



9 PM

Compilation

21st to 26th August, 2023

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General Studies Paper – 1

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General Studies - 1

1. Don't pretend not to see caste

Source: The post is based on the article “**Don't pretend not to see caste** — to fight it, we must first acknowledge its existence” published in “The India express” on 21st August 2023.

Syllabus: GS1- Salient features of Indian Society, Diversity of India.

News: In this article, the author discusses the deep-rooted casteism in India. There is a need to acknowledge and address it for genuine inclusivity. Article also highlights the struggles of Dalits, the importance of representation beyond reservations, and the significance of embracing and celebrating Dalit history in the Indian independence movement.

What are the incidents that show casteism is still present in India?

Denial of Caste: Many claims to live in a casteless society, but incidents like discrimination against lower-caste individuals indicate its absence. Darshan Solanki's suicide, children beaten over drinking water, and men shot for riding horses suggest caste-based violence are some examples.

Reservation Debates: Discussions about reservations on social media show underlying biases against reserved categories.

Professional Bias: Some avoid doctors with lower-caste surnames, suspecting them of lacking merit.

Dalit Representation: Dalits still struggle for representation in cultural and intellectual spaces, indicating systemic barriers.

What is the importance of De-casteing in India?

Genuine Inclusivity: Acknowledging casteism is crucial for creating an inclusive society where everyone is treated equally.

Dalit Struggles: Without addressing caste, the struggles and discrimination faced by Dalits continue.

Fair representation: De-casting ensures fair representation of all communities in premier institutions, media, and cultural spaces.

Trust Building: Addressing caste issues is vital for building trust among various communities.

Enriches national history: Recognizing Dalit contributions to the Indian independence movement enriches national history.

Progress and Unity: Overcoming caste barriers is essential for India's unified progress and realizing the vision of “sabka vishwas”.

How can De-casteing be achieved?

Acceptance: Firstly, acknowledge the presence and impact of casteism in society, instead of denying or overlooking it.

Education: Educate younger generations about the importance of seeing beyond caste and the value of inclusivity.

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Representation beyond reservations: Push for Dalit representation in cultural institutions, intellectual spaces, and media, beyond just reserved seats in politics.

Celebrate Dalit History: Embrace and highlight the contributions of Dalits in the Indian independence movement and other spheres.

Promote Allies: Encourage individuals from privileged castes to become allies, supporting marginalized communities in various spaces.

Build Trust: Address and work on the distrust Dalits might feel towards the upper segments of society, fostering unity.

Policies Emphasizing Inclusion: Formulate policies that emphasize diversity, inclusion, and equity, ensuring nobody is left behind.

2. The key to India's hunger challenge

Source: The post is based on the article "**The key to India's hunger challenge:** A focus on gender-sensitive growth" published in "The India express" on 21st August 2023.

Syllabus: GS1- poverty and developmental issues.

News: In this article author discusses India's progress in reducing poverty, highlighting achievements since 1991. They mention the growth in foreign reserves and food production, but also point out challenges like malnutrition in children and the impacts of climate change. The author suggests focusing on women's education and investing in agricultural research for a better future.

How has India been able to reduce poverty?

Government Efforts: Indian government lifted 135 million people out of poverty from 2015-16 to 2019-21.

Economic Shift: Post-1991 reforms transitioned India from state-controlled to a market-oriented economy, boosting growth.

Rise in Foreign Reserves: Reserves increased from \$1.4 billion in 1991 to around \$600 billion, stabilizing the economy.

Green Revolution: Transformed India into the largest rice exporter.

White Revolution: Positioned India as the top milk producer with 222 MT production.

Cotton Production: Introduction of Bt cotton in 2002 made India the biggest cotton producer.

Together, these measures and achievements have contributed to a significant reduction in poverty.

What challenges are present in poverty alleviation efforts?

Challenges in India's poverty alleviation efforts include:

Persistent Malnutrition: NFHS-5 (2019-21) showed 32% of children are underweight, 35% stunted, and 19% wasted.

Climate Change: Increases risks to food systems, which can impact poverty alleviation. Extreme weather events like heat waves and flash floods are concerning.

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Low Women Participation: Only 30% of women were part of the labor force in 2021-22, indicating untapped potential.

Education Gaps: For effective poverty alleviation, women's education beyond the 12th grade is vital, but many don't have this opportunity.

Agricultural Challenges: Need for increased investment in research to ensure sustainable and nutritious food growth to support poverty reduction.

What should be done?

Empower Women in Tech: Train women in 15,000 self-help groups to fly drones for agricultural purposes.

Strengthen Agricultural Research: Double or triple R&D expenditures in agriculture for sustainable growth and nutritious food.

Tackle Malnutrition: Address the high percentages of underweight, stunted, and wasted children through targeted interventions.

Ditch Outdated Policies: Move away from export controls and stocking limits, which are remnants of older economic strategies.

Collaborate with Leading Institutions: Engage top institutions like Punjab Agriculture University for ushering in a new era of sustainable and nutritious agriculture.

Prioritize Women in Workforce: Boost the women's participation rate in the labor force by providing skill formation and higher education opportunities.

General Studies Paper –2

General Studies - 2

1. “Criminal law Bills renaming is needless meddling

Source: The post is based on the article “**Criminal law Bills renaming is needless meddling**” published in “The Hindu” on 21st August 2023.

Syllabus: GS2- Indian constitution – Criminal Justice System

News: In this article, the author criticizes the renaming of three legal bills in Hindi. He argues that it's a push towards majoritarianism, ignores linguistic diversity, and goes against constitutional provisions that require laws to be in English.

About the renaming of three bills.

Indian Penal Code: Renamed as “Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita”.

Code of Criminal Procedure: Now called “Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita”.

Indian Evidence Act: Changed to “Bharatiya Sakshya Bill”.

What are the major criticisms of renaming legal bills in Hindi?

Unfamiliarity for Many: More than half of India's citizens and a significant majority of its legal practitioners find the Hindi names of the legal bills unfamiliar.

Constitutional Concerns: Article 348 of the Constitution requires that authoritative texts of all Acts be in English, so naming bills in Hindi challenges this provision.

Ignoring Linguistic Diversity: Historical protests, particularly in the 1960s, have shown strong resistance to imposing Hindi as the sole official language.

Perceived Majoritarianism: The push for Hindi may undermine other significant languages like Bengali, Tamil, and Telugu.

Importance of English in Legal Context: English remains the primary language of India's courts, and legal statutes and precedents are primarily written in it, ensuring clarity in legal matters.

Potential Political Motive: There is a growing perception that the move towards Hindi might be driven by certain political motivations.

What should be done?

Reconsider Renaming: Revert the bills to their original English names to maintain familiarity and continuity.

Constitutional Compliance: Ensure the names align with Article 348, which requires laws to have English as the authoritative text.

Stakeholder Consultation: Engage with legal practitioners and the public, especially in non-Hindi speaking regions, before making linguistic changes.

Respect Linguistic Diversity: Acknowledge the significance of languages like Bengali, Tamil, and Telugu, to prevent feelings of majoritarianism.

Committee Review: The bills should possibly be reviewed by the Committee for Law and Justice, not just the Home Affairs Committee.

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2. The Katchatheevu controversy

Source: The post is based on the article “**The Katchatheevu controversy**” published in **The Hindu** on **21st August 2023**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – International Relations

Relevance: **India and Sri Lanka agreement on Katchatheevu.**

News: Tamil Nadu’s Chief Minister M. K. Stalin restarted discussions about Katchatheevu, a barren islet near Rameswaram. He called to reclaim the islet from Sri Lanka as it would permanently resolve issues for local fishermen.

He said that even though fishermen were set free after being caught by Sri Lanka, their boats and fishing nets, essential to their livelihoods, were not given back.

When did Katchatheevu become a part of Sri Lanka?

In June 1974, **India’s Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Sri Lanka’s Prime Minister Sirim R.D. Bandaranaike signed an agreement to establish** the boundary between the two countries from Palk Strait to Adam’s Bridge.

The boundary was determined by historical evidence and international legal principles, **placing Katchatheevu within Sri Lanka’s territory.**

How important is Kachatheevu?

Both countries’ fishermen have historically used the islet for fishing.

However, **the March 1976 pact specified that** fishermen must not fish in the historic waters, territorial sea, or exclusive zones of either country without permission from Sri Lanka or India.

Some political groups and Tamil Nadu fishermen view Katchatheevu’s reclamation as a remedy for illegal maritime boundary crossings.

However, fishermen in Sri Lanka’s Northern Province believe this would worsen their problems, **given Tamil Nadu fishermen’s use of bottom trawling on their territorial waters.**

What led to the talks between India and Sri Lanka over Kachatheevu?

Sri Lanka claimed Kachatheevu due to Portuguese rule from 1505-1658 CE, while India argued it was under the control of the former Raja of Ramnad.

However, in a July 1974 Lok Sabha debate, External Affairs Minister Swaran Singh explained that **the decision to include Kachatheevu as part of Sri Lanka resulted from extensive research into historical and other records concerning the islet.**

Since then, there have been multiple instances where political leaders have resurfaced the issue of Katchatheevu. Over the past 15 years, both Jayalalithaa and Karunanidhi have brought the issue before the Supreme Court.

How has the Centre responded regarding the issue?

In August 2013, India told the Supreme Court that the issue of reclaiming Kachatheevu from Sri Lanka didn’t exist, **as no Indian land was given to Sri Lanka.**

They said it was a historical dispute between British India and Ceylon, settled by the 1974 and 1976 agreements.

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In December 2022, the government mentioned to the Rajya Sabha that **Katchatheevu is on Sri Lanka's side** of the India-Sri Lanka International Maritime Boundary Line.

3. Express View on Saudi and Iran: Welcome detente

Source– The post is based on the article “**Express View on Saudi and Iran: Welcome detente**” published in “**The Indian Express**” on **21st August 2023**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – International relations

News– Recently, Iranian foreign minister **Hossein Amirabdollahian's visit to Saudi Arabia** had traveled to Riyadh to offer condolences on the death of King Abdullah.

What is the historical trajectory of the relationship between Iran and Saudi Arabia?

The relationship has faced challenges primarily due to their **contest for leadership** within the region. Iran was led by **Shia leadership** and Saudi Arabia by **Sunni leadership**.

Since the Iranian Revolution in 1979, suspicions about each other's motives have persisted. Iran accused Saudi Arabia of providing support to Baghdad during the **Iran-Iraq war (1980-88)**. Saudi Arabia was alleged to have backed insurgents against the Iran-affiliated President Bashar al-Assad in the ongoing **Syrian civil war** since 2011. The **Iranian nuclear program** further intensified these suspicions.

Tensions escalated in 2016 when Saudi Arabia executed a prominent Shia cleric. It triggered Iranian protesters to attack the Saudi embassy in Tehran.

Diplomatic relations had been severed in 1987-88 when hostilities between the regional rivals reached a peak due to clashes in Mecca involving Iranian pilgrims and attacks on the Saudi embassy in Tehran.

Why Stability in relationship between Iran and Saudi Arabia holds immense significance for India?

Over **8 million Indians** are residing in the West Asian and Gulf regions.

India's energy security depends on the strength of its connections with the two primary suppliers of crude oil.

India has maintained **strong affiliations** with both Riyadh and Tehran. Naturally, Delhi will closely monitor these developments due to their implications for its national interests.

4. Crafting safe Generative AI systems

Source– The post is based on the article “**Crafting safe Generative AI systems**” published in “**The Hindu**” on **21st August 2023**.

Syllabus: GS2- Awareness in the field of IT and computers

News– The article explains the potential of generative AI and risks related to it. It also explains the importance of identity assurance framework to deal with the risk associated with generative AI.

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What is the potential of generative AI?

Generative AI has the potential to unleash significant **technological and societal transformations**. Utilization of **Large Language Models** alone is projected to contribute between \$2.6 trillion and \$4.4 trillion annually to the global economy.

Example is Jugalbandi Chatbo. It aims to function as a universal translator in rural India. It receives queries in local languages, and then presents these responses to users in their native tongue.

This has the capacity to **democratize access to information** and enhance the **economic well-being** of millions of individuals.

What are risks related to generative AI?

AI-powered tools enable malicious actors to craft **synthetic entities**. These cannot be distinguished from humans online, using speech, text, and video formats.

These bad actors can **manipulate identities**. They can launch a range of harmful actions such as spreading misinformation, disinformation, engaging in security breaches, perpetrating fraud, propagating hate speech, and public shaming.

In the United States, an AI-generated image depicting the Pentagon ablaze caused turmoil in equity markets.

Fake users on platforms like Twitter and Instagram, disseminating strong political opinions, have exacerbated online **political polarization**.

AI-generated voices have been cloned and utilized to bypass **authentication measures** for banking customers.

An individual in Belgium was reportedly driven to suicide after interactions with a Large Language Model. Additionally, recent elections in Turkey were marred by **AI-generated deepfakes**.

The risk of malicious actors exploiting Generative AI for purposes of **misinformation and influencing election outcomes** is steadily on the rise.

What is the potential solution to risks related to generative AI?

Regulation alone is insufficient. A **broader perspective** must be taken into account to enhance **Internet safety and reliability**.

There is a need for an **identity assurance framework**. This framework ensures trust among interacting parties by verifying the authenticity of entities involved.

What are some facts about the identity assurance framework?

The core principles of this framework involve its inclusion of various **emerging credential types** worldwide. It does not have exclusive reliance on any single technology or standard.

Digital wallets are important. They offer **selective disclosure** and protect users from **governmental or corporate surveillance**. This identity assurance framework would encompass humans, bots, and businesses.

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At present, more than 50 countries are engaged in initiatives to develop or issue **digital identity credentials**. India, with Aadhaar, holds a leading position in implementing **online identity assurance safeguards**.

The European Union is in the process of establishing a **new identity standard** that will also support **online identity assurance**.

The concept of **identity assurance** is intertwined with the issue of **information integrity**. Information integrity guarantees that the accessed content is genuine and originates from the **purported source**.

This credibility is founded upon three pillars. Firstly, **source validation** ensures the verification of the information's origin, publisher, or individual. Secondly, **content integrity** guarantees that the information remains unaltered.

Lastly, **information validity** can be achieved through **automated fact-checking and crowd-sourced reviews**.

Identity assurance faces dilemmas like **balancing privacy and surveillance, civil liberties and security, and anonymity and accountability**.

Information integrity raises questions about **censorship** and the timeless query of **'who defines the truth?'**

5. End the death penalty: Its basis has collapsed

Source– The post is based on the article **“End the death penalty: Its basis has collapsed”** published in the **“mint”** on **21st August 2023**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Indian Polity and Governance – Criminal Justice System

News– The article deals with the issue of the death penalty.

What are arguments against the death penalty?

The potency of the death penalty has diminished as **human rights** became codified both **legally and socially**. Fear has yielded ground to **civil considerations**.

Today, the efficacy of this punishment as a **deterrent** is uncertain. Research has revealed only **tenuous connections** between **crime rates and executions**.

The **associated costs** remain substantial. Taking a life is irreversible, and there is risk of a **wrongful conviction**. No justice system can ensure **complete accuracy** in assigning guilt, regardless of intention. **Imperfections** are inevitable.

Under the norms established by the Supreme Court, this penalty is reserved for **“rarest of rare”** cases. Although this provision holds value in its intent to decrease executions, It does not succeed in lessening the **significant moral burden** on our conscience.

Some argue that abolition of the death penalty can lead to **unintended consequences**.

If executions were abolished, there might be a rise in **police encounters** due to pressure to maintain **law and order**.

Lenient laws might result in **more aggressive policing** on the ground. Severe penalties could help curb **vigilante actions**.

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This argument is flawed. It assumes that it's acceptable for the **rule of law** to be influenced by **societal conditions**. It is disregarding its **supremacy in principle**. It overlooks the potential for police reforms.

Research indicates that isolating convicts in prison achieves the intended objective of our **judicial system**. Eliminating the death penalty from our legal framework is unlikely to lead to a surge in **severe violations**.

6. Time's Come To Draw New Lines

Source– The post is based on the article “**Time’s Come To Draw New Lines**” published in “**The Times of India**” on **22nd August 2023**.

Syllabus: GS2- Judiciary

Relevance: Issues related to functioning of judiciary

News– Ranjan Gogoi, a former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, put forth the notion that the concept of the basic structure is subject to debate.

What are some facts about basic structure?

The **Kesavananda Bharati judgment** was delivered by a **13-member constitutional bench** in 1973. It introduced the **concept of “basic structure”**.

The bench said that there are some things in the Constitution that even Parliament cannot change.

What are issues with the basic structure?

Lack of clarity– There is a question regarding the extent to which SC can **interpret the concept** of the “basic structure.” The judiciary has not yet provided **clear guidance** on this matter.

Varying perspectives among judges– As per Ranjan Gogoi, the concept of the basic structure is **subject to debate**.

The current Chief Justice had expressed that the basic structure serves as the “**North Star**” **guiding jurisprudence**.

Historical perspective– When the Kesavananda verdict was delivered in April 1973, it carried a **narrow majority of 7-6**. The panel of 13 judges produced a total of **11 separate opinions**.

The consensus was shaped by the then Chief Justice, SM Sikri. He presented a **six-point “majority view”** in open court. However, four of the judges declined to do so.

The second proposition stated that “Article 368 does not **empower Parliament** to modify the **fundamental structure or framework of the Constitution.**”

The concept of the basic structure did not **organically arise** from this judgment. Its frequent use to justify judicial interventions is questionable unless the entire idea is **thoroughly examined** by another constitutional bench.

Political backdrop– Indira Gandhi held **considerable power**. She wants amendments that would enhance the **authority of the executive** in pursuing its **social agenda**.

The judiciary was divided between **progressive and conservative factions**, and some believed that curbing executive power was imperative.

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Extraordinary circumstances can lead to flawed laws. The notion of the basic structure was a product of its era. It warrants a **reevaluation and clarification** in the context of our times.

Other issues– Certain **common-sense “basic” features** have been disregarded by the judiciary. A fundamental aspect of the Constitution should involve **checks and balances**.

There are questions regarding the Supreme Court having authority to **exclusively appoint** all judges to the higher judiciary.

A dissenting judge in the NJAC case, Justice J Chelameswar, argued that the independence of the judiciary isn't compromised simply because the Chief Justice isn't the **primary influencer in judicial appointments**.

There is assumption that the concept of the basic structure was derived from the **thoughts of the constituent assembly** that drafted the Constitution.

However, the chapter on fundamental duties was not part of the **original Constitution**. This was **added in 1976 as Article 51A**.

A provision introduced a quarter century after the initial Constitution was classified as an **element of the basic structure**.

7. Sushil Kumar Modi writes: Judges should declare their assets, too

Source– The post is based on the article **“Sushil Kumar Modi writes: Judges should declare their assets, too”** published in **“The Indian Express”** on **22nd August 2023**.

Syllabus: GS2- Judiciary

Relevance: Reform in judiciary

News– The article deals with the issues of declaration of assets by judges of Supreme Courts and High Courts.

What are various provisions related to declaration of assets by public officials?

All public officials in India are obligated to submit an **annual declaration of their assets**, using various forms and methods.

The terms of employment and the **Conduct Rules for Civil Servants** specify the **compulsory submission of annual property declarations** for their immovable assets.

Other constitutional authorities, such as the Comptroller and Auditor General of India, adhere to their **Code of Ethics** by posting their most recent asset declarations on their website.

Members of the Council of Ministers also disclose their assets in accordance with the **Code of Conduct for Ministers** issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Members of Parliament are mandated to provide details of their **assets and liabilities** within 90 days of taking their oath of office.

What is the stand of the judiciary on declaration of assets by judges?

Regarding the judges of the Supreme Court and high courts, there is no provision for officially **disclosing their financial holdings**.

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In 1997, the Supreme Court adopted a resolution called “**The Restatement of Values of Judicial Life**” was adopted. This resolution stipulates that judges must declare their assets and debts upon assuming office and subsequently at the beginning of each year.

In 2009, a full bench of the Supreme Court decided to make judges’ **asset declarations** public by posting them on the apex court’s website. The same bench changed its stance, deciding that **asset declarations** would be posted on the website voluntarily.

Currently, the Supreme Court’s website shows that only 55 judges have uploaded their asset declarations. Concerning high courts, only five have made this information available on their websites.

What are some facts about the Judicial Standards and Accountability Bill, 2010?

This bill aimed to establish a **legal framework** for **investigating individual complaints** against judges of the high courts and Supreme Court and recommending appropriate actions.

It also aimed to facilitate the **declaration of judges’ assets and debts and establish standards of conduct** for them. The bill was meant to replace the **Judges Inquiry Act of 1968** while preserving its fundamental aspects.

Way forward-

The Supreme Court has taken the stance that the public has the **right to be informed** about the **assets of individuals** contesting elections as Members of Parliament or Members of Legislative Assemblies.

Judges also serve as **public officials**. It is reasonable for litigants to have access to such **fundamental information** about them. This approach would foster **trust and confidence** in the judicial system among those involved in legal proceedings.

The **Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice** extensively discussed it.

The Committee suggested that the government should introduce **appropriate legislation** to enforce the **mandatory submission of property reports** by judges of the Supreme Court and high courts on an annual basis.

This can be achieved by introducing necessary amendments to existing acts—namely, the **Supreme Court Judges (Salaries and Conditions of Service) Act of 1958** and the **High Court Judges (Salaries and Conditions of Service) Act of 1954**.

Alternatively, an entirely **new legislation** addressing this matter could be introduced.

Another option is for the Supreme Court collegium to establish a **suitable mechanism** that would require judges of the Supreme Court and high courts to compulsorily disclose their annual reports on **immovable properties**.

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8. “The World Bank must reform- Overhauls to multilateral development banks could be a lasting legacy of India’s G20 presidency”

Source: The post is based on the article “**The World Bank must reform- Overhauls to multilateral development banks could be a lasting legacy of India’s G20 presidency**”

published in “**Business Standard**” on 22nd August 2023.

Syllabus: GS2- Important International institutions.

News: In this article, author discusses the need for reforms in the **World Bank Group (WBG)** to better support low and middle-income countries, enhance its role as a knowledge provider, and improve its advisory services.

What are the major roles of the WBG?

Financier: Provides loans to low and middle-income countries. Like, assisting countries with developmental needs.

Knowledge Bank: Produces and shares information and research. Like, publishing the “Doing Business index”.

Trusted Advisor: Offers policy advice based on global best practices. Such as, sharing cross-country experiences to aid policy decisions in developing countries.

Why is there a need for reforms in the WBG?

The need for reforms in the WBG arises due to:

Debt Distress in LICs: Despite owing half their external debt to MDBs, low-income countries (LICs) are considered in debt distress. Like, questions arise about the accuracy of debt sustainability assessments by multilateral development banks (MDBs).

Incentive Structure Issues: There’s a potential conflict of interest, where WBG staff are rewarded for new lending, possibly leading to biased debt sustainability assessments.

Volatile Support for MICs: Middle-income countries (MICs), while having market access, are susceptible to rapid changes in capital flows. For instances, MICs often experience capital flow reversals due to global sentiment shifts.

Knowledge Impact: Despite allocating a significant budget to knowledge dissemination, its impact has been limited. For example, While WBG releases multiple growth forecasts for India, it doesn’t significantly address India’s low female labor force participation or its lagging manufacturing sector.

Lack of Local Engagement: WBG’s current advisory model lacks intense local engagement and updated country-specific knowledge.

Redundancy: The WBG often duplicates efforts that other institutions, like the IMF, already handle. Like, multiple growth forecasts for India with no superior accuracy.

Operational Mode: The WBG has remained in remote mode post-pandemic, unlike its client countries, affecting its efficiency and relevance.

What should be done?

Enhance Financial Support:

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For LICs, the WBG should focus on building resilience and state capacity. Addressing LICs' debt distress through comprehensive assessments, factoring in challenges like climate risks, is vital.

For MICs, the introduction of financial tools such as guarantees or swap lines can stabilize their economies, given MICs' susceptibility to capital reversals from global shifts.

Revamp Knowledge Delivery:

An independent review of the WBG's knowledge outputs, like the often-criticized "Doing Business index," is necessary. Additionally, the WBG should ensure its reports are more accessible and aligned with pressing issues, such as key challenges faced by countries like India.

Improve Advisory Services:

The WBG needs to incorporate international expertise into its advisory services, offering member nations informed policy advice. Simultaneously, collaborating with local institutions will provide value while optimizing resource use.

Adjust Operational Model:

Mirroring its client nations, a return to in-person operations by the WBG is crucial. This would boost engagement and responsiveness across its various offices, including places like New Delhi.

9. "Decoding the President's speech-Words matter, especially when used by the highest constitutional authority of the country"

Source: The post is based on the article "Decoding the President's speech-Words matter, especially when used by the highest constitutional authority of the country" published in "The Hindu" on 22nd August 2023.

Syllabus: GS2- Parliament

News: In this article author discusses President Droupadi Murmu's Independence Day speech, emphasizing the Constitution's importance, India's history, and the significance of specific word choices in reflecting the nation's ideological debates.

What did President Droupadi Murmu emphasize?

President Droupadi Murmu, in her Independence Day address, underlined the Constitution as India's guiding document. She stressed the nation's dedication to remain a constitutional democracy.

The President also highlighted the importance of harmony with nature, female empowerment, and the transformative power of education, drawing from her personal experience as a teacher.

She acknowledged India's economic achievements while pointing out that there's more to be done to fulfill the dreams of the freedom fighters.

What's the debate around identity?

President Murmu emphasized the identity of being an "Indian citizen" as paramount, even though Indians have multiple identities like caste, language, and profession.

Interestingly, she didn't mention religion as an identity, using the term "creed" instead. In Hindi, she used "panth" instead of the more common "dharma".

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Why do word choices matter?

The choice of terms becomes crucial in the backdrop of ongoing ideological debates. For instance, the Constitution uses terms like “religion” and “faith,” translated in Hindi as “dharma.” The author suggests that such word choices by the President, the nation’s highest authority, are consequential. They can be indicative of broader ideological stances and should align with the Constitution’s language.

10. “The BRICS test for India’s multipolarity rhetoric”

Source: The post is based on articles

“**The BRICS test for India’s multipolarity rhetoric**” published in **The Hindu** on **22nd August 2023** and

“**We face hard options on the BRICS architecture**” published in **Live Mint** on **22nd August 2023**.

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

Relevance: challenges with India in BRICS

News: The **BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa)** summit is being held in South Africa.

What is the importance of BRICS?

BRICS got stronger due to global changes in world politics and problems within the United Nations. **BRICS holds broader global representation than UNSC and G-7.**

Global institutions have failed to bring global governance because they lack representation. BRICS steps in to fill this gap. Around 40 countries want to join BRICS reflects Global South’s discontent with their global status.

Hence, amid global uncertainty, **countries seeking recognition could use BRICS to shape geopolitics.**

However, BRICS and SCO might not lead to fully democratic global governance due to conflicts and hierarchies. But they could start discussions for creating more inclusive global governance.

Where does India stand in the global order?

India’s current geopolitical decisions lack clarity. India’s position of being part of multiple groups like the Quad, G-20, G-7, BRICS, SCO, and the global South simultaneously, raises questions about its stand.

India joined non-Western groups due to undemocratic post-World War II institutions like IMF and UNSC. But India isn’t against the U.S./West.

India is connected to BRICS, SCO, and the global South due to its development, geography and history. However, **China’s dominance in these groups creates issues for India.**

While India’s trajectory aligns with G-20, G-7, and the Quad, gaining significant influence in these powerful forums is tough.

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Hence, **India is caught between an emerging geopolitical divide where both sides acknowledge India's interests but India doesn't entirely align with either.** This makes it more challenging for India to maintain equilibrium.

What are the challenges with India?

India wants a world with many powerful countries working together in new ways. But it needs to be careful that its actions don't make China even stronger.

While it's good to create new groups and promote de-dollarization, these changes could also help China become more powerful.

China's size, economy, the Belt and Road Initiative, and diplomacy will likely shape groups like BRICS, which could be challenging for India due to its own limitations.

When India works to make non-western groups and systems stronger, it unintentionally aids China's revisionist agenda.

Hence, **India needs to balance two main objectives: advocating for a fair and inclusive global governance system while safeguarding its own interests.**

It's also essential for India to limit China's dominance in non-western groups, but also avoid isolating other global South nations who might support China's push to expand these forums.

BRICS now has five nations, and even with more joining, China's influence might still stay strong. India joined BRICS for economic growth, but if it becomes political, **India might get involved in unexpected issues, especially with China.**

What lies ahead?

India faces the challenge of finding its place in both non-western forums like BRICS and SCO while limiting China's influence. It also needs to balance Western demands and maintain its position in groups like UNSC and G-7.

India's relations with the US and the West grew due to China's actions and Indo-Pacific trade importance. **While India joined BRICS for its gains, China's role complicates matters.** Hence, India should be cautious about too much involvement in BRICS.

11. Sidharth Luthra writes on proposed Criminal Codes: It's still colonial

Source– The post is based on the article “**Sidharth Luthra writes on proposed Criminal Codes: It's still colonial**” published in “**The Indian Express**” on **23rd August 2023**.

Syllabus: GS2- Polity

Relevance: Important bills and acts

News– The Union Home Minister recently introduced three comprehensive Criminal Justice Codes on procedure, evidence, and offences before Parliament.

What are some positive aspects of the new criminal codes?

Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita incorporates community service. It is a commendable inclusion. But, open prisons are still not covered.

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The **Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS)**, introduces **video conference trials** and modifies the process of **e-filing First Information Reports**.

What are issues with the new criminal codes?

It introduces **offences** such as fake news, terrorism, organised crime, and corruption. However, it does not abolish the **existing specialised legislations** that address these crimes.

The new Bharatiya Sakshya Sanhita fails to **incorporate adjustments** that align with the **principle of reverse burden or presumptions** found in the specialized laws pertaining to terrorism, corruption, and organized crime offenses.

The new code increases the penalties for **reckless and negligent actions** resulting in death. But, it disregards the unique handling of **recklessness and negligence** practised in Singapore. It also amplifies the vulnerability of medical professionals.

There is lack of a **well-defined reasoning** behind the decision not to harmonize the penalty for **mob lynching** with that of murder or **intentional culpable homicide**.

The **restructuring of sections** and the decrease in their quantity by consolidating definitions, updating illustrations is commendable. But, it does not significantly change the **fundamental nature** of the 1860 Code.

Sedition is abolished under Section 124A of the IPC. But, it is reintroduced as **Section 150 in the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita**.

This closely resembles the **concept of sedition** and continues to raise concerns about **freedom of expression** and the potential for misusing it against dissenting voices.

There are already sufficient provisions in existing laws like the IPC/UAPA to address the matters intended to be covered.

Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita does not provide **comprehensive security** to detainees. The chapter on **plea bargaining** remains unaltered and limited to **sentence bargaining**, rather than encompassing the option to **admit guilt** for a lesser offense.

Expanding the authority of the police to **request custody** (PC) for 40/60 days undermines the right to bail.

Broadening the scope to apply the **15-day request custody provision** doesn't align well with the intention of breaking free from the colonial past,

It does not correspond with BNSS's stated objective of promoting **advanced forensics and scientific investigations** to enhance the quality and speed of inquiries.

The government should have contemplated reducing the **15-day PC duration**. By extending police powers to request remand, BNSS **contradicts Article 21**.

Even our colonial rulers who introduced this provision held reservations about the 15-day PC period. Pre-independence **Lahore High Court Rules** mandate the **shortest feasible PC period** and prohibit **obtaining confessions**.

Way forward-

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Rationalising laws is a positive step forward. But, for a true departure from the colonial legacy, there is a need for a **coherent philosophical framework** for criminal justice.

It is imperative to **streamline provisions**, **decriminalize** when necessary, introduce **criminalization for emerging forms** of criminal activity, **regulate arrest powers**, implement **guidelines for bail** and sentencing to guide discretion.

There is a need to reinforce the **presumption of innocence** and safeguard the **fair trial rights** of the accused, while also securing the **participatory rights of victims**.

12. A strong case to restore Section 8(4) of the RP Act

Source: The post is based on articles “**A strong case to restore Section 8(4) of the RP Act**” published in **The Hindu** on **23rd August 2023**.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Salient Features of the Representation of People’s Act

Relevance: concerns with disqualification of legislators.

News: Recently, Rahul Gandhi was disqualified on being convicted and sentenced to two years imprisonment in a 2019 defamation case.

The disqualification was instant because of the Supreme Court of India’s judgment in Lily Thomas vs Union of India (2013).

What did the court rule in Lily Thomas vs Union of India judgment?

