



**9 PM**

# **Compilation**

**August, 2023**

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of August 2023

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# General

# Studies

# Paper – 1

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### General Studies - 1

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#### 1. [Preserving tribal culture: Odisha's Special Development Councils model is worth emulating](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Preserving tribal culture: Odisha's Special Development Councils model is worth emulating**” published in **The Hindu** on **1st August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 1 – Salient features of Indian Society, Diversity of India.

**News:** The author discusses how tribal cultures are fading due to modern development. The Central government's development projects don't consider tribal cultures. The Odisha government's Special Development Councils (SDCs) initiative helps preserve tribal culture while promoting development.

#### **Why is tribal culture fading in India?**

Tribal culture in India is fading due to:

**Modern development:** Societies adopting global norms overshadow tribal cultures.

**Central government projects:** These have a one-size-fits-all approach, not considering tribal customs.

**Focus on development:** Programs like the Aspirational Districts Programme prioritize development over cultural context. For instance, except Odisha, other states follow the Central government's approach which doesn't prioritize tribal culture.

This has led to a decline in the richness and diversity of tribal traditions.

#### **How is Odisha government's Special Development Councils (SDCs) initiative helpful in preserving tribal culture?**

The Odisha government's Special Development Councils (SDCs) initiative aids in preserving tribal culture through:

##### **Languages:**

Odisha has over 22 tribal languages. The SDCs promote the use and spread of these languages.

Example: 21 tribal proficiency centres have been set up to educate people about tribal culture and dialect.

##### **Sacred Groves:**

These are vital for tribal culture and religion.

Data: 4,500 groves were near extinction. Now, 4,730 groves are protected in nine districts.

##### **Artisan Support:**

Recognizing tribal artisans helps in preserving their craft.

Data: 40,000 tribal artisans received ID cards, ensuring both cultural preservation and job opportunities.

##### **Tribal Resource Centres:**

They ensure knowledge transfer.

Data: Over 50 centres built in Sundargarh district, with more planned in other districts.

##### **Representation:**

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The SDCs involve tribes in decision-making, preventing majoritarianism.

Example: The Councils have members from all tribal groups, including Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs).

By integrating development with cultural preservation, the SDCs initiative ensures that tribal culture thrives alongside progress.

### What should be done?

**Adopt the SDCs model:** Central government should use Odisha's SDCs approach for tribal areas.

**Focus on Culture:** Development projects should prioritize preserving tribal customs.

**Inclusive Decision Making:** All tribal groups, especially smaller ones, should be involved in decisions.

**State Funding:** Ensure projects are state funded to cater to local needs.

**Expand to Other States:** Apply Odisha model in tribal-dominated areas like Madhya Pradesh and Sikkim for effective preservation and development.

## 2. [Not going to down – urbanisation in India](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Not going to down**” published in “**The Times of India**” on **1st August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS1- Urbanisation

**Relevance:** Challenges faced by emerging urban centres

**News**– The surge in India's daily mean rainfall since the last week of June again showed up the poor state of urban India's infrastructure.

### What are the challenges related to urbanisation in India?

**Smaller urban centres** are facing more challenges. In emerging urban areas, **infrastructure** doesn't exist.

As per **Census 2011**, there were **7,933 urban settlements**. As per **Niti Aayog report in 2021**, about **65% of these settlements** didn't have a master plan. Almost half of them continue to be governed as rural entities.

### What are the root causes behind these challenges?

First, states have not followed the **true essence of the 74th constitutional amendment**. It provides for the transfer of the **urban planning function** to an elected local government.

Secondly, the insufficient **delegation of powers** has resulted in **master plans** losing touch with reality. They do not align with the evolving nature of urban settlements. These plans **lack flexibility and overly focus on zoning**.

Master plans fail to consider the **informal nature of India's urban employment market**. Consequently, zoning plans encounter unforeseen growth of clusters linked to informal jobs.

### What is the importance of urban areas?

GOI estimated that urbanisation contributed to almost **60% of GDP**. **Almost 75% of the population increase by 2036** will be due to urban growth.

### Way forward-

**Master plans** play a crucial role in improving the **urban living standards**.

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Achieving this goal involves addressing two key aspects. Firstly, political power needs to be **decentralised** to urban local governments.

Political executives should have **greater ownership and influence over master plans**. This involvement can bring a dose of **practicality and realism** to the planning process.

### 3. [India@75, Looking at 100: From Mathura to Manipur: The journey for gender justice](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “India@75, Looking at 100: From Mathura to Manipur: The journey for gender justice” published in “The Indian express” on 4th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS1- social issues

**News:** The author discusses the increasing violence against women in India. Despite reforms, incidents like rapes continue to rise. Key cases like the Mathura rape and Delhi gang rape shaped legal changes. However, current events, like conflicts in Manipur, show persisting challenges. The article questions India’s progress on gender justice as it nears 100 years of independence.

#### About Current State of Gender Justice in India

Gender justice in India faces serious challenges due to high violence rates against women.

In 2021, India saw 31,677 registered rape cases, showing an increase from 2020.

Despite laws like the 2012 POCSO Act, these incidents continue, including 10% involving minors.

Important cases like Mathura, Delhi, and Hathras have led to law reforms.

However, gender-based violence persists during conflicts, like in Manipur.

As India approaches 100 years of nationhood, it’s crucial to address these systemic issues.

#### How have rape laws evolved?

**Start of Movement:** The Mathura rape case in 1979 ignited the campaign against rape.

**1983 Amendment:** After the case, rape laws saw the first amendment. Minimum seven years for general rapes and ten years for aggravated ones were set.

**Vishaka Guidelines:** Introduced in 1997, these led to the 2013 act against workplace sexual harassment.

**2012 Change:** POCSO Act introduced, addressing sexual crimes against children under 18. It expanded the definition of sexual assault.

**Post Delhi Gang Rape:** After the 2012 incident, the rape law further evolved, including wider definitions from POCSO into the section 376 of the IPC.

**2019 Update:** Kathua case’s aftermath led to death penalties for rape of minor girls under 12.

**Caste-based Atrocities:** Cases like Hathras underline the need for laws recognizing caste-related sexual violence.

#### What notable cases marked the campaign?

**Mathura Case (1979):** A tribal girl raped by policemen, leading to a Supreme Court judgment.

**Rameeza Bi & Maya Tyagi:** Husbands killed by police; both women raped.

**Suman Rani (1989):** Sentence reduced due to the victim’s “character and conduct”.

**Bhanwari Devi (1992):** Acquitted due to caste beliefs; sparked workplace harassment guidelines.

**Khairlanji Massacre (2006):** Dalit family targeted; mother and daughter gang-raped.

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**Kathua Case (2018):** Muslim girl raped and murdered; led to death penalty for rape of minors under 12.

**Hathras Case (2020):** Dalit woman raped by upper-caste men; delayed medical care and controversial cremation.

**Manipur Conflict:** Ethnic conflict saw increased sexual assaults, compelling national attention.

### 4. [Is India's sugar surplus leading to a crisis?](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Is India's sugar surplus leading to a crisis?**” published in “**The Hindu**” on **7th August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS1- Economic geography.

**Relevance:** Issues related to sugar production

**News**-India became the world's top sugar producer in 2021-2022, surpassing Brazil with a record of 359 lakh tonnes. However, the extensive use of resources in sugar production is depleting rapidly, leading to a potential crisis in the future.

#### **What are the reasons behind excess sugar production?**

The **excess production** is a result of **policies and measures** that encourage farmers to prioritize the cultivation of sugarcane.

To ensure the welfare of sugarcane farmers, the Central government has implemented the **fair and remunerative price scheme**. This scheme establishes a **minimum price** that sugar mills must pay to the farmers.

Moreover, state governments offer **significant subsidies to incentivize** the cultivation of sugarcane. These actions are motivated by **political considerations** to win votes in crucial rural areas.

The surplus sugar production has resulted in a notable increase in exports. A record **110 lakh tonnes** was exported during the 2021-2022 period.

However, India's **aggressive export promotion and domestic support strategies** for farmers have raised concerns among other sugar-producing nations like Brazil, Australia.

They filed a complaint with the World Trade Organization and accused India of **violating international trade rules** by offering excessive **export subsidies and domestic support**. The WTO ruled against India, and India's subsequent appeal was also unsuccessful.

#### **What efforts have been made by the government to address this issue?**

The Indian government is diverting it to the **production of ethanol**. In the transport sector, the use of ethanol-blended petrol significantly reduces **harmful emissions** from vehicles.

The government launched the **EBP programme in 2003** to reduce crude oil imports and curtail greenhouse gas emissions from petrol-based vehicles.

It started with the modest goal of achieving a **blending rate of 5%**, but the **target set for 2025 is 20%**.

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The government also reduced the **Goods and Services Tax on ethanol from 18% to 5%** in 2021. In the same year, of the 394 lakh tonnes of total sugar produced, about 350 lakh tonnes were diverted to produce ethanol.

### How does excessive sugarcane cultivation impact groundwater?

Sugarcane requires a **substantial amount of rainfall**, around 3,000 mm. But, in the top-growing States, the **actual rainfall** received is only 1,000-1,200 mm.

The cultivation of sugarcane necessitates a **significant amount of irrigation**, with approximately **two lakh litres of groundwater** required for irrigating **100 kg of sugar**.

These States are already prone to drought and face **stress on their groundwater resources**. It is indicated by a 2022 report from the **Central Ground Water Board**.

### What should be done?

There is a need for **evaluating incentives** that favour sugarcane cultivation over other crops and lead to a **persistent surplus**.

Introducing **fair and comprehensive subsidy schemes** for various crops can encourage farmers to **diversify their crops**. It can achieve a **more balanced distribution** of cultivation, **prevent monocultures**, and ensure a **fair income**.

In the long term, **environmentally responsible sugarcane cultivation practices** must be adopted, with a focus on groundwater conservation.

**Use of drip irrigation** must be promoted. It can reduce water consumption by up to 70% compared to conventional flood irrigation methods.

Investments are needed in **water-saving and management systems**, including **rainwater harvesting, wastewater treatment, and canal irrigation networks**.

**The Central Ground Water Board** conducts valuable research and gathers data. But, there are still gaps in understanding **groundwater availability and distribution**. Therefore, it is crucial to seriously consider **investments in groundwater research**.

## 5. Dalit Christians — exclusion by society, church, state

**Source:** The post is based on the article “Dalit Christians — exclusion by society, church, state” published in “The Hindu” on 14th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS1- Salient features of Indian Society, Diversity of India. & GS2- Mechanisms, laws, institutions and bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of vulnerable sections

**News:** In this article author discusses the challenges faced by Dalit Christians in India, highlighting their struggle for equality and identity. He also argues for amending the 1950 Presidential (SC) order to include them in the Scheduled Caste (SC) list.

### What challenges do Dalit Christians face in India?

1. **Lack of Scheduled Caste Status:** Dalit Christians are not recognized as Scheduled Castes (SC) despite commissions, such as the Justice Ranganath Misra Commission in 2007, recommending their inclusion. This deprives them of certain reservation benefits.

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2. **Discrimination in Christianity:** Though many Dalits converted to Christianity to escape caste-based discrimination, they still face prejudices. Non-Dalit Christian converts continue to practice age-old untouchability, bringing these practices into churches.
3. **Intersectional Discrimination:** Using the ‘Theory of Intersectionality’, Dalit Christians face unique discrimination due to their dual identity as Dalits and a religious minority. They experience exclusion by society, church, and the state.
4. **Identity Struggles:** Despite converting, Dalit Christians haven’t fully realized the expected social upliftment. This leads to ambiguity in their identity, as they’re caught between being ‘Dalits’ and ‘Christians’. The state sees them only as “Christians”, pushing them into “intersectional invisibility”.
5. **Inadequate Legal Protection:** The single-axis framework of Indian law doesn’t provide ample protection for groups with overlapping identities like Dalit Christians. In the Soosai vs Union Of India case (1985), a Dalit Christian’s plea was dismissed, indicating the state’s narrow viewpoint.
6. **Assumptions and Prejudices:** Some argue that the Constitution sees Christianity as a “foreign import”, questioning the legitimacy of Dalit Christian citizenship. This perception further excludes them from certain benefits and protections.

### What steps should be taken to address these issues?

7. **Amend the 1950 SC Order:** The government should modify the 1950 Presidential (SC) order, as suggested by the Tamil Nadu Assembly, to include Dalit Christians in the Scheduled Caste list.
8. **Church Reforms:** Churches should actively work against caste-based discrimination, ensuring equality among all members.
9. **Intersectional Recognition:** Understanding the unique ‘Dalit Christian’ identity is crucial. The state should consider their dual discrimination as both Dalits and a religious minority.
10. **Legal Framework Revision:** India’s legal system should move beyond the ‘single-axis framework’, which further marginalizes overlapping identities, to recognize the intersectionality of identities.
11. **Promote Inclusivity:** Public awareness campaigns can educate society about Dalit Christians’ struggles, fostering greater acceptance and inclusion.
12. **Strengthen Evidence:** Collect and present compelling evidence to show that discrimination continues post conversion, urging for policy changes.

### 6. A scientific survey at Gyanvapi, its limits”

**Source:** The post is based on the article “A scientific survey at Gyanvapi, its limits” published in “The Hindu” on 14th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS1- The salient aspects of Art Forms, Literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times.

**News:** The article discusses the Supreme Court of India’s order for a non-invasive survey of the Gyanvapi mosque to check if it’s built over a temple. It explains the science behind the methods used, their accuracy, and potential errors, emphasizing the sensitivity and significance of the findings due to the emotional and political implications involved.

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### What scientific methods are employed for a non-invasive survey of the Gyanvapi mosque?

**Geophysical Mapping for Archaeological Prospecting:** Techniques are adapted from geophysical mapping, which can be either:

**Active Methods:** Inject energy into the ground and measure the response. Examples include seismic and electromagnetic techniques.

**Passive Methods:** Measure existing physical properties like magnetometry and gravity surveying.

**Ground-Penetrating Radar (GPR):** ASI plans to use GPR to create a 3-D model of buried structures. It sends a radar impulse and records return signals from subsoil contrasts.

**Data Analysis:** Acquired data is processed to determine physical parameters. This requires a strong understanding of physical processes and advanced software.

**Modeling:** The archaeological object is simplified into a representative model with defined parameters for analysis.

### What limitations exist in the scientific methods used for a non-invasive survey of the Gyanvapi mosque?

**Ambiguity in Interpretation:** Different earth materials can have similar physical properties, leading to uncertain results.

**False Imaging with GPR:** As the radar beam spreads in a cone shape, objects can reflect parts of the beam prematurely, creating incorrect images.

**Data Limitations:** Ideal methods expect infinite, error-free data. However, real data is limited and contains measurement errors.

**Reconstruction Difficulties:** Geophysical tools might not always perfectly reconstruct target images.

**Contradictory Interpretations:** Even sophisticated systems can have different interpretations, as seen with lunar penetrating radar systems.

**Reliance on Supplementary Info:** Due to data limitations, extra information is often added, which might lead to inaccurate results.

### 7. Our millennial attitudes are in uneven transition

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Our millennial attitudes are in uneven transition**” published in “Live Mint” on 16th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS1- Society (social changes)

**News:** In this article author discusses findings from a survey on Indian millennials’ views on population growth, family values, and social biases. It highlights their mixed feelings about India’s demographic changes and persistent prejudices, especially towards the LGBTIQ+ community.

### What are the major findings of the latest Mint YouGov-CPR biannual millennial survey?

**Views on population:**

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33% see India's large population as a problem.

26% believe in India's demographic advantage; 40% are neutral.

Only 31% are proud of India being the world's most populous nation; 26% are embarrassed.

### **Economic Growth and Comparison to China:**

49% of urban Indians believe India's population can be an asset with the right investments.

Better education and factory jobs are viewed as essential for growth like China.

China is seen as having done better in population control, job creation, and poverty reduction.

### **Marriage and Family Values:**

35% of millennials and 38% of post-millennials view marriage as important, compared to 55% of pre-millennials.

49% believe in children living with and caring for elderly parents.

28% want parents to be independent; 23% believe parents need support but shouldn't live with children.

### **Social Biases:**

55% of parents want their children to marry the opposite gender.

50% prefer marital partners without disabilities; 42% want marriages within their religion.

21% are uncomfortable with an LGBTIQ+ neighbor.

People from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, unmarried men, physically disabled, and other faiths are also subjects of bias.

## 8. Reclaiming India's past- Greater focus and investment are required to understand the evolution of India's diverse and inclusive cultural heritage

**Source:** The post is based on the article "**Reclaiming India's past- Greater focus and investment are required to understand the evolution of India's diverse and inclusive cultural heritage**" published in "Business standard" on 16th August 2023.

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

**News:** In this article, the author emphasizes India's rich and diverse cultural heritage, which has been influenced by various global interactions throughout history. The author also stresses the importance of recognizing and preserving this multifaceted legacy for a better understanding of the Indian identity.

### **What have shaped the India's Cultural Tapestry?**

**Geographical Advantage:** India's strategic location at trade intersections enabled interactions with different countries. For example, its coastline connected it with the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal.

**Cross-cultural Interactions:** India witnessed a flow of traders, pilgrims, and invaders, leading to a fusion of cultures. This brought in influences from Central Asia, Iran, and beyond.

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**Linguistic Blends:** Languages like Hindi and Urdu integrated foreign words. For instance, “akhbaar” in Hindi, meaning newspaper, is from Arabic.

**Religious Diversity:** India’s acceptance of varied spiritual paths, such as Sufism alongside traditional beliefs, added depth to its cultural tapestry.

**Culinary and Material Exchanges:** Elements seen as inherently Indian, like tea or potatoes, are in fact foreign introductions, highlighting the interweaving of diverse influences in India’s cultural fabric.

### Why is it important to recognize and preserve the rich and diverse cultural heritage of India?

**Identity and Unity:** Recognizing India’s diverse heritage helps understand its unique identity. The integration of words like “akhbaar” from Arabic into Hindi showcases this blend.

**Valuing Global Bonds:** Appreciating India’s past interactions, like its maritime connections to the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal, underscores its longstanding global relations.

**Promote Inclusivity:** Celebrating India’s varied influences, such as the acceptance of both Sufism and traditional beliefs, encourages mutual respect and unity among its diverse population.

**Preservation of Knowledge:** Retrieving and studying lost Indian texts, preserved in places like Tibet, helps in conserving ancient wisdom, as seen with the Samhita project’s endeavors.

**Understanding Reciprocal Influences:** Recognizing how India has impacted countries like Indonesia and China deepens appreciation for its cultural exports.

**Encouraging Research:** Acknowledging this rich tapestry can inspire further research, shedding light on India’s multifaceted history and its global interactions.

### 9. 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.

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**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.

**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.

### 10. 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

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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.

**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.

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**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.

### 11. Teach The Teacher – Religion baiting in schools

**Source:** The post is based on the article **“Teach The Teacher – Religion baiting in schools must be responded to by swift and strict penal action. Delays send wrong messages”** published in **The Times of India** on **28<sup>th</sup> August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 1 – Indian Society – Communalism

**Relevance:** communal behavior in schools

**News:** Recently, a school in Uttar Pradesh's Muzaffarnagar experienced an instance of communalism.

#### **What steps have the authorities taken in response?**

A case has been filed by the police under IPC section, the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights has sent notices under the Right to Education Act and the Juvenile Justice Act, and a state government investigation has begun.

**However, despite this,** the teacher continues to make statements and remains free from custody.

**Must Read:** [Communalism in India](#)

#### **What are the findings of research regarding religious discrimination in schools?**

Research showed discrimination exist against minority students by teachers in a mid-sized Indian city. The study found that some minority teachers also contributed to this discrimination.

Hence, the findings of the research and the current incident could have adverse effects on the students enrolled in the school.

#### **What can be the way ahead?**

**Discrimination in schools can have a lasting impact on young minds and shape their behavior as adults.** This should worry educators and policymakers. Even esteemed institutions like IITs are not immune to caste bias.

Therefore, taking action against teachers like the one in Muzaffarnagar sets a positive example in addressing this harmful behavior.

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# General Studies Paper –2

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### General Studies - 2

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#### 1. [Indian gig workers ought to get a well-crafted social security net](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Indian gig workers ought to get a well-crafted social security net**” published in **Mint** on **31<sup>st</sup> July 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 the** Rajasthan Platform-based Gig Workers (Registration and Welfare) Act 2023

**News:** Rajasthan Government has enacted the Rajasthan Platform-based Gig Workers (Registration and Welfare) Act 2023. It aims at regulating the gig economy in the state.

It is a positive step for gig workers as Niti Aayog expects 200% growth in gig employment by 2030.

#### **What are the key features of the Act?**

**Read Here:** [Rajasthan’s move spells some hope for gig workers](#)

#### **What are the concerns with the Act?**

**Implementation:** The Act establishes a statutory framework for the protection of gig workers. However, adequate execution is required for it to be effective.

**Lacks Architecture on the Social Security System:** The Act emphasizes inclusive governance and financial assistance for welfare goals.

However, it lacks information on the specific architecture of the social security system as well as actual implementation, leaving design and execution to bureaucracy.

**Centralizes Welfare Fund:** It centralizes welfare contribution into a single fund, administered by a government-appointed welfare board. Hence, instead of empowering the individual worker, the Act empowers appointed government authorities and other board members.

A more effective approach would have been to transfer funds directly into individual gig worker welfare accounts through separate accounts created by the welfare board.

The fund should not only be used for long-term returns but also to buy group insurance (life, term, health, and accident) for its members.

The fund could also be used to alleviate the impact of gig income volatility by providing discounted micro-overdraft loans through the already implemented Open Credit Enablement Network.

**Funding the Social Security System:** The Act intends to support the social security system by levying a 2% tax on aggregators.

However, **social security is the responsibility of society and should be financed by the state’s exchequer**, using taxes from individuals and corporations.

The government could also offer matching grants to encourage voluntary contributions.

#### **What can be the way ahead?**

India requires a national, multi-contributor social security system that leverages the existing digital public infrastructure. It is also necessary to create a system that combines various government schemes to benefit gig workers.

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### 2. [Rap on the knuckles: Supreme Court has tried to hold States and Centre to account on mob violence](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Rap on the knuckles: Supreme Court has tried to hold States and Centre to account on mob violence**” published in “The Hindu” on 31st July 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- mechanisms, laws, institutions and bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of vulnerable sections

**News:** The Supreme Court criticized the Union and State governments for not acting against mob violence and lynchings, especially targeting Muslims and marginalized groups by “cow vigilantes”. Despite guidelines from a 2018 judgment, such incidents continue, with political influences playing a role.

#### What is Supreme Court view on mob violence and lynchings?

- **Criticism of Governments:** The Supreme Court has criticized the Union and State governments for their “consistent failure” to act against mob violence and lynchings over the past five years.
- **Duty of the State:** In the 2018 case, **Tehseen S. Poonawalla vs Union of India**, the Court emphasized that it’s the state’s “sacrosanct duty” to protect its citizens. They should prevent any form of “vigilantism”.
- **Guidelines Issued:** The Court provided guidelines in 2018. This included:

Appointing a nodal police officer in every district.

Identifying areas with recent mob violence.

Using police intelligence to tackle such incidents.

Sensitizing law enforcement.

Warning the public about the consequences of mob violence.

#### What should be done?

- **Implement Guidelines:** Governments should follow the 2018 Supreme Court guidelines, which include appointing nodal police officers and identifying violence-prone areas.
- **Sensitization:** The Home Ministry and State governments should sensitize law enforcement and the public about the repercussions of mob violence.
- **Civil Society Action:** Communities need to promote understanding and prevent the stereotyping of minorities. This will help curb mob violence and vigilantism.
- **Political Accountability:** In regions like Tamil Nadu, where secular movements are active, political leaders face backlash for any communal incidents. This level of accountability should be adopted everywhere.

### 3. [States’ lax response to lynching](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**States’ lax response to lynching**” published in “The Hindu” on 31st July 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- mechanisms, laws, institutions and bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of vulnerable sections

**News:** This article discusses the Supreme Court’s request to several Indian states to respond to a petition by the National Federation of Indian Women. This petition addresses the states’ alleged inaction against mob violence targeting Muslims and seeks justice for the victims based on a previous court judgment against vigilantism.

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### About National Federation of Indian Women (NFIW) petition.

**Concern:** NFIW raised issues regarding inaction against mob violence targeting Muslims.

**Highlighted Incidents:** Examples include the lynching of a man in Haryana for transporting a cow and two men attacked in Odisha on suspicion of smuggling beef.

**Court Response:** The Supreme Court asked various states to address these concerns, referencing a past judgment against vigilantism.

**Desired Outcomes:** NFIW seeks police examination, constitutional violation checks, compensation for victims, and consistent support for affected individuals.

### What was major judgment related to mob violence and lynching?

**Tehseen Poonawala vs. Union of India case (2018):**

#### Key Points:

The state has a “**sacrosanct duty**” to protect citizens’ lives.

Vigilantism, whether cow-related or otherwise, was condemned, with warnings against anarchy and chaos.

State authorities must prevent any form of vigilantism.

### What were the seven remedial directions given by the SC to States?

Seven Remedial Directions by the Supreme Court

1. **Nodal Officer Appointment:** States must appoint a nodal officer, not below the rank of Superintendent of Police, to address bias-motivated crimes.
2. **Immediate FIR Lodging:** For any lynching or mob violence incident, local police must promptly file an FIR.
3. **Informing the Nodal Officer:** The officer registering the FIR must inform the district’s nodal officer.
4. **Victim’s Family Protection:** Measures should be in place to protect victims’ families from further harassment.
5. **Investigation Monitoring:** The nodal officer should personally oversee crime investigations.
6. **Compensation Scheme:** States should establish schemes to financially support victims.
7. **Official Accountability:** Officials failing in their duties regarding lynching incidents will face disciplinary action, potentially leading to departmental actions.

### How are States responding to the contempt petition?

**Status Report:** States are directed to provide year-wise data from 2018 detailing lynching incidents, FIRs registered, and actions taken.

**Compliance Measures:** The court accepted the Attorney General’s suggestion for the Ministry of Home Affairs to discuss the compliance steps with State department heads, based on the Tehseen Poonawala judgment.

**Central Role:** The Supreme Court asked the Centre to report on the outcome of this meeting.

**Next Steps:** The case will be revisited in October, with the states and Centre providing more insights into their measures and actions.

**Read more:** [Committee to suggest necessary amendments in IPC, CrPC to curb mob lynching](#)

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### 4. [Express View on India-China ties: Riding on hope](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Express View on India-China ties: Riding on hope**” published in the “**The Indian Express**” on **31st July 2023**.

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

**Relevance**: Bilateral relationship between India and China

**News**- The Chinese President Xi Jinping might visit Delhi in September for the G20 summit.

#### **Why are some strategic experts optimistic over the Xi visit?**

Xi's presence in Delhi is an opportunity to end the **current stalemate in bilateral relations** that began with **China's aggression in Ladakh in the summer of 2020**.

There was a meeting between National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and Wang Yi, in Johannesburg on the **margins of a BRICS forum**.

A Chinese statement issued after the meeting referred to the “**Bali Consensus**” between **Modi and Xi** on the need to “**stabilize bilateral relations**”.

#### **Why are the prospects of resolving the stalemate in the relationship during Xi's visit weak?**

There was not **much interaction** between Modi and Xi at the G20 meeting in Bali, Indonesia, last November.

The Modi government has consistently emphasized that a return to **normalcy in bilateral relations** will not occur until Beijing restores **peace and tranquillity** along the border.

In contrast, Chinese officials have urged India to **set aside the border issue** and focus on **cooperating in other domains**. However, Delhi has maintained its stance that the condition of the border reflects the overall state of the relationship

China is reluctant to address the **territorial disputes** with its neighbouring countries, such as Japan, the Philippines, Vietnam, Taiwan, and India.

Despite this, Xi's diplomatic representatives try to present a **positive outlook** on the discussions with these neighbours and **assert progress**, even when there is none

Recently, Beijing issued “**stapled visas**” to Indian athletes from Arunachal Pradesh participating in World University Games in Chengdu, China. Beijing uses the stapled visas to assert its **territorial claim over Arunachal Pradesh**.

**Territorial sovereignty** is the major cause of **multiple disputes** between Delhi and Beijing. The **PLA's aggressive behaviour** on the disputed border has undermined the efforts to manage these issues.

### 5. [A critical lapse in Jan Vishwas Bill](#)

**Source**: The post is based on the article “**A critical lapse in Jan Vishwas Bill**” published in **Business standard** on 1st August 2023.

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

**News**: This article discusses the Jan Vishwas Bill passed by Lok Sabha, which amends many provisions, including those in the Drugs & Cosmetics Act. Recently, Indian drug quality was questioned due to several incidents. The new amendments favor manufacturers more than consumers, reducing penalties for producing substandard drugs. The author believes patient safety shouldn't be compromised for business ease.

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### About Jan Vishwas Bill

**Purpose:** Boost ease of living and business by amending provisions.

**Changes to D&C Act:** Might favor drug manufacturers over consumers.

**Quality Issues:** 48 brands found substandard; concerns from US FDA and other countries.

**Penalty Reduction:** Lighter penalties for substandard drug production.

**Concerns:** Potentially compromises patient safety and India's drug reputation.

### What is the need for Jan Vishwas Bill?

**Addressing Over-Criminalization:** The existing laws might have been too penalizing, hindering businesses.

**Aligning with Business Growth:** The need to make India a more attractive business destination while ensuring quality and safety.

**Pharmaceutical Industry Concerns:** With reported substandard brands and international issues, a revision was deemed necessary.

**Enhancing Reputation:** Incidents in countries like Gambia, Sri Lanka, and the US FDA's findings spotlighted the need for legislative action.

**Ensuring Consumer Safety:** Despite the bill's potential biases, the overall intent was to safeguard consumers from health risks.

### What are the implications of Jan Vishwas Bill?

**Simplifies Regulations:** Aims to boost ease of living and doing business by amending various provisions.

**Potential Bias:** Changes to the Drugs & Cosmetics Act might favor drug manufacturers over consumers.

### Quality Concerns Highlighted:

Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation found 48 brands to be substandard.

US FDA pointed out issues in Indian factories exporting generics.

Deaths in Gambia and Uzbekistan linked to an Indian-made cough syrup.

Sri Lanka and Nepal raised concerns over Indian drug quality.

**Weaker Penalties:** Producing substandard drugs may lead to lighter penalties, risking patient safety.

**Reputation at Risk:** India, known as the pharmacy of the world, might see its reputation damaged.

### What should be done?

**Strengthen Regulations:** Ensure the Drugs & Cosmetics Act prioritizes patient safety over business interests.

**Stricter Quality Checks:** Address issues like the 48 substandard brands and concerns raised by the US FDA.

**Review Penalties:** Reconsider Jan Vishwas Bill's lenient penalties for producing substandard drugs.

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**Preserve Reputation:** Protect India's status as the "pharmacy of the world" by ensuring high-quality generics.

**Balance Business and Safety:** Improve business conditions without compromising patient rights and drug safety.

### 6. [Who's listening to the teacher? HEI Rankings aren't](#)

**Source-** The post is based on the article "**Who's listening to the teacher? HEI Rankings aren't**" published in the "**The Times of India**" on **1st August 2023**.

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

**Relevance:** Higher education

**News-** The article explains the issues related to the ranking system for educational institutions and importance of qualitative methods to assess the quality of education

#### **Why are qualitative methods important to assess the quality of education institutions?**

**To achieve a well-rounded approach, qualitative research** holds equal importance.

Quantitative methods are effective for analysing certain aspects such as **faculty research and publications**. But, they may not suffice when it comes to evaluating **qualitative elements like the quality of teaching**.

The **quality of teaching** is the **most important** among all the criteria used in rankings to judge the strength of an educational institution. This is particularly relevant for institutions that prioritise teaching in India.

#### **What are the issues with the rankings system of educational institutions?**

Certain ranking mechanisms tend to blur the distinction between the **quality of teaching and learning outcomes**. They overlook the **intricate examination of pedagogy**.

Most ranking systems fail to adequately capture the **subjective aspects of teaching and learning**. They tend to prioritise the **objective data** on an **institution's accomplishments**.

Ranking systems mention **innovations** in teaching methods. But, their approach often remains **quantitative and lacks qualitative elaboration**.

Teaching is inherently a **creative and critical endeavour**. It involves a teacher infusing their **passion** for the chosen subject, combining it with **effective pedagogy**.

If ranking exercises are **merely quantitative**, it fails to acknowledge the fundamental **creative and critical nature of education**.

#### **What are the challenges faced by a teacher in case of overcrowded classrooms?**

The **recent report by QS rankers** highlighted the discouraging **faculty to student ratio** in Indian higher education institutions.

In such overcrowded classrooms, **pedagogy** becomes the first and **most critical casualty**. It makes it difficult for teachers to effectively deliver their lessons.

The **imagination and creativity** a teacher brings to the classroom are undermined when faced with an excessive number of students per class.

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### 7. The dangers in the Digital Personal Data Protection Bill

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**The dangers in the Digital Personal Data Protection Bill**” published in the “**The Hindu**” on **2nd August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – Indian Polity – Fundamental Rights

**News**– The government is set to introduce the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Bill in Parliament.

#### **What is the importance of the Right to Information Act?**

It has been a **tool to empower** millions of Indian citizens since 2005. Access to information is necessary for **governments accountability** in a democracy.

According to the Supreme Court of India, individuals have the **right to access information** about wilful defaulters and the specifics of Non Performing Assets held by public sector banks.

In democracies, voter lists containing names, addresses, and other personal information are regularly made public to facilitate **public scrutiny and prevent electoral fraud**.

Poor and marginalised people can enjoy the benefits of government schemes and welfare programmes, if they must have access to relevant information.

#### **What are the issues related to the draft Data Protection Bill?**

**Exemptions under RTI Act**– The RTI Act includes a provision to **protect the privacy** of people. It contains an **exemption clause under Section 8(1)(j)**.

Personal information is exempt from disclosure if it is not related to **public activity; or any public interest**. The information is also exempted if it leads to **invasion of privacy**.

Therefore, **data protection law** does not require any amendment to the existing RTI law. The **Justice A.P. Shah Report on Privacy** also mentions it.

However, the DDP Bill 2022 includes an **amendment to Section 8(1)(j)**. It exempts all personal information from disclosure. This is not good for the **transparency and accountability regime** in the country.

**Excessive power to executive**– A primary objective of any data protection law is to curtail the **misuse of personal data**, including for financial fraud.

Government is the **biggest data repository**. It should not have **wide discretionary powers** under the data protection law.

The **DDP Bill, 2022**, grants **extensive authority** to the executive to **formulate rules and notifications** covering a wide array of matters.

For example, the central government holds the power to **exempt any government or private sector entity** from adhering to the law’s provisions by issuing a **notification**.

This raises the possibility of the government selectively **exempting entities like the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI)**.

In contrast, smaller non-governmental organisations, research institutions, associations of individuals, and Opposition parties would be required to establish systems to comply with the **stringent responsibilities of a data fiduciary**.

**Data Protection Board**– it is critical that the **oversight body** set up under the legislation is **adequately independent**.

The draft Bill does not ensure the autonomy of the **Data Protection Board**. The **strength and composition** of the board, and **process of selection and removal** of its chairperson and other members will be decided by central government

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Government will have power to **appoint the chief executive** responsible for managing the board.

**Data Protection Board** has power to impose fines up to ₹500 crore. It can be misused by the executive to target the **political opposition** and those critical of its policies.

### 8. [C Raja Mohan writes: South Asia, now open to business](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**C Raja Mohan writes: South Asia, now open to business**” published in **The Indian express** on 2nd August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- India and its neighborhood-relations.

**News:** In this article author talks about India’s growing economy and its potential positive effect on South Asia. They discuss how regional integration, influenced by economic reforms, can overcome political disputes. Despite challenges, there are new factors accelerating this process, including India’s increasing economic ties with neighbors, economic openness in the region, and support from Western countries. Ultimately, the author suggests India’s economic growth can benefit all South Asian countries.

#### **How India’s growing economy and its potential positive effect on South Asia?**

India is emerging as the **third-largest economy and a major tech hub**.

##### **Effects on South Asia**

###### **Trade Increase:**

Intra-regional trade grew from 2% in 1990 to 6% now.

India’s exports: \$16 billion to Bangladesh, \$6 billion to Sri Lanka, and \$8.5 billion to Nepal in 2022.

###### **Regional Integration:**

Leaders from Nepal and Sri Lanka are showing interest in deeper economic ties with India.

Cross-border projects like rail, road, and energy are gaining momentum.

###### **Great Power Influence:**

The US and allies are focusing on India as a counter to China, helping promote India’s ties with its neighbors.

Japan is promoting connectivity between India and Bangladesh.

#### **How South Asian regional integration can overcome political disputes?**

##### **Trade as a Bridge:**

Intra-regional trade in South Asia grew from 2% in 1990 to 6% currently.

As trade benefits economies, it encourages nations to resolve political issues.

##### **Leadership Engagements:**

Visits by Nepal’s PM and Sri Lanka’s President to India have led to stronger economic commitments.

Such direct discussions can pave the way for resolution of disputes.

##### **Economic Alliances:**

Countries like Nepal and Sri Lanka show increased interest in economic ties with India.

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Economic interests can overshadow past political differences.

### External Influence:

Japan's effort in promoting India-Bangladesh connectivity is an example of foreign nations pushing for regional unity.

The US's \$500 million grant to Nepal for energy and road connectivity emphasizes regional collaboration.

### Alternative Cooperation Routes:

Instead of relying solely on SAARC, nations are pursuing bilateral and sub-regional cooperations, bypassing traditional hindrances.

### 9. [Expansion worries: Enlarging Brics will not inevitably restore relevance](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article "**Expansion worries: Enlarging Brics will not inevitably restore relevance**" published in **Business standard** on 2nd August 2023.

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

**News:** This article discusses the potential expansion of the BRICS group. China wants more countries like Russia to join. India and Brazil prefer democracies like Indonesia over autocracies like Saudi Arabia. This reflects BRICS' challenges in staying relevant as its original purpose has shifted. India wants a careful, consensus-based expansion approach. The upcoming August summit will address these issues.

### About BRICS current situation

BRICS includes Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa.

They discuss global economic matters.

China wants countries like Russia to join.

India and Brazil prefer democracies joining, like Indonesia.

There's debate over Saudi Arabia's potential membership.

BRICS' relevance has changed over time.

China's growth and anti-Western stance influenced this change.

India now values the Quad and G20 more.

The August summit will discuss BRICS' expansion.

India seeks a consensus-based approach to expansion.

### What are the challenges faced by BRICS?

**Differing Expansion Views:** While China wants countries similar to Russia to join, India and Brazil lean towards democracies like Indonesia.

**Potential New Members:** The debate on including Saudi Arabia highlights differing priorities. While its addition would favor China, India remains cautious.

**Shift in Relevance:** Originally, BRICS was a stage for large emerging economies. However, China's economic growth and its anti-Western approach have changed its focus.

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**China's Dominance:** The risk of BRICS becoming a “China-plus” grouping can reduce its balanced influence.

**Balancing Act:** India wants to stay independent of Sino-Western tensions, affecting its commitment to BRICS.

**Alternate Forums:** China has developed other platforms for engaging emerging countries, overshadowing BRICS.

**Relevance Concern:** With India valuing the Quad and G20 more, BRICS' importance is questioned.

### What should be done?

**Consensus-based Expansion:** All BRICS nations should agree on new members.

**Objective Criteria:** Use clear criteria for adding new members, not just geopolitical shifts.

**Avoid Dominance:** Prevent BRICS from becoming a “China-plus” group.

**Value Democracy:** Prefer established democracies like Indonesia over autocracies like Saudi Arabia.

**Re-establish Purpose:** Refocus on BRICS' original goal of shaping the global geo-economic order.

**Consistent Approach:** Decisions should not be influenced by temporary geopolitical events.

### 10. [Apar Gupta writes: On Manipur, internet shutdown is no cure](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Apar Gupta writes: On Manipur, internet shutdown is no cure**” published in “The Indian express” on 3rd August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2-Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance applications, models, successes, limitations, and potential;

**News:** The author discusses the frequent internet shutdowns in India, which are meant to maintain law and order but also harm citizens' rights and the economy. Different methods of “limited internet shutdowns” are used, like restricting certain mediums, limiting time, geographically targeting areas, or blocking specific websites. These shutdowns can favor the rich, are hard to enforce, and can increase surveillance. Despite their regular use, no government study confirms their effectiveness.

### About frequent internet shutdowns in India

India frequently shuts down the internet to maintain law and order.

In 2018, India led globally in internet shutdowns.

Jammu and Kashmir faced a 550-day mobile data blackout until 2021.

Manipur's ongoing ban has lasted over 80 days since May 3, 2023.

Rajasthan had 85 shutdown orders between January 2020 and September 2021.

Despite shutdowns, no government study confirms their positive impact.

### What are different judicial cases related to internet shutdown?

#### Gujarat High Court Case:

Concerning Gauravbhai Sureshbhai Vyas in 2015.

The court found shutdown orders proportional because they limited only mobile internet.

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### **Manipur High Court Case:**

The court restored wired internet but continued to block social media and VPNs.

### **Supreme Court's Anuradha Bhasin Judgment:**

Condoned selective internet bans.

### **What are different methods of "limited internet shutdowns"?**

#### **Restriction by Medium:**

Internet access is limited based on its medium, like mobile or wired.

Example: Gujarat High Court's 2015 decision allowed only wired internet.

Data: Only 3.8% of Indians use wired connections; most rely on mobiles.

#### **Restriction by Time:**

Internet is shut down for specific hours or days.

Example: In Rajasthan, shutdowns are often limited to two-three days.

Geographical Localization:

The shutdown targets specific districts or areas instead of an entire state.

Example: 26 out of 85 shutdown orders in Rajasthan targeted Udaipur.

#### **Website or Service Specific:**

Blocks or permits specific websites or types of services, like social media or banking.

Example: In Jammu and Kashmir, whitelisting allowed 153 sites, but 80 didn't work effectively.

Recent trend: Banning VPNs, social media, and messaging apps, although enforcement is challenging.

### **What are the implications of "limited internet shutdowns"?**

**Socio-economic Impact:** Limited access affects mostly the less affluent.

**Challenging Enforcement:** Restricting specific services or apps is hard to implement. For example, in Jammu and Kashmir, 80 out of 153 whitelisted websites didn't work effectively.

**Increased Surveillance:** Whitelisting can lead to invasive checks like physical stop-and-frisk measures.

**No Confirmed Effectiveness:** No government study proves the positive impact of these shutdowns.

**Hinders Peaceful Protests:** Social media shutdowns can prevent citizens from organizing non-violent demonstrations. For instance, shutdowns limited the spread of information about the Phaknung gangrape protest in Imphal.

**Possibility of Increased Violence:** Some studies suggest violence can rise during shutdowns as peaceful protests are stifled.

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

#### **Empirical Study:**

The government should study the actual effects of internet shutdowns.

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The standing committee on IT urged an assessment of shutdowns' impact on the economy and public safety.

**Evidence-based Policymaking:** Policymakers should base decisions on concrete data rather than assumptions.

**Promote Accountability:** Encourage the use of the internet for holding the state accountable.

**Re-evaluate Policies:** Avoid "limited internet shutdowns" that endanger citizens without proven benefits.

### 11. [As Article 370 hearings begin in the Supreme Court, question of the 'temporary' provision](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article "**As Article 370 hearings begin in the Supreme Court, question of the 'temporary' provision**" published in "The Indian express" on 3rd August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure,

**News:** The article discusses the debate on Article 370, which gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir. The Supreme Court is examining if its 2019 removal was legal.

#### What are the arguments in favor of removing Article 370?

**Temporary Provision:** Article 370 is titled "Temporary provisions with respect to the State of Jammu and Kashmir". This suggests it wasn't meant to be permanent.

**Self-contained Exit:** Article 370(3) allows for the President to declare the article inoperative, indicating a mechanism for its removal.

**Uniformity:** Removal can lead to uniform application of Indian laws to Jammu & Kashmir, integrating it fully with India.

**Development & Growth:** Some believe removal can boost the region's development, as it would get equal attention and opportunities like other states.

#### What are the arguments against removing Article 370?

**Original Agreement:** The accession of Jammu & Kashmir to India was based on certain terms, with Article 370 being central.

**"Temporary" Misunderstood:** The term "temporary" in Article 370 refers to the period before J&K's Constituent Assembly created its Constitution (1951-1957), not the Article's lifespan.

**Constituent Assembly's Role:** Clause (3) of Article 370 mandated that any change to the relationship between J&K and India needed the J&K Constituent Assembly's recommendation.

**End of Constituent Assembly:** Since the Constituent Assembly ceased to exist after 1957, the power to alter Article 370 also ended, making the Article permanent.

**Preservation of Identity:** Article 370 ensured J&K maintained its unique identity and relationship with India.

**Collaborative Relationship:** The petitioners saw Article 370 as fostering a collaborative relationship between J&K and India. Removing it could disturb this balance.

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### 12. How UIDAI is using AI to tackle payment frauds

**Source:** The post is based on the article “How UIDAI is using AI to tackle payment frauds” published in “The Indian express” on 3rd August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance applications, models, successes, limitations, and potential;

**News:** The article discusses increasing fraud in India’s Aadhaar-enabled Payment System (AePS). The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) is using artificial intelligence to fight this, especially by identifying fake fingerprints. Despite this, fraud continues due to issues like dishonest bank agents and lack of awareness.

#### About financial crime in India

Fraud in Aadhaar-enabled Payment System (AePS) is rising.

UIDAI uses AI to identify real versus fake fingerprints.

In 2020-21, 2.62 lakh financial crimes were reported.

Crimes jumped to 6.94 lakhs in 2022.

Payment frauds increased from 700,000 in FY21 to 20 million in FY23.

Many don’t report cyber frauds; only 2.6% of 2022’s complaints led to FIRs.

Business correspondents, local bank agents, sometimes cheat users.

Crime Branch warned about cyber criminals cloning fingerprints from government sites.

#### Why there is increased fraud in Aadhaar-enabled Payment System (AePS)?

**Growing Usage:** As AePS gains popularity, it becomes a bigger target for fraudsters.

**Fake Fingerprints:** Criminals have created fake fingerprints using silicone to steal money.

**Rural Users:** A significant part of AePS users are in rural areas, often less aware of fraud risks.

**Business Correspondents (BCs):** BCs sometimes misrepresent transaction amounts. For example, they might give out Rs 500 but record a higher amount.

**Lack of Receipts:** Rural users often don’t ask for or receive transaction receipts from BCs, making fraud easier.

**Limited Awareness:** Many people don’t know about cyber frauds and thus don’t report them.

#### How India is fighting with fraud in Aadhaar-enabled Payment System (AePS)?

**AI Integration:** UIDAI is using artificial intelligence to detect fake fingerprints.

**Fingerprint Technology:** UIDAI introduced the Finger Minutiae Record – Finger Image Record (FMR-FIR) modality. It checks fingerprint “liveness” to spot cloned prints during authentication.

**Facial Recognition:** In collaboration with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), Airtel Payments Bank implemented facial recognition for transaction authentication.

**Liveness Detection:** New technology differentiates between live fingers and cloned ones.

**Awareness Campaigns:** Efforts are being made to raise awareness about cyber frauds, especially in rural areas.

**Increased Monitoring:** The RBI’s ombudsman received over 2,000 AePS complaints between November 2021 and March 2023, indicating active monitoring.

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**Law Enforcement:** Crime Branch wing of Haryana Police is investigating numerous AePS-related cyber fraud complaints.

### 13. From state visit to a more robust trade relationship

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**From state visit to a more robust trade relationship**” published in “The Hindu” on 3rd August 2023.

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

**News:** In this article author discusses the historic visit of India’s Prime Minister to Washington. They highlight the growing U.S.-India partnership, especially in defense and technology. However, the trade relationship, though improving, hasn’t reached its potential. Both nations should prioritize creating a strong Free Trade Agreement to maximize benefits.

#### **About India-US trade**

**Historic Visit:** India’s PM 2023 visit to Washington strengthens U.S.-India relations.

**Current Trade:** Exceeds \$120 billion.

**U.S. Approach:** Shifted from traditional FTAs, emphasizing resilient supply chains and labor rights.

**Enhancing Relations:** Resolved six WTO disputes during India’s PM US visit; potential for a major Free Trade Agreement.

**Agriculture Trades:** Exchanges like mangoes for India and cherries for the U.S. without an FTA.

**Trade Potential:** By prioritizing, bilateral trade could reach \$500-\$600 billion by 2030.

#### **What is the U.S.’s current trade approach?**

**Shift from FTAs:** The U.S. has evolved away from Free Trade Agreements.

**Supply Chain Focus:** Emphasis on creating resilient supply chains.

**Reshoring and Friend-shoring:** Aim to bring production back to the U.S. or move to friendly countries.

**Labor and Environment:** Prioritizing labor rights and environmentally friendly production over traditional globalization.

**Skeptics’ Views:** Many believe the U.S.’s goals could be better achieved with a revamped FTA strategy.

#### **How can both countries enhance their trade relationship?**

**Resolve Disputes:** During recent India’s PM US visit, six disputes under the World Trade Organization were settled.

**Explore FTAs:** Both countries should consider major Free Trade Agreement negotiations.

**Utilize Past Successes:** Examples include small trade deals like exchanging mangoes, pomegranates from India for U.S. cherries, hay, and pork.

**Agriculture Opportunities:** India has shown willingness to open its agricultural market in exchange for concessions, as seen with Australia gaining access for wine, wool, and sheep meat.

**Work Towards Major Agreements:** Initiating negotiations for a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement could cover a wider range of goods and services.

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**Stronger Leadership Mandate:** Trade needs more attention from both Biden and Modi administrations for better outcomes.

**Set Ambitious Goals:** Aiming for \$500-\$600 billion in bilateral trade by 2030 is possible with a focused approach.

### [14. The Will's Not There For Our Woods](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article **“The Will’s Not There For Our Woods”** published in **The Times of India** on **3<sup>rd</sup> 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 associated with the Forest Conservation Amendment Bill 2023.

**News:** The article explains the concerns associated with the Forest Conservation Amendment Bill 2023.

**Why was FCA originally enacted?**

[Click Here to Read](#)

**What did the Supreme Court say in Godavarman (1996)?**

The judgment made two key observations:

1. The term “forest land” in the FCA referred to all forest areas, regardless of ownership or condition.
2. The FCA applied to lands recorded as forests in government records and also to forest lands not officially notified or recorded but fulfilling the dictionary definition of forests (often known as “deemed forests”).

As a result, **states were mandated to establish district-level committees responsible for identifying and reporting all forests**, including degraded and denuded forest areas.

In 1997, states submitted expert committee reports on forest identification, but there were significant variations in the process.

**What did the Lafarge judgment (2011) require?**

In the judgment, the SC issued guidelines instructing states to conduct an exercise to identify forests, including those falling under the dictionary meaning.

**The court provided a specific procedure to follow in cases** where there was uncertainty about whether an area should be classified as a forest or not.

**How does the FC Amendment 2023, impact forests as per dictionary meaning?**

**Section 1A of the Act states that the** provisions of FCA will cover lands that are either **(a)** notified by statute as forest, or are **(b)** not notified by statute as forest, but recorded as forest in government record.

**The FC Amendment does not address forests as per the dictionary meaning**, raising uncertainties about the future status of already identified forest lands as per dictionary meaning.

The Ministry of Environment, Forestry and climate change has clarified that areas identified in 1997 by the expert committees will be recorded as forests. However, the wording of the amendment creates ambiguity.

**Must Read:** [Forest \(Conservation\) Amendment Bill, 2023: Explained](#)

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### Who are other potential impacts of the amended act?

**First, the real estate and mining lobbies are expected** to benefit the most from the proposed changes. Forest lands in states like Haryana and Uttarakhand may decrease if they are not identified as forests as per the dictionary meaning.

**The threat is particularly high in the NCR region**, where the potential windfall gains for real estate in the Aravallis could lead to the loss of significant forested areas.

**Second, citizens who rely on the hydrological functions of forests**, such as groundwater recharge and stream flow, will be the biggest losers.

**This is because forested watersheds play a crucial role** in sustaining springs, streams, and groundwater sources, which are essential for the success of the [Har Ghar Nal Se Jal program](#).

### 15. [Express View on Delhi services Bill: A self-goal](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “Express View on Delhi services Bill: A self-goal” published in “The Indian express” on 4th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure.

**News:** This article discusses the GNCTD Bill, which can allow the central government in India to override decisions of Delhi’s elected officials. This raises concerns about democracy and federalism. The article also critiques regional parties supporting this bill, warning it could harm their political influence.

### About Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill (GNCTD Bill)

The GNCTD Bill allows the central government to override Delhi’s elected decisions.

Once passed, the Lieutenant-Governor (Centre’s nominee) becomes the final authority in Delhi.

Previously, the Supreme Court ruled Delhi’s elected government had more powers.

BJD and YSRCP, two regional parties, support the bill, which could affect their future political influence.

### What are the issues with GNCTD Bill?

**Central Overreach:** The GNCTD Bill enables the central government to overrule the decisions of Delhi’s elected government.

**Lieutenant-Governor’s Power:** The Lieutenant-Governor, appointed by the Centre, becomes the final decision-maker in Delhi, bypassing elected representatives.

**Contradicts Supreme Court:** The bill goes against a recent Supreme Court decision that granted Delhi’s elected government more powers.

**Undermines Democracy:** The bill challenges the fundamental promise of electoral democracy and the federal spirit of the Indian Constitution.

**Federal Concerns:** By impacting Delhi’s autonomy, there’s a fear that other states might face similar central interventions.

**Erodes Checks and Balances:** The bill could weaken the balance of power, concentrating authority with the Centre rather than distributing it federally.

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### 16. Workplace safety is not negotiable at any level

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Workplace safety is not negotiable at any level**” published in the “**mint**” on **4th August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Vulnerable sections of the population. GS1- Social empowerment

**Relevance:** issues related to women

**News**– The article deals with the issue of sexual harassment of women at workplaces.

#### **What are some statistics related to sexual harassment of women at workplace?**

According to a 2022 **report by the International Labour Organization**, nearly 23% of employed individuals globally experienced violence and harassment at work.

In India, an **analysis conducted by Mint** revealed that the country’s leading publicly traded companies witnessed a significant 70% increase in sexual harassment complaints during the period of 2022-23.

This rise in reported cases was particularly prominent among **23 large-cap firms**.

#### **Which factors are responsible for increased reporting of sexual harassment cases at workplaces?**

In the previous fiscal year, a significant number of employees transitioned back to work on **hybrid models** after the **pandemic-induced shift** to remote work. The increase in reported cases of harassment could potentially be attributed to this shift.

The rise in reported cases could also be explained by **improved reporting mechanisms** due to **clearer guidelines** and **policies implementation**.

There is a greater sense of confidence in the **redressal process** and people now feel **more empowered** to come forward and seek resolution.

In Indian workplaces, **awareness of rights and grievance mechanisms** has increased significantly since the introduction of the **Supreme Court’s Vishaka guidelines in 1997**.

These guidelines laid the foundation for the **Sexual Harassment of Women in the Workplace Act of 2013**, commonly known as the **PoSH Act**.

Well-managed companies are **educating their staff** about this law seriously. As a result, office employees now have a **clearer understanding** of the **scope of the PoSH Act** and the various forms of harassment.

The global movement of speaking up and exposing predators has also influenced India Inc. Employers have established **Vishaka panels** to address harassment cases. Discussions about **gender ratio and autonomy** have become common topics in office conversations.

The COVID-19 pandemic has prompted companies to address the **emotional and physical safety** of their employees.

Well-managed companies have established a PoSH apparatus. But, they are exceptions. The majority of **formal and informal organisations** in the country lack **adequate safety measures**.

#### **Way forward-**

It is crucial to recognize that this law is to **safeguard every individual** across all levels of employment, regardless of positions.

Addressing this challenge requires **collective effort from all stakeholders**. **Gender justice** must be at the forefront of this endeavor.

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17. [Details Awaited – Personal data protection bill this time does well to emphasise purpose limitation. But subsequent rules are the key](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Details Awaited – Personal data protection bill this time does well to emphasise purpose limitation. But subsequent rules are the key**” published in **The Times of India** on **4<sup>th</sup> August 2023**.

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

**Relevance:** About Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2023

**News:** Recently, the Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2023, was introduced in Lok Sabha after the changes made on recommendation of the parliamentary committee.

**What are the key provisions of the new Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2023?**

The Bill has three notable features:

**Firstly**, it emphasizes purpose limitation to prevent data misuse, ensuring that even unwittingly given consent does not grant access beyond the specified purpose.

**For example**, a food delivery app may in its fine print also seek the phone contact list. The bill clearly spells out that even if consent is unwittingly given, purpose limitation will apply. In this example, the phone contact list will be out of bounds for the app.

**Secondly**, individuals have the right to have their data erased.

**Thirdly**, the bill introduces consent managers, licensed intermediaries, to help people navigate the legal aspects of consent.

However, the effectiveness of the bill depends on the subordinate legislation or rules that the government will later draft.

**Must Read:** [Data Protection Bill approved by Cabinet: Content, concerns and The dangers in the Digital Personal Data Protection Bill](#)

**What can be the way ahead?**

**First**, the drafted rules should provide clear definitions for exemptions from the checks imposed by data protection law.

Currently, **the government has a broad exemption for using the personal data for upholding sovereignty and public order**. However, these exceptions should be more specific and precise, considering that governments collect significant amounts of personal data.

**Second**, privacy being a fundamental right, **the bill needs to be thoroughly debated in the Parliament**. However, considering India’s significant amount of unprotected personal data, the bill’s passage should not be delayed.

18. [The lessons of Hiroshima must not drift away](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**The lessons of Hiroshima must not drift away**” published in “**The Hindu**” on **5<sup>th</sup> August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – International relations

**Relevance:** Issues related to nuclear weapons and disarmament.

**News**– The article explains the concept of nuclear taboo and nuclear deterrence.

**What are some facts about the concept of nuclear deterrence and nuclear taboo?**

With the increasing threat of nuclear weapons, it became evident that nuclear weapons will be a **global problem**. This led to **development of taboo** against their actual use.

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**Nina Tannenwald** has defined the nuclear taboo as a **collective norm** that strongly opposes the use of nuclear weapons. These weapons are regarded as so **morally reprehensible** that there are very few circumstances in which their use can be considered justified

This strong aversion extends to **all types of nuclear weapons**, regardless of their explosive power. It advocates for a **universal prohibition** on their use.

However, this taboo lacks a **legal foundation**. Instead, it is rooted in **notions of morality, proportionality, and accountability**.

It is deeply entrenched in our perception of them as **distinct and unique**. As per Bernard Brodie, nuclear weapons are considered the **'absolute weapon.'**

The **exceptional treatment** given to nuclear weapons does not solely stem from their **sheer destructive potentials**. Instead, it is largely founded on the profound knowledge we have gained from the survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The experiences of people affected by the bombings have shown that nuclear weapons are **indiscriminate**.

They leave **lasting contamination** on the environment for decades and have far-reaching effects on future generations due to radiation exposure. In **Japan**, people are still living with the consequences of the events that unfolded in August 1945.

### How has the notion of nuclear taboo been tested in recent times?

**Russia's invasion of Ukraine** has challenged our understanding of deterrence and the nuclear taboo. Throughout the conflict, Russian President Vladimir Putin has issued **various nuclear threats**.

These threats have ranged from reminding the world of **Russia's nuclear weapons status** to ordering Russia's nuclear forces into a **'special regime of combat duty'**.

In September 2022, Putin declared Russia's readiness to **make use of all weapon systems**. It raises concerns about the possibility of Russia using **tactical nuclear weapons**.

This had several **dangerous implications**. This speculation may create certain expectations that could influence the behavior of the Russian leadership. It also undermines the **long-standing nuclear taboo**.

Furthermore, there is still no consensus on the definition of a **tactical nuclear weapon**. **Battlefield or tactical weapons** are delivered over **shorter distances and are smaller in size**.

However, the yield can significantly vary depending on the **delivery method**. For instance, the U.S. possesses tactical weapons with yields ranging from a fraction of 1kt to 170kt.

### Why there is reason for optimism in the official reactions from the NATO and other nuclear weapons states concerning Mr. Putin's aggressive posturing?

Washington made it unequivocally clear that any nuclear use would be met with a **robust and proportionate response**. It did not specify that this response would be nuclear.

On the contrary, it emphasized a **carefully calibrated and conventional reaction** to any **nuclear adventurism** at NATO's borders.

Furthermore, the U.S. did not alter its **nuclear preparedness**, which prevented **further escalation and nuclear speculations** in Europe.

In November, even China's President Xi Jinping called upon the international community to **collectively oppose** the use of nuclear weapons or any threats of their use.

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### 19. [Express View on restrictions on laptop imports: Licence raj dot com](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Express View on restrictions on laptop imports: Licence raj dot com**” published in **The Indian express** on 5th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilisation of resources, growth, development and employment. & Effects of liberalisation on the economy,

**News:** The Indian government now requires licenses to import devices like laptops. This is like old restrictive policies. The aim is to boost local manufacturing and reduce imports, mainly from China. However, this can cause supply issues and higher prices. Recent policies show a return to past socialist approaches, which could harm economic progress made since the 1990s.

#### **What are the benefits of imposing licenses to import devices like laptops?**

**Promote Domestic Manufacturing:** The government aims to strengthen local industries and reduce dependency on imports.

**Curb Chinese Imports:** In 2022-23, personal computer imports stood at \$5.3 billion, with China being the major contributor. Reducing these imports can balance trade.

**Economic Strategy:** By controlling imports, the government can influence the market, encouraging businesses to set up manufacturing units in India.

**Job Creation:** Boosting domestic manufacturing can lead to more jobs for the local population.

**National Security:** Reduced dependence on foreign tech may reduce potential cyber risks and protect sensitive data.

#### **What are the limitations of imposing licenses to import devices like laptops?**

**Disruption:** No prior warning to manufacturers can lead to sudden market disturbances.

**Supply Shortages:** Immediate licensing requirements can cause a lack of available products.

**Price Surge:** Limited supply often results in higher equipment prices for consumers.

**Bureaucratic Hurdles:** Licensing introduces more red tape, slowing down business operations, similar to pre-1991 era challenges.

**Cost Disadvantages:** Domestic manufacturing might not always be cost-effective, making products pricier.

**Tech Ecosystem Impact:** India’s IT services and startups, essential for “Digital India,” may suffer.

**Regressive Approach:** It reflects a return to older, restrictive policies, potentially hindering modern economic growth.

**Global Trade Relations:** Such policies might strain relations with trade partners like China.

### 20. [Centre tables Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2023: What it says and why it's being criticised](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Centre tables Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2023: What it says and why it's being criticised**” published in “The Indian express” on 5th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Parliament and State Legislatures – structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these.

**News:** This article discusses India’s new Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2023. The bill outlines how businesses, and the government can use citizens’ data. Critics argue the

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government has too much power and exemption in this bill. The Indian government says these exemptions are necessary for national security and public health reasons. The article also compares data protection approaches in the EU, the U.S., and China.

### About India's New Data Protection Bill

**Overview:** India has introduced the Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2023. This legislation guides how businesses, and the government can use citizens' data.

**Evolution of the Bill:** Initially inspired by European privacy laws, it later adopted features from the U.S. and China models.

**Key Criticisms:** Critics are concerned about the bill's exemptions. For instance, the government can appoint members to the data protection board and has more leniencies.

**Government's Defense:** The Indian government believes these exemptions are vital. As Rajeev Chandrasekhar mentioned, carve-outs are necessary for national security and public health.

### What are the major benefits of Data Protection Bill?

**Guidelines for Data Collection:** The bill sets clear rules for how corporations and the government can gather and use citizens' data.

**Balancing Security and Privacy:** The government claims exemptions are crucial for addressing national security, law and order, and public health emergencies.

**Learning from Others:** Officials stated they've learned from Europe and Singapore's mistakes, creating a bill suitable for India's economic reality.

**Equal Rules for Data Breaches:** Both government and private entities are governed by the same rules regarding data breaches.

### What are the major criticisms of the Data Protection Bill?

Major Criticisms of India's Data Protection Bill:

**Government Exemptions:** The bill grants the government significant exemptions, allowing it to bypass some norms.

**Data Protection Authority's Role:** There's a weakening of the Data Protection Authority of India, the main regulatory body.

**Government's Control on Authority:** The government can appoint members to the data protection board, raising concerns about potential biases.

**Bypassing Consent:** Provisions allow the government to skip seeking express consent from citizens for data collection.

### What are the different global models for data protection laws?

Different Global Models for Data Protection Laws:

#### EU Model:

Based on the GDPR, focusing on comprehensive personal data protection.

Prioritizes individual's right to privacy.

Contains clear exemptions like national security.

#### US Model:

Viewed as a "liberty protection" against government intrusion.

Lacks a comprehensive set of privacy rights.

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It has sector-specific rules and legislation like the Privacy Act.

### **China Model:**

Introduced laws like the Personal Information Protection Law (PIPL) and the Data Security Law (DSL).

Emphasizes government control over data.

Firms like Didi faced heavy fines, showcasing strict enforcement.

### 21. Bin This Law: SC's Rahul call reminds why we must decriminalize defamation

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Bin This Law: SC's Rahul call reminds why we must decriminalize defamation**” published in “Times of India” on 5th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary

**News:** Rahul Gandhi was convicted by a Surat court of criminal defamation and given a two-year sentence, disqualifying him from Lok Sabha. The Supreme Court (SC) later stayed this conviction. This article criticizes the defamation law as outdated and misused. It suggests this law should be removed.

### **About criminal defamation law**

**Read here:** [Criminal defamation in India – Explained, pointwise](#)

### **Why did the Supreme Court put a stay on the Surat court's order for Rahul Gandhi on criminal defamation?**

The Supreme Court put a stay on the Surat court's order for Rahul Gandhi on criminal defamation for these reasons:

**Abuse of Defamation Provision:** The Supreme Court observed that the defamation law had been misused in this case.

**Maximum Sentence without Reason:** The trial judge gave Rahul the maximum two-year sentence without explaining why.

**Impact on Representation:** Rahul's two-year sentence disqualified him from Lok Sabha, affecting not just him but his entire constituency.

**Colonial Nature of Law:** The article mentions the defamation law as having a “colonial sting”, hinting that it's outdated.

**Ambiguous Wording:** The law's vague terms allow it to be used against various speech acts, from dissent to satire.

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

**Review Defamation Law:** The criminal defamation provision has been misused, suggesting a need for review.

**Clear Sentencing Guidelines:** Judges should provide clear reasons when giving maximum sentences.

**Protect Representation:** Ensure that legal decisions don't unjustly affect entire constituencies.

**Clarify Law Wording:** Make defamation law clear to prevent misuse against dissent, humor, or satire.

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### 22. [Opaque subsidies – Govt control returns to the oil sector](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Opaque subsidies – Govt control returns to the oil sector**” published in **Business Standard** on **7<sup>th</sup> 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 state regulating oil prices

**News:** Previously, the government claimed to deregulate petrol and diesel prices and eliminate indirect fuel subsidies, which were seen as positive reforms.

However, it seems that the government has come up with a system by which it continues to control prices at the pump while concealing the subsidies involved.

#### **What efforts have been taken by the government to control prices?**

The Union Budget has allocated approximately 30,000 crore rupees to support three state-controlled oil marketing companies (OMCs) in their climate initiatives.

**It is expected to balance out the losses the OMCs have faced because of under-recoveries,** caused mostly due to unchanged fuel prices when global oil prices changed due to the Russia-Ukraine war.

However, **this capital infusion might also involve the government once again taking a stake in HPCL and controlling the oil prices.**

Hence, cooperative efforts of the three government-owned enterprises to preserve consumer prices and absorb losses **highlight that political factors influence oil prices rather than the free market.**

#### **What will be the impact of the state again regulating the oil prices?**

**First,** it will not only negatively impact future finances but also hinders India’s environmental transition, which was supposed to be funded by investments from existing oil companies.

**Second,** this could further convince voters that politicians play a role in determining oil prices, strengthening their lack of trust in the free market.

Hence, transparent subsidies, independent of the price actually paid, are the only way out.

### 23. [The bureaucracy as prosecutor and judge](#)

**Source–** The post is based on the article “**The bureaucracy as prosecutor and judge**” published in “**The Hindu**” on **7<sup>th</sup> August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Polity

**Relevance:** Issues related to separation of power

**News–** The Jan Vishwas Act, 2022 was recently enacted into law by Parliament. It has decriminalised or made “compoundable” offences across 42 legislations.

#### **What are the issues related to Jan Vishwas Act, 2022?**

Legislation has largely replaced **criminal imprisonment with monetary penalties.** But it has also shifted the authority to impose these penalties from the judiciary to the bureaucracy.

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**For instance**, the Jan Vishwas Act amends the Environmental (Protection) Act, 1986, and the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981, to **substitute imprisonment with penalties**, up to ₹15 lakh. Penalties can be imposed by **designated bureaucrats for specific offences**.

The crucial question is related to granting bureaucracy authority to decide about disputes and **impose penalties**. It is against the **constitutional principle of the separation of powers**.

### What is the status of division of powers between executive and judiciary?

The Constitution does not explicitly provide for **division of powers** between the judiciary and the executive. **Article 50** only **directs the state** to achieve such a separation in due course.

However, this separation was not accomplished until several years after the Constitution came into effect. The **criminal magistracy** was included within the **executive branch** at the time of Independence.

In 1970, some State legislatures enacted laws like **The West Bengal Separation of Judicial and Executive Functions Act, 1970**. It led to establishment of a **separation of powers** at the level of the criminal magistracy under the **Criminal Procedure Code, 1898**.

### What are various methods used by bureaucracy to encroach upon judicial power?

Several Ministries have established **judicial tribunals** to assume the **judicial responsibilities** that were previously handled by the judiciary. Many of these tribunals were set up in a way that allowed bureaucrats to be appointed as **“technical members.”**

The Union government has created a fresh category of **statutory regulators**, such as the Securities and Exchange Board of India and the Competition Commission of India. These regulators were granted authority to **impose hefty fines** on the private sector.

The Union government has created the **role of adjudicatory officers** in several legislations such as the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002, the Information Technology Act, 2001 and the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.

These adjudicatory officers were always bureaucrats. They were given powers to either confirm **“attachment orders” for properties or impose penalties on businesses**.

### What Indian law says about “judicial function”?

The Supreme Court has made it explicitly clear that a **“judicial function”** must only be carried out by an **independent judicial authority** that is not under the control of the executive.

As of now, there seems to be **limited legal precedent** on whether the imposition of a penalty qualifies as a **“judicial function.”**

However, any process involving **fact-finding**, application of the law to those facts, and the **determination of punishment or compensation** fundamentally constitutes a **judicial function**.

Therefore, the responsibility should lie with the government to **substantiate** its case before an impartial judge to ensure that citizens receive a **fair trial** before any penalty is imposed. The government cannot simultaneously act as a **prosecutor and a judge** in its own case.

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### 24. G-20 negotiators face climate change hurdle

**Source**– The post is based on the article “G-20 negotiators face climate change hurdle” published in “The Hindu” on 7th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – Global groupings and agreements

**News**– G-20 negotiators are now worried about reaching a consensus over climate change issues ahead of the leaders’ summit in September.

#### Why are G20 negotiators worried?

The concerns have heightened following **two ministerial meetings of the G-20 focused on energy transitions, the environment, and climate** in July.

These meetings failed to reach a consensus on crucial matters such as **emission targets, reducing reliance on fossil fuels, and climate finance**.

These differences spilled over into virtual Sherpa negotiations, where the initial **version of the Leaders’ Declaration** was being discussed last week.

As a result, the **Chairman’s Summary and Outcome documents** included several sections labeled as “**non-agreed paragraphs**” among G-20 members.

#### What are the contentious issues between G-20 countries related to climate change?

There is division between **developed countries and the developing world** concerning **climate goals and climate finance**.

A major point of contention is the wording related to “**phasing out**” **fossil fuels**. It faced strong opposition from countries like India and Saudi Arabia. These countries preferred the term “**phasing down**” instead.

There are significant differences among members regarding **global emissions targets**.

There were disagreements on the target of **peaking emissions by 2025 and achieving a 60% reduction in emissions by 2035** in comparison to 2019 levels. Developing countries including India did not commit to these targets.

Another contentious matter was related to the **lack of funding** from developed countries, such as the U.S. and Australia. They had promised to provide **\$100 billion annually** starting from 2020.

The **Chairman’s Summary and Outcome document** released in Chennai revealed further disagreements among G-20 members.

One point of contention was the scope of the **Environment and Climate Sustainability Working Group’s mandate** to discuss energy issues, given the existence of a **separate Energy Transition Working Group**.

Additionally, there were differing views on **energy transitions** and how to incorporate them into the document.

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### 25. Expanding powers – The registration Bill is as draconian as the old one

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Expanding powers – The registration Bill is as draconian as the old one**” published in **Business Standard** on **8<sup>th</sup> August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – Governance – Government Policies & Intervention

**Relevance:** concerns with the Press and Registration of Periodicals Bill, 2023.

**News:** Recently, **the Press and Registration of Periodicals Bill, 2023** was passed in the Rajya Sabha. It repeals the Press and Registration of Books, 1867.

#### What are some of the provisions of the Bill?

The Bill simplifies the registration process, excludes scientific and academic journals from its purview, and decriminalizes the offence of filing improper information.

#### What are the concerns with the Bill?

**First**, the legislation grants an excessive amount of authority to the press registrar general, a government-appointed official.

**Under Sections 4(1) and 11(4) of the Bill**, the registrar general is empowered to deny approval or revoke the registration certificate of any owner or publisher who has been convicted by a court for engaging in “terrorist or unlawful activity” or “having done anything against the security of the State”.

Both Sections specify that the definitions of “terrorist act” and “unlawful activities” are outlined in specific clauses of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (**UAPA**), 1967.

However, these terms are phrased in such a way that they can be interpreted broadly or narrowly at the discretion of the authorities.

**This brings a sense of ambiguity and makes it possible for any news publication** to have its registration cancelled if the registrar general deems it unfit.

**Second**, the Bill allows the registrar general to enter premises to verify information.

**Third**, it also allows the registrar general to appoint other agencies to monitor a publication’s functions.

**Fourth**, the Bill grants the government the authority to establish regulations governing the practice of news publishing.

This has been done to align with the government’s establishment of a “fact-checking unit” as per the **Information Technology Rules of 2021**, which gives the powers to order content to be taken down.

#### What can be the way ahead?

The government should refer the Bill to a committee for deeper deliberations before the Lok Sabha passes it because in its current form, it cannot be described as an exemplar of Indian democracy in practice.

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26. [Blessed By Beijing – China’s propaganda war is well funded and waged subtly. Centre and states must coordinate](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Blessed By Beijing – China’s propaganda war is well funded and waged subtly. Centre and states must coordinate**” published in **The Times of India** on **8<sup>th</sup> August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – International Relations

**Relevance:** concerns with Chinese growing influence.

**News:** An NY Times investigation has exposed a complex network of Chinese influence operations worldwide, raising security concerns for India.

### What are the findings of the investigation?

The investigation reveals that American millionaire **Neville Roy Singham** is allegedly linked to the Chinese Communist Party’s propaganda efforts.

**Singham’s non-profits have funded various** entities, including think tanks, political parties, and media abroad, which promote CCP messaging. **In India**, Singham’s network is believed to have supported a news website.

**The goal is to shape a positive image of China** by establishing networks for generating news, providing false information, and providing funding for seemingly harmless public initiatives.

**For instance**, Taiwan has recently begun identifying Chinese-sponsored beautification initiatives in its regions.

While these funds are channeled through a contest organized by China’s Fujian province, **the underlying objective is to exert cultural influence on the Taiwanese population**.

Therefore, given China’s massive resources, similar influence operations might be attempted against India.

### What measures can be adopted by India?

India has an administrative structure where different components often lack effective communication. Moreover, a notable portion of the population remains underemployed or receives low wages. These factors create openings for Beijing to exploit India’s weaknesses.

Hence, **the Indian government needs to** be more watchful of China’s secret plans, work closely with state governments, and use this as a reason to boost the economy.

27. [Neither the right to privacy nor the right to information](#)

**Source–** The post is based on the article “**Neither the right to privacy nor the right to information**” published in “**The Hindu**” and “**It’s My (Digital) Life**” published in “**The Times of India**” on **8th August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Polity

**Relevance:** Important Bills and Acts

**News–** Recently, Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Bill 2023 was introduced in Parliament.

### What is the interrelationship between right to privacy and right to information?

In 2017, a nine-judge Constitutional bench of the Supreme Court reaffirmed the **right to privacy**. This landmark decision set an **international standard**.

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The recently introduced **DPDP Bill 2023** emerged from the discussions around the **right to privacy**.

The **right to information** ensures **access** to government documents to uphold government **transparency and accountability**. This law has played a pivotal role in strengthening **democratic practices**.

These two rights **mutually complement** each other. However, certain tensions exist between the **right to information and the right to privacy**.

For instance, under the MGNREGA, **mandatory disclosure regulations** ensure that workers can oversee expenditures and facilitate public oversight through social audits.

This implies that data about individuals registered under the Act are **accessible** to everyone.

### What are issues with the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Bill 2023?

**Data protection-** The Bill's purpose is to **establish protocols** for processing **digital personal data**. It acknowledges both individuals' **right to safeguard their personal data** and the necessity of processing such data for **lawful objectives**.

According to **Section 4(2)**, "**lawful purposes**" is defined in the **broadest sense**. It can be for any purpose which is not **expressly forbidden by the law**.

This means that activities like extracting data on worker's wages or pension payments are permitted since they are "**not expressly forbidden.**"

**Section 36** empowers the central government to request information from the **Board, data fiduciaries, or other sources** as needed. **Sections 4(2) and 36** combined make our data accessible to both government and private entities.

**Undermining RTI- Section 8(1)(j)** allows for exemption from disclosure. It is provided when **personal information** has no relationship to any **public activity or interest**, or it would lead to **unwarranted invasion of the privacy** of the individual.

This standard sets a **high threshold for exemption**. It asserts that information which cannot be **denied to the Parliament or a State Legislature** shall not be **denied to any person**.

The DPDP Bill 2023 proposes substituting **Section 8(1)(j)** with merely "**information which relates to personal information.**"

This modification threatens the **integrity of the RTI 2005**. For instance, the current requirement for public servants to disclose their immovable assets could be impacted. Although this information is personal, it serves a **broader public interest**.

**Data Protection Board-** It will be effectively controlled by the government. The **chairperson and members** are appointed by the central government.

In Europe, the **General Data Protection Regulation** established a **rigorous standard for data protection**. It creates a **robust oversight body** in a society characterized by **universal literacy and high levels of digital and financial literacy**.

**Literacy issues-** India has the absence of **widespread literacy** and **inadequate digital and financial literacy**, along with an overwhelmed legal system. The likelihood of citizens being able to seek **legal remedies** in cases of **privacy violations** is minimal.

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### What should be done to increase the efficacy of data protection board?

It should demonstrate promptness in addressing instances of **personal data breach** that lead to consumer complaints.

Secondly, it should enact a **fundamental transformation** by eliminating the avenues for **evading responsibility** that were previously available.

It should not get entangled in the **intricacies of data controllers, data processors, and data brokers**. Rather, it should focus on holding the entity that initially receives consumer information **accountable**.

It should act swiftly in **imposing and collecting penalties**, which may include fines that can escalate to ₹250 crore and beyond.

### Why has data protection become crucial?

Every day, through our **online activities**, we are **generating data**. This involves tasks ranging from managing our finances and settling utility bills to purchasing groceries, insurance, and even booking appointments with doctors, flights, or hotels.

There is **unrestricted circulation of our data**, as it gets passed along without limitations.

For instance, immediately after visiting a car-related website, we are inundated with phone calls, text messages, and social media intrusions attempting to persuade us to buy cars. This underscores the **deep connection between financial and sovereign identity data**.

### [28. Consumers can look forward to an era of data privacy](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Consumers can look forward to an era of data privacy**” published in the “**mint**” on **8th August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Polity

**Relevance:** Important Bills and Acts

**News**– Recently, Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Bill 2023 was introduced in Parliament.

### How will draft data protection be beneficial for Indian citizens?

It has the potential to reshape **consumer behaviours and their attitudes** towards the businesses they engage with.

Consumers are likely to become more **cautious and attentive** when it comes to the **collection, processing, and storage** of their personal data by businesses.

The Bill now offers an increased level of control to consumers over their personal data. It enables them to **provide or withdraw consent** for specific purposes of data processing.

This provision ensures that consumers are **fully informed** about the ways in which their data will be utilised. Thus, it enhances **transparency in the data practices of businesses**.

Consumers will have the ability to exercise **various other rights** concerning their **personal data**. These include the **right to know** what data is held by a Data Fiduciary, how it is utilised, and with whom it is shared.

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Consumers can also request corrections to their **stored information** or even request its removal. These rights are not restricted to consumers alone. They can also be exercised by a **designated individual** in the event of the data subject's death or incapacity.

The new privacy framework will also establish provisions for **addressing grievances**. It enables consumers to **seek remedies** in cases of **data breaches or unauthorised data processing**. Consumers can approach the Data Protection Board.

It will bring relief from **unwanted communications** such as **spam emails and telemarketing** calls. The intrusive marketing messages are expected to diminish.

This change is expected to transform the **landscape of direct marketing**. Ultimately, consumers will benefit from a **personalised interaction** with companies that engage in marketing their products and services.

### What will be its impact on rural areas ?

Language need not be a barrier for non-English-speaking consumers. The Bill has incorporated a provision for **privacy notices** to be available not only in English but also in other languages mentioned in the **Eighth Schedule of the Constitution**.

The envisaged Data Protection Board will act as a **'digital office' for rural inhabitants**. They often face **limited access to legal remedies** in contrast to urban dwellers.

It has the potential to significantly impact people's lives once they comprehend the importance of **securing their personal data**.

### Way forward-

This legislation holds the potential to serve as a **potent tool** for nurturing **digital empowerment and inclusivity** across the entire nation.

Individuals across all age groups, including children, youth, middle-aged individuals, and senior citizens, should be **educated about the key aspects** of the Bill.

Efforts to **raise awareness** must encompass all socio-economic strata in both rural and urban areas of India.

**Data Fiduciaries** must adhere to their newfound **legal obligations**, especially in **rapidly evolving technological domains**.

### [29. Command and control- Changes in the law will affect IMs' autonomy](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article **"Command and control- Changes in the law will affect IMs' autonomy"** published in "Business standard" on 8th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Education, Human Resources.

**News:** The article discusses recent changes in the Indian Institute of Management (Amendment) Bill, 2023, which gives the Indian government more control over the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs). This raises concerns about the institutes' autonomy and potential interference in their functioning.

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### What are the major changes in the Indian Institute of Management (Amendment) Bill, 2023?

**Director's Appointment:** Earlier, the board of governors (BOG) chose the IIM director based on recommendations. Now, they need approval from the "visitor", the President of India.

**Search Committee:** A member nominated by the visitor will be part of the director search committee.

**Chairperson's Nomination:** Previously, the board chose the chairperson. Now, the President will nominate them.

**Visitor's Powers:** The visitor can initiate inquiries in IIMs and issue binding directives based on findings.

**Board Suspension:** The government can set conditions for suspending or dissolving an IIM's board.

### What are its implications?

**Government Influence:** The government gains significant control over IIMs, especially in the appointment of key roles like directors and chairpersons.

**Potential Interference:** While the government claims no intention to interfere, the new powers could allow future intrusions into IIM operations.

**Autonomy Concerns:** The 2017 law prioritized IIM autonomy, but these changes might reverse that, potentially hindering IIMs' adaptability and efficiency.

### What should be done?

**Preserve Autonomy:** Maintain the operational independence of IIMs, as it allows them to adapt quickly and effectively.

**Clear Intent:** The government should clearly communicate its intentions, ensuring no undue interference in the IIMs' functioning.

**Performance Reviews:** Reinforce the need for independent reviews every three years to boost quality and encourage competition among IIMs.

**Address Functional Issues:** While ensuring autonomy, address issues related to director appointments and other functional areas that weren't handled well previously.

**Balance:** Establish a balance between autonomy and accountability, making sure IIMs use their independence constructively.

**Focus on Excellence:** Any change should prioritize IIMs' mission of offering top-tier management education and research.

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### 30. [Ensuring women's right to the city](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Ensuring women's right to the city**” published in “The Indian express” on 9th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS1- social empowerment & GS2- social Justice

**News:** In this article author discusses the challenges women face in Indian cities due to lack of gender-responsive urban planning, emphasizing the need for more inclusive and equitable cities that prioritize women's safety, freedom, and the recognition of unpaid care work.

#### What challenges do women face in Indian cities?

Women in Indian cities face:

**Safety Concerns:** 52% of women in a 2021 ORF study avoided education or jobs due to safety issues.

**Longer Commutes:** Women in Delhi travel 27 extra minutes for safer routes.

**Public Transport Issues:** Only 9% of women in an Ola study felt public transport was safe.

**Higher Transport Costs:** Women in Mumbai spend 21% more on transport due to safety and multiple tasks.

**Low Employment:** Only 20% of women are employed compared to 70% of men.

**Unequal Care Burden:** Women spend 297 minutes daily on housework; men spend 31.

**Unpaid Work:** Women contribute 3.26 billion hours of unpaid care work daily.

#### What should be done about it?

**Gender-Responsive Urban Planning:** Urban planning often ignores women's economic and social realities, leading to exclusion and fear. Design cities that consider the needs of women, children, and the elderly.

**Safety over Technocracy:** Go beyond just CCTV and apps; adopt a holistic approach to women's safety and inclusion.

**Safer and affordable transportation:** Improve public transport safety and affordability, considering that only 9% of women find it safe and women in Mumbai spend 21% more time on transport than men. Adopt successful measures like women-only transport, free buses, and helplines.

**Recognize Care Work:** Given women spend 297 minutes daily on housework, support and value their contributions.

**Facilitate Care Infrastructure:** Design urban spaces that prioritize childcare, healthcare, housing, parks, and leisure areas.

**Community Involvement:** Include diverse voices in policy-making, that echoes Jane Jacobs' idea that cities should be created by everyone.

**Cities for Well-being:** Prioritize areas beyond production and consumption, focusing on overall well-being, like health and education.

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### 31. [Five years of Ayushman Bharat: A shield for the vulnerable](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Five years of Ayushman Bharat: A shield for the vulnerable**” published in “The Indian express” on 9th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes.

**News:** The author discusses India’s healthcare scheme, Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY). This program provides free health coverage to millions, reduces medical costs, and ensures quality care.

#### **What are the important features of AB-PMJAY?**

Read – [Features of AB-PMJAY](#)

#### **What are the benefits of AB-PMJAY?**

**Out of pocket expenditure:** It supports over 12 crore families, aiming to cover 50% of India’s population. It reduces out-of-pocket expenditure and enhances healthcare accessibility for all. It has saved over Rs 1 lakh crore in treatment costs.

**Gender Equality:** 48% of treatments under the scheme have been availed by women, promoting equal healthcare access.

**Universal Health Coverage:** Takes India closer to Sustainable Development Goal 3.8, ensuring quality healthcare regardless of economic status.

**Easy Access:** Over 27,000 hospitals accept the Ayushman Card for free treatment. Patients can receive care in any state with AB-PMJAY, benefiting migrants.

**Fraud Prevention:** Uses National Anti-Fraud Unit (NAFU) and state-level units, Aadhaar-based authentication, AI and ML technologies to detect frauds. Over 210 hospitals de-empaneled for violations.

**Feedback System:** Calls made to patients’ post-treatment to assess service quality.

### 32. [Climate events and an umbrella for urban health](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Climate events and an umbrella for urban health**” published in “The Hindu” on 9th August 2023.

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

**News:** The author discusses the increased vulnerability of urban areas, especially slums, to diseases like malaria and dengue after extreme weather events in India. He is emphasising the need for a resilient urban primary health care system and better coordination for an effective response.

#### **Why is there an increase in health vulnerability in urban areas?**

**Extreme Weather Events:** Cyclones, floods, and heavy rains have caused devastation, leading to conducive conditions for water and vector-borne diseases.

**Vector-borne Diseases:** Diseases like malaria and dengue diseases are more likely to spread in rain-affected areas.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of August 2023

**Poor Living Conditions:** Many live in slums or informal urban settlements, which often lack proper sanitation and waste disposal.

**Mobility:** Movement of people between states can spread diseases.

**Economic Vulnerability:** Many slum residents work in the informal sector without social security benefits.

**Inadequate Healthcare Infrastructure:** Urban areas, especially vulnerable ones, receive a tiny fraction of primary health care funding.

### What should be done about it?

**Rebuild Health Systems:** Focus on urban primary health-care resilience, especially in slums and peri-urban areas.

**Increase Public Investment:** More funds for vulnerable urban regions; a special fund from institutions like the Finance Commission can help.

**Coordinate Efforts:** States should work together, especially given the movement of people across borders, to manage and mitigate disease spread. Strengthen systems like the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme, making them more comprehensive.

**Streamline Governance:** Overcome fragmentation in urban health governance for better coordination.

**Leverage Lessons from COVID-19:** Ensure data sharing, standardize treatments, and regulate costs during health emergencies.

**Integrate Frontline Workers:** Create multi-purpose health cadres that are accountable to both communities and health systems.

**Plan for Climate Change:** Recognize the increasing frequency of extreme events and plan public health responses accordingly.

### [33. Talking peace in Jeddah: India offers a new perspective](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Talking peace in Jeddah: India offers a new perspective**” published in “**Business standard**” on 9th August 2023.

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

**News:** In this article author discusses a peace summit in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, where countries addressed the Ukrainian crisis. It highlights the growing global influence of non-Western nations, Russia’s isolation, China’s role in a potential solution, and India’s stance on territorial integrity.

### What were diplomatic developments at peace summit at Jeddah, Saudi Arabia?

Diplomatic developments at the Jeddah peace summit included:

**Hosting by Saudi Arabia:** It highlights Saudi Arabia’s growing influence, especially after making peace with Iran through China’s interventions.

**US and China Attendance:** Both countries, having differing views on the Ukrainian crisis, were present.

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**Russia's Isolation:** It was depicted in the reduced attendance at the Russia-Africa summit, held last month, compared to previous years.

**China's Position:** Despite its previous 12-point charter, China signaled its intention to play a key role in a Russia-Ukraine settlement.

### What role did India play at this peace summit?

**Balanced Approach:** India refrained from criticizing Russia in UN resolutions.

**Preference for Dialogue:** National Security Advisor Ajit Doval emphasized dialogue as a solution to belligerence.

**Territorial Integrity:** Doval stressed the importance of respecting sovereignty and territorial integrity by all nations.

**Implicit Message to China:** Doval's emphasis on territorial boundaries was likely directed at China, given their border disputes.

### 34. [Express View on IIM bill: Mis-management](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article "**Express View on IIM bill: Mis-management**" published in **The Indian Express** on **9<sup>th</sup> August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – Governance – Government Policies & Intervention

**Relevance:** concerns with the Indian Institute of Management (Amendment) Bill, 2023.

**News:** Recently, the Lok Sabha has passed **the Indian Institute of Management (Amendment) Bill, 2023**. The Bill increases the government influence over the appointment and removal of directors at Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs).

### What are the concerns with the Bill?

**The IIM Act, 2017**, aimed to elevate these elite management schools to "institutions of national importance" and empower boards of governors to appoint directors of an IIM on the basis of the recommendations of a search-cum-selection committee.

However, **the new legislation subordinates the boards to the IIMs' Visitor** (the President of India), granting the government substantial veto power in the appointments.

If the Bill is enacted, **the Visitor will nominate the board's chairperson**, a responsibility previously held by its members. The government will also define the terms for the board's suspension or dissolution.

**The Visitor's expanded authority compromises the institution's autonomy. For instance**, the President can institute inquiries and issue directives which will be binding on the IIM management.

Moreover, despite assurance given by the education minister that the government wouldn't intervene in IIMs' operations, the move raises concerns about government influence on IIMs.

**Must Read:** [Indian Institute of Management \(Amendment\) Bill, 2023](#)

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### What can be the way ahead?

There has been criticism regarding the operations of B-schools in the recent year. **For example**, IIM Calcutta experienced a conflict between its Board and Director, revealing concerns over executive powers and conduct.

This necessitates the importance of checks and balances for IIM functioning. However, excessive government involvement might yield negative consequences.

### 35. [Falling short – on Digital Data Protection Bill 2023](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Falling short**” published in “**The Hindu**” on **9th August 2023**.

**Syllabus**: GS2- Polity

**Relevance**: Important Bills and Acts

**News**– Recently, The Digital Data Protection Bill, 2023, was passed in the Lok Sabha on Monday.

### What are the major provisions of the Bill?

An entity or individual, referred to as the **data fiduciary**, is allowed to process the personal data of an individual for a lawful purpose. It can be done only after obtaining the **data principal’s consent**. It can be processed for **specific legitimate reasons**.

These legitimate reasons are instances in which the data can be processed without obtaining the **data principal’s consent**. This includes situations where government agencies **process the data** to issue licenses, provide welfare benefits, grants, and services.

The Bill also imposes a **responsibility on the data fiduciary** to inform both the **data principal and the Data Protection Board** to assess compliance with the Bill in case of a **breach of personal data**.

### What are the concerns related to the Bill?

The Bill does not contain the provision related to the requirement of **informing data principals** about third parties with whom their data might be shared, or specifying the duration for which the data will be stored.

Too much leeway is provided to agencies of the state in the **form of exemptions**.

The **Srikrishna Committee’s Draft Bill in 2018** allowed for **exemptions** to state institutions from acquiring informed consent in matters related only to the “**security of the state**”.

It also suggested **parliamentary oversight and judicial approval** of non-consensual access to personal data.

In the 2023 version, the state is empowered to process data through **wide-ranging exemptions**. The government is allowed to collect information which could be used for **mass surveillance**.

In providing exemption to the state for obtaining , the Bill also does away with **purpose limitation — using the data only for the specified purpose**.

### For further reading-

<https://blog.forumias.com/neither-the-right-to-privacy-nor-the-right-to-information/>

<https://blog.forumias.com/consumers-can-look-forward-to-an-era-of-data-privacy/>

### 36. [A Hassle Is Born – on Registration of Births and Deaths \(Amendment\) Bill 2023](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article “A Hassle Is Born” published in “The Times of India” on 9th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Polity

**News**– Recently, Parliament passed the Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Bill 2023.

#### What are the major provisions of the Bill?

The Bill provides for the birth certificate to be used as a **required document** for **various purposes** such as admission to educational institutions, inclusion in voter lists, and government employment.

The scope of applications is **extensive, formidable, and unlimited**. Acquiring the birth certificate will necessitate the **use of Aadhaar numbers** belonging to both the “parents and informant.”

#### What are issues with the Bill?

For economically disadvantaged sections and individuals with **lack access to data resources**, this will lead to **exclusion**.

The objective of establishing a more **comprehensive database** of recorded births and deaths is commendable. But, the Bill imposes **new responsibilities** on citizens.

#### Why does the civil registration system exhibit variations across different states?

This is primarily due to **differences in governance mechanisms**. Additionally, **economic prosperity** also contributes to **significant disparities** within states.

In Bihar, registrations have been reported to be below **optimal levels** even when births and deaths occur in healthcare facilities. **Corruption** is also prevalent.

In other regions as well, **Civil Registration System (CRS) offices** can be **insufficiently distributed, inadequately staffed, and uncooperative**.

#### What should be done?

Government should improve the **registration infrastructure** significantly.

The **doctrine of proportionality** should be the guiding force. citizens should not be subjected to unnecessary difficulties and risks.

### 37. [The grammar of commerce in a new age of geopolitics](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article “The grammar of commerce in a new age of geopolitics” published in “The Hindu” on 9th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- International relations

**News** – Since March 2018, 23 advanced and developing countries have agreed for currency swap arrangements with India, extending credits in settling transactions.

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### How an unexpected shift in the utilization of the Indian rupee for international transactions occurred after the Ukraine-Russia conflict?

Sanctions on Russia directly targeted the assets of **Russian financial institutions**. This situation posed a significant challenge for both Russia and India.

To address this, an **alternative approach** was adopted for **settling payments** between the two nations. It involves the utilization of the Indian rupee in **trade-related transactions**.

The payments originating from either India or Russia are now directed to **Rupee Vostro accounts** established in Russian banks by **authorized dealer banks in India**. These accounts are responsible for facilitating the **settlement of payments** between the two countries.

### How India-Russia alternate payment arrangement is facing challenges?

Russia is continuing with a **trade surplus**. In 2020-21, it amounted to \$3.42 billion, followed by similar surpluses in the following years.

Russia is reluctant to hold more of the Indian rupee as an asset in the **Vostro account**. The rupee has a low rank in the **global currency hierarchy** and may be subject to **depreciation**.

Indian refiners have settled some payments for Russian oil imports using the Chinese yuan. It seems to be acceptable to Russia.

### How similar payment arrangements were made in the past?

India established comparable **bilateral trade and clearing agreements** during the 1950s.

India and the Soviet Union engaged in **bilateral trade agreements** that involved the establishment of a **closed rupee-denominated account**. This account was utilized to manage both the **exchange of goods and credit-related transactions** between the two nations.

This initiative was initiated in the 1950s when the Soviet Union established a steel plant in Bhilai, despite opposition from Western nations.

The Soviet Union experienced a **consistent buildup of trade surpluses**. The decision to float the dollar in 1971 resulted in turbulence within the currency market and also affected the Soviet rouble.

The situation became more complicated due to the **fragmentation of the former Soviet Union**, which left Russia as a separate entity.

### How is the current situation different from the past?

The **geopolitical situation** is different from the past. Presently, Russia is not averse to obtaining yuan for the **management of its surpluses** within the existing rupee account.

However, historical evidence indicates a **reluctance within the sphere of BRICS** for non-Chinese members to **utilize the Chinese currency**.

This hesitance became apparent during a proposition to create a **clearing system among BRICS** as a response to **China's persistent and sizable surpluses**. Regrettably, this proposal did not come to fruition.

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### What are other similar alternate payment settlements systems related to using local currencies?

India and the United Arab Emirates have **rupee-dirham arrangements**.

This arrangement covers various transactions including **trade, remittances, and capital movements**.

It allows India to **circumvent dollar payments** for its imports of crude oil and minerals from the UAE. The agreement outlines provisions for linking their **payment and messaging systems**, enabling **swift and cost-efficient money transfers**.

Efforts are also underway to negotiate a **similar agreement with Indonesia**, utilizing the rupiah for transactions with India.

### How a new financial architecture is emerging?

Indian rupee, Russian rouble, Chinese yuan, UAE dirham, and even Indonesia's rupiah are aligned towards the shared objective of **localized currency transactions**.

Southern nations are preparing to engage in **trade and payment settlements** among themselves. They want to move away from the use of **dominant currencies**.

This trend will circumvent the need to rely on **institutions from advanced countries**, such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and private capital, at least for the purpose of settling their bilateral transactions.

There are challenges stemming from **political disparities** and the **differing standing of currencies**. However, **geo-economics** could potentially surpass **geopolitical** obstacles and help bridge these differences.

It signals the **early stages of a novel financial structure**. Currencies of Southern nations are going to replace the longstanding **hegemonic and exploitative system** enjoyed by the currencies of the North.

### [38. Stop the fence-sitting in cluster bomb use](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article "**Stop the fence-sitting in cluster bomb use**" published in **The Hindu** on **10<sup>th</sup> August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – International Relations – International Treaty and Organization

**Relevance:** International law related to prohibition of cluster bombs

**News:** The decision by the United States to provide cluster munitions to Ukraine as part of a military aid package aimed at supporting Ukraine's conflict with Russia has sparked controversy.

### What are cluster bombs/munitions?

[Click Here to Read](#)

Human Rights Watch claims that Russia deployed cluster bombs against Ukraine in cities like Kharkiv, causing civilian casualties and damaging homes, hospitals, and schools. Ukraine's adoption of these weapons will exacerbate the situation.

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### Which international treaty prevents the use of cluster bombs?

**The Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM)**, enacted in 2008, prohibits cluster bomb use, production, stockpiling, and transfer **under Article 1**. The convention also requires countries to destroy existing stockpiles of cluster munitions in their possession.

**Countries are also legally bound to create** victim support programs for cluster bomb survivors within their jurisdiction, ensuring aid and recovery.

However, the treaty isn't universal; 112 nations, including several NATO members like Canada, Germany, France, and the UK, have joined the CCM.

Whereas, **countries like the U.S., Russia, China, Israel, and India, along with Ukraine, have not ratified it.**

Since both Russia and Ukraine are not signatories to CCM, it may be argued that they are not bound by any international law. However, there are other laws that prevent the use of cluster bombs.

**Must Read: [Explained: What are cluster bombs and thermobaric weapons, allegedly used by Russia against Ukrainians?](#)**

### What are other international laws that prevent the use of cluster bombs?

**An essential principle of customary international law (CIL) in times of war** is the prohibition of indiscriminate attacks. This signifies that the application of force must be selective, targeting distinct military targets rather than civilians.

**This CIL norm is codified in Article 51(4) of Additional Protocol I to the 1949 Geneva Conventions, which both Russia and Ukraine have ratified.**

Another crucial principle of international humanitarian law applicable in this context **is proportionality, which is codified in Article 51(5) of Additional Protocol I to the 1949 Geneva Conventions.**

This rule forbids the disproportionate application of force that results in unintended harm to civilians or civilian structures, in comparison to the expected military advantages.

### Is the US violating international law by supplying cluster bombs to Ukraine?

The US, not bound by CCM, doesn't breach international law by providing cluster bombs. Moreover, **the U.S.-made cluster bombs have a low rate of explosion compared to Russians.** However, still, supplying such weapons is an irresponsible act.

### What can be the way ahead?

Universal prohibition of cluster bomb usage, possession, transfer, and supply, as outlined in the CCM, **requires global adherence.** This requires all UN member nations to join the CCM and eliminate cluster bombs.

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### 39. Mediating, Minus Sarkar – on Mediation Bill

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Mediating, Minus Sarkar**” published in **Times of India** on 10th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Dispute redressal mechanisms

**News:** The author discusses the new Mediation Bill passed in India, which formalizes and promotes mediation as a mainstream method for resolving disputes.

#### **What are the main features of the Mediation Bill?**

**Recognition of Mediation:** The bill recognizes mediation as a key method for resolving various disputes, from commercial to personal matters.

**Definition:** Mediation involves a neutral third person helping parties find an amicable settlement.

**Types:** Includes conciliation, community, and online mediation.

**Mediation Agreement:** Given the same status as a court judgment, harder to challenge than an arbitral award.

**Online Mediation:** Specific rules are provided for Online Mediation.

**Mediation Council:** Established with experienced members from mediation, law, government, and industry sectors.

**Training & Service Providers:** The bill acknowledges mediation institutes and service providers.

**Community Mediation:** Addressing local peace and harmony issues.

#### **What are the benefits of the Mediation Bill?**

**Speedy Process:** Mediation can be done within days to a few months, much faster than litigation.

**Cost-Efficient:** While now a profession, mediation remains less costly than court proceedings.

**Active Participation:** Disputants play a central role, unlike in adversarial processes.

**Amicable Solutions:** Focuses on practical agreements benefiting both parties rather than strictly legal verdicts.

**Enforceability:** Mediation agreements are easily enforced.

**High Success Rate:** Often sees success rates above 50%.

**Support from Lawyers:** Many lawyers appreciate mediation for its advantages and benefits to clients.

#### **What are the limitations of the Mediation Bill?**

**Exclusions in Schedule:** The bill has a lengthy list of cases not suitable for mediation. For instance, many disputes involving the government are excluded, indicating a preference for the state to continue litigations with citizens.

**Ambiguous Provisions:** Compoundable criminal offences are listed as non-mediatable, but another awkwardly drafted provision makes them mediatable.

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**Weak Language:** Mandatory mediation before litigation is emphasized in soft terms, which might dilute its impact.

**Section 49 Issue:** There's a significant loophole in Section 49, making it less stringent.

**Absence of Practising Mediators:** The Mediation Council lacks representatives from the current practicing mediators, which seems like an oversight.

**Non-adherence to Singapore Convention:** The bill doesn't incorporate the Singapore Convention, which would have made enforcement of international commercial mediated settlements more accessible globally.

**Over-Reliance on Mediators:** The success of the bill heavily depends on the continuous efforts of mediators across the country.

### 40. Judged Half Right- House panel spot on for mandatory asset declaration for judges. Court vacations are a more complex issue

**Source:** The post is based on the article "**Judged Half Right- House panel spot on for mandatory asset declaration for judges. Court vacations are a more complex issue**" published in **The Times of India** on 10th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Separation of powers between various organs

**News:** The House panel in India has recommended that Supreme Court and high court judges declare their assets annually. They have suggested replacing collective vacations with individual annual leaves, underlining the importance of quality over speedy justice.

#### **What recommendations has the House panel made for the judiciary of India?**

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice (House panel) has made the following recommendations for the judiciary of India:

1. Judges of the Supreme Court and high courts should declare their assets annually.
2. Replace the current system of court vacations with individual annual leaves for judges.

#### **What are the main benefits of these recommendations?**

##### **Transparency and Accountability:**

Mandating asset declaration would promote transparency in the judiciary.

Previous voluntary disclosures were limited, with the court's website showing data only till March 2018 for 55 SC judges.

##### **Efficiency and Speed:**

Replacing collective vacations with individual leaves can lead to more working days.

The Supreme Court of India is already in session for 200 days, compared to the US's 79 days, suggesting potential for quicker case disposal.

##### **Quality Justice:**

Despite the push for efficiency, there's recognition that judges need breaks for reflection.

Pausing ensures verdicts are well thought out, maintaining the quality of justice.

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### 41. Steps worth taking- Sound advice from Parliament on judicial reform

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Steps worth taking- Sound advice from Parliament on judicial reform**” published in **Business standard** on 10th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Separation of powers between various organs

**News:** The author discusses a recent parliamentary report suggesting reforms in India's judiciary. It emphasizes raising judges' retirement age, reassessing post-retirement jobs, reducing court holidays, creating regional Supreme Court Benches, and improving diversity in the higher judiciary.

### What are the reforms suggested by parliamentary report in India's judiciary?

Suggested Reforms in India's Judiciary:

- **Retirement Age:** Raise the retirement age for judges. This addresses concerns about judges seeking post-retirement jobs funded by the public.
- **Post-retirement Jobs:** Reassess post-retirement public appointments for judges. The current system gives the executive potential influence over judges' futures.
- **Court Holidays:** Reduce the long holidays of superior judiciary benches. Current long breaks limit litigants' access to the higher courts.
- **Regional Supreme Court Benches:** Establish Supreme Court Benches outside New Delhi. This addresses the high travel costs and language barriers for many Indians. **For example,** Travel to New Delhi is costly and arguing in non-local languages can be challenging for some Indians.
- **Diversity in Judiciary:** Address the declining representation of marginalized communities in the higher judiciary. The court needs diversity to maintain public legitimacy.

### What are the significance of these recommendations?

**Enhanced Judicial Impartiality:** Raising the retirement age can reduce judges' dependence on post-retirement jobs. Less chance of executive influence on a judge's decisions.

**Increased Public Trust:** By reassessing post-retirement jobs, public faith in unbiased judgments grows.

**Improved Court Efficiency:** Reducing court holidays ensures faster case resolution. Litigants will have better access to the courts.

**Greater Access to Justice:** Regional Supreme Court benches eliminates travel barriers. Litigants can argue in local languages, reducing linguistic challenges.

**Promotion of Practical Federalism:** Regional benches help in decentralizing the judicial system. More areas get representation and better judicial access, reflecting federal principles.

**Representation and Legitimacy:** More diverse judges ensure marginalized communities are represented. A diverse court enhances its legitimacy and reduces executive control in the appointment process.

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### 42. [Express View on Lancet TB study: Food for cure](#)

Source– The post is based on the article “Express View on Lancet TB study: Food for cure” published in “The Indian Express” on 10th August 2023.

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

**Relevance:** Issues related to TB

**News–** Recently, a Lancet study underlines the need to improve nutrition of TB patients.

#### **How undernutrition is the primary risk factor associated with tuberculosis?**

The connection between diet and the illness is supported by the **historical public health records** of Europe and North America. The prevalence of TB notably declined when people began to consume **better diets**.

In India, modeling studies have indicated that **addressing undernutrition** can decrease TB cases by more than 70 percent.

A recent study published in the **medical journal Lancet** provides evidence that a **nutritious diet** reduces the **occurrence of tuberculosis** among vulnerable individuals and also diminishes **mortality rates** in TB patients.

This study, conducted in Jharkhand, reveals that early weight gain in individuals impacted by TB reduces the **mortality risk** by 60 percent.

Tuberculosis (TB) and the medications diminish the **appetite of patients**. Fever raises the rate at which calories are burned. In severe cases, the illness leads to **“wasting” or low weight-for-height conditions**.

A patient who has recovered from TB but continues to have a poor diet is at a **significant risk of relapse**.

#### **What are some facts related to Nikshay Poshan Yojana?**

The **National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP)** has launched the **Nikshay Poshan Yojana**.

It provides Rs **500 per month** to individuals diagnosed with TB. However, this amount is widely **considered insufficient**.

According to **NTEP guidelines**, a tuberculosis patient should ideally consume **2,800 calories daily**.

Experts argue that eradicating TB necessitates **enhancing the living conditions** of patients and their families.

This program has encountered **numerous systemic challenges**.

A **2020 study published in the Indian Journal of Tuberculosis** revealed that healthcare providers faced difficulties due to **inadequate training and complicated reporting formats**. It hinders the **effective implementation** of the scheme.

Moreover, **limited patient awareness** has also restricted the reach of the **nutritional program**.

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43. [Bibek Debroy writes: BIMARU states are breaking poverty's chains](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Bibek Debroy writes: BIMARU states are breaking poverty's chains**” published in “**The Indian Express**” on **10th August 2023**.

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

**Relevance:** Estimation of poverty

**News**– The article explain the prevalence of poverty rate in India as indicated by UNDP and NITI Aayog reports

### **What are various methods used in India to define and quantify poverty?**

Traditionally, poverty has been identified as a **percentage of the population** living below a **designated poverty line**. It is known as the **head-count ratio**.

The currently recognized poverty line is still based on the **Tendulkar measurement**.

Due to the absence of **National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) surveys on consumption expenditure** beyond 2011-12, **no head-count ratios** are available after that period.

Over time, development economists have contended that poverty is a **multi-faceted concept**. There has been a transition to **multidimensional poverty index (MDPI)**.

### **What are some facts about Multi-dimensional Poverty Index?**

It relies on **three key dimensions of poverty: health, education, and living standards**.

Health metrics encompass aspects like **nutrition, child and adolescent mortality, and maternal health**, while education measures include **years of schooling and school attendance**.

**Living standard** encompasses factors like cooking fuel, sanitation, access to clean drinking water, electricity, housing, assets, and bank accounts.

### **What are poverty rates in India as per data provided by UNDP and NITI Aayog?**

According to the **UNDP report**, around **415 million individuals** transitioned out of poverty between 2005-06 and 2019-21, resulting in a reduction of poverty incidence **from 55.1 percent to 16.4 percent**.

As per UNDP report, the **steepest declines** in poverty have occurred in **economically disadvantaged states**.

However, it's important to note that the UNDP's report presents a **national aggregate perspective** for India, while the Niti Aayog report delves into **regional and state-specific disparities**.

The Niti Aayog report indicates a decrease in poverty rates from **24.85 percent in 2015-16 to 14.96 percent in 2019-21**.

During this period, an estimated **135.5 million Indians** were lifted out of poverty. Within this group, Uttar Pradesh alone accounted for 34.3 million individuals.

### **How have BIMARU states performed well in poverty reduction?**

Many years ago, **demographer Ashish Bose** introduced the acronym BIMARU to represent the then-undivided states of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh.

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BIMARU served as a **symbolic representation** of the various issues that plagued India during that time.

India's overall **development, employment situation, and poverty alleviation efforts** are significantly influenced by the conditions prevailing in these states. This is primarily due to their **substantial populations**, as well as the **extensive poverty levels**.

The **report from Niti Aayog** reveals that the **most rapid declines in poverty rates** were observed in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and Rajasthan.

Specifically, **Bihar's poverty rate** has now reached 33.8 percent, Madhya Pradesh at 20.6 percent, Odisha at 15.7 percent, and Rajasthan at 15.3 percent.

**Uttar Pradesh's poverty rate** stands at 22.9 percent, having started from a baseline of 37.7 percent in 2015-16.

### 44. [Demolitions as state-sanctioned collective punishment](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article "**Demolitions as state-sanctioned collective punishment**" published in **The Hindu** on 11<sup>th</sup> August 2023.

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

**Relevance:** Issues with state led demolitions drive

**News:** In Nuh, Haryana, several homes were demolished in neighborhoods by the state government as a form of bulldozer justice following the riots.

The state governments justifies that these demolitions are done to remove "illegal structures" or "encroachments". However, the courts have highlighted specific procedures for conducting demolitions.

### **What are the observations of the court regarding demolitions?**

**Courts have acknowledged that** "unauthorized structures" frequently serve as homes for economically disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals, who have been failed by the state in its obligation to provide shelter to all its citizens.

Hence, **other than enforcing basic procedural requirements** such as adequate notice, **courts have emphasized that the administration must conduct a survey before demolitions** to assess residents' eligibility for rehabilitation schemes.

If they are eligible, then rehabilitation should be done before any demolitions.

However, state governments frequently disregard these procedures and conduct demolitions at their own convenience.

**For example, last year,** it was discovered that the administration had changed the date on a demolition notice to make it seem like they were following the rules.

### **What do states clarify in carrying demolitions?**

The states conduct these demolitions as a way to enact punishment against those linked to riots, attempting a form of frontier justice. **They also argue that the courts are slow**, frequently grant bail, and are lenient in granting acquittals.

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Therefore, in order to calm public outrage, the state must take it upon itself to deliver “justice” outside the bounds of law.

However, despite widespread violation of zoning regulations, **it is the vulnerable and marginalized communities that are subjected to demolitions.** Additionally, the demolitions are predominantly concentrated in Muslim neighborhoods.

Hence, **the High Court of Punjab and Haryana noted that the focused targeting of a specific community resembled ethnic cleansing.**

### What are the concerns with the state carrying out demolitions?

**Bulldozer justice involves collective punishment,** penalizing not only the accused before guilt is established but also impacting their innocent family members.

**Imposing punishment without establishing guilt, at the discretion of the state, violates the rule of law.** The rule of law safeguards individuals from an overreaching state.

Therefore, **abandoning the rule of law for frontier justice is the first step towards an authoritarian society,** where personal safety, property, and even fundamental rights become subject to the arbitrary decisions of state authorities.

**Must Read: [Picking Up Peace – on economic costs of riots](#) and [Haryana violence was preventable. Why did it happen?](#)**

### What can be the way ahead?

**The responsibility to uphold the rule of law and the Constitution rests with the courts.** However, the courts, including the Supreme Court of India, have remained silent for over a year, even accepting the state’s justification for demolitions.

Hence, **the recent High Court order of Punjab and Haryana recognizes** the unlawful bulldozer justice pattern, potentially initiating the judiciary’s stance against state impunity and upholding fundamental constitutional principles.

### 45. [India’s Myanmar quandary, its paradoxical policy](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**India’s Myanmar quandary, its paradoxical policy**” published in **The Hindu** on **11<sup>th</sup> August 2023.**

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – International Relations

**Relevance:** India and Myanmar Relations

**News:** Myanmar’s President extended the emergency by six months, and the military has decided to release political prisoners. Still, these actions don’t suggest a democratic and peaceful Myanmar.

### What are the concerns with these developments in Myanmar?

The emergency extension delays the military’s planned elections, but it’s justified by citing the lack of ‘normalcy’ in various parts of the country.

**The push for ‘normality’ has caused great suffering, with Myanmar civilians facing 2.5 times more violence than Afghans.**

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**The Tatmadaw** (Myanmar's military) controls just 30%-40% of the land, making a national election lose credibility if held in only one-third of the nation.

Further, bringing more military by the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) raises concerns about the junta's commitment to democracy.

Even the National League for Democracy not participating in new elections and smaller parties being excluded leaves no strong opposition to the USDP in a parliament where the military holds a veto.

Hence, in such a situation, **junta's (military) decision to reduce Ms. Suu Kyi's sentence and move her to house arrest doesn't indicate a move toward democracy.**

Because, despite being a significant rival to the Tatmadaw, she has demonstrated a willingness to work with the military. However, **she remains a key figure for political transformation in Myanmar.**

Hence, junta's action regarding Ms. Suu Kyi's sentence could lessen protests, help in ending sanctions and improving the economy. It also enables countries like India to engage with the junta more positively.

### **How has been the bilateral relation between India and Myanmar?**

India aided Myanmar during the pandemic and coup, yet Myanmar residents were accused of sparking violence in Manipur. Trafficking and drug concerns led India to stop the [Free Movement Regime](#) in 2022.

India's Foreign Minister discussed projects and border stability with Myanmar during the [Mekong Ganga Cooperation \(MGC\)](#) meeting. India also backs the [ASEAN's](#) 'Five-Point Consensus'.

However, **India's stated dedication to democracy in Myanmar contrasts with its policy as India's policy is affected by northeast security and China relations.**

**For example,** India's announcement of the Sairang-Hmawngbuchhuah railway project near the Myanmar border, **under India's Act East Policy**, aims to counter China's railway access in Myanmar and the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor.

Moreover, several reports suggest that India has escalated its arms provision to the military post-coup. This not only contradicts India's position on restoring democracy but also intensifies tensions along the border.

**Must Read:** [India - Myanmar relations | Timeline](#) and [Coup in Myanmar and India-Myanmar bilateral relations](#)

### **What lies ahead?**

The relaxation of Ms. Suu Kyi's prison sentence may provide an opportunity for India to engage with her and pro-democracy actors.

**The government and media must avoid labeling incoming refugees as security threats,** as many have family ties in India. This is essential to prevent violence escalation and foster a compassionate environment.

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### 46. A brilliant model of affirmative action – on reservation

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**A brilliant model of affirmative action**– In light of the recent US Supreme Court decision on race-based admissions, the Indian model of reservations in both jobs and education holds valuable lessons” published in “Business standard” on 11th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Comparison of the Indian constitutional scheme with that of other countries

**News:** The U.S. Supreme Court ruled against race-based admissions. In this article author compares this to India’s quota system. He also refers Dr. Clark’s view that genes affect social status, raising doubts about affirmative action’s impact on social mobility.

#### **What is affirmative action?**

Affirmative action is a policy aimed at increasing opportunities for historically marginalized groups. It involves giving preferential treatment in areas like education and employment. For instance, colleges might consider race as a factor in admissions. In India, reservations in education and government jobs are a form of affirmative action. This approach intends to address past discrimination and create more diverse and inclusive societies.

#### **What is the constitutional difference in affirmative action between India and the USA?**

##### **USA’s Constitutional Stance on Affirmative Action:**

**Basis:** The U.S. Supreme Court ruled based on the Equal Protection Clause of the Constitution, which emphasizes equality without race bias.

**Implementation:** The Court permits considering race in admissions only to encourage a diverse student body. There can’t be fixed racial quotas. Moreover, race-based admissions should not be permanent and must conclude eventually.

Examples: The University of North Carolina and Harvard College seemingly set racial quotas, contradicting the constitutional guidelines.

##### **India’s Constitutional Approach to Affirmative Action:**

**Basis:** The Indian Constitution provides quotas for specific groups like Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, and Economically Weaker Sections.

**Implementation:** These quotas are applied primarily to government institutions, both in education and employment. The emphasis is on representing these groups at various societal levels.

**Distinct Feature:** Unlike the U.S., India hasn’t set a definite endpoint for these reservations, understanding that elevating disadvantaged groups might be a prolonged process.

#### **What are the impacts of affirmative action?**

##### **Perceived Benefits of Affirmative Action:**

**Diversity in Education:** Affirmative action promotes a racially diverse student body in universities, as seen in the U.S. Supreme Court’s allowance for race-based admissions.

**Representation:** In India, specific groups like Scheduled Castes and Tribes get representation in government institutions due to quotas.

##### **Challenges and Criticisms:**

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**Social Mobility:** Gregory Clark's book suggests that affirmative action might not significantly improve social mobility. He believes genes play a considerable role in determining social status.

**Duration of Impact:** Clark's findings indicate that while those lower in the social order may eventually rise, the pace is very slow, taking around 300 years.

**Effectiveness:** The U.S. model is perceived as weak, especially after the recent ruling, whereas India's robust system seeks representation in education and jobs without setting an end date for reservations.

### What should be done?

**Re-evaluate Affirmative Action:** Considering the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling, there's a need to assess the effectiveness of race-based admissions.

**Broaden Approaches:** Look at comprehensive models like India's which provides quotas for specific groups in education and jobs.

**Focus on Representation:** Ensure diverse representation across societal levels, as India's model does without setting an endpoint for reservations.

**Alternative Measures:** Explore options like redistribution through progressive taxation or higher minimum wages, inspired by Nordic countries.

**Private Sector Inclusion:** Given the limited scope of affirmative action in government institutions in India, consider extending reservations to the private sector for broader impact.

### [47. Not Quite Healthy- PMJAY has design flaws which may limit its potential to lower out-of-pocket expenditure](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article "Not Quite Healthy- PMJAY has design flaws which may limit its potential to lower out-of-pocket expenditure" published in "Times of India" on 11th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes;

**News:** In this article author reviews the five-year performance of Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY), India's health insurance scheme, referencing a CAG report that found database errors. The article also discusses hospital disparities in states and suggests improvements to decrease out-of-pocket costs.

### What does the CAG report say about PMJAY?

- Data Issues:** The CAG report revealed several problems with PMJAY's data. Notably, the PMJAY Id, which should be a unique 9-digit alphanumeric code, had duplicates. This means multiple beneficiaries could have the same identification, leading to confusion and potential fraud.
- Age Discrepancies:** There were inaccuracies related to beneficiaries' ages. Some of the records showed beneficiaries born in the 19th century, indicating significant errors in the database.
- Impact on Costs:** GOI data showed that the average hospitalization cost in 2022-23 was ₹13,703, which is less than 3% of the total cover of ₹5 lakh per family. This figure seemed

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inconsistent with the typical rise in medical expenses, making it a potential concern in the CAG report.

6. **Need for Stronger Oversight:** The report suggests that without proper data and process controls, dubious healthcare providers could exploit the system, emphasizing the need for a tighter grip on information and procedures.

### What should be done?

**Data Integrity:** Rectify database issues, ensuring PMJAY Ids are unique and correct age discrepancies, like those born in the 19th century.

**Hospital Availability:** Increase the number of empaneled hospitals, especially in poorer states like Bihar which, despite having a population exceeding Tamil Nadu by 50 million, has less than half its number of empaneled hospitals.

**Protect Patients:** Address issues in public hospitals where patients are reportedly defrauded or denied PMJAY benefits.

**State Health Authorities Role:** SHAs, being the primary administrators, should enhance their oversight and efficiency.

**Independent Audit:** The government should commission an independent audit to assess PMJAY's impact on out-of-pocket expenses.

### 48. [Their Bhasha, Their Future- Research has shown teaching in mother tongue leads to better skilling as well as better grasp of English](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article "**Their Bhasha, Their Future- Research has shown teaching in mother tongue leads to better skilling as well as better grasp of English.**

Recent CBSE decision is the right call, argues IMF's executive director" published in "Times of India" on 11th August 2023.

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

**News:** In this article, author emphasizes the importance of teaching children in their mother tongue for better understanding and a connection to their culture. He also cites evidence that this method enhances learning and success and argues against the misconception that English education alone propels progress in India.

### What efforts did India make to teach children in their mother tongue?

#### Historical Efforts:

Gandhiji believed that English as a primary medium created a barrier between educated elites and the masses. He felt it hindered the spread of knowledge to everyone.

Freedom fighters like C Rajagopalachari, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, and Annie Besant stressed an education controlled by Indians, valuing the country's ethos.

Unlike Jawaharlal Nehru, who leaned towards Western methods, these leaders saw value in beginning education in the mother tongue, introducing English later.

Annie Besant, in "Principles of Education," suggested schools teach in the local mother tongue, introducing English later.

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### Government of India Efforts:

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) issued an order on July 21 to use the mother tongue for instruction, highlighting its commitment to native language education.

The National Education Policy also encapsulates the intent to promote mother tongue instruction.

### What are the UNESCO findings on teaching children in their mother tongue?

UNESCO Findings on Mother Tongue Instruction:

**Global Advocacy:** Since 1953, UNESCO has consistently promoted mother tongue education through its Global Education Monitoring Reports.

**Learning Impact:** Being taught in a language other than one's own can have negative effects on learning, especially for children from poor backgrounds.

**Duration Recommendation:** At least six years of mother tongue instruction is necessary to reduce learning gaps for minority language speakers.

**Pedagogical Reasoning:** A background study for the 2005 UNESCO report emphasized that mother tongue-based bilingual schooling is rarely challenged based on its educational logic.

**Note:** Research suggests that starting with the mother tongue and introducing English later makes learning English easier. Skills acquired in the mother tongue during early years assist in mastering a second language later in life.

### What should be done?

**CBSE Directive:** Implement the Central Board of Secondary Education's order to use the mother tongue for instruction.

**Adapt Schools:** Address challenges in teacher recruitment, curriculum development, and teaching materials to cater to diverse linguistic backgrounds.

**Lead by Example:** Government's Kendriya Vidyalayas and Navodaya Vidyalayas should pioneer the implementation of mother tongue instruction.

**Value Research:** Policymakers should prioritize evidence-based benefits of mother tongue education over anecdotal arguments advocating English-only education.

**Uphold Rights:** Recognize and ensure that education in the mother tongue for every child in India, as it nurtures learning excellence and cultural connection.

### [49. S Y Quraishi on the Collegium bill: How to make Election Commission credible](#)

**Source-** The post is based on the article "**S Y Quraishi on the Collegium bill: How to make Election Commission credible**" published in "**The Indian Express**" on **11th August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Appointment to various Constitutional Posts

**Relevance:** Issues related to agricultural inputs

**News-** On Thursday, the day before the Monsoon Session is set to end, the government tabled the Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners (Appointments, Conditions of Service, Term of Office) Bill in the Rajya Sabha.

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### What is the context behind the introduction of Bill?

In March, a unanimous decision was given by the Supreme Court.

This verdict stated that a **committee composed of the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, and the Chief Justice of India** would be responsible for appointing the Chief CEC and ECs until the Parliament enacts a law.

The ruling emphasised that the **independence of the Election Commission** necessitates a **collegium**. The court emphasised that safeguarding the **integrity of the electoral process** is crucial to **uphold democracy**.

The involvement of the Chief Justice of India will ensure **fairness** and shield the appointment procedure from any **interference by the Executive branch**.

### Why is the ruling by SC significant?

It addresses concerns related to **bias and the autonomy** of institutions.

The existing selection process creates a **notable drawback** for newly appointed Election Commissioners (ECs). Irrespective of their impressive backgrounds, they remain vulnerable to being **perceived as partisan**.

Their actions carried out **dutifully and in good faith**, are frequently interpreted as favouring a specific political party. This underscores the necessity for a **collegial approach** to enhance **public perception** of the Commission's **impartiality and autonomy**.

The Supreme Court verdict emphasised that the involvement of the CJI could **counterbalance** the **unchecked influence** of the executive branch over appointments.

### What are some significant provisions of the Bill?

The proposed legislation aims to **replace the Chief Justice of India (CJI) with a cabinet minister** designated by the Prime Minister.

It provides for a **search committee led by the Cabinet Secretary** and consisting of two other members not below the rank of government secretary. This committee's role is to compile a list of **five potential candidates** for the Selection Committee's evaluation.

The Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and other Election Commissioners (ECs) will be chosen from individuals who currently hold or have previously held a **position equivalent to the rank of a government secretary**.

These appointees must possess **integrity**, as well as **knowledge and expertise in the administration and execution of elections**.

The Bill safeguards **the two Election Commissioners against removal** and establish **parity with the Chief Election Commissioner**.

### What are issues with the Bill?

The Commissioners were previously placed on the **same level as Supreme Court judges** since the enactment of the 1991 Act. They are now being relegated.

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The Election Commissioner then and now remains **equivalent to that of the Chief Secretary (CS)** and the Supreme Court judge. But their position in the hierarchy of precedence is being diminished.

The provision that permits the Selection Committee to choose someone from outside the shortlist is completely **undesirable and undermines** the purpose of the shortlisting committee.

### **How the institutional independence of the Election Commission (EC) is a pressing concern at national and global level?**

There has been a growing worldwide erosion of **confidence in electoral bodies**. The **Gallup World Poll** indicates that merely 50 percent of voters express trust in the **fairness of elections**. In the USA, this number was at 40% in 2019.

Even within India, the **credibility of the EC** has faced increasing scrutiny in recent years. **Allegations of bias** in election scheduling and the **arbitrary removal of registered voters'** names, and disregard for **blatant violations of the model code**, have cast doubt on the EC's reputation.

Recent **democracy reports from the V-Dem Institute** underline that various democracy indicators, including the **autonomy of the ECI**, have been on a decline in India.

### **What are issues with the collegium system for appointment of Election Commissioners?**

The appointment of CBI directors, for instance, has been conducted through the collegium process. But, some of these appointments have not upheld a **commendable reputation**.

Additionally, there have been concerns about the **inclusion of the Chief Justice of India (CJI)** in the collegium.

CJI may possess **legal expertise** but might not be **well-acquainted** with the candidates. There are concerns regarding **fair adjudication** by CJI if an appointment is challenged in the Supreme Court.

The collegium system would gain **further credibility** if a unanimous decision were made a **prerequisite for appointments**.

### 50. Jan Vishwas Bill: More trust, less suspicion

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Jan Vishwas Bill: More trust, less suspicion**” published in “**The Indian Express**” on **11th August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Polity

**Relevance:** Important Bill and Acts

**News**– Recently, Jan Vishwas Act was introduced in Parliament.

### **How is Jan Vishwas Bill a positive step in the direction of boosting investment and economy?**

The investors are concerned that businesses are highly vulnerable to **legal action and imprisonment**. The **Jan Vishwas Bill** aims to alleviate such concerns.

The inclusion of **criminal liability in numerous laws** has fostered suspicion toward private enterprises.

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A total of **183 provisions across 42 Central Acts** will undergo decriminalization. The goal is to ensure that the **severity of punishment** aligns with the **gravity of the offense**.

The elimination of **punitive measures** will be **positively received** by companies. They are fearful of **receiving notices** that could lead to arrests of their **key management personnel** for even the **slightest infractions**.

These notices to directors also impact the **company's public image** on a global scale, particularly considering SEBI's strict disclosure guidelines.

This **legal reform** will also **ease the burden** on the judicial system. These cases congest the court system. Companies enlist **high-profile lawyers** to defend them. Consequently, **more serious offenses** that require thorough examination by the courts get **pushed aside**.

The recent legislation comes at a timely juncture.

Amendments are being made to the **Marine Products Export Development Authority Act, the Farm Produce (Grading and Marking) Act, the Rubber Act, the Tea Act, and the Spices Board Act** to mitigate the severity of consequences for violating **specified regulations**.

Similarly, removing the criminal provision from the **Forest Conservation Act** that allowed for the arrest of grazers whose livestock entered forest areas will align the law with the objectives of the Forest Rights Act.

### Way forward-

The amendment within the legal framework is essentially a way to enable **transformative shifts**.

There is a need to **modify the regulations** to align them with the **intended objectives** of the law, while also maintaining a **balance between safeguarding public interests and those of the industry**.

The elimination of **unnecessary provisions** and the initiative to decriminalize are measures that will enhance **people's trust** in the government.

This trust is a **prerequisite for attracting investments** and for halting the **outflow of capital** from the country.

As a nation on the cusp of becoming the **third-largest economy**, it's crucial that laws are continuously **assessed, modified, or even revoked**.

The government should remain **vigilant against violations** that jeopardize lives or harm the environment. However, it's equally vital to honor those who **contribute taxes and generate wealth**.

Business and industry associations should now advocate for the **decriminalization of inappropriate provisions** in **financial and corporate laws**.

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### 51. [Error On Commission – on appointment of election commissioners](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Error On Commission**” published in “**The Times of India**” on **12th August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Appointment to various constitutional posts

**Relevance:** Issues related to appointment of Election Commissioners

**News**– Recently, GOI tabled a bill governing the appointment of election commissioners in Rajya Sabha.

#### **Why is the SC ruling on appointment of Election Commissioners significant?**

Firstly, there is a **conflict of interest, if the political** executives manage the selection of Election Commissioners. Because, these Commissioners are responsible for **supervising elections**.

Secondly, it's crucial for the Election Commission to maintain an **impartial image** in the eyes of all parties involved. Hence, it's imperative that the procedure for appointing Election Commissioners doesn't undermine the **trustworthiness of the Commission's rulings**.

#### **Way forward**

In practical terms, the **significance of the Leader of the Opposition** can be negated. It is undesirable as it can lead to **accusations of favoritism** in appointment process

There is a need to ensure **unanimous decisions** by the selection committee. Providing the LOP with a **substantive role** will ensure that the **Commission's credibility** is upheld.

For more reading- <https://blog.forumias.com/s-y-quraishi-on-the-collegium-bill-how-to-make-election-commission-credible/>

### 52. [In 'demolition raj', the High Courts as beacons](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**In 'demolition raj', the High Courts as beacons**” published in “**The Hindu**” on **12th August 2023**. **Syllabus:** GS2- Judiciary

**Relevance:** Issues related functioning of higher courts in protecting the vulnerable sections

**News**– In the districts of Gurugram and Nuh in Haryana, there have been clashes between Hindu and Muslim communities. The Haryana government has taken to demolishing the houses of persons suspected to be involved in the violence without notice.

#### **What are issues with the demolition drive by the Haryana government?**

It's evident that only the homes belonging to a particular section of population are singled out for demolition. This targeting is both **deliberate and exclusive in nature**.

The **principle of rule of law** which guarantees **legal equality and equal protection** has been disregarded.

#### **Why is SC being questioned for its silence on demolition drive?**

When the bulldozers were causing destruction in Uttar Pradesh, the matter was brought before the Supreme Court of India. The court's reaction was **lukewarm**.

It heard the government's assertion that these constructions were **unauthorized** and **legal procedures** were being followed. The court's response observed that **proper protocols** must be adhered to.

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Court should have asked stringent questions about targeting a specific community and the reason behind the **swift and abrupt demolitions**.

The Supreme Court could have taken **suo motu action**.

### What are criticisms against the working of SC in recent times?

The Supreme Court appears to be **yielding more ground**. This is evident in the **repeated extensions** granted to the Director of the Enforcement Directorate.

The SC has not **established clear boundaries** and **administered consequences** for each violation. The **established boundaries** will be **breached continuously** with impunity without these types of actions.

The examples of **prolonged delays** in hearing cases are the **modification of Article 370, electoral bonds, demonetization, legislative immunity under Article 194, the validity of the Assam Accords, and amendments to the Citizenship Act**.

These situations have led to the emergence of an **adjudication doctrine** where the **alleged illegality** has persisted for such an extensive period.

Furthermore, **notable legal practitioners** have been **nominated by the collegium** for positions as High Court judges. However, the government's inertia in processing these appointments remains. The Court does not **assertively address** this issue.

### Why is the Punjab and Haryana High Court ruling being appreciated in this case?

The Punjab and Haryana High Court questioned whether it is an act of **ethnic cleansing**. It is a **scathing indictment** of the prevailing authorities.

The court went beyond mere **inquiry and promptly halted** the demolitions. It confronted the State Home Minister's rationale for the demolitions and promptly reminded him of **Lord Acton's dictum** that **power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely**.

Significantly, this course of action was undertaken **suo motu**, initiated by the court itself. Kudos to the esteemed Justices for their praiseworthy action.

### Way forward-

The actions of a former Chief Justice of India have triggered **significant concerns** due to his **newfound uncertainties** about the **basic structure of the Constitution** following his appointment to the Rajya Sabha.

This is a moment for us to revisit the **wisdom of our legal luminaries, internalize their insights, and live by the principles they advocated**.

It's an opportune time for the High Courts to **rise to their vital role**, as conferred by **Article 226 of the Constitution**.

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### 53. [Think, Then Act – Proposed criminal codes need serious deliberation](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Think, Then Act – Proposed criminal codes need serious deliberation**” published in **The Times of India** on **12<sup>th</sup> August 2023**.

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

**Relevance:** **Issues with three bills** that aim to replace IPC, CrPC and the Indian Evidence Act.

**News:** Recently, three bills, **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, and Bharatiya Sakshya Bill, 2023** have been introduced in the Parliament that aim to **replace IPC, CrPC and the Indian Evidence Act.**

#### **What are the concerns with the Bill?**

- Despite claims of repeal, offences like sedition still persist under a different chapter.
- The inclusion of a separate provision for mob lynching where the punishment for a mob could involve death, creates a perplex situation.
- Marital rape is still not criminalized.
- Criminal defamation still remains in the Bill.
- Requiring forensic teams to visit crime scenes for serious offenses seems unrealistic due to the existing backlogs even in metropolitan labs.

#### **What can be the way ahead?**

No drafts were released in the public domain before the Union home minister introduced the bills in Lok Sabha. The reforms committee which worked on these bills also lacked transparency.

Hence, **instead of rushing there are various shortcomings that need to be addressed.** The parliamentary standing committee, to which the bills have now been sent, must look into these issues.

### 54. [The rise of bulldozer governance](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “Suhas Palshikar writes: The rise of bulldozer governance” published in “The Indian express” on 12th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability.

**News:** In this article author discusses how India’s democracy is shifting, with governments using more forceful methods like bulldozers and police encounters. These actions often target the poor and marginalized. The government is also bypassing standard democratic procedures in the legislature. The author suggests this trend is worrisome and challenges the true essence of democracy.

#### **How is India’s democracy shifting?**

India’s democracy is shifting in the following ways:

**Bulldozer Governance:** Governments are using force, symbolized by bulldozers, to assert their power. Examples include demolitions in Haryana following communal violence.

**Decreased Regulation:** Despite the ideal of minimal government intervention, there’s an increased use of physical coercion to maintain law and order.

**Surveillance:** Governments are using advanced techniques like drone surveillance and facial recognition without much legislative oversight.

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**Police Power:** States are increasingly giving the police a “free hand,” resulting in encounter killings, like the Telangana police incident in 2019 (killing suspected rapists)

**Legislative Functioning:** There’s less discussion and vetting of bills, with some being pushed through as Money Bills, limiting proper democratic debate.

**Executive Dominance:** The executive branch is gaining more control, even intervening in state matters, challenging the federal principle.

This shift, seems to be moving away from democratic ideals.

### What are the major concerns of this shift?

#### Citizen Concerns:

The use of force, like the bulldozer incidents in Haryana, affects the marginalized the most.

Advanced surveillance techniques such as facial recognition threaten citizen privacy.

#### Governance Concerns:

The government’s assertive actions, like not properly vetting bills, reduce transparency.

Leaders assert dominance, sometimes bypassing federal principles to intervene in state matters.

#### Judicial Concerns:

The judiciary often remains a silent observer, not intervening in cases of potential overreach.

The direction of governance primarily targets less privileged sections, without adequate checks.

#### Social Concerns:

Media might not consistently challenge high-handed governance.

Terms like “bulldozer baba” highlight societal acceptance of forceful governance.

#### Idea of Democracy:

Bypassing democratic procedures in the legislature erodes democratic norms.

The rising belief in a leader’s ultimate wisdom weakens the need for democratic checks and balances.

### What should be done about it?

**Strengthen Oversight:** Enhance judicial involvement to ensure government actions align with democratic principles, as seen with the Punjab and Haryana High Court’s intervention in Nuh.

**Legislative Reforms:** Encourage thorough vetting of bills and promote discussions to avoid bypassing democratic procedures.

**Enhance Accountability:** Ensure surveillance techniques, such as facial recognition and drones, are used with proper legislative oversight.

**Promote Media Vigilance:** Media should consistently highlight and critique instances of high-handed governance.

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**Public Awareness:** Educate the public about the importance of checks and balances in a democracy.

**Emphasize Federalism:** Respect the federal principle to maintain the balance of power between the central and state governments.

**Restore Democratic Ideals:** Prioritize citizens' rights and well-being over forceful measures, ensuring democracy serves all.

### 55. [India's TB problem and the right to treatment](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article "India's TB problem and the right to treatment" published in "The Indian express" on 12th August 2023.

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

**News:** The author highlights the challenge of drug-resistant tuberculosis (DR-TB) in India. While new diagnostic tools and treatments exist, India often relies on outdated methods. The WHO recommends modern solutions that are more effective and cost-saving. The author urges India to adopt these to prevent DR-TB deaths and suffering.

#### What are India's achievements in relation to drug-resistant tuberculosis (DR-TB)?

**Detection:** India identified 64,000 MDR/RR-TB cases in 2022, a significant number though below WHO estimates.

**Molecular Tests:** Several Indian companies manufacture advanced molecular tests for DR-TB detection.

**Investment:** India heavily invested in molecular platforms during the Covid-19 pandemic, which can be repurposed for TB.

**Cost-effective PCR:** Many Indian companies made affordable PCR (polymerase chain reaction) components during the Covid-19 crisis.

**Treatment Time:** India has treatments that reduce DR-TB treatment duration from 24 months to 6 months.

**Drug Supply:** India is the global supplier of pretomanid, a crucial drug in the BPAL(Bedaquiline, Pretomanid, and Linezolid) regimen for DR-TB.

#### What are the challenges of drug-resistant tuberculosis (DR-TB) in India?

**High Cases:** India accounts for a quarter of the world's DR-TB cases, with 119,000 new cases estimated yearly by WHO.

**Underreporting:** Only 64,000 MDR/RR-TB cases were reported in 2022, missing a substantial number.

**Delayed Diagnosis:** Rapid diagnosis of DR-TB is limited, leading to treatment delays.

**Old Diagnostic Methods:** 77% of suspected TB patients were diagnosed using traditional sputum smear microscopy, an outdated method.

**Treatment Adherence:** India uses a mix of DR-TB treatments, many of which are hard to follow.

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**Reliance on Injectables:** Over 22,000 MDR/RR-TB patients in 2021 received treatments with injections, despite WHO's recommendation against it.

**Incomplete Treatment:** Only 68% of the MDR/RR-TB patients initiated on treatment in 2020 completed it.

**Limited Access:** Only 53% of MDR/RR-TB patients in 2022 received the WHO-recommended shorter bedaquiline regimen.

### What should be done to address these challenges?

**Enhance Reporting:** Increