2020-21. The corporate tax to GDP ratio fell from 3.5% in 2018-19 to 3.1% in 2022-23.

Rise in Zero-Tax Individuals: The number of individuals with zero tax liability grew from 2.9 crore in 2019-20 to 5.16 crore in 2022-23. The recent increase in the rebate limit to Rs 7 lakh might further this trend.

Reduced GST Rates: The weighted average GST rate fell from 14.4% during its introduction to 11.6% in 2019 due to tax cuts in 2017 and 2018.

9. Laws governing forests of the Northeast

Source: The post is based on the article "Laws governing forests of the Northeast" published in "The Hindu" on 6th September 2023.

Syllabus: GS3- Environment – environment conservation

News: The article discusses concerns over the Forest (Conservation) Amendment Act, 2023, which allows diversion of forest land near India's borders without clearance. Special constitutional protections in Northeast India like Article 371A for Nagaland and 371G for Mizoram can restrict certain central laws, including forest-related ones.

What is the controversy about the new act?

Amendment Details: The Forest (Conservation) Amendment Act, 2023 is at the center of controversy. It permits the diversion of forest land within 100 km of India's international borders for projects without the typical forest clearance.

Area of Concern: A significant portion of Northeast India, including states like Mizoram, lies within this 100 km range, making them directly affected by the amendment.

Mizoram's Opposition: The Mizoram Assembly unanimously passed a resolution opposing this amendment, aiming to protect the rights and interests of its people.

Constitutional Protections: Northeastern states like Nagaland and Mizoram have special constitutional protections (Article 371A and 371G) that can restrict certain central laws. This creates potential clashes with the new amendment.

Widespread Discontent: It's not just Mizoram. States like Tripura and Sikkim, which are governed by the ruling party or its allies, also expressed concerns and opposed the 100-km exemption clause in the amendment.

Is the Forest Conservation Act (FCA) relevant to Northeast India?

The FCA, established in 1980, governs the diversion of forest lands for non-forest purposes.

Relevancies of FCA are:

Special Protections: Northeastern states like Nagaland and Mizoram have constitutional protections (Article 371A and 371G) that can restrict some central laws.

Nagaland's Stance: Although Nagaland once extended the FCA to government forests, it was later deemed non-applicable due to lack of resolution.

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Mizoram's Position: When Mizoram became a state in 1986, all Central Acts including FCA were extended to it, covering 84.53% of its notified forests.

Other States: The FCA is applicable in Meghalaya, Tripura, the Sixth Schedule Areas within these States, and in Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, and Manipur, with varying extents of FCA clearances.

What is Recorded Forest Area (RFA)?

Definition: RFA refers to lands that are recorded as forests, regardless of their official classification or ownership.

Coverage: Over half of the Northeast region is categorized as RFA.

Types: RFAs include notified forests and unclassified forests (forests not officially categorized).

Supreme Court Ruling: In 1996, the court expanded "forest land" under the FCA to cover areas recorded as forests in government records, broadening the FCA's reach to unclassified forests.

Distribution in Northeast: Percentages range, with Assam at 34.21% and Sikkim at 82.31%. Other states like Mizoram and Nagaland have 35.48% and 53.01% RFA, respectively.

How does the FRA Act impact the Northeast region?

The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act (FRA) 2006 includes various forest classifications, from unclassified to national parks.

Rights Recognition: FRA acknowledges specific rights under state laws, customary laws, and tribal traditions.

Northeast's Stance: While FRA benefits Northeast due to sizable unclassified forests, only Assam and Tripura have implemented it. Other states claim it's irrelevant due to existing land ownership structures.

Mizoram's Shift: Initially, Mizoram extended the FRA in 2009 but retracted in 2019, citing irrelevance as no claims for rights emerged.

What can be done to protect forests?

Measures to Protect Forests:

FRA Implementation: The Environment Ministry, in 2009, emphasized the importance of implementing the Forest Rights Act (FRA) and obtaining prior informed consent from the Gram Sabha before admitting a forest diversion proposal.

Role of District Collector: The District Collector, who heads the committee issuing FRA titles, was tasked with ensuring FRA compliance during the forest clearance process.

Shift in 2022: The Ministry's 2022 Forest Conservation Rules altered the process, asking states to ensure FRA compliance only after final approval for forest diversion.

State's Responsibility: States can ensure mandatory FRA fulfillment and Gram Sabha consent before any forest land is handed over for non-forest purposes.

Tribal Affairs Ministry's Role: This ministry can recognize and settle forest rights when forests are diverted, reinforcing legal security for forest-dwelling communities and forest protection.

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10. Time to decide-Infrastructure development in the hills cannot be the same as in the plains

Source: The post is based on the article “**Time to decide-Infrastructure development in the hills cannot be the same as in the plains**” published in “The Hindu” on 6th September 2023.

Syllabus: GS3- Environment – environment conservation

News: The article discusses concerns about flood damage in north India, with the Chief Justice suggesting a study on the Himalayan region’s sustainability. The Centre proposes a committee to address these concerns, focusing on balancing population growth, infrastructure, and the area’s delicate environment.

What is the “Carrying Capacity”?

The “carrying capacity” is a concept taken from population biology. It refers to the maximum number of a species that can live sustainably in a specific ecosystem without harming it. If the population exceeds this capacity, the environment may get damaged, leading to a natural decrease in species numbers.

What environmental challenges are faced in the Himalayan states?

Population Growth: The Himalayan States struggle to support an increasing number of residents without harming the environment.

Infrastructure Needs: They need roads and buildings, but construction can damage the delicate ecosystem. For example, post the 2013 Uttarakhand floods, road-widening projects continued despite concerns.

Fragile Geography: The region’s unique topography makes development tricky. In January, land issues in Joshimath, Uttarakhand showed this.

Balancing Act: There’s a need to balance between development and preserving the environment. Himachal Pradesh’s recent floods, caused by building on vulnerable mountains, are a case in point.

What are the various proposals to overcome these challenges?

Expert Committee Suggestion: Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud recommended an expert committee to conduct a “complete and comprehensive” study on the Himalayan region’s carrying capacity.

Technical Committee Proposal: Following the suggestion, the Centre proposed a 13-member technical committee to delve into the matter.

Carrying Capacity Guidelines: In 2020, the Centre circulated guidelines among the 13 Himalayan States. The goal was to assess the carrying capacity of hill stations, cities, and eco-sensitive zones in these states.

Reminder from Environment Ministry: The Environment Ministry reminded the states in May to undertake the aforementioned study and submit their findings.

11. RBI’s e-rupee could use UPI for a reformist leap

Source- The post is based on the article “**RBI’s e-rupee could use UPI for a reformist leap**” published in the “**mint**” on **6th September 2023**.

Syllabus: GS3 – Indian Economy – Mobilisation of resources

Relevance- issues related to digitalisation of banking system

News- Recently, State Bank of India has integrated UPI with e-rupee wallets designed for holding the RBI’s central bank digital currency.

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What are some facts about UPI?

The UPI system is administered by the National Payments Corporation of India. It is a consortium of financial institutions.

The UPI platform is built upon India's state operated Aadhaar system, which utilises biometric IDs to verify the identities of bank and telecom users.

What are the benefits associated with integrating UPI with e-rupee wallets designed for holding the RBI's central bank digital currency (CBDC)?

E-rupee holders can now use UPI to conduct swift retail transactions by scanning QR codes. This integration is expected to provide increased liquidity to e-rupees. It could potentially transform UPI in the future.

What will be the potential role of a CBDC with RBI's e-rupee?

it can be a novel medium for offering a fast, cost-effective, and secure alternative to cumbersome cross-border money transfers. Such adoption would also support economic growth, international trade, and financial inclusion.

From a strategic perspective, using RBI's digital tokens for trans-border transactions could potentially serve as a barrier against the adoption of cryptocurrencies and capital flight.

What is the significant distinction between CBDC and UPI?

CBDC represents a direct claim on the currency issuer, RBI. These IOUs are backed by RBI's own guarantee, making them exceptionally secure.

In contrast, UPI relies on the safety of commercial banks participating in the payment process.

12. Use financial inclusion to reduce inequality and speed up growth

Source– The post is based on the article “Use financial inclusion to reduce inequality and speed up growth” published in the “Live Mint” on 6th September 2023.

Syllabus: GS3 – Indian Economy – Inclusive growth

News– The article explain the contribution of B20 grouping for promoting financial inclusion and challenges in prompting financial inclusion.

What is the contribution of B20 for promoting financial inclusion?

The topic of financial inclusion has been a consistent part of the B20 discussions for an extended period. It all began at the Pittsburgh Summit in 2009 when the Financial Inclusion Experts Group (FIEG) was established.

The Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion (GPII) was formed at the Seoul Summit in 2011. It was followed by the introduction of a fundamental set of financial inclusion metrics at the Mexico Summit in 2012.

The China Summit in 2016 led to the adoption of high-level principles for digital financial inclusion. At the Indonesia Summit in 2022, an implementation guide for this was provided.

What are challenges in promoting financial inclusion?

According to the 2021 Global Findex Database from the World Bank, approximately 24% of adults worldwide lack access to formal financial accounts.

Only 29% of adults choose to deposit their savings in a financial institution, and a mere 28% of adults borrow from a formal financial institution on a global scale.

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MSMEs are also facing growing disparities in obtaining financing. A publication by the **World Bank** titled “**MSME Finance Gap: Assessment of the Shortfalls and Opportunities in Financing MSMEs in Emerging Markets**” revealed it.

As per the report, **21% of micro-enterprises** in developing countries face constraints due to **loan application rejections or unfavorable loan terms**. For small and medium-sized enterprises, this figure rises to 30%.

Globally, women encounter various obstacles **accessing basic banking services**. It including **restrictive social norms, limitations on mobility, lack of identification, and limited financial literacy**. This gender disparity is evident in low-income and developing countries.

For example, in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East and North Africa, the **gender gap in bank account ownership** is 12 and 14 percentage points. It is twice the **average gender gap** in emerging economies and three times the global average.

In case of **digital payments**, men with accounts in developing countries are **typically 6 percentage points** more likely than women to use **digital payment methods**.

Women also face greater challenges in **accessing emergency funds**. According to the **World Bank's Findex data** from 2021, only **50% of women in developing nations** claimed they could consistently access emergency cash, compared to **59% of men**.

What is the way forward for financial inclusion?

There are **three main pillars** to reduce barriers to financial inclusion.

The first pillar focuses on enhancing the **ecosystem and facilitators** that drive financial inclusion. Challenges such as a **lack of innovation in financial services, low financial literacy, limited opportunities for capacity building, and gender-based exclusion** can strain ongoing financial inclusion efforts.

To address this, the promotion of **private sector engagement** in financial inclusion through partnerships is necessary.

There is need for enhancement of **individuals' and small enterprises' capacities** through **incubation and financial literacy programs**, and the promotion of **gender-inclusive financial services and initiatives**.

The second pillar aims to expand the **reach of financial products and services**. **Global insurance penetration** remains low at 7% of GDP.

There is also a need to accelerate **financial inclusion for agricultural, rural, and migrant populations**.

This pillar concentrates on reducing the **cost of capital** for financial institutions, devising **innovative distribution channels** for service delivery, and promoting **cross-border payments** through **protocol standardization**.

The final pillar strengthens the **consumer protection framework** to uphold **consumer trust** in new digital products. It seeks to formulate policies that strike a **balance between protection and innovation**.

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13. How unemployment is measured?

Source: The post is based on the article “**How unemployment is measured**” published in “The Hindu” on 7th September 2023.

Syllabus: GS3- Economy – employment

News: The article talks about challenges and methods for measuring unemployment in India. It points out differences with developed countries due to India’s informal economy. It also mentions that varying definitions and time frames can result in different unemployment rates, and the 2020 lockdown’s impact on these rates may not be accurately reflected due to measurement methods.

What is unemployment?

Unemployment refers to when someone is out of a job, is ready to work, and is actively seeking employment. It doesn’t mean simply being without a job; one must also be searching for work.

To measure unemployment, the number of unemployed people is divided by the total labor force to get the unemployment rate.

In 2017, India’s unemployment rate was 6.1%, but by 2021-22, it decreased to 4.1%.

Comparatively, the U.S. had rates fluctuating between 3.5% in 2022 and 3.7% in 2023. The U.S.’s employment-to-population ratio was 60.8% in 2019 with an unemployment rate of 3.7%.

What are the different methods for measuring unemployment in India?

Methods for Measuring Unemployment in India:

Usual Principal and Subsidiary Status (UPSS):

Considers one’s main activity over the past year.

If someone worked for seven months and was unemployed for five, they are still considered employed under this method.

Current Weekly Status (CWS):

Focuses on an individual’s employment status over the past week.

A person is deemed employed if they’ve worked at least an hour in the past week.

This method often shows higher unemployment rates than UPSS because it captures short-term joblessness.

Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy Approach:

Classifies people based on their activity the day before the interview.

It often reports a higher unemployment rate but lower labor force participation rates because of its focus on daily activity.

What are the challenges for measuring unemployment in India?

Informal Economy:

Many Indians don’t have a single, year-round job.

People might work as a casual laborer one month and as a farmer another, making it hard to consistently classify their employment status.

Social and Cultural Norms:

Many women, particularly in rural areas, might be willing to work but aren’t actively searching due to societal constraints.

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In a 2009-10 survey, 33.3% of rural women showed willingness to work if available within their household.

Varied Employment Definitions:

Methods like Usual Principal and Subsidiary Status (UPSS) and Current Weekly Status (CWS) have different time frames and criteria, leading to different unemployment rates.

For instance, UPSS considers someone employed if they worked seven months in a year, even if unemployed for five.

Lockdown Impact:

The 2020 lockdown greatly affected the Indian economy.

Its effects might not be accurately reflected in yearly unemployment rates, given the long-term (UPSS) and short-term (CWS) measures used.

Urban vs. Rural Dynamics:

Unemployment rates are often lower in rural areas due to the nature of agrarian work, even if joblessness exists.

14. For an expanse of blue, with air so clean

Source: The post is based on the article “For an expanse of blue, with air so clean” published in “The Hindu” on 7th September 2023.

Syllabus: GS3- Environment – Air pollution

News: The article discusses the severe air pollution crisis, its health impacts, especially in Delhi. It highlights global efforts to combat air pollution crisis, and emphasizes the need for action and global attention to ensure clean air for all.

What's the situation on air pollution?

Global Situation on Air Pollution:

The earth has entered what the UN Secretary-General calls the “era of global boiling”, emphasizing the urgent challenges of climate change.

Lung cancer deaths reached 10 million globally in 2020 (According to WHO) and could increase by 3.2 million by 2050 (according to Indian National Institute of Health).

India's Situation on Air Pollution (with a focus on Delhi):

South Asia hosts nine of the world's 10 most polluted cities; Delhi is a prime example.

Delhi's air contains high levels of harmful pollutants like SO₂, NO_x, and particulate matter.

In 2019, air pollution was linked to 1.67 million deaths in India, making up 17.8% of total deaths.

What are the health impacts of air pollution?

Lung Cancer: 10 million deaths worldwide in 2020 were attributed to lung cancer, and this number could increase by 3.2 million by 2050.

Respiratory Ailments: Delhi's polluted air, laden with pollutants like SO₂, NO_x, and high particulate matter, affects breathing and exacerbates respiratory conditions.

Cardiovascular Disorders: Polluted air increases the risk of heart diseases due to the inhalation of harmful particles.

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Mental Health Issues: Air pollution has been linked to adverse mental health outcomes due to environmental stressors.

Vulnerable Groups at Risk: The air pollution toll is especially high for immunocompromised individuals, pregnant women, children, and the elderly.

Staggering Death Rate: In 2019, 1.67 million deaths in India, which is 17.8% of the total deaths, were related to air pollution, highlighting the dire consequences on health.

What measures are being taken to combat the air pollution crisis?

Global Efforts to Combat Air Pollution:

Cities like Ljubljana, Accra, Seville, Bogota, and Medellin are adopting **car-free zones, green spaces, and electrified public transportation.**

China is transitioning **to clean energy and e-mobility.**

Indonesia launched a **'Carbon Efficient Farming'** project to assess biomass and reduce CO2 emissions.

Thailand and Vietnam have initiated measures to decrease open straw burning.

UNESCO introduced a **carbon tax on flights** and is investing in emission reduction.

The World Air Quality Project provides real-time air quality data to residents.

The **"Virtual Meetings" project**, in collaboration with UNEP, promotes environmentally conscious digital work.

India's Efforts to Combat Air Pollution:

The **PUSA Decomposer**, created by IARI, uses biotechnology to address agricultural pollution.

GRAP 3 (Graded Rapid Action Plan) is a state-level policy monitoring air quality in hotspots.

Green War Rooms have been established for a focused approach.

Innovative startups **are transforming agricultural waste into useful products**, reducing open field burning.

What should be done?

Acknowledge the Problem: Recognize the severe impacts of air pollution, as 10 million global deaths were due to lung cancer in 2020.

Implementation: Best practices for combating air pollution need to be effectively applied, not just discussed.

Learn from Successful Cities: Adopt methods from cities like Ljubljana and Bogota that have prioritized health and environment.

Prioritize Health: With 1.67 million deaths in India linked to pollution in 2019, health-focused policies are essential.

Innovative Solutions: Support startups converting agricultural waste into valuable products, reducing sources of pollution.

Global Collaboration: While UNESCO and UNEP have taken steps, a global cohesive effort is crucial.

Public Awareness: Educate the public on the importance of clean air and their role in the solution.

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15. GDP: It All Comes Down To Demand

Source: The post is based on the article “**GDP: It All Comes Down To Demand**– Growth is being driven by booming public investment. Private firms are still unsure. For them to invest, consumption needs to grow faster” published in “The Times of India” on 7th September 2023.

Syllabus: GS3- Economy- Indian economy

News: The article discusses India’s economic growth, highlighting the strong performance of key sectors. It also points out concerns like the weak monsoon, declining exports, skewed consumption patterns, and the need for more private investments.

What is the growth scenario in India?

India’s Growth Scenario:

GDP Growth: India recorded a 7.8% GDP growth in Q1 FY 23-24, suggesting a robust economic recovery.

Leading Sector: The services sector emerged as the primary growth driver, witnessing a substantial 10.3% increase. For instance, there was notable demand in travel, tourism, and financial services.

Manufacturing Uptick: The manufacturing sector experienced a revival, growing by 4.7%. This improvement came after the sector faced challenges due to high raw material costs, which have since decreased.

Construction’s Role: The construction sector is also on an upward trajectory, benefitting from the government’s emphasis on infrastructure development.

Domestic Spending: There’s a positive sign in domestic consumption, which went up by 4.9% in Q1 23-24. However, this surge is primarily seen in the higher income category.

Investment Landscape: The government currently spearheads investments. For instance, their capital expenditure surged by 59%, overshadowing private sector investment.

Export Challenge: India faces challenges in the export domain, with a decline of 7.7%, largely attributed to the global slowdown.

What are the major concerns to India’s economy?

Major Concerns to India’s Economy:

Weak Monsoon: The deficient monsoon is a concern, affecting agricultural growth. With a growth of just 3.5%, it might lead to higher food prices, impacting the broader economy.

Exports Decline: There’s a 7.7% contraction in exports in Q1 FY 23-24. The global slowdown, especially in merchandise exports, poses challenges to external trade.

Skewed Consumption: While domestic spending increased by 4.9%, consumption largely leans towards the higher income group, indicating a ‘K’ shaped recovery. This can lead to disparities in economic benefits.

Limited Private Investment: Even with promising signs, private sector investment remains restricted. The government is leading, but private sector involvement is essential for sustained growth.

External Threats: With global GDP growth projected to slow further, India faces potential challenges in exports and global economic ties.

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16. Xi's 'one mountain, two tigers' diplomatic puzzle

Source– The post is based on the article “Xi's 'one mountain, two tigers' diplomatic puzzle” published in the “**Business Standard**” on **7th September 2023**.

Syllabus: GS3- Bilateral groupings and agreements

Relevance- India and China bilateral relationship

News– Chinese President Xi Jinping is skipping the G20 summit as India hosts world leaders in Delhi.

How Xi's absence from the G20 summit in India shows his preference for non-western framework?

Mr. Xi has been a consistent attendee of nearly all **G20 summits**. It provided him with a **global platform** to promote **China's narrative**.

However, in recent years, Mr. Xi has become convinced that **profound changes** not seen in a century are taking place. It signifies **America's diminishing role** in the **global order**.

He is growing more optimistic about China's rise as a **powerful challenger to the United States**.

There is a **newfound dynamism** in **various alliances** connected to China or where China plays a leading role.

A notable contrast can be observed between Mr. Xi's absence at the **Delhi G20 summit** and his presence at the **Brics summit in South Africa**.

Mr. Xi perceives **nations joining groupings** such as Brics and SCO as a testament to **China's achievements in global affairs**.

It is leading Mr. Xi believes that China can become a **counterbalance**, and form a **China-led bloc opposed to US dominance**.

Here, Mr. Xi aims to persuade developing nations that China alone holds the key to the “**path of prosperity**” after **Covid pandemic**.

Mr. Xi has committed to supporting **sustainable development in the Global South**. He has established a “**South-South Cooperation Fund**” totaling \$4 billion and allocated a \$10 billion fund by Chinese financial institutions to implement his **Global Development Initiative**.

How China's grand vision clashes with India's growing advocacy of issues related to the Global South?

During its tenure as the G20 presidency, India extended invitations to 125 nations for the “**Voice of Global South**” summit.

India has leveraged its G20 presidency to advocate for the **acceleration of reforms within global financial institutions**.

India is actively working to secure **fertiliser and grain supply chains** in light of the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Under its G20 presidency, India appears to be **gaining global acceptance**. It is now perceived as a **counterbalance to China**.

During its G20 presidency, India hosted **foreign delegations** in regions such as **Jammu & Kashmir and Arunachal Pradesh**. It is a **diplomatic achievement**.

How Xi's recent behaviour will impact the broader India-China relations?

As India's influence grows, the **resolution of the border dispute** between the two countries may become even more challenging.

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Beijing has **escalated tensions** by renaming places in Arunachal Pradesh, and **issuing stapled visas** to its residents, and **releasing a map** that questions **India's territorial integrity**.

China is facing **internal challenges**, including **economic difficulties and rising unemployment**. It may lead to **increased assertiveness**.

Mr. Xi is actively working to establish an **alternative international framework** and is investing more in **alliances associated with China**. Furthermore, China's vision is now in competition with **India's outreach to the Global South**.

17. Let us deploy fiscal federalism against climate change

Source: The post is based on the article **"Let us deploy fiscal federalism against climate change"** published in **Live Mint** on **7th September 2023**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Environment – Climate Change

News: The current climate governance in India is highly centralized, with the central government taking the lead in key areas. Centre is responsible for shaping state-level climate policies via initiatives like the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC).

Although states have created their own plans (SAPCCs), they lack coordination, face funding constraints, and do not align with the Centre's net-zero goal. Thus, there's a need to strengthen fiscal federalism for climate change.

What can be done to enhance fiscal federalism for climate change?

Define Activities and Map Climate Finance Channels: India should expand its efforts to map the programs being carried out in different states along with the funding sources, building upon the initiatives by Niti Aayog to map programs that have connections to climate change.

Enhance Fund Allocation: A significant portion of funds should be allocated to states using fiscal federal mechanisms that are designated for climate-related initiatives and renewable energy projects.

Strengthen State Capacity: There is a need to strengthen institutional mechanisms for planning, executing, and overseeing various initiatives.

Currently, these mechanisms fall under the centralized administration of the National Mission on Strategic Knowledge for Climate Change.

Incentivize Climate Action: India can provide performance-based rewards to states that make significant progress towards climate goals. States that reduce emissions or increase renewable energy generation could be made eligible for additional grants.

Harmonize Policy: India should unify state-level climate policies and regulations to create a stable environment for businesses and investors. Central government can facilitate coordination and knowledge sharing among states to promote best practices.

Boost Data Gathering and Monitoring Systems: States should establish robust data systems for fiscal federalism to effectively address climate change.

This includes improving climate data quality, implementing monitoring frameworks, and fostering transparency. Standardized data collection and reporting formats can facilitate comparisons and informed decision-making.

Encourage Public-Private Partnerships: India can attract private investment in climate action by providing fiscal incentives, innovative financing models, and risk-sharing arrangements.

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Partnerships between the government, private sector, and civil society can also help to mobilize resources and accelerate projects.

Enlarge the Finance Commission's (FC) role: India's fiscal federalism, managed by the FC, allocates finances between the central and state governments.

While the FC addresses disaster management and considers forest cover in its horizontal distribution formula, this measure falls short in addressing ecological challenges.

Hence, **the upcoming 16th Finance Commission may develop a net-zero plan with medium-term funding structures for subnational levels.** Future Commissions should also address this issue comprehensively, ensuring fairness among states.

18. Over 30% UPI frauds in 3 states

Source: The post is based on the article "Over 30% UPI frauds in 3 states" published in **Business Standard** on 7th September 2023.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Internal Security – Cyber Security

Relevance: concerns with increasing digital banking/UPI frauds

News: India recently reached a significant milestone of 10 billion Unified Payments Interface (UPI) transactions, indicating the growing popularity of digital payments. However, this increase has also led to an increase in fraud cases.

What are some of the findings of the fraud cases related to UPI/digital banking?

India has witnessed an increase in UPI frauds, with over 30% originating from Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, and West Bengal, and approximately 55% of all reported digital payment frauds being UPI-related.

The majority of these UPI frauds (50%) involve sums below ₹10,000, **with an estimated average of 80,000 UPI frauds occurring each month in India.**

A trend of fraudulent UPI apps, posing as authorized users, has emerged. These deceptive apps are employed for defrauding individuals through methods like phishing, malware, UPI ID spoofing, and device monitoring.

According to an RBI report, digital banking fraud surged from 3,596 cases with losses of approximately ₹155 crore in FY22 to 6,659 cases amounting to ₹276 crore in FY23.

Experts also warn that fraudsters may soon utilize artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) to cheat users. These evolving threats could make it more challenging to identify phishing emails.

What measures have already been taken to prevent digital frauds?

First, the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has implemented a 24×7 monitoring system with an average response time of 24 hours to combat these threats.

Second, banks are mandated to provide Fraud Monitoring Returns within three weeks of detecting fraud, regardless of the amount involved.

Third, the RBI has issued third-party outsourcing guidelines to prompt the fintech ecosystem to invest in security and improve processes.

Fourth, bodies such as the Central Fraud Registry, Centralised KYC Registry, Central Payments Fraud Information Registry had been established to report information on data and fraud.

What more can be done to prevent digital banking frauds?

The following measures can be taken by users to prevent digital frauds:

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- Users should practice digital safety by safeguarding their UPI PIN, never sharing sensitive information such as OTP or UPI PIN, and enabling two-factor authentication (2FA) for enhanced security.
- Reviewing transaction history for unauthorized activity is crucial.
- Invest in reputable paid antivirus software, avoid malicious downloads, and use unique passwords for different platforms.
- Report fraud incidents promptly to authorities, financial institutions, and regulators for swift action.
- Digital forensics may be used to investigate and analyze IP addresses, email headers, and other digital traces to identify fraudsters.
- Payments service providers, app developers, and operators should improve their technology to identify and prevent irregularities.
- Set transaction limits based on user risk profiles and implement extra authentication for high-value transactions.
- Use AI and ML algorithms to spot anomalies.
- Ensure secure, updated Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) for UPI integration and invest in data encryption for user data protection.

19. How to curb government's fiscal irresponsibility

Source: The post is based on the article “**How to curb government's fiscal irresponsibility**” published in “The Indian express” on 8th September 2023.

Syllabus: GS3- Economy- Fiscal policy

News: The article discusses how India's Fiscal Responsibility Law (FRBM Act, 2003) aimed to control government borrowing has been regularly bypassed. Due to a provision in the Indian Constitution, the government can easily amend the law using money bills, leading to consistent delays in achieving fiscal targets. The article suggests rethinking this approach for effective fiscal control.

What is Fiscal Responsibility Law (FRL)?

FRL sets rules to control government borrowing and manage fiscal deficits.

Purpose: Ensures that governments don't overspend today, preventing financial burdens in the future.

Global Examples:

Germany: Their “debt brake” restricts annual government borrowing to 0.35% of GDP.

US: They have a statutory debt ceiling which sets an upper limit on government borrowing.

India's Experience:

FRBM Act, 2003: India's version of FRL aimed at controlling government borrowing and achieving fiscal discipline.

Goals: One of the primary targets was to eradicate India's revenue deficit by March 31, 2008.

Delays: Due to money bills, the deadline was shifted multiple times, finally settling on March 31, 2018.

Escape Clause: This is a provision that allows temporary deviations from fiscal targets due to unforeseen events. However, the very concept of a money bill in India acts as a major escape clause, letting the government easily amend the FRL.

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How Fiscal Responsibility Law evolved in India?

Evolution of Fiscal Responsibility Law in India:

Constitutional Backing: Article 292 of India's Constitution allows the Union government to borrow, but Parliament must set limits.

Initial Measures:

An expert committee led by EAS Sarma paved the way for the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act (FRBM) in 2003.

The Vijay Kelkar Task Force worked on its implementation in 2004.

Amendments and Delays:

FRBM's original goal was to eliminate the revenue deficit by March 31, 2008.

Using money bills, this deadline was postponed multiple times: to 2009, 2015, and finally to 2018.

Issues with Money Bills:

The Finance Bill, being a money bill, can amend laws like the FRBM without full parliamentary scrutiny.

This loophole was used to dilute and delay fiscal targets under the FRBM Act, 2003.

A New Approach:

The FRBM Review Committee Report in 2017 proposed a new bill – the Debt Management and Fiscal Responsibility Bill – to address the challenges.

What is the need of Fiscal Responsibility Law?

Excessive Borrowing: Governments have a history of borrowing heavily, risking future financial health.

Election Driven Spending: Governments might overspend to appease voters before elections, increasing future burdens.

Economic Stability: To prevent the adverse impacts of excessive deficits on the economy, legal checks are necessary.

Constitutional Framework: Article 292 of India's Constitution permits the Union government to borrow, but within limits set by the Parliament. An FRL defines those limits.

Accountability: A structured law ensures government remains accountable for its financial actions and decisions.

20. Impact of RBI's lending guidelines

Source– The post is based on the article **“Impact of RBI's lending guidelines”** published in **“The Hindu”** on **8th September 2023**.

Syllabus: GS3- Indian economy and mobilisation of resources

Relevance- Issues related to banking sector

News– On August 18, the Reserve Bank of India issued guidelines enabling a borrower to transition from a floating interest rate-based loan to one with a fixed interest rate.

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What are the detailed guidelines by RBI?

This transition from **floating interest rates to fixed interest rates** will be based on a **policy approved** by the lending institution's board of directors. The policy must also specify how many times such a switch can occur during the loan's term.

The lending institution must also provide **full communication** to the borrower about all **relevant charges, service fees, and administrative costs** associated with the transition.

It is the responsibility of the lending institution to transparently inform the borrower, at the time of loan approval, about the **implications of switching** from a floating to a fixed interest rate.

The borrower will now have the **flexibility to choose** between increasing the EMI, extending the loan tenure, or a combination of both.

Furthermore, the regulator has requested that lending institutions provide borrowers with **quarterly statements** through appropriate channels.

These statements should detail the **principal and interest amounts** collected to date, the **EMI amount**, the number of **remaining EMIs**, and the **annualised interest rate** for the entire loan term.

What are the differences between fixed interest rates and floating interest rates?

Fixed interest rates **remain constant** throughout the loan's tenure. Floating interest rates are **subject to market fluctuations and base rate changes**.

Floating interest rates are **often lower** than fixed rates.

Lenders prefer floating rate-based loans because they allow for **better adjustments** in response to **changing market conditions**.

The advantages of floating rates can benefit borrowers by potentially **increasing their savings**. But, the downside is that it can also lead to **higher costs** in case of **rising interest rates**.

Floating rate loans typically do not incur **prepayment penalties**, unlike fixed rate loans.

Fixed-rate loans offer borrowers **greater certainty and security**. It facilitates **better budget planning and financial management**.

21. Do subsidies and safety nets take focus away from generating jobs?

Source– The post is based on the article “**Do subsidies and safety nets take focus away from generating jobs?**” published in “**The Hindu**” on **8th September 2023**.

Syllabus: GS3- Inclusive growth

News– With five States going to the polls at the end of the year, political parties have been announcing several promises, largely to address concerns of price rise of essentials.

What is the effectiveness of electoral?

It appears to be a **mixed scenario**. In Chhattisgarh, certain promises like the Old Pension Scheme cater to a **small segment of the population** and may not be advisable. Reintroducing the OPS would **worsen inequality**.

In Madhya Pradesh, **nearly 13% of the overall expenses** go towards OPS, but it **benefits less than 2% of people** who were in government jobs. So, it essentially **transfers wealth** from the poor to the affluent.

However, others, like reducing the cost of gas cylinders, appear to be **reasonable**.

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A recent '**Data Point**' in **The Hindu** revealed that 25% of those who benefited from the Ujjwala Scheme, either didn't request a refill or only requested one.

This is significant in the context of providing **₹1,500 per month to women**. There is a need to take into account **specific target groups** when discussing this **populism**.

Why do political parties make election promises?

It's crucial to consider the **broader context of our political economy and society**. The economic experts don't have a **definitive solution for unemployment**.

So, in the absence of a definitive solution, **temporary measures** are used. Electoral promises can be likened to **temporary measures**. They become necessary when we lack **more fundamental solutions** to address the underlying issue.

Field of economics has fallen short in **servicing societies** on a larger scale. This problem isn't unique to India. **Jobless growth** is a widespread issue in nearly every country today.

The **focus on productivity**, especially since the rise of the **neoliberal consensus**, has primarily benefited a **small segment of the population**.

There exists a **portion of the population** that doesn't benefit from growth. It necessitated the implementation of **populist measures** to include them. Yet, some measures may be driven by **political considerations**.

Should GDP growth be the only focus area for economists?

GDP growth remains important. If we look at India's **growth trajectory** over the years, it's clear that during periods of high GDP growth, **poverty** has reduced.

GDP growth had a **positive impact** in the initial 10-12 years **after liberalisation**. It has ceased to be **effective** since then.

What is the way forward for inclusive growth?

Traditional manufacturing sectors like car production, steel manufacturing, and semiconductor chip production, which used to be associated with **job creation**, no longer generate substantial **employment**. The reason is **automation**.

There is a need to invest in **mining for the energy transition**. India has barely tapped into its **extensive mineral resources**. Mining can **generate local jobs**, including opportunities for **historically marginalised castes**.

Developing economies are undergoing **two important transitions** that need to be considered. One is a **structural transition** that often keeps them stuck in the **middle-income category** due to difficulties in **pushing industrialization**.

The second is a **significant energy transition** with substantial implications for employment.

There is a need to ensure the **stability of prices** for **agricultural products**. India has witnessed recent increases in the prices of tomatoes, yet farmers lack a **guarantee of a consistent minimum price**.

Government should seriously consider **technological interventions** aimed at **transforming agricultural output into higher-value products**. This represents a **long-term solution** to the issue.

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22. Pulses are dearer- Shortfall in pulse production has spurred inflation

Source: The post is based on the article “Pulses are dearer- Shortfall in pulse production has spurred inflation. Government must ease restrictions, allow imports” published in “The Indian express” on 9th September 2023.

Syllabus: GS3- Agriculture- Transport and marketing of agricultural produce and issues and related constraints.

News: Due to lower monsoon rainfall, there's less planting of pulses like arhar, urad, and moong. This has caused their prices to rise above the official minimum rates. Global pulse prices are also high. The government needs to use its stored pulses wisely and consider changing import rules to help with the shortage.

What are the reasons for the price rise in pulses?

Domestic Reasons for Pulse Price Rise:

Reduced Planting: Farmers sowed 8.6% less area under pulses such as arhar, urad, and moong compared to last year, a decline of over 1.1 million hectares.

Price Increases: In two months, arhar prices increased from Rs 10,000 to Rs 12,500 per quintal. Moong prices went up from Rs 6,500 to Rs 9,000, and chana prices rose from Rs 4,600-4,700 to Rs 6,100-6,200.

Exceeding MSP: Current market prices for pulses like arhar, moong, and chana are well above their official Minimum Support Prices.

Global Reasons for Pulse Price Rise:

Reduced International Harvests:

Canada and Australia's pulse harvests are projected at 1.3-1.4 mt each, down from 1.7-1.8 mt the previous year.

El Niño is affecting Myanmar, a key urad supplier to India.

International Price Hikes: Masoor's landed price increased from \$650-680 to \$780-790 per tonne.

Export Limitations: Mozambique set a floor price of \$850-900 per tonne for arhar exports.

What can the government do?

Utilize Stored Pulses: The government has chana stocks which can be released into the market. They were holding around 3.8 million tonnes of chana as of June 30.

Restrict Bidders: Consider limiting bidders to actual users or dal millers during allocations. This ensures that the right stakeholders get access to the pulses.

Revisit Import Restrictions: The current rule, not allowing stocks to be held beyond 30 days from customs clearance, discourages imports. This needs revision as larger imports are crucial now.

Facilitate Bigger Shipments: Presently, imports are in 25-tonne containers, but bigger 30,000-60,000 tonne vessels would be more efficient.

Revise Pea Import Duties: The government should reconsider the 50% duty and the minimum price of Rs 200/kg on yellow/white peas, making them more affordable for import.

General

Studies

Paper – 4

General Studies - 4

1. Enhance board effectiveness to acquire a competitive advantage

Source– The post is based on the article “**Enhance board effectiveness to acquire a competitive advantage**” published in the “**mint**” on **4th September 2023**.

Syllabus: GS4 – Corporate governance

Relevance- Issues related to board of company

News– The article explains the the essential element to boost the effectiveness of the board of a company

What are some facts about the board of a company?

It pertains to the individuals who have been ‘chosen to **oversee a company** on behalf of its shareholders.’

Traditionally, boards have primarily emphasized **conformity with regulations and rules**. Recently, they have also emphasized **transparency and the principles of corporate governance**.

What are the ingredients that are critical for enhancing the effectiveness of a company’s board?

Familiarity with the Context: It is essential that they possess a good understanding of the **business context**.

Implementing a **structured induction plan** for board members is crucial. The operational team should provide them information about the **company’s purpose, strategy, and values**.

It is vital for the board to gain insights into the **company’s performance** in comparison to its competitors and engage with industry experts.

This process equips board members with the **necessary background information** for company discussions and decisions. It enables them to apply their **expertise** within the appropriate **business context**.

Clarity of Roles: The board’s role, beyond the **regulatory responsibilities**, encompasses **owning the corporate strategy, risk oversight, succession planning, and guiding the management**.

It is imperative to establish a **deliberate and limited overlap** between the board and management roles. It should be clearly defined.

The effective practice involves **creating role descriptions, identifying areas of overlap**, and then **establishing clear agreements** within the board, CEO and management team. This process should be **revisited annually**.

The selection of the right team, starting with the CEO, is likely the **most pivotal function** of the board.

Composition of the Board: Alongside role clarity, the **composition of the board** is a pivotal factor in determining its **effectiveness**.

A diverse and relevant blend of **skills, experiences, and perspectives** significantly enhances **the decision-making process**.

The initial step involves clearly **identifying the capabilities and experiences** required by the company. Subsequently, establishing a **distinct board-member value proposition** is crucial.

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Board composition should be **viewed holistically**, as a team with **complementary individual capabilities** that can **function effectively** when working together.

Conduct of Meetings: The practical aspects of conducting board meetings play a significant role in enhancing **board effectiveness**.

Considerations include the **frequency of board meetings, time allocation** during these meetings, and the **quality of board discussions**. **There is a need to ensure that the same voices don't dominate every time, and the management team feels challenged and motivated**, rather than **criticized and demoralized**.

Some **effective practices** include involving all CXOs in board meetings, **shorter presentations**, conducting **structured briefings** by committees to the entire board, and delivering **periodic updates on business performance** to the board between meetings.

2. In-person teaching has value if it's led by values

Source: The post is based on the article **"In-person teaching has value if it's led by values"** published in **Live Mint** on **5th September 2023**. **Syllabus: GS 4 – Ethics Role of educational institutions in inculcating values**

Relevance: Roles of educational institutions and challenges associated with online education

News Recently, two teachers in Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka have been caught on camera making discriminatory remarks against Muslim students.

What do these incidents highlight about the situation of educational institutions?

These incidents highlight the growing presence of prejudice in our educational institutions, which were traditionally seen as places of compassion and promoters of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Inculcating values of openness used to be a teacher's duty. However, today, some have started expressing biases.

This leads to worries about students being exposed to such beliefs and highlights the need for steps to protect education from the influence of bigots.

What are the drawbacks of online classes compared to in-person teaching when it comes to instilling values in students?

The pandemic shifted schools online. While online classes were formal and safer, they were less effective for learning, lacking live classroom experience.

It was also noted that online classes couldn't compete with in-person teaching even when teachers were highly skilled at their jobs.

The best teachers are those who can make students interested, curious, and excited about the subject they are learning.

These teachers are able to create a stimulating and engaging learning environment, which is essential for student success. Online classes cannot replicate this experience.

In addition to academic knowledge, **students also need to learn important social and emotional skills, such as** empathy, respect, and grace.

These skills are best learned through modeling and interaction with others. Online classes cannot provide the same level of social interaction as offline classes, which is why they are not a complete substitute for traditional schooling.

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What is the way ahead?

The Indian government is facing the challenge of educating millions of students at a low cost. **One way to do this is to use digital aids**, such as online learning platforms and hybrid models that combine online and offline learning.

However, it is important to ensure that these digital aids are bias-free and provide the best of both worlds, online and offline learning. **Ensuring unbiased education is crucial for instilling values and attitudes.**

3. Living in the age of moral dystopia

Source: The post is based on the article “**Living in the age of moral dystopia**– Conformism is the norm today. Humanism, justice, and freedom have all been consigned to the deep freeze, to be retrieved at some indefinable point in future” published in “The Hindu” on 5th September 2023.

Syllabus: GS4- ethics- human values (role of family, society and educational institutions in inculcating values.) & probity in governance

News: The author talks about how moral values are decreasing in India. They mention communal violence, government bias, and public apathy as examples. The author also points out that societal values are changing, and intolerance and injustice are becoming more accepted.

How are moral values and societal values decreasing in India?

Moral Values Change:

Broken Promises: Leaders and governments are increasingly failing to uphold their pledges. There’s no longer an expectation for them to keep their word.

Skewed Justice: Government actions, like demolishing buildings without legal procedures, indicate a move away from fairness and justice. The Punjab and Haryana High Court raised concerns about potential ethnic cleansing.

Gender Disrespect: The public humiliation of women in Manipur and the public support for the accused in the Kathua rape case show a declining respect for women’s rights and safety.

Public Indifference: Acts of violence, from lynchings to property destruction, are happening regularly. Many witnesses choose merely to record these acts, showing a lack of empathy and intervention.

Societal Values Change:

Decline in Communal Harmony: Yogita Bhayana’s act of helping a Muslim man rebuild his shop was criticized, signaling a reduction in societal appreciation for communal unity.

Historical Bias over Present Justice: There’s an undue emphasis on historical events and wrongs while current issues, like attacks on mosques in various states, are sidelined.

Desensitization to Violence: The frequency of violent incidents and the public’s passive response, such as simply recording them for social media, indicates a growing desensitization to brutality.

Destruction Celebrated: Some media segments hail the destruction of properties as “instant justice,” indicating a societal shift towards accepting brute force as justified.

How does this impact India’s fabric?

Impact on India’s Fabric:

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Eroded Trust: With leaders not keeping their promises, faith in governance is diminishing.

Communal Harmony Threatened: Acts like the criticism of Yogita Bhayana, who helped a Muslim man, signal a strain on inter-community relations.

Selective Historical Preoccupation: The focus on ancient wrongs, while overlooking present-day issues like mosque attacks, creates division and neglects contemporary challenges.

Increased Desensitization: The passive response to violence, such as public recordings of brutal incidents without intervention, weakens societal empathy and compassion.

Skewed Justice Perception: Viewing property destruction as “instant justice” distorts the understanding of genuine justice and law.

Gender Disparities: Incidents like the humiliation of women in Manipur undermine the progress towards gender equality.