[Click Here to Read](#)

Now, only Section 8(3) remains in the Act which deals with disqualification of persons convicted and sentenced to two years imprisonment.

What is section 8(3) of Representation of People Act, 1951?

Section 8(3) suggests that upon a conviction with a two-year sentence, a sitting member gets disqualified from the conviction date, **decided by the President under Article 103**. However, it doesn’t directly say they’re disqualified instantly.

Further, **the House’s Secretariat, to which the member belongs, lacks the power** to announce that a member is disqualified immediately upon being convicted by a court of law.

Hence, the instant disqualification of Mr. Gandhi didn’t have a strong legal basis.

Is suspending the sentence enough to lift the disqualification, or is it essential to suspend the conviction itself?

In the 1980s and 1990s, certain High Courts (like Allahabad High Court in 1987 and Himachal High Court in 1994) believed that disqualification remains even with a suspended sentence.

However, **in the Jayalalithaa case of 2001, the Madras High Court determined** that when the sentence is put on hold, the conviction should also be considered as on hold.

In Rahul Gandhi’s situation, the Supreme Court stopped the conviction but didn’t say if stopping the conviction also stops disqualification.

Moreover, disqualification happens when the sentence is two years or more in prison. So, it’s based on the sentence length, not the conviction itself.

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Why was Section 8(4) struck down by the SC in Lily Thomas vs Union of India (2013)?

The Supreme Court removed Section 8(4) because Parliament can't treat lawmakers who are found guilty differently. This is because Article 102(1) says lawmakers and candidates should be treated the same way.

However, when it comes to treating them differently, the Constitution actually allows it. Article 103 says that for current lawmakers, the President will decide if they should be disqualified under Article 102(1).

Read More: [Making sense of the disqualification of a Lok Sabha MP and Disqualification of Legislators in India – Explained and Does Rahul Gandhi stand disqualified as an MP following his conviction?](#)

What can be the way ahead?

The Lily Thomas ruling hasn't changed politicians' behavior much concerning criminal matters. Powerful ruling party members can quickly delay convictions, avoiding instant disqualification.

Therefore, **to safeguard legislators' careers from sudden disruptions caused by court orders, section 8(4) should be constitutionally restored and protected.**

13. Medical prescription guidelines: Go for well-calibrated adoption

Source: The post is based on the article "Medical prescription guidelines: Go for well-calibrated adoption" published in "Live Mint" on 23rd August 2023.

Syllabus: GS2- Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies & Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health.

News: In this article, author discusses the challenges and considerations of India's new medical guideline urging doctors to prescribe generic drugs over branded ones. He also emphasises the need for quality assurance, better infrastructure, and collaboration among stakeholders to ensure affordable and quality healthcare in India.

About India's new medical guideline.

Issue by: On August 2nd, the National Medical Commission (NMC), which oversees India's medical sector, issued guidelines for registered medical practitioners. These guidelines cover various topics, including medical ethics.

Preference for Generics: An important instruction for registered medical practitioners is to recommend INN generics (International Non-Proprietary Name) rather than branded medications.

Promotion of Government Centers: Urges patients to purchase drugs from government centres and generic pharmacy outlets.

Educational Aspect: Doctors should inform patients about the equivalence of generics to branded drugs in terms of efficacy.

Quality Assurance: Emphasizes the need to ensure the quality and standardization of INN generics.

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What are the challenges of India's new medical guideline?

Challenges of India's New Medical Guideline

Trust in Quality: Many doctors lack confidence in the quality and reputation of generic drug manufacturers. They've used branded generics for years and are hesitant to switch due to concerns about clinical outcomes.

Comparison with Western Markets: Unlike the West, where generics must meet strict quality standards, India's criteria are less stringent, leading to doubts about drug equivalence.

Transfer of Drug Choice: The guideline might shift drug choice from doctors to chemists. There's a fear that chemists might dispense pricier drugs for higher trade margins instead of cheaper generics.

Availability Issues: Currently, generic drugs only account for 1-2% of the market share in India.

Quality Assurance: India lacks adequate drug control inspectors and testing labs, making regular inspections of manufacturing facilities challenging.

Prescribing Challenges: Generic drugs often come in fixed-dose combinations, making it hard for doctors to prescribe the right strength variations. Without the flexibility found in branded medicines, doctors might find it challenging to match the exact needs of their patients using generics.

What should be done?

Enhance Trust: Educate doctors on the quality of generic drugs and their manufacturing standards to build confidence in prescribing them.

Quality Control: Increase the number of drug standard control inspectors and expand testing laboratories. Regular inspections of manufacturing facilities are crucial.

Improve Availability: Expand the network of Jan Aushadi centres beyond the current 9,000+ to ensure easier access to generic drugs.

Review Trade Margins: Evaluate and possibly regulate trade margins to ensure that cost savings from generics are passed on to consumers.

Open Dialogue: Encourage discussions between the government, medical bodies, patient groups, and pharmaceutical industry to address concerns and collaborate on solutions.

14. The U.K.-India relationship is alive with opportunity

Source- The post is based on the article **"The U.K.-India relationship is alive with opportunity"** published in **"The Hindu"** on **24th August 2023**.

Syllabus: GS2- Bilateral groupings and agreements

Relevance: India and UK bilateral relationship

News- The article explains the status of trade, investment and cultural relationship between India and UK.

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What is the status of the trade and investment relationship between India and the UK?

The United Kingdom and India have a **robust trading partnership**. The value of bilateral trade was **£36 billion in 2022**.

India was the **second-largest contributor of investment projects** in the UK during the previous fiscal year. These projects amounted to 118. It generated 8,384 new jobs throughout the U.K.

The UK is the **sixth-largest investor** in India. It has **infused \$34 billion** into India through **foreign direct investment** between April 2000 and March 2023.

U.K. enterprises are also actively generating **employment opportunities** and fostering growth. Presently, there are **618 U.K. companies** operating in India.

They collectively generated a turnover of **approximately \$50 billion** and employed around 466,640 individuals directly in 2021.

Business relationships are growing stronger. Recently, Tata Group selected the U.K. as the location for its inaugural gigafactory outside of India.

Both countries are negotiating a **free trade agreement**.

What is the status of cultural relationship between the two countries?

As per Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a **“living bridge”** exists between our nations. It is exemplified by our **shared affinity for Bollywood**.

The U.K. holds one of the **largest audiences** for Bollywood outside of India. It has served as the backdrop for iconic films like **Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham**, which featured scenes shot at St. Paul's Cathedral and Blenheim Palace. There exists a **vibrant Indian diaspora** in the U.K. numbering **over 1.6 million**. Indian students represent one of the **largest groups** of international students in the U.K.

The UK has launched **‘Alive with Opportunity’**, a £1.5 million **marketing campaign**. This campaign has been crafted to spotlight the strong connection between our nations and cultivate the ongoing **exchange of people, ideas, and culture**.

15. Needed, a well-crafted social security net for all

Source: The post is based on articles **“Needed, a well-crafted social security net for all”** published in **The Hindu** on **24th August 2023**.

Syllabus: **GS 2 – Government Policies and Interventions for Development in various sectors and Issues arising out of their Design and Implementation.**

Relevance: **concerns with social security schemes in India.**

News: Social security in India has largely been ignored by the policymakers. The article explains the measures needed to enhance social security schemes in India.

What are the various findings of the data?

As per the Periodic Labour Force Survey Annual Report 2021-22, around 53% of India's salaried workforce lacks social security benefits.

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Further, only 1.9% of the poorest 20% of workers enjoy any such social security benefits. Similarly, only around 1.3% of active labor force members, who are gig workers, have access to social security.

India's social security system is ranked very poorly, securing the 40th position out of 43 countries in Mercer CFS's 2021 ranking.

What are the concerns with the existing social security benefits schemes?

The National Social Security Fund for unorganized sector workers began with ₹1,000 crore, intended for workers like weavers and rickshaw pullers.

However, this was insufficient compared to the required ₹22,841 crore. Additionally, an audit by the CAG found ₹1,927 crore unutilized.

Similarly, **the National Social Assistance Programme** aimed to provide a ₹75 monthly pension to elderly individuals without earners at home.

However, the Centre's contribution has remained at ₹200 monthly since 2006, lower than the daily minimum wage.

Moreover, budget cuts have also impacted the implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act along with other schemes.

How is the social security scheme in Brazil?

Brazil's General Social Security Scheme offers income for workers facing income loss from accidents, disabilities, death, medical leave, family duties, unemployment, or imprisonment. Accessing benefits is easier in Brazil.

India, with around 91% of its workforce in the informal sector, also needs an accessible social security scheme like Brazil's due to this large informal workforce.

Must Read: [Social security and the story of two Budgets](#)

What steps can be taken by India to enhance its social security schemes?

First, expanding employer and employee contributions within the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) system for formal workers.

Second, informal workers who earn a decent income could contribute a part of their earnings. This could motivate informal businesses to become more official and contribute more as well.

Third, [Code on Social Security in 2020](#) and [e-Shram](#) platform are important measures taken for social security. However, e-Shram makes informal workers register themselves, without motivating employers to encourage registration.

The Code on Social Security (2020) consolidated existing social security laws, primarily focusing on formal enterprises and did not cover informal ones.

Fourth, there is a need to fund social security for India's large workforce, beyond just construction and gig workers.

This includes a nationwide labor card and expanding successful schemes to other types of workers. Special attention is also required for females and migrant workers.

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Fifth, Existing schemes like the Employees' Provident Fund (EPF), Employees' State Insurance Scheme (ESI), and National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) could be strengthened by increasing budgetary support and extending coverage.

Administrative enhancements are also needed due to overlapping responsibilities between the State and Centre.

Sixth, there is a need to raise awareness about social security benefits among workers. Organizations like the Self-Employed Women's Association, running worker facilitation centers, could receive funding to carry out campaigns, particularly for women.

16. Sunil Bharti Mittal writes: It's time for Africa – and India's G20 presidency is part of the opportunity

Source: The post is based on the article "Sunil Bharti Mittal writes: It's time for Africa – and India's G20 presidency is part of the opportunity" published in "Indian Express" on 24th August 2023.

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

News: In this article, author stresses Africa's economic potential and urges worldwide cooperation to boost integration. The focus is on health, education, agriculture, industry, trade, infrastructure. The author also praises India's efforts to strengthen African ties.

About Africa's economic potential.

Rich Resources: Africa has 30% of global mineral reserves, 12% of oil, and 8% of natural gas.

Population Growth: By 2050, Africa will contribute over half of the world's projected population growth.

Young Workforce: Africa boasts a young and growing workforce, promising future economic growth.

Consumer Base: Rising disposable incomes indicate a growing consumer market.

Underutilization: Currently, Africa contributes under 3% to global manufacturing and trade.

Agriculture: About 70% of Africans work in agriculture, but there's room for growth with improved training and resources.

Trade Agreement: The African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) aims to boost intra-continental trade.

What steps have been taken by India for the better utilization of Africa's potential?

India's Steps for Utilizing Africa's Potential:

G20 Advocacy: Under its G20 presidency, India vocalized the need for the African Union's membership in the group.

Business-20 (B20) Action Council: India established the B20 Action Council titled 'African Economic Integration: An Agenda for Global Business' to promote Africa's economic integration.

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Focus on Inclusion: The council aligns with India's vision for heightened participation of Africa in the Global South.

Economic Recommendations: Through the B20 Action Council, India aids in crafting recommendations for regional economic integration in Africa.

Strengthening Ties: India's Prime Minister has been active in fostering a stronger relationship with Africa, emphasizing its importance in the global arena.

What should be done to effectively integrate the African continent?

Human Capital Development: Prioritize health and education outcomes. The African Development Bank indicates a yearly need of \$26 billion for healthcare. More schooling leads to increased earnings.

Revitalize Agriculture: Around 70% of the African population is in agriculture. Addressing gaps in finance, seeds, and fertilizers, and enhancing mechanization and value-addition is crucial.

Encourage Industrial Activities: Complement natural resources with higher productivity activities, emphasizing the empowerment of micro and small enterprises. This is in line with the African Union's Agenda 2063.

Maximize AfCFTA: The African Continental Free Trade Agreement needs to be fully implemented to improve competitiveness across the continent.

Strengthen Connectivity: Boost both physical and digital infrastructures, focusing on roads, railways, and digital links for comprehensive connectivity across Africa.

17. India's G-20 opportunity for an African Renaissance

Source: The post is based on the article "India's G-20 opportunity for an African Renaissance" published in **The Hindu** on 25th August 2023.

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

News: The author talks about Africa's challenges and reduced global support. They mention military takeovers, major global players, and India's potential help through ties and forums.

What are the major challenges faced by Africa?

Governance Issues: Africa is facing challenges of misgovernance, the dominance of ruling tribes, and rampant corruption. An illustrative example of this is the recent resurgence of military rule in nations like Egypt, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger.

Security Concerns: The continent is under constant threat from Islamic terror outfits and deep-rooted inter-tribal conflicts. Past military interventions by global powers like France, the US, and Russia's Wagner Group have often worsened the situation rather than resolving it. A case in point is the division and power struggles among armed forces in Libya and Sudan.

Socio-Economic Disruptions: Africa faces hurdles like unplanned development, adverse effects of climate change, rising food inflation, rapid urbanization, and soaring youth unemployment.

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Eroding International Support: Global powers such as China, Russia, France, UK, and the US are showing dwindling support for the continent. **For instance**, the slowdown in China's economy has reduced its trade with Africa, plunging many African nations into debt.

External Exploitation: Colonial-era powers and the US continue to exploit Africa's rich mineral resources. Meanwhile, a significant concern for Europe is curbing illegal migration originating from Africa.

What role has India played in Africa to overcome these challenges?

Deep Historical Ties: India's relationship with Africa is rooted in history, from Mahatma Gandhi's satyagraha against apartheid to UN peacekeeping roles.

Trade and Investment: India-Africa trade amounted to \$98 billion in 2022-23. India was the fifth largest investor in Africa, providing over \$12.37 billion in concessional loans.

Educational and Socio-Economic Engagements: India has completed 197 projects in Africa and granted 42,000 scholarships since 2015. Focus areas include education, healthcare, telecom, IT, and agriculture.

Technological and Financial Innovations: India can offer African nations innovative solutions like the JAM trinity (Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile), DBT (Direct Benefit Transfer), UPI (Unified Payments Interface), and Aspirational Districts Program.

People-to-People Ties: Around three million people of Indian origin reside in Africa, strengthening cultural and social bonds.

In summary, India's multifaceted engagement with Africa positions it to offer support both bilaterally and through multilateral forums.

18. The real purpose of the medical college

Source: The post is based on the article "The real purpose of the medical college" published in "The Hindu" on 25th August 2023.

Syllabus: GS2- Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health.

News: In this article, author talks about the misconception of more medical colleges solving healthcare access issues in India. They argue for strengthening secondary-level healthcare, not just prioritizing tertiary care and medical education.

What are the realities and myths about medical colleges?

Myth about Medical Colleges:

Complete Healthcare Solution: There's a widespread belief that establishing a medical college will address all healthcare needs of a district.

Boost in Opportunities: Locals often think that the presence of a medical college increases the chances of their children securing a medical seat.

Solution to Healthcare Access: Producing more medical professionals from more colleges is often seen as the solution to inadequate access to healthcare.

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Reality about Medical Colleges:

Overload of Patients: Many medical colleges are crowded with patients needing primary or secondary care, which could be addressed at lower-level facilities.

Misplaced Focus: Over 80% of cases treated at medical colleges don't need tertiary specialty care. Effective treatment can be given at lower levels, as seen in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Infrastructure Challenges: New medical colleges, like some AIIMS projects, often face setbacks due to poor infrastructure and connectivity.

Shift in Priorities: When district hospitals convert to medical colleges, the focus can shift from patient care to education.

What should be done?

Strengthen Secondary-Level Healthcare: Prioritize improving secondary-level care facilities, given that over 80% of cases at medical colleges could be treated at these lower levels.

Establish Efficient Referral Systems: India's failure to implement a working referral system in tertiary-care facilities points to the need for a structured patient routing system. Such systems work in regions with functional secondary facilities, ensuring that patients receive care at the appropriate level.

Re-evaluate Hospital Conversions: Before converting district hospitals into medical colleges, consider their vital role in patient care. Some district hospitals, despite resisting conversion, have excelled in providing quality care, especially in trauma responses.

Focus on Current Challenges: Address existing issues like poor infrastructure, lack of specialists, and overcrowded medical colleges. The struggles faced by new AIIMS projects highlight the importance of this focus.

Educate the Public: Debunk myths surrounding medical colleges to ensure the public understands the importance of a balanced healthcare infrastructure.

19. Should the CJI be part of the committee selecting the CEC?

Source: The post is based on the article "**Should the CJI be part of the committee selecting the CEC?**" published in **The Hindu** on 25th August 2023.

Syllabus: GS 2 – Election commission

News: The article discusses a new Bill proposing changes to the selection panel for the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and Election Commissioners (ECs) in India. Critics argue that replacing the Chief Justice of India with a Cabinet Minister on the panel could compromise the Election Commission's independence.

What are the major provisions of the CEC and Other ECs (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Bill, 2023?

Read Here – [Appointments to the Election Commission – Proposed changes](#)

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What are the major concerns related to this bill?

Neutrality Concern: The Bill proposes a Cabinet Minister, nominated by the Prime Minister, in the selection panel instead of the Chief Justice of India. This means two members from the ruling government on the panel, raising concerns about the panel's impartiality.

Bill vs Supreme Court's Intention: While the Bill follows the Supreme Court's directive to enact a law for appointments, critics argue it misses the Court's intended spirit, especially regarding ensuring the Election Commission's independence from the executive.

Status Downgrade of CEC: The Bill equates the CEC's salary to that of the Cabinet Secretary instead of a Supreme Court judge. Despite similar pay, this change is viewed as a potential status dilution.

EC Independence: There are concerns that the new system might make the Election Commission more susceptible to executive influence.

20. India and the Northern Sea Route

Source: The post is based on the article "India and the Northern Sea Route" published in **The Hindu** on 25th August 2023.

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

News: The article talks about India's increasing role in Arctic's Northern Sea Route (NSR) for cargo. It covers Arctic's significance for India, Russia's nuclear icebreakers for NSR, and India's involvement due to the Chennai-Vladivostok Maritime Corridor project.

Why is the Arctic region significant to India?

Historical Engagement: India's ties with the Arctic date back to the signing of the Svalbard Treaty in 1920. India also established a research station in the Arctic in 2008 and became an observer-State of the Arctic Council in 2013.

Climate Impact: Changes in the Arctic climate can influence India's economic security, water security, and sustainability.

Resource Potential: The Arctic might contain over 40% of global oil and gas reserves, along with reserves of coal, zinc, and silver.

Trade Route: The Northern Sea Route (NSR) in the Arctic offers a shorter shipping route between Europe and Asia-Pacific, potentially saving up to 50% in distance.

Economic Benefits: In 2023, India's cargo traffic at the Arctic's Murmansk port was 35% of eight million tonnes.

What is NSR (Northern Sea Route)?

Definition: The Northern Sea Route (NSR) is the shortest shipping route for freight transportation between Europe and Asia-Pacific countries.

Location: The NSR spans four seas of the Arctic Ocean, starting at the boundary between the Barents and the Kara seas (Kara Strait) and ending in the Bering Strait (Provideniya Bay).

Distance: The route measures 5,600 km in length.

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Recent Events: The 2021 blockage of the Suez Canal highlighted the NSR's significance as an alternative maritime route.

Navigation Challenges: The Arctic Ocean remains icebound for most of the year, requiring icebreaking assistance for safe navigation.

What are the driving factors for India to participate in the NSR development?

Cargo Traffic Growth: Cargo traffic along the NSR experienced a surge of around 73% from 2018-2022, with a volume of 34.117 million tonnes in 2022.

Energy Imports: India's increasing imports of crude oil and coal from Russia are facilitated by the NSR's reliability and safety.

Geographical Benefits: India's major trade depends on sea transportation. The NSR offers a more efficient route, enhancing India's trade potential.

Chennai-Vladivostok Corridor: The Chennai-Vladivostok Maritime Corridor (CVMC) could link with the NSR, shortening transport time. The CVMC is 10,500 km, a significant reduction from the 16,000 km St. Petersburg-Mumbai route.

Strategic Considerations: With potential collective influence from China and Russia over the NSR, India's involvement can ensure balanced regional dynamics.

What lies ahead?

NSR Development Plan: Russia's plan for the NSR targets a cargo traffic of 80 million tonnes by 2024 and 150 million tonnes by 2030.

Russian Collaboration: A Russian delegation met with the Indian business community, discussing the NSR development. They promised to provide key components for the route's year-round operation.

Indian Company Involvement: Rosatom is encouraging Indian companies to participate in projects related to the NSR.

CVMC Project: A workshop involving stakeholders from India and Russia for the Chennai-Vladivostok Maritime Corridor (CVMC) project is scheduled for October.

Economic Context: All these developments are unfolding against the backdrop of Western economic sanctions on Russia, which might influence strategic and economic collaborations.

These developments indicate India's continued interest and involvement in Arctic and NSR projects.

21. Express View on BRICS: In uncharted waters

Source- The post is based on the article "**Express View on BRICS: In uncharted waters**" published in the "**The Indian Express**" and "**Brics & Beijing**" published in "**The Times of India**" on **24th August 2023**.

Syllabus: GS2- Regional and global groupings

News- The article explains the issues of expansion of BRICS membership and challenges faced by the grouping.

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What are the reasons behind the Chinese and Russian push for BRICS expansion?

Firstly, China and Russia are looking to transform BRICS as a counter to US-led Multilateral system.

Secondly, both Russia and China hope to create new strategic and diplomatic space for themselves through an expanded BRICS as both face Western sanctions and pressure.

Thirdly, by admission of new states with authoritarian regimes China and Russia want to project authoritarian regimes standing upto western democracies.

What are the reasons behind countries for pushing their inclusion in BRICS

Firstly, the countries of the global south want to **gain strategic autonomy** by their inclusion in BRICS.

Secondly, countries from the global south want to **stand up to western pressures** by using the platform of BRICS.

Lastly, countries eyeing for BRICS membership want to use BRICS to get their economic concerns addressed especially after COVID-19 and Ukraine war.

What are the arguments for and against BRICS Expansion

Against: it will make **BRICS less efficient**. There will be **difficulty in reaching consensus** on contentious issues and declarations, given the wide ranging economic and political differences between the member countries.

For: it will **put pressure on the west to end its prolonged neglect of the global south**. BRICS can become a counter to groupings like G7 which are west dominated.

What are the existing Fault lines between the member states of BRICS

Firstly, India and China are engaged in border disputes in eastern Ladakh.

Secondly, India has been advocating for resilient supply chains which aims at diversification of supply chains away from China.

Thirdly, China has been using the BRICS platform to target US while other members like India, South Africa and Brazil have deepened their engagement with US.

Lastly, newly admitted members like Saudi Arabia and Iran have deep sense of suspicion and animosity despite Chinese efforts to ensure peace between them.

What should be India's Role in the Expanded BRICS

India has allowed for expansion of BRICS but has insisted on finalization of membership criterion for expansion. India has asserted its heft in the recent meeting of BRICS.

However, India will need to **smartly play** the role of balancer in the forum to prevent **BRICS** from becoming a **Chinese-talk shop**.

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22. The dopiness Bharat NCAP cannot solve

Source: The post is based on articles:

“The dopiness Bharat NCAP cannot solve” published in **Business Standard** on **25th August 2023**.

“Make India a global hub for vehicle crash testing” published in **Live Mint** on **25th August 2023**.

Syllabus Topic: GS 2 – Government Policies and Interventions for Development in various sectors and Issues arising out of their Design and Implementation

News: Recently, Bharat New Car Assessment Programme (Bharat NCAP) has been introduced by the Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways.

What is Bharat NCAP?

[Click Here to Read](#)

It is the first such program to be administered by a national government, whereas others like Global NCAP are privately funded entities. It reduces testing by approximately one-fourth of Global NCAP's expenses.

What safety measures have Indian car manufacturers been employing so far?

GNCAP's crash results, safety features and its ratings are popular in India. Tata Motors, Mahindra & Mahindra, Hyundai, use its 5-star ratings for marketing.

Maruti Suzuki hasn't participated in GNCAP tests because as per the company, Indian vehicles already meet safety standards **set by the Central Motor Vehicle Rules**.

However, **the company is enthusiastic about the BNCAP**, and is providing three models for testing.

What is the significance of BNCAP rating and how is it different from GNCAP?

The difference between the two lies in cost, not quality.

BNCAP tests are almost the same as GNCAP's, so cars rated highly internationally are likely to do well in local testing. **Government labs conducting BNCAP tests with cost-effective resources will also cut expenses for car manufacturers.**

The government's approval for car safety could also attract consumers. If authorities push car makers to compete using BNCAP ratings, buyers might consider these ratings when buying cars.

This could encourage better performance and elevate safety standards across the industry.

Even a survey found that more than two-thirds of potential car buyers want BNCAP ratings, and most existing car owners would think about upgrading if their vehicles received poor ratings.

Read More: [Bharat NCAP: India gets its own car crash testing programme](#)

What are the findings related to the road accidents in India?

According to a World Bank report, India possesses 1% of global vehicles but accounts for 11% of road crash fatalities, costing 3% to 5% of GDP annually.

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways indicates that 87% of car-related deaths result from occupants not using seatbelts.

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Moreover, car safety is often linked with airbags, but the seatbelt is a more effective safety device. Airbags can be dangerous without a fastened seatbelt.

In two-wheeler accidents, 70% of fatalities involve riders without helmets. However, over speeding contributes to 69% of all fatalities.

What can be the way ahead?

First, the introduction of BNCAP is crucial, **but improving road safety in India requires a comprehensive approach beyond car features. This includes** awareness, road design, addressing accident-prone areas to safeguard all road users.

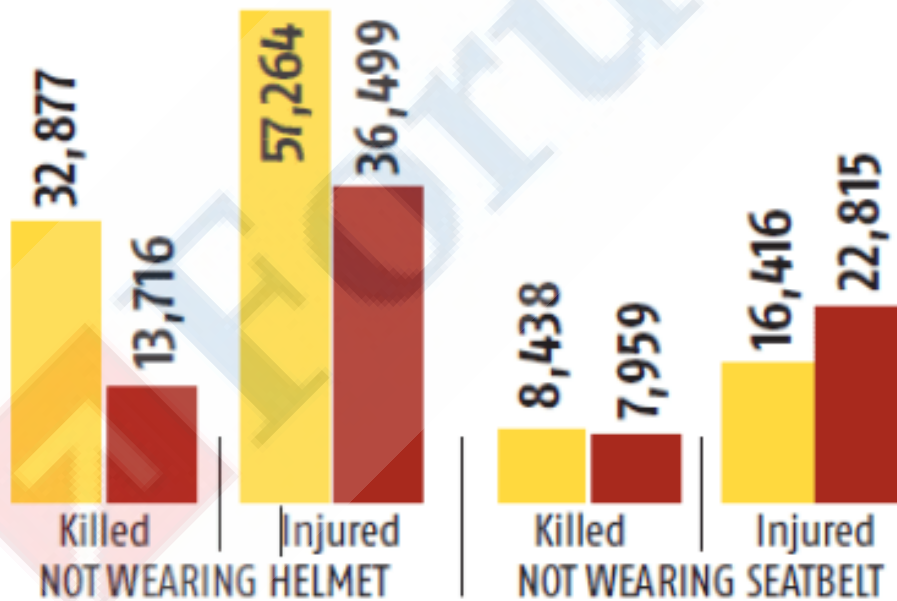
Second, car occupant fatalities declined from 18% (2016) to 13.6% (2020), while fatalities among vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and cyclists rose from 47% (2016) to 64% (2020). This emphasizes the necessity for broader safety measures for everyone.

Third, if BNCAP proves successful as an affordable and high-quality initiative, **India could become a global hub for crash testing.**

This shift would benefit India in terms of foreign earnings and may enhance the credibility of Indian crash tests worldwide.

PERSONS KILLED AND INJURED DUE TO NON-USE OF SAFETY DEVICES

■ Drivers ■ Passengers (in 2021*)



* Latest available data; Source: Ministry of Road Transport and Highways

Source: Business Standard

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23. The new discourse of the Global South

Source: The post is based on the article “Ram Madhav writes: **The new discourse of the Global South**” published in “The Indian Express” on 26th August 2023.

Syllabus: GS2- Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India’s interests.

News: The article discusses the changing definitions of “developed” and “developing” countries. The terms are becoming outdated as many nations, like India, are showing rapid progress. The term “Global South” is introduced, emphasizing cultural differences rather than just economic. The focus shifts towards sustainable living and eco-friendly worldviews.

What’s the problem with the terms “Developed” and “Developing”?

Lack of Clear Definitions:

The World Trade Organisation says it doesn’t have definitions for “developed” and “developing” countries.

The United Nations categorizes Europe, North America, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand as the “developed world”, and the rest as “developing”, but without a clear definition.

Questioned by Prominent Figures:

Bill and Melinda Gates stated these terms have outlived their usefulness. Bill predicted almost no poor countries will exist by 2035.

Economic Inconsistencies:

Countries like Germany, classified as “developed”, face economic issues.

Mexico, with a GDP above \$10,000, is considered “developing”, but it’s grouped with nations like Sierra Leone having a GDP under \$500.

Population vs. GDP:

Latvia is “developed” with a GDP of \$30 billion and a small population, while India’s larger GDP of \$3.75 trillion but huge population of 1.4 billion keeps it “developing”.

How are India and China challenging this?

India’s Challenge:

India is rapidly progressing, competing with many developed nations on economic and technological fronts.

Examples include its significant GDP growth, transformational economic reforms, infrastructure development (metros, airports, waterways), and achievements in space exploration with Chandrayaan-3.

India’s introduction of the term “Global South” shifts the focus from just economic development to cultural and sustainable aspects.

China’s Challenge:

Despite being a global superpower, China still positions itself as part of the “developing world”.

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President Xi Jinping's statement at the BRICS summit in Johannesburg emphasizes China's affiliation with the developing world, potentially for political reasons.

Why does the Global South mean?

Meaning of Global South:

New Terminology: It's a term some leaders use as an alternative to "developing world."

Beyond Economics: While the traditional labels focus on economic indicators, "Global South" emphasizes cultural and other differences.

Sustainable Vision: Countries in the Global South often have an eco-friendly worldview. For example, they prioritize sustainable living, ecological balance, and universal healthcare.

Cultural Distinction: The difference between Global South and Global North is more about cultural aspects than just economic or developmental ones.

24. Fallacy, fantasy, Global South

Source: The post is based on the article "**Fallacy, fantasy, Global South**" published in **Business Standard** on **26th August 2023**.

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

Relevance: challenges with the Global South.

News: The article explains challenges with the Global South.

What does the term Global South mean?

The term "**Global South**" originated in 1969 in a journal during the Vietnam War. It was used to criticize the unfair global order created by the Northern hemisphere's dominance over the Southern hemisphere.

This term evolved over time, and was also referred to as **Third World and Developing World**.

Does the term "Global South" accurately represent geographical and economic realities?

Geographically: The Global North-South division originated from the 1980 Brandt Report by former German Chancellor Wilhelm Brandt.

This report arbitrarily divided the world along the 30-degree north latitude line, passing through the Americas, Africa, Europe, and including China.

However, it left out Australia, New Zealand, developed countries of the Global South.

Therefore, the notion of categorizing the world into a prosperous North and an underdeveloped, struggling South does not align with geographical realities.

Economically: Around 78 nations fall under the Global South, including China, India, Indonesia, Brazil, Nigeria, and Bangladesh, collectively constituting a significant portion of its population.

However, economic inconsistencies emerge upon closer analysis. **For instance**, China, despite a per capita income exceeding \$12,000, maintains its claim as a developing nation, which contradicts its categorization within the Global South.

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Hence, the definition of the Global South also does not align economically.

Must Read: [The Global South: origins and significance](#)

What are the other issues with the term?

Several key allies of the “Global North” are situated in the Southern hemisphere, including Japan, Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, the Philippines, and even India.

Therefore, it becomes evident that a majority of India’s allies, economic interests, diaspora, and cultural connections are situated in the “Global North”, despite viewing it negatively.

How has India’s global position evolved over time?

In Nehru’s time, the division was East-West, viewing the West as exploitative and the Soviet Bloc as representing the East.

Nehru’s Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) held anti-Western sentiments, later intensified by Indira Gandhi’s alignment with the Soviet Union.

However, **China’s post-Cold War rise changed the global landscape, posing new challenges for India.**

What are the challenges with India?

Russia’s decline and China’s challenge to American power have sparked new concepts of multilateralism and plurilateralism.

However, **it is also necessary recognize that these alternative groupings could be influenced by China, as seen in BRICS and SCO.**

Therefore, with China’s increasing influence, evaluating Global South’s leadership is crucial as it could also become a Chinese dominated bloc.

25. G20 ministers agree to map global value chains, link MSMEs

Source– The post is based on the article **“G20 ministers agree to map global value chains, link MSMEs”** published in the **“The Hindu”** on **26th August 2023**.

Syllabus: GS2 – International Relations – Global groupings

News– Recently, a two-day G20 Trade and Investment Ministerial Meeting took [place in Jaipur.

What are important parts of outcome document from Trade and Investment Ministers of G20 nations?

1. **Comprehensive framework within the G20 context** for the purpose of mapping out **global value chains** is suggested.

The objective is to comprehend the existing issues and identify the necessary actions to enhance the **inclusivity, sustainability, and resilience** of these value chains.

2. It focuses on MSMEs. The declaration from Jaipur emphasizes the imperative of **reinforcing the capabilities of MSMEs.**

Due to their small scale, MSMEs face limitations in accessing **critical information, financial resources, and market-related data points.**

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A worldwide trade assistance platform, overseen by the **International Trade Centre**, will be consistently upgraded through consultation with **UNCTAD and the World Trade Organisation (WTO)**.

This evolution aims to make the platform **more inclusive** and to offer **comprehensive data** to MSMEs.

3. The principles associated with the **digitization of trade documents is important part of outcome document**. The aim is to minimize the reliance on **paper documents** and remove obstacles that hinder the **seamless movement of goods and services**.

General Studies Paper –3

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General Studies - 3

1. Dollar Today, Rupee Tomorrow

Source: The post is based on the article “**Dollar Today, Rupee Tomorrow**” published in **The Times of India** on 21st August 2023.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Indian economy – Money and Currency

News: In this article author discusses the challenges and implications of making the Indian rupee an international currency, comparing it to dominant currencies like the U.S. dollar. They argue that India should focus on economic growth and trade expansion, rather than rushing to internationalize the rupee.

What are the functions of a currency such as the rupee?

The functions of a currency like the rupee are:

Medium of Exchange: Used to buy and sell products within India.

Unit of Account: Prices of products are set in rupees.

Store of Value: People save and hold rupees for future use.

Example: When both a buyer and seller in India transact, they use the rupee for payment and set the product’s price in rupees.

What is the role of international currencies?

The role of international currencies includes:

Medium of Exchange: Used for global trade between different countries.

Example: Over 80% of global trade transactions between 1999 and 2019 used the U.S. dollar.

Unit of Account: Sets prices for international transactions.

Example: Most world trade prices are in dollars or euros.

Store of Value: Held by central banks as reserves.

Example: Central banks hold 60% of their reserves in the U.S. dollar.

Dominance in Finance: 60% of international banking deposits and loans are in dollars.

What are the challenges of making the Indian rupee an international currency?

Small World Trade Share: India contributes less than 2.5% to global merchandise trade and less than 4% to world services trade. Most transactions use the dollar.

Limited Financial Transactions: India’s global financial transaction share is even smaller. Its corporate bond market is young, and public banks dominate.

Lack of Full Convertibility: India hasn’t fully adopted capital account convertibility, limiting the rupee’s use in global financial transactions.

Foreign Exchange Reserves: The Reserve Bank of India holds about \$600 billion in foreign currencies, primarily for rupee stability. Other countries might not store large rupee reserves.

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What should be done?

Focus on Growth: Prioritize expanding the economy, trade, and foreign investment.

Avoid Premature Changes: Don't rush to make the rupee fully convertible just to speed up its internationalization.

Natural Progression: Let rupee internationalization follow as India's economic stature grows.

Prioritize Stability: Ensure the rupee's stability without compromising major objectives.

2. When VVIPs Leave – on the issue of beautification of cities during VVIP visits

Source: The post is based on the article “When VVIPs Leave” published in The Times of India on 21st August 2023.

Syllabus: GS3 – infrastructure development

News: The author discusses how cities in India temporarily improve infrastructure for G20 meetings, which highlights the year-round poor conditions. He also emphasizes the need for local government power and genuine urban development instead of superficial enhancements.

Why is the temporary beautification of cities problematic?

Highlights Year-Round Neglect: Temporary touch-ups showcase the usual poor conditions.

Seen as VVIP Appeasement: In Mumbai, hiding slums and filling potholes are perceived as prioritizing VIP visitors over regular citizens.

Wasted Resources: Money is spent on short-term fixes rather than lasting solutions.

Skews Priorities: Focuses on cosmetic changes instead of essential infrastructure.

Quick Deterioration: Pune's post-G20 beautified areas returned to their neglected state within a week.

Disconnect with Citizens: People feel alienated when improvements are temporary and not genuinely for their benefit

What are the major issues with urban infrastructure in India?

Lagging Behind Neighbors: Indian cities fall behind not just Western but also many Asian cities in infrastructure.

Focus on Showiness: New flyovers get priority over essential facilities like sewage treatment.

Frequent Flooding: Last year, Bengaluru's tech parks flooded due to poor drainage.

Lack of Local Governance Power: Despite constitutional recognition, municipal revenue hasn't significantly grown since 1946-47.

Stagnant Municipal Revenue: RBI report shows no significant growth in municipal revenue from 1946-47.

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3. Gene-edited mustard: Less pungent, more useful

Source: The post is based on the article “**Gene-edited mustard: Less pungent, more useful**” published in **The Indian Express** on **21st August 2023**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Agriculture

Relevance: About GTR genes-edited mustard

News: Oilseeds provide oil for cooking and protein-rich meals for animals. **Rapeseed-mustard** is a key Indian oilseed, constituting 42.6% of oil production and 30.3% of meal production.

However, **its high glucosinolate levels create pungent taste and odor** in its products, making the oil less preferred by consumers and the meal unpalatable for the livestock.

What alternative is being adopted by the scientists for the rapeseed-mustard?

Scientists are trying to breed rapeseed-mustard along the lines of canola quality by lowering glucosinolate levels. This will help in reducing the pungent taste and odor of the oil and meal.

However, **these low-glucosinolate mustard lines face issues in large-scale farming due to vulnerability to pests and diseases.** Because glucosinolates also shield crops like mustard against pests and pathogens.

While lowering glucosinolates benefits oil and meals, it compromises the plant’s overall defense. Therefore, **novel breeding research plays a crucial role** in addressing these challenges.

How does novel research breeding help in addressing these challenges?

Novel breeding research involves glucosinolate production in leaves and pod walls, transported to seeds via **glucosinolate transporter (GTR) genes**. GTR1 and GTR2 classes encompass 12 genes responsible for this process.

For example, CRISPR/Cas9 gene editing was used to modify 10 out of 12 GTR genes in ‘**Varuna**’ **Indian mustard**.

Targeted gene editing of the Varuna mustard variety resulted in seed glucosinolate levels below the 30-ppm of the canola-quality limit. Whereas other parts like leaves and pod walls had notably higher glucosinolates.

This low-seed, **high-leaf glucosinolate** edited lines demonstrated defense responses better than the wild-type mustard, due to the high glucosinolate concentration in leaves and pod walls.

Whereas **the low glucosinolate levels in seeds** will reduce the pungent taste and odor in the oil and meals, making it useful for both animals and humans.

What are the characteristics of this new GTR genes-edited mustard?

The new GTR genes-edited mustard lines are transgene-free, meaning they are not genetically modified (GM) and lack foreign genes found in Bt cotton or GM hybrid mustard.

The low-seed high-leaf glucosinolate mustard lines are genome edited (GE), different from GM or transgenic plants. **The final GE lines also do not possess the Cas9 protein and are devoid of transgenes.**

Moreover, in India, strict rules governed by the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (**GEAC**) under the Ministry of Environment oversee GM crop cultivation.

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But in March 2022, a **new rule was introduced by the Ministry stating that GM plants without added foreign DNA don't require GEAC approval** for field tests or commercial sale.

This change means that clearance is now only required from an Institutional Biosafety Committee (**IBSC**).

What is the way ahead?

India imports a substantial amount of edible oils, covering over 60% of consumption.

Therefore, it's crucial to boost domestic oilseed production through breeding for improved yields, pest resistance, and quality, to curb foreign exchange outflow.

4. Pilot fatigue in India, a wake-up call for airlines

Source– The post is based on the article **“Pilot fatigue in India, a wake-up call for airlines”** published in **“The Hindu”** on **21st August 2023**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Disaster management

Relevance: Issues related to aircraft accidents

News– In the past weeks, there have been reports of some Indian pilots who passed away due to cardiac arrest. One of them was a pilot of Indian origin flying for an airline in West Asia.

What are issues related to pilots in India?

Airlines and the aviation **regulatory body** in India does not comprehend the significance of **fatigue and inadequate sleep**.

India has some of the most inadequate regulations concerning **Flight and Duty Time Limitations** and **rest intervals**.

Proficiency evaluations are manipulated and training often reduced to a mere formality.

Airlines around the globe impose a **minimum cumulative cockpit experience requirement** for both pilots. Indian airlines do not fulfil these criteria.

Flying crew in India get **one day off** in a week and just their annual leave. ‘Safe airlines’ worldwide provide at least **two days off** every week and proper rest periods between flights for the body clock to unwind.

The fatal accident at Mangaluru and Kozhikode (August 2020) had identified another important factor. The pilots were taking medications. **Self-medication** becomes a norm. Without many being aware of side-effects, these can induce other conditions.

What are the contributing factors behind the aircraft accidents?

Crew duty time cannot be **standardized** for all situations. **Human fatigue** varies throughout the day, with the circadian low affecting the period from midnight to sunrise. The number of landings during a pilot's duty duration contributes to fatigue.

Over 60 years ago, a scientific study demonstrated that **stress levels** during landing approaches can elevate heart rates to over 240 beats per minute.

This triggers the **adrenal glands** and leads to significant **sugar depletion** in the body. This has identified this as a contributing factor towards accidents.

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Accidents have been linked to **sleep deprivation and momentary micro-sleep episodes** lasting between five to 15 seconds during the **approach and landing phases**.

5. Express View on Luna-25: After the crash-landing

Source– The post is based on the article “**Express View on Luna-25: After the crash-landing**” published in “**The Indian Express**” on **22nd August 2023**.

Syllabus: GS3- Awareness in the field of space

Relevance: Space exploration

News– Recently, Russian spacecraft Luna-25 was crash-landed on the moon.

Over the past four years, attempts to land spacecraft on the moon have been made by **four distinct nations** — Israel, India, Japan, and Russia. Each of these attempts met with failure during the **final stages of landing** or just prior to it.

How have lunar missions transformed in this century?

“Luna-25” mission should not be misconstrued as a continuation of the **Luna series of lunar probes** that were launched by the Soviet Union in the 1960s and 1970s.

The contemporary wave of lunar missions differs significantly from those undertaken half a century ago.

Modern technology and materials are utilized, along with **new types of propellants**. Even the **objectives and incentives** driving these missions have evolved substantially.

Lunar exploration at the start of this century focussed initially on **Orbiter missions**.

How will this incident impact future space missions and Chandrayaan-3?

Setbacks are not unfamiliar to space agencies. Every nation engaged in **space exploration** has faced **failures and challenges**. These setbacks have served as **opportunities for learning and growth**.

The unsuccessful Luna-25 mission has in fact paved the way for Chandrayaan-3 to potentially become the **first spacecraft** to successfully land in the **polar region** of the moon.

ISRO is likely experiencing its own sense of apprehension for the **landing attempt of Chandrayaan-3**.

It has undergone substantial **safety enhancements** to prevent a repeat of the previous mishap. However, there remains a lack of **assurance or complacency** until the test is successfully passed.

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6. How to fix holes in the financial safety net

Source– The post is based on the article “**How to fix holes in the financial safety net**” published in “**The Indian Express**” on **22nd August 2023**.

Syllabus: GS3- Economy

Relevance: Global financial system

News– The article explains the evolution of the global financial system and challenges faced by current financial architecture. It also explains the future of the global financial system.

How has the global financial system evolved until 2011?

The period before World War I was characterised by **unrestricted movement of capital and fixed exchange rates** tied to the **gold standard**. The gold standard’s success depended on cooperation between major **global economic powers**.

Following the interwar era, the gold standard was replaced by the **post-1940s Bretton Woods system**. The **Bretton Woods conference** led to the establishment of three significant **international financial institutions: the IMF, World Bank, and later, GATT and WTO**.

Until the 1970s, the International Monetary Fund managed the **global financial safety net** (GFSN) through the **Bretton Woods system**. It was characterised by **semi-fixed exchange rates and controlled capital movements**.

However, this system collapsed in the early 1970s. There were doubts about the sustainability of the **US dollar’s convertibility** into gold at a **fixed exchange rate** and concerns about the availability of **sufficient gold** to match the increasing supply of US dollars.

This collapse gave rise to the present framework of **flexible exchange rates** disconnected from gold, and relatively **unrestricted capital accounts**.

The 1980s and 1990s were marked by frequent instances of **balance of payments crises and macroeconomic instability** in numerous emerging markets and developing economies.

The open capital accounts in these economies led to **volatility in capital flows**. It contributed to an escalation in the frequency and severity of financial crises.

From 1970 to 2011, there were a total of 147 systemic banking crises, 218 currency crises, and 66 sovereign debt crises, primarily occurring in EMDEs.

During this time, the IMF remained the sole but largely **ineffective observer** of the **Global Financial Safety Net**. **Substantial transformations** have since occurred.

The most significant event of the late 1990s was the Asian financial crisis. Many of the countries affected by this crisis felt that the conditionalities imposed by the IMF were too onerous, which led many to increase their foreign exchange reserves as self-insurance.

Ten **ASEAN** member states plus China, Japan, and South Korea (ASEAN+3) founded the **Chiang Mai Initiative (CMI)** in 2000. In 2010, it became the “**Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralisation**” (**CMIM**).

The already existing ASEAN swap arrangements were expanded to facilitate **bilateral currency swaps** among all ASEAN +3 countries.

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How has the global financial system transformed after the global financial crisis of 2008-09?

The **2008-09 North Atlantic Financial Crisis** led to innovations in the **Global Financial Safety Net**. The US **Federal Reserve** set up **bilateral swap lines** with the major central banks in advanced economies along with a few emerging market economies.

For euro-area countries, the **European Financial Stability Facility** was created as a temporary crisis solution in 2010. It became the **European Stability Mechanism** in 2012, with a lending capacity of Euros 500 billion.

A **global network of bilateral swap lines** has proliferated. The number of bilateral swap lines has increased from only a few in 2007 to 91 at the end of 2020. It amounts to a total of about USD 1.9 trillion.

There are now seven **regional financial arrangements** with total potential resources available of almost USD 800 billion.

What are issues related to the global financial system?

During the Covid crisis, the IMF lent USD 118 billion to 22 countries in the western hemisphere; USD 25 billion to 40 countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

The above data illustrates that when more developed countries suffer from crises, the **magnitudes of loans** to them are much larger than similar crises in emerging economies.

There has also been a perception that the **conditionalities accompanying IMF programmes** to advanced economies are **less stringent** than in emerging economies

There has been a growing dissatisfaction with the **distribution of quotas and voice** in **IMF governance** with the increasing economic size of emerging economies

The economic weight of emerging economies do not reflect adequately in the **voting, quota, and governance structure of the IMF**.

What will be the future shape of the global financial system?

The **16th review of quotas** is currently ongoing. Many observers believe that there is little chance of the major member countries agreeing to the **increased quota of emerging economies**.

Without significant **governance reform** in the IMF being unlikely, its relative **importance and effectiveness** could get progressively eroded.

Thus, the GFSN of the future is likely to be a **combination of different regional financial arrangements, bilateral swap lines, increasing foreign exchange reserves, and the IMF**.

What are the options for India among transformations in the global financial safety net?

India is currently not part of any **regional financial arrangements**. In case of any **macroeconomic and external crisis**, it will have to rely on its **bilateral swap lines**, particularly with Japan, and the IMF.

India should consider approaching the **“Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralisation”** for potential membership.

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The pursuit of **prudent macroeconomic policies** encompassing **fiscal, monetary, financial and development policies** since the early 1990s, is the **best financial safety net** that India should aspire for.

It should also continue to build **adequate foreign exchange reserves** for its **self-insurance**.

It should be particularly careful in **opening the capital account**, especially to **volatile debt inflows** into its **bond market**.

7. “On smartphone manufacturing in India”

Source: The post is based on the article “**On smartphone manufacturing in India**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 22nd August 2023.

Syllabus: GS3- Effects of liberalisation on the economy, changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth.

News: The article discusses a debate between former RBI governor Raghuram Rajan and Minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar on the effectiveness of the Indian government’s **production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme** in promoting genuine manufacturing versus just assembly in the electronics sector, especially in mobile phone production.

What is government’s production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme?

Read hear: [About the PLI Scheme](#)

What are Raghuram Rajan’s arguments?

Program’s Efficacy: The Central government scheme isn’t turning India into a self-reliant manufacturing giant.

Dependency on Imports: While there’s a decrease in imports of assembled mobile phones, the imports of mobile components (like screens, batteries, and circuit boards) surged between FY21 and FY23.

Assembly vs. Manufacturing: Companies are largely just assembling phones in India using imported components rather than manufacturing them fully here. The end result is merely a ‘Made in India’ label.

Job Quality: The kind of jobs created through this scheme are low-level assembly jobs which don’t pay well.

Economic Impact: Such assembly work doesn’t produce the strong economic multiplier effect genuine manufacturing would offer.

Net Exports Concern: Even if only 60% of component imports are for mobile production, the import value would still surpass the export value.

What is the Minister’s response?

Use of Imports: Not all imported components (screens, batteries) are for mobile phones. They could be for other products like monitors and electric vehicles.

PLI Coverage: Only 22% of mobile phone production in India benefits from the PLI scheme.

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Value Addition: While the current value added in India for mobile manufacturing is low, it's expected to rise as the broader supply chain establishes in India.

Future Outlook: The PLI scheme's long-term benefits, such as job creation and establishing India in manufacturing, will take time to become evident.

Conclusion

The debate centers on the PLI scheme's true impact on Indian manufacturing. While Raghuram Rajan argues that it fosters low-value assembly over genuine manufacturing, Minister Chandrasekhar believes its long-term benefits will soon be evident. The real cost is the potential missed opportunities in other sectors like education when investing heavily in the PLI scheme.

8. "What are the concerns about drilling in the North Sea?"

Source: The post is based on the article "What are the concerns about drilling in the North Sea?" published in "The Hindu" on 22nd August 2023.

Syllabus: GS3- Environment

News: The U.K. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak approved new offshore fossil fuel drilling in the North Sea, despite environmental concerns and the global push against climate change, raising questions about the U.K.'s commitment to climate change targets.

About history of drilling in North Sea.

The North Sea is between England, Scotland, and Europe.

The 1958 Geneva Convention allowed countries to explore their continental shelves.

The U.K.'s Continental Shelf Act started in 1964.

British Petroleum (BP) got the first licence in 1964.

BP found gas in 1965 and oil in 1970 in the North Sea.

Many companies joined exploration by the 1980s.

Production peaked in 1999 with 1,37,099 thousand tonnes.

By 2022, production reduced to 38,037 thousand tonnes.

What are the concerns about drilling in the North Sea?

Environmental Impact: Drilling in the North Sea intensifies the global threat of climate change. Activities associated with such drilling can lead to the warming of oceans, which, in turn, contributes to rising sea levels.

Risk to Marine Life: Offshore drilling has direct detrimental effects on marine biodiversity. Coral reefs, shellfish, and broader marine ecosystems are also at risk due to the increased acidity in the waters. This acidic condition arises when carbon pollution from drilling activities settles into the oceans.

Climate Commitments: The Climate Change Committee(CCC), in its 2023 report, highlighted that the U.K. is not adequately prepared for the implications of climate change. This report was

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based on evaluations from the Second National Adaptation Programme, spanning from 2018-2023, which showed a significant lack of preparation in climate adaptation.

Global Agreements: The CCC report shows the U.K. lacks adequate climate risk preparation. The Climate Action Tracker claims the U.K. isn't meeting Paris Agreement standards, and new drilling plans exceed the recommended 1.5°C temperature rise limit.

9. How India is becoming a young country but with an ageing workforce

Source- The post is based on the article **“How India is becoming a young country but with an ageing workforce”** and **“Express View on CMIE data: A dissonant note”** published in **“The Indian Express”** on **23rd August 2023**.

Syllabus: GS3- Indian economy and employment

Relevance: Employment statistics of Indian economy

News- While addressing the nation on Independence Day, Prime Minister Modi made a special mention to India being a youthful nation and highlighted the opportunities that lay before India's youth.

How India workforce is ageing?

The **proportion of India's youth in workforce** has declined from 25% in 2016-17 to a mere 17% by the end of the previous fiscal year in March.

The percentage of **individuals in workforce** within the **middle age group** has decreased from 38% to 33% during the same timeframe. The **oldest age bracket** above 45 years has expanded its share from 37% to 49%.

Just in the past seven years, the **share of people 45 years and older** has gone from one-third to almost one-half.

The **overall count of employed individuals** has decreased from 41.27 crore to 40.58 crore. The most significant reduction has been observed in the engagement of young individuals.

During 2016-17, the workforce included 10.34 crore people below the age of 30. However, by the end of 2022-23, this figure had declined by more than 3 crores. It is just 7.1 crore.

The **employment level** of those aged 45 and above increased, despite an **overall decline in employment levels**.

Which factors explain the ageing workforce?

The youth are being pushed out of the job market.

An effective method to monitor this trend is by examining the metric known as the **“Employment Rate.”** The Employment Rate for any specific population or age group provides insight into the proportion of that age group or population that is employed.

The population falling under the **youth category** saw an expansion from 35.49 crore in 2016-17 to 38.13 crore in 2022-23.

While the **“young” population** grew by 2.64 crore, the count of **employed youth** declined by 3.24 crore. The youth of India encountered a significant **31% decrease in employment** over the past seven years.

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This decline is evident in the considerable drop in the **Employment Rate** for this particular age group. It went from 29% to a mere 19%.

The decrease in employment rates is the most modest among the **oldest age category**. Remarkably, this is the only age group where the total count of **employed individuals** has actually increased.

In the age bracket of 25 to 29 years, the **employment rate** has seen an upward trajectory over the last seven years.

However, this rise in the ER is not attributed to a greater number of individuals from this age group gaining employment. Instead, it is primarily due to a **significant decline in the overall population** within this cohort.

Why this outcome is hardly unexpected?

India has observed a surge in **youth unemployment** in recent times. This implies that a considerable proportion of the youth who enter the job market **struggle to secure jobs**.

India experiences a limited rate of **labor force participation**, particularly among women. India ranks among the countries with one of the **lowest female labor force participation rates** globally.

The combined impact of a **low labor force participation rate and elevated unemployment rates** results in a **deteriorating employment rate** for India's youth.

10. Building resilience against landslides

Source– The post is based on the article “**Building resilience against landslides**” published in “**The Indian Express**” on **23rd August 2023**.

Syllabus: GS1- Geography. GS3- Disasters

Relevance: Space exploration

News– The deaths and destruction by landslides in Himachal Pradesh last week have led to much-needed attention on the Himalayan ecosystem.

What are the reasons behind the vulnerability of Himalayan ecosystem?

Tectonic or neo-tectonic actions and **surface processes** including erosion, weathering, and rainfall impact the Himalayan ecosystem.

Environmental vulnerabilities are exacerbated by **extreme climatic events** driven by **climate changes**. It results in occurrences like avalanches, landslides, debris flow, glacial lakes outburst floods, landslide lakes outburst floods, and rapid floods.

Climate change has **detrimental effects** on glaciers, river systems, geomorphology, and biodiversity.

These events contribute to the **instability of the mountain system**. Moreover, the Himalayan region faces **additional pressure** due to human activities.

Mountainous areas are typically characterized by **slope instability and a susceptibility to landslides**.

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Various factors influence these occurrences. These include **slope steepness, elevation of hills, rock durability, forest coverage, urban development**, and the presence of **loosely consolidated sediment**.

Activities such as **river flow, alteration of the base of slopes, and deforestation** contribute to the vulnerability of a region to landslides. Factors like **debris flow** and underground water **weaken slopes**, making them prone to sliding.

The collision between the **Indian plate and the Eurasian plate** in the Himalayan region generates **subterranean stresses** that are discharged as earthquakes. It causes **fractures** and weakens the **litho-structures** near the surface of the mountains.

Way forward-

There is a need to create **vulnerability maps** of Himalayas and classify regions into **risk zones** ranging from the most vulnerable to the least.

Monitoring can be facilitated through **web-based sensors like rain gauges, piezometers, inclinometers, extensometers, InSAR, and total stations**.

To comprehensively assess the situation in the Himalayas, the establishment of a **Himalayan States Council** is imperative.

This council should aim to **replicate scenarios of hazards** resulting from natural occurrences, environmental deterioration, climate-related events, and human interventions in hill towns and areas.

The **disaster management agencies** of the respective states should collaborate within this **centralized council**.

The Himalayan region possesses **valuable assets** such as glaciers, river systems, mineral deposits, geothermal and hydrocarbon energy reserves. These could be harnessed. Nonetheless, a **delicate equilibrium** must be maintained between **exploiting** these resources and ensuring **ecological sustainability**.

Urban planning must accommodate the **unique characteristics of mountainous terrain**. Limitations should be placed on **extensive constructions**. **Proper drainage systems** need to be established.

Slope cutting should be carried out scientifically, and an emphasis should be placed on constructing **retaining walls** and adhering to **building regulations**.

It is crucial to conduct **high-resolution mapping** for all towns and evaluate their **load-bearing capacities** as fundamental steps in the formulation of building codes.

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11. Easing credit flow: On the Reserve Bank of India's Public Tech Platform for Frictionless Credit

Source: The post is based on articles “**Easing credit flow: On the Reserve Bank of India's Public Tech Platform for Frictionless Credit**” published in **The Hindu** on **23rd August 2023**.

Syllabus: **GS 3 – Indian Economy – Mobilization of Resources, Growth & Development**

Relevance: **About** Public Tech Platform for Frictionless Credit

News: Recently, the RBI has announced to establish a ‘Public Tech Platform for Frictionless Credit’.

What is “Public Tech Platform for Frictionless Credit”?

It aims to make borrowing easier for small and marginal borrowers. It will function as a digital hub for credit information, streamlining the loan approval process.

The platform will include an open architecture, open Application Programming Interfaces (APIs), and open standards that enable the sharing of digital data with lenders by a variety of organisations, including governmental agencies, credit information providers, and digital identification authorities.

The platform would be introduced in a pilot project on products like Kisan Credit Card loans, loans for dairy farmers, credit without collateral for MSMEs, and personal and home loans through participating banks.

Lenders have the ability to get borrower information from places like Aadhaar e-KYC, digital land records, and even data about milk supply from specific dairy cooperatives.

Must Read: [What is RBI's new pilot for frictionless credit?](#)

Why was the platform needed?

A centralized public platform is crucial because it's hard for small farmers in rural areas to get formal loans. Despite over seven decades of independence, the issue of enhancing inclusive rural credit remains a significant challenge.

Due to the unavailability of the formal credit, many rural borrowers resort to informal sources like moneylenders, often facing high interest rates.

Hence, **the proposed digital platform could address this challenge by** utilizing digital advancements to ensure timely and cost-effective availability of small loans to those who need financing the most.

12. The laptop error

Source– The post is based on the article “**The laptop error**” published in “**The Times of India**” on **23rd August 2023**.

Syllabus: GS3- Indian economy

Relevance: Issues related to manufacturing and trade

News– Recently, India banned the import of personal computers, laptops and tablets. A licence would be needed to import a computer.

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What are the objectives behind this move of government?

It is essential to diminish **reliance on imports** and enhance **domestic manufacturing**. India must pressurise international corporations to establish **production facilities** within the country.

Security considerations come into play as well. 60% of imported computers are sourced from China. India also has a **trade deficit of 100 billion dollars** with China.

Why has India not emerged as a major player in computer manufacturing?

One significant factor is **India's zero duty commitment to the 1997 IT agreement with the WTO**. This commitment has adversely affected the hardware industry by attracting **foreign-made computers** due to the **absence of tariffs**.

Local computer manufacturers faced challenges in competing, due to **substantial drawbacks such as inadequate logistics, infrastructure, and elevated costs associated with land, labour, and capital**.

In contrast, China offered **substantial subsidies** to foreign corporations to establish manufacturing operations within its borders.

The Government's **Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme** aimed at encouraging manufacturing has not yielded the **desired outcomes**.

Way forward-

Initiating conversation with the companies and establishing a **six-month timeframe** is a more **constructive approach**.

International manufacturers are also cautious about China and seeking **alternative options**. **Disrupting China's influence** cannot be achieved abruptly. There exist **more effective strategies** to address **national security apprehensions**.

Amendments to the PLI scheme are imperative. **Emphasising local designs** and **incentivizing the relocation of component manufacturers** to India should be prioritised. PLI agreements should incorporate a **specified end date for high tariffs**.

India must adopt the **manta of push export rather than stop imports**.

13. Nurturing capex- With foreign investments declining, it is necessary to maintain growth in government capital expenditure

Source: The post is based on the article "Nurturing capex- With foreign investments declining, it is necessary to maintain growth in government capital expenditure" published in "Business Standard" on 23rd August 2023.

Syllabus: GS3- Indian economy, mobilisation of resources

News: In this article, the author discusses the Indian government's new projects and their potential impact on the fiscal deficit. The author also emphasizes the importance of maintaining capital expenditure to support economic growth, despite challenges such as slowing tax revenue and declining foreign direct investment.

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How are the Indian government's new projects impacting the fiscal deficit?

Impact on Fiscal Deficit

1. **New Projects Cost:** The Union government unveiled projects costing ₹1.2 trillion, such as electric buses, railway enhancements, expanding the Digital India footprint, and support schemes for artisans (Vishwakarma scheme), etc.
2. **Current Year's Expenditure:** Not all the project expenses will affect this year's fiscal balance. Some costs are shared by the states, and only a fraction of the funds will be used before March 2024.
3. **Pre-election Spending:** Additional schemes, such as extending free food grain supplies or increasing income support for farmers, could potentially widen the fiscal deficit beyond the projected 5.9 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) for 2023-24.
4. **Revenue Shortfalls:** In the first quarter of 2023-24, the Centre's gross tax revenue growth was only 3%, compared to the annual 10% target. The net tax revenue declined by 14%.
5. **Positive Impact of Capital Expenditure:** Government's capital expenditure rose by 59% in the first quarter, attracting more private sector investments, with approved plans rising to ₹3.53 trillion.

What are the challenges in maintaining capital expenditure to support economic growth?

Fiscal Deficit Concerns: With new projects worth ₹1.2 trillion, there's potential strain on the fiscal deficit.

Tax Revenue Shortfalls: The Centre's gross tax revenue grew only 3% in the first quarter, missing the 10% annual target. Net tax revenue even declined by 14%.

Lower Disinvestment Receipts: The expected revenue from disinvestments is lower than initially budgeted, offsetting the potential gains from other sectors like the RBI.

Declining Foreign Investment: Foreign investments fell 16% to \$71 billion in 2022-23 in comparison to 2012-13 and continued to decline by 22% in the first quarter of 2023-24.

What should be done?

Prioritize Capital Expenditure: Despite fiscal concerns, the government should aim for the projected ₹10 trillion capital spending for 2023-24.

Revenue Expenditure Control: Focus on limiting revenue expenditure, which was projected to grow only 1.4% in 2023-24 over the ₹34.52 trillion in 2022-23.

Boost Domestic Investment: Encourage private sector growth, given the current commitment of ₹1.72 trillion in investments.

Address FDI Decline: Implement strategies to attract foreign investments, given the 16% drop in 2022-23.

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14. Not rocket science: Even as we get closer to the Moon, let's recognise India should be a much bigger player in global space economy

Source: The post is based on the article "Not rocket science: Even as we get closer to the Moon, let's recognise India should be a much bigger player in global space economy" published in "Times of India" on 23rd August 2023.

Syllabus: GS3- Science and Tech (awareness in the field of space)

News: India's space agency, ISRO, plans to soft land Chandrayaan-3 on the Moon. Despite tight budgets, ISRO consistently delivers advanced science.

How is ISRO progressing with limited funds?

Chandrayaan-3 Mission: Despite budget constraints, ISRO plans to soft land Chandrayaan-3 on the Moon.

Budget Allocation: For 2023-2024, ISRO received ₹12,544 crore, slightly more than ₹12,474 crore in 2021-22 but 8% less than 2022-23.

Collaboration with Private Sector: INSPACe, established in 2020, bridges the gap between ISRO and private space startups, enabling them to utilize ISRO's technical expertise and infrastructure.

Satellite Launchers: With technologies like PSLV, GSLV, and SSLV, ISRO launched 431 satellites for 36 countries by July 2023.

Earnings: By July 2022, ISRO earned \$223 million from foreign satellite launches using PSLV.

What potentials and challenges lie ahead for ISRO?

Potential:

Global Market Share: India aspires to capture a 9% share of the global space market by 2030.

Economic Growth: A report indicates the possibility of India's space economy reaching \$100 billion by 2040, substantially higher than the projected \$40 billion.

International Collaborations: Successful missions like Chandrayaan-3 can lead to increased partnerships with other nations.

Challenges:

Budget Constraints: Recent trends show a decline in budget allocations, with 2023-2024 receiving ₹12,544 crore, 8% less than the previous year.

Manpower Issues: ISRO has not expanded its manpower in years and fewer students are pursuing advanced space studies.

Global Ranking: Despite its achievements, India ranks among the top 15 countries for satellites in orbit, holding only 2% of the global space economy.

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15. India has an opportunity to lead the fourth industrial revolution

Source– The post is based on the article “**India has an opportunity to lead the fourth industrial revolution**” published in the “**mint**” on **24th August 2023**.

Syllabus: GS3- Indian economy

Relevance: Manufacturing sector

News– The article explains the issues related to fourth industrial revolution in India.

What are some facts about fourth industrial revolution?

Fourth industrial revolution is marked by the **convergence** of the **physical, digital, and biological realms**.

It will **deeply transform** our lifestyles, occupations, and social interactions. This is driven by **emerging technologies** like artificial intelligence, the internet of things, and biotechnology.

How India has potential to lead the fourth industrial revolution?

India possesses a well-established **ecosystem of financial data** through initiatives like the **Unified Payments Interface and the Aadhaar platform**.

New platforms such as the one **focused on logistics** are on the horizon. These platforms will transform various sectors ranging from finance to logistics. It will establish a **digital infrastructure** capable of advancing the fourth industrial revolution.

India has a **substantial youthful population** and an education system equipped to produce the **necessary skill sets**.

Indian **higher education institutions** having young and talented minds. They are enthusiastic about making a **global impact**.

India is a fertile ground for **entrepreneurship**. It has emerged as one of the world’s **fastest-growing startup hubs**.

These startups can be empowered to take the lead in the fourth industrial revolution by channeling resources into **innovative technology**.

What are challenges in achieving the full potential of fourth industrial revolution?

There is insufficient **public and private investment in research endeavors**. Presently, India’s allocation for research and development remains **below 0.7% of its GDP**.

It is even lower than countries like Egypt and Brazil. In contrast, nations such as the United States, China, Israel, Japan, and South Korea allocate between **2% and 5% of their GDP** towards scientific research.

To tackle this issue, the government has recently introduced the **Anusandhan National Research Foundation Bill, 2023**, in the Parliament.

Way forward-

It is crucial to invest in **higher education**. Equipping universities with **state-of-the-art technology** and **research facilities** to **foster innovation and entrepreneurship** is required. Transitioning from a **time-bound education system** to **continuous learning** is imperative.

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Facilitating **ease of doing business** is important. **Entrepreneurs** are the **driving force** behind the fourth industrial revolution. They require a **favorable ecosystem**.

The fourth industrial revolution isn't solely about technology. It also **revolves around people**. It revolves around **utilizing technology** to enhance lives, generate opportunities, and construct a better future.

Deregulation and support for private higher education are other pivotal measures. India universities necessitate assistance to **innovate**, adapt to **evolving industry demands**, and equip Indian students with **futuristic skills**.

Universities must cultivate a **culture of research and innovation**, foster **collaborations** with industry, and embrace **novel technologies and teaching methodologies**.

16. [On the moon, over the moon – Chandrayaan-3 signals the launch of India's time in space exploration](#)

Source: The post is based on articles "**On the moon, over the moon – Chandrayaan-3 signals the launch of India's time in space exploration**" published in **The Hindu** on **24th August 2023**.

Syllabus: **GS 3 – Science and Technology**

Relevance: **About Chandrayaan-3 Mission**

News: Recently, Chandrayaan-3 successfully landed on the moon's surface. **India has now become the fourth country ever to soft-land a spacecraft on the moon and the first to do so in the South Polar region.**

What is the significance of this achievement?

Chandrayaan-3's success reflects ISRO's response to Chandrayaan-2's failure. After the setback, ISRO modified 21 subsystems for the upgraded Chandrayaan-3 lander, featuring redundancies for backup.

Chandrayaan-3's achievement also marks a crucial moment for India, especially since it has joined the **Artemis Accords**. **It could become a leader in the lunar space missions.**

Chandrayaan-3 has showcased India's understanding of key interplanetary spacecraft types: orbiters, landers, and rovers.

Chandrayaan-3's data is important because it's the first mission to physically, chemically, and thermally analyze the soil, subsoil, and air near the moon's South Pole.

What are upcoming space missions?

The recent lunar success ends India's second exploration phase.

The third phase partners with Japan's JAXA for LUPEX, focusing on studying water-ice at the moon's South Pole. The mission will use the Chandrayaan-2 and -3 landing system.

Chandrayaan-3's success also boosts ISRO's confidence for upcoming missions: electric satellites, quantum communications, human space flight, reusable launch vehicles, etc.

Must Read: [Chandrayaan-3: Small step to moon, giant leap for India's space journey](#)

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What lies ahead?

India's technological advantage should drive more exploration and scientific research in space. **Prioritizing research and scientific aims over engineering demands** will lead to better outcomes.

The involvement of private companies is crucial for bringing innovation and enhancing India's space initiatives.

17. Perspectives on industrial policy

Source: The post is based on the article "Perspectives on industrial policy" published in "Business Standard" on 24th August 2023.

Syllabus: GS3- Effects of liberalisation on the economy, changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth.

News: In this article, author discusses India's protectionist policies in manufacturing and electronics, contrasting them with targeted approaches in the US and EU. They emphasize the benefits of trade liberalization, using Asia's success in electronics as an example, and suggest India should integrate more with global value chains for competitiveness.

Why is India adopting protectionist policies?

Promotion of Domestic Manufacturing: India has introduced import restrictions on electronic goods like laptops and tablets. These restrictions add to already high tariffs, which are the highest among competing economies.

Boosting Industries with Financial Support: Through the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme, India aims to financially support and enhance the growth of its electronics sector and other industries.

Broad Protectionism in India vs. Targeted Global Strategies: While the US and EU have targeted strategies for specific sectors, India's protective measures span across 14 sectors. Some of these sectors, like textiles and food processing, don't seem to have a strategic basis.

Electronics Sector's Rapid Evolution: The electronics sector is marked by swift technological changes. India's protective measures in this sector reflect the challenges of domestic manufacturing keeping pace with global advancements.

How do other economies approach industrial policy?

US's Targeted Industrial Strategy

The US introduced the CHIPS and Science Act to promote domestic research and manufacturing in semiconductors and electric vehicles. This billion-dollar initiative aims for "strategic autonomy," reducing dependence on countries like China and Russia. The US-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) further boosts regional economic integration.

EU's Green Agenda

The EU unveiled the Green Deal Industrial Plan, targeting carbon neutrality by 2050. A key tool, the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), imposes taxes on imports from high carbon-output sectors, affecting major exporters like China and Russia.

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Selective Protectionism in Developed Economies

Both the US and EU employ selective protectionist measures. While the US focuses on technological advancement and reducing geopolitical risks, the EU emphasizes environmental sustainability. Their strategies are designed with specific goals, such as combating climate change or ensuring technological advancements, unlike India's broader approach.

What should be done?

Embrace Open Trade in Electronics: The electronics sector's rapid technological pace makes import substitution challenging. Given the sector's global value chains and the success of top exporters also being top importers, India should consider more open trade policies for easier cross-border movements.

Learn from Asian Economies: Countries like China and Vietnam integrated into electronics global value chains with open trade policies. China's dual trade regime allowed duty-free entry for parts and components, boosting exports. Adopting such strategies can benefit India.

Combine Incentives with Trade Liberalization: Historically, countries like South Korea thrived after shifting from import-substitution to export expansion. India should merge its financial incentives with trade liberalization to expose producers to competition, promoting efficiency and innovation.

18. The promise of our goods and services tax is unfulfilled

Source: The post is based on the article **"The promise of our goods and services tax is unfulfilled"** published in "Live Mint" on 24th August 2023.

Syllabus: GS3- Indian economy

News: The author discusses the shortcomings of India's Goods and Services Tax (GST) system, highlighting that it hasn't met its promised benefits in revenue growth and GDP increase. This is mainly due to multiple tax rates, exemptions, and the concept of a revenue neutral rate.

What were the expected benefits from India's Goods and Services Tax (GST) system?

Tax Collection Buoyancy: Due to inbuilt incentives of compliance, there was expected to be less scope of leakage.

Only Tax on Value-Added: The tax burden would only apply to the added value in the economic chain, preventing 'tax on tax'.

Greater Compliance: Suppliers prefer dealing with parties who have proof of tax payment, ensuring a chain of compliance.

Inter-State Commerce Boost: GST removed inter-state barriers to commerce.

GDP Growth: A 2009 study by NCAER estimated that the GDP growth rate would rise by 2-2.5% annually because of GST.

Boost in Exports: The tax reform was expected to increase Indian exports by 10-14% year after year.

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What are the major reasons for not fulfilling the expected benefits from the GST system?

Lack of Tax Buoyancy: Indirect taxes didn't increase as expected. The Economic Survey of 2023 confirmed this.

GST Revenue vs. GDP Growth: GST revenues didn't outpace nominal GDP growth. The actual tax rate was only 11.4% compared to the expected 17%. (according to Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council)

Rate Slabs Proliferation: Multiple rate slabs, with items at 28% or higher, and others at 0% or 3%, caused complexity and imbalance.

Revenue Neutral Rate (RNR) Concept: Focusing on RNR led to misjudgment in predicting tax compliance behavior between pre and post-GST regimes.

Exemptions and Classifications: Many exemptions and arbitrary classifications resulted in disputes, litigation, and pending refunds.

Exclusions from GST: Large parts of the economy were left out of GST, which prevented lowering the overall tax rate.

Impact on Small Businesses: High rates and compliance costs hurt small businesses, even with a composite rate of 6%.

What should be done?

Reduce High Rates: To promote compliance and fairness, tax rates, especially those that are exceptionally high, need to be reduced. This includes rates on imports.

Simplify Compliance: Introduce a user-friendly app, similar to the Bhim app for UPI transactions. This will ease the GST entry process for small businesses and encourage better compliance.

Incorporate More Sectors: Many economic sectors remain outside GST. Bringing them under GST can help distribute the tax burden more evenly.

Revise Rate Slabs: The current variety of tax slabs complicates the system. A more uniform approach is required.

Minimize Exemptions: Overly specific exemptions and classifications lead to litigation. Reducing these can streamline the system.

Focus on Small Businesses: Adjustments should cater to small entrepreneurs, ensuring GST doesn't disproportionately impact their profits.

19. Rajasthan's Gig and Platform Workers Welfare Act: empowering the young worker

Source: The post is based on the article "Rajasthan's Gig and Platform Workers Welfare Act: Empowering the Young Worker" published in "Indian Express" on 24th August 2023.

Syllabus: GS3- Indian Economy ; growth, development and employment.

News: The author talks about Rajasthan Gig and Platform Workers Act, which benefits gig workers in India. It tackles problems like low pay and transparency. While praising its features, the author points out shortcomings and stresses effective implementation's importance.

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What are the main features of Rajasthan Gig and Platform Workers Act?

Unique ID for Workers:

Purpose: To recognize each gig worker and ensure their rights and benefits aren't diluted or overlooked.

Impact: This identification can serve as a foundation for all future benefits, making sure no worker is left out.

Transaction Fee:

Why it's levied: The fee is introduced as a consistent source of revenue for a welfare fund dedicated to the gig workers.

Transparency: With many companies, especially like Uber, using the "upfront pricing" model, workers often aren't aware of the exact commission deducted. This fee calculation makes such details transparent.

Tripartite Welfare Board:

Composition: A combination of government officials, company representatives, and the workers themselves.

Inspiration: This model is inspired by the International Labour Organization's (ILO) framework. A similar structure was used by Maharashtra's Hamaal Panchayat to represent workers in the unorganized sector.

Benefits: Such a board prevents any one party (like a single company) from having undue influence. It ensures that all stakeholders have a voice, reducing the chances of corrupt practices or biases.

Data Transparency:

Requirement: Companies must share detailed transaction data, including the breakdown of charges and commissions.

Storage: This data will reside in a database controlled by the government.

Accessibility: Workers can access this data, ensuring they are aware of transaction details and promoting overall transparency in operations.

What are the issue with Rajasthan Gig and Platform Workers Act?

Employee Misclassification:

The Act avoids addressing the categorization of gig workers as "partners" or "aggregators".

This classification has been a choice for companies, offering them protection against providing full employee benefits.

Globally, there's a consensus that many gig workers fit employee definitions and should get associated protections.

Ambiguities in the Act:

Certain areas in the Act are not clearly defined, leading to potential confusion in its execution.

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Areas like grievance resolution and data sharing need clearer guidelines for effective implementation.

Implementation Challenges:

Companies like Uber have a history of resisting legal requirements.

Ensuring these companies adhere to the Act's provisions will be crucial.

Effective rules and systems need to be put in place to ensure the Act's objectives are met.

What should be done?

Address Misclassification: Clearly define gig workers' status, leaning towards employee recognition.

Clarify Ambiguities: Create clearer guidelines for areas like grievance resolution and data sharing.

Establish Effective Rules: Focus on rules and systems for executing the Act's provisions without loopholes.

Involve Workers in Implementation: The worker mobilization that led to the legislation must continue during the Act's implementation phase.

Expand and Improve: Use the Rajasthan Act as a model, refining it for adoption in other Indian states.

20. How infrastructure investments may be slowing job creation

Source- The post is based on the article **"How infrastructure investments may be slowing job creation"** published in **"The Indian Express"** on **25th August 2023**.

Syllabus Topic: GS 3- Indian Economy – Employment and unemployment

News- In this article the author discusses lopsided development policies which have resulted in fewer job creation for millions of youths who join the labor force every year.

What is 'Growth-Unemployment paradox' which is observed in case of India?

India has been the fastest growing economies of the world. India's growth has attracted headlines. But nearly a quarter of young people are unemployed. This coexistence of high growth and high unemployment is called 'Growth-Unemployment' paradox.

What are the lopsided development policies which have led to 'Growth-Unemployment' paradox?

Firstly, India has focused heavily on improvement of physical infrastructure but has fallen behind on human infrastructure like education and skills. Physical infrastructure in the absence of good human infrastructure has slowed the pace of job growth.

Secondly, India's infrastructure development has focused largely on Urban areas. However, India's manufacturing sector is rapidly **de-urbanizing** and moving away from urban to rural areas to remain competitive. As the rural areas lack the necessary physical and human capital, manufacturing sector growth has slowed down resulting in increased unemployment.

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Thirdly, there has been a lack of focus on infrastructure development in Tier II cities which have the potential to generate 70% of new jobs in the next 20 years.

What are the measures that must be taken to correct this 'Growth-Unemployment' paradox?

Firstly, Policymakers must focus upon the development of both physical and human infrastructure in rural areas and tier II cities as the manufacturing sector across the world is witnessing **de-urbanization**.

Secondly, India must invest heavily in the tertiary education sector which has the potential for development of **new age entrepreneurship** and subsequent job creation.

Lastly, the governance system needs to be improved to track the progress of investments and their effects in the field of job creation. Every penny of investment by the government needs to yield jobs.

21. Express View on export ban: The onion diktat

Source– The post is based on the article “**Express View on export ban: The onion diktat**” published in “**The Indian Express**” on **24th August 2023**.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Agriculture

News– Centre has imposed a 40 per cent export duty on onions.

Why is this move not good for farmers?

Farmers cultivating onion, potato, and tomato do not experience any advantages from government agencies' **Minimum Support Price (MSP) based procurement**. These farmers are entirely subject to the **forces of the market**.

Most farmers who grow rabi onions don't sell their entire crop immediately after **harvesting**. Instead, they store the crop to prevent **moisture and sprouting**.

They then make **staggered sales** from September to October, before the next kharif crop.

This time, unseasonal heavy rains in March and April **caused damage** to a significant portion of the **harvested onions**. It made them **less suitable for storage**.

Farmers also had to engage in **distressed sales** of onions prone to rapid **quality deterioration**.

What are the consequences of imposition of export duty on onions?

This decision has left a **negative impression** on the growers that the government remains inactive during periods of low prices but take action as soon as prices start to rise.

All recent governmental interventions, including export bans and the **imposition of stock limits**, openly contradict the **farm reform laws** that were introduced just three years ago.

The prohibition of export poses a threat to **India's reputation** as a **dependable global supplier**. **Restoring that credibility** will be a difficult task.

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22. Remembering C R Rao: Man of statistics and science

Source: The post is based on the article “**Remembering C R Rao: Man of statistics and science**” published in **The Indian Express** on 26th August 2023.

Syllabus: GS3- Achievements of Indians in science & technology.

News: The article praises C. R. Rao’s vital role in statistics, explaining his innovations, awards, and influence. It mentions his academic journey, mentorship, and lasting impact on global and Indian statistical communities.

What are the major roles of C. R. Rao in the field of statistics?

Major Roles of C. R. Rao in Statistics

Pioneering Tools: Rao formulated the Cramer-Rao bound in 1945, setting a benchmark for assessing statistical techniques. His Rao-Blackwellisation concept in 1948 improved estimator efficiency.

Influential Publications: Over his career, Rao authored roughly 500 papers and 14 books, addressing complex statistical problems.

Multivariate Analysis: Rao’s work in multivariate analysis, estimation theory, and differential geometry was groundbreaking. His Fisher-Rao metric is widely used in probability and physics.

Applications Across Disciplines: His innovations impacted various fields. For instance, geologists use Rao-Blackwellised estimates for rock dating, and biologists use Rao’s score test for genetic associations.

Education & Mentorship: Rao’s textbook, published in 1952, influenced many statisticians, and he supervised over 30 PhD students, fostering the next generation of experts.

What are the major achievements of C. R. Rao?

Renowned Publications: He authored around 500 papers and 14 influential books on complex statistical challenges.

Prestigious Awards: Rao received the Guy Medal in silver (1965) and gold (1993) from the Royal Statistical Society. India honored him with the Padma Vibhushan in 2001, and the U.S. awarded him the National Medal of Science in 2002.

Global Impact: Known as ‘Rao’s children’, his academic descendant’s number over 50, spanning the globe, attesting to his widespread influence.

Institution Building: Rao played a crucial role in establishing the Indian Statistical Institute as a top-tier research center, leaving a lasting legacy in India.

23. Indu Bhushan and Soumya Swaminathan write: India’s hidden adversary, lead poisoning

Source: The post is based on the article “**Indu Bhushan and Soumya Swaminathan write: India’s hidden adversary, lead poisoning**” published in “The Indian Express” on 26th August 2023.

Syllabus: GS3 – Environment Pollution

News: The author discusses the serious issue of lead poisoning in India, affecting many children. Despite global awareness, India’s old paints, water-pipes, and certain jobs expose people to lead.

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The author suggests legislative changes, monitoring, cleanup of contaminated areas, and public awareness as solutions to protect future generations.

Why lead poisoning a concern in India?

High Exposure in Children: A 2021 study found that about 20 crore children in India have blood lead levels exceeding the safe limit set by WHO.

Severe Health Impact: Lead poisoning can lead to learning disabilities, neurological impairments, stunted growth, and organ damage. Children are especially vulnerable.

Economic and Social Impact: The effects of lead poisoning account for a significant learning gap between rich and poor countries. Affected children might achieve less in education and work, impacting the nation's productivity.

Prevalent Lead Sources: India has old paints and water-pipes releasing toxic lead dust. There's also exposure from informal recycling of lead-acid batteries and certain occupations.

How did others countries address this?

U.S. Initiative with Gasoline: The U.S. successfully reduced blood lead concentration by over 90% between 1976 and 1995 by eliminating lead from gasoline.

Paint and Water-pipe Regulations: Globally, countries have introduced strict standards to ensure paints and water pipes are lead-free, reducing exposure sources.

Bangladesh's Turmeric Solution: Turmeric adulteration was a major lead source in Bangladesh. By introducing strict regulations and educating consumers between 2017 and 2021, they reduced lead-tainted turmeric from 47% in 2019 to 0% in 2021.

How can India tackle this issue?

Clear Legislation: India needs a strong legislative framework defining health and safety standards, especially for manufacturing and recycling products containing lead.

Enforce Standards: It's vital to strictly enforce regulations on paints and water pipes, given their contribution to lead exposure.

Monitoring System: Establish a system for blood lead level testing. Introducing such monitoring in household surveys can help identify affected populations.

Identify Contaminated Sites: Launch nationwide efforts to pinpoint lead-contaminated areas, prioritizing clean-ups near schools and residential zones.

Promote Sustainable Practices: Establish waste management practices and electronic waste recycling programs to minimize lead contamination.

Inter-departmental Coordination: Enhance collaboration between government agencies, NGOs, and international partners to address the issue cohesively.

Public Awareness: Raise awareness about lead's dangers, targeting parents, workers in lead-related industries, schools, and healthcare professionals to ensure wide-reaching impact.

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24. Guns 'N Rovers – Why sarkari Isro delivers but sarkari DRDO doesn't

Source: The post is based on the article “Guns 'N Rovers – Why sarkari Isro delivers but sarkari DRDO doesn't” published in *The Times of India* on 26th August 2023.

Syllabus: GS 3 – Indigenization of Technology, Defence Technology.

Relevance: concerns with DRDO

News: There has been an increasing disparity between the ISRO and the DRDO. DRDO is criticized for inefficiency.

What are the concerns with DRDO?

A recent CAG audit pointed out multiple delays in DRDO's key projects.

According to SIPRI, India remained the largest arms importer from 2018 to 2022. This is because of insufficient coordination between DRDO and India's armed forces, resulting in delays and increased costs.

The challenge of defense procurement can be seen as a trilemma, seeking high-quality, affordable, and quick delivery. These complexities have led to India becoming the leading arms importer.

Must Read: [Is DRDO To Blame for India's Acute Import Dependence?](#) and [CAG pulls up DRDO for delay in the completion of projects and failure to achieve key parameters](#)

How can DRDO become efficient?

Global arms industry sees limited technology transfer. Hence, it becomes challenging for India to develop indigenous arms.

However, **evaluating DRDO's performance requires** considering the requirements of the armed services and the budget constraints of the government.

Hence, for DRDO to succeed, the government should ensure effective cooperation with the armed services and stick to achievable projects. **This effort must be supported by consistent investments, as globally failure rates are high.**

A restructured approach can enable the establishment of a domestic high-tech defense foundation.

25. Rethink the dynamics of India's fiscal federalism

Source- The post is based on the article “Rethink the dynamics of India's fiscal federalism” published in “*The Hindu*” on 26th August 2023.

Syllabus: GS3- Government budgeting, GS2- Issues pertaining to federalism

News- The article explains the need for relook at the present system of fiscal federalism.

Why do emerging dynamics of India's fiscal federalism need rethinking?

Fundamental shift from a **centrally planned economy to a market-driven economic structure.**

The conversion of a **dual-tier federation into a multi-tier fiscal system** following the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments,

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The elimination of the **Planning Commission** and its substitution with **NITI Aayog**,

The enactment of the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act.

The implementation of the **Goods and Services Act** with authority vested in the GST Council,

The **widespread utilization of cess and surcharges** that impact the size of the divisible pool.

Why should the system of transferring resources between different levels of government be more focused on equity?

According to **Chancel and Piketty (2019)**, the share of total income captured by the **top 1% earners** in India was **less than 21%** in the 1930s. It dropped to **6% in the early 1980s** and then increased to **22% during the period of economic liberalization**.

The recent measures like **tax exemptions and concessions** have disproportionately favored the affluent and have reduced the **available pool of resources**.

Per capita income in 16 major states from 1970-71 to 2020-21 reveals an increasingly divergent pattern.

The **Human Development Index** across 15 states **exhibits convergence** during the post-reform era. When examining data since 2005, the **rate of convergence** has decreased with a significant negative CAGR of -2.85%.

Why is there a need for reevaluating Article 246 and the Seventh Schedule to undertake a fresh division of powers, functions, and responsibilities?

India's political landscape has evolved from the single-party governance of the post-Independence era to a genuinely multi-party system.

The dynamics of politics, society, technology, demographic composition, and even the development approach itself have undergone substantial changes.

In the new evolving framework, numerous central legislation, including the MGNREGA 2005, the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009, and the National Food Security Act 2013 place an additional burden on the individual states.

During the process of constitution-making, **the issues of division of responsibilities and taxation authority** was not adequately addressed. It heavily borrowed from the Government of India Act 1935, and neglected the subsidiarity principle.

73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments provided an opportunity for reconsideration. But, no significant steps were taken. In fact, matters were complicated further by the introduction of Schedule XI and Schedule XII.

These schedules lack practical significance unless they are broken down into specific activities and sub-activities, similar to the approach adopted by Kerala and a few other states.

What are other issues related to fiscal federalism that should be considered by the Union government?

The persistent neglect in integrating the **third tier of governance** into **India's fiscal federal framework** is a significant concern.

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The lack of a **consistent financial reporting system** across all tiers of government presents a notable deficiency.

A comprehensive **reevaluation of the off-budget borrowing practices** of both the Union and the individual States is essential.

Such borrowings usually **evade scrutiny** and remain unreported. All financial transactions should be accounted for under **appropriate budgetary allocations**.

The central government should set a positive example. But, it is perhaps more culpable of resorting to **off-budget borrowing** than the States.

States are subject to restraint through **Article 293(3)** under the oversight of the Union and the **Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act**. But, the Union frequently evades such checks.

The substantial use of the **National Small Saving Fund (NSSF)** for **financing central public sector undertakings and ministries** through loans is not included in the Union's **fiscal deficits**.

There is also a substantial domain of **unique banking arrangements** involving public sector banks to facilitate cash and **credit circulation** outside the bounds of **budgetary allocations**.

It is imperative for the Union, States, and local governments to act transparently and make all off-budget transactions **transparent and publicly accessible**.

26. Cleantech, for an inclusive green future in India

Source– The post is based on the article “**Cleantech, for an inclusive green future in India**” published in “**The Hindu**” on **26th August 2023**.

Syllabus: GS3- Environment

News– In his address to the nation on Independence Day this year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi talked about India showing the world how to combat climate change.

What is the concept of a green economy?

The concept of the green economy **synchronises developmental progress with positive environmental results**.

For example, the construction of a solar park or a station for charging electric vehicles contributes to the growth of **essential infrastructure** in an emerging economy. It also addresses **climate change**.

What are various cleantech initiatives in states to promote the green economy?

These efforts focus on providing access to **clean technology solutions** to support the **livelihoods** of the rural populace. For instance, in Andhra Pradesh, there are **solar dryers** that transform surplus tomatoes into sun-dried products.

In Maharashtra, **biomass-powered cold storage facilities** assist lemon farmers in achieving profits three to five times higher than the original prices.

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What is the potential of cleatech for the Indian economy?

The rural economy of India consists of around **120 million farmers and 34 million microenterprises**. It faces issues like **unreliable access to electricity** and a heavy reliance on **costly imported diesel**.

The **clean technology solutions** offer the potential to decrease India's **diesel imports**, and prevent the **spoilage of perishable food items**.

It will improve **opportunities for rural livelihoods**. This presents an **investment prospect valued at \$50 billion** for investors and financiers.

Research conducted by the CEEW indicates that merely 12 such clean technology solutions could potentially positively affect at least **37 million livelihoods**, which corresponds to roughly **16% of the rural population**.

What are various aspects of a comprehensive strategy to promote a green economy in India?

Leverage existing government programmes- The **Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana** that extends **collateral-free loans** for microenterprises can be used to enable the adoption of **cleantech solutions**.

The **Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro food processing Enterprises** can be used to unlock support for solutions such as a solar dryer, an **energy-efficient multipurpose food processor** or a solar grain mill.

The **Agriculture Infrastructure Fund**, which has only seen a **15% fund utilisation** against a target of ₹1,00,000 crore, can support the adoption of **biomass-powered cold storage and beyond**.

Large-scale financing of cleantech solutions- It requires supporting bankers' capacity on **credit assessment** for cleantech .

There is also a need to **hedge their risks** in the initial stages of the market through **partial guarantees**. Moreover, active engagement with financiers is important to **structure loan products** that are aligned with the cash flow scenarios of users.

Adopting some of these principles helped **'Powering Livelihoods'**, to unlock 300-plus loans for **cleantech solutions** to women, self help groups, farmer producer organisations and individual micro entrepreneurs in rural areas.

Multi-actor partnerships- Partnership between **technology innovators, manufacturers, distributors and service providers, financiers, and market-linkage players** to enable an overall ecosystem is required.

Cleantech manufacturers often need help bringing their products to customers. The challenges faced include **low product awareness, high customer acquisition cost, and low density of customers** for such products in a given area.

Users too struggle with **limited after-sales service and market linkage** of the final processed products.

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There is a need for a **holistic ecosystem** where distributors work with manufacturers to enable **technology access** at the last mile, service providers ensure **after-sales services**, and **market-linkage players** enable the connection to the market.

27. Isro's solar odyssey

Source– The post is based on the article “**Isro's solar odyssey**” published in the “**Business Standard**” on **26th August 2023**.

Syllabus: GS3- Awareness in the field of space

News– The Indian Space Research Organisation is all set to launch the Aditya-L1 mission, dedicated to studying the Sun. It'll be launched by ISRO's PSLV rocket from Satish Dhawan Space Centre SHAR in Sriharikota.

What are the various details about the Aditya-L1 mission?

The Indian Space Research Organisation intends to position the observatory within a **halo orbit** encircling the first **Lagrangian point (L1)** within the Sun-Earth system. It is situated approximately **1.5 million km from Earth**.

The journey will span nearly four months, and the mission's planned duration extends to five years.

Lagrange points are locations in space where the **gravitational forces** of two celestial bodies, such as the Sun and Earth, balance the centripetal force necessary for a small object to move synchronously with them.

This phenomenon assists a spacecraft in **minimising fuel consumption** required to maintain its position.

Among the **five Lagrange points**, three are **unstable (L1, L2, and L3)**, while **two (L4 and L5)** are stable.

A satellite positioned in the **halo orbit** around the L1 point offers a major advantage related to **uninterrupted observation** of the Sun without encountering any **occultation or eclipse**.

Through the Aditya L1 mission, ISRO scientists will scrutinise the **Sun's corona**, and comprehend the mechanisms underlying the corona's unusually high temperatures.

The mission's objectives also encompass investigating the **origins of solar wind** and its implications on the **heliosphere**.

The observatory will delve into the study of **coronal mass ejections (CMEs)**, **massive ejections of plasma and magnetic fields** from the Sun's surface.

Why is ISRO taking this ambitious mission?

The Sun functions as a **dynamic laboratory** for investigating various stellar phenomena. These include **nuclear fusion, magnetic field dynamics, and the generation of solar wind**.

The examination of the Sun's interior using techniques like **helioseismology** provides valuable data for refining models of **stellar evolution**. These understandings contribute to our comprehension of the broader universe.

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Missions dedicated to studying the Sun shed light on its role in shaping the **potential habitability** of planets within our solar system.

The fluctuations in the Sun's energy emissions can exert **long-term effects** on Earth's climate patterns. Scrutinizing these variations aids scientists in **enhancing climate models** and comprehending the **interplay between solar radiation and atmospheric processes**.

Intense releases of electromagnetic energy and particles can temporarily disrupt the upper atmosphere of Earth. it can lead to **interference with signal transmissions**.

Coronal Mass Ejections have the potential to cause **electromagnetic and ground-level electrical disturbances**, potentially harming power grids.

Preparedness and protective measures can be taken by individuals and organisations when provided with advance information about such events. The Aditya L1 mission represents a step toward this objective.

Comprehending these processes offers insights into the realm of **plasma physics**.

The data and information gathered from the Aditya L1 mission will have **practical implications** for **space operations and terrestrial technology**, ranging from optimising **satellite functions** to enhancing the **accuracy of GPS systems**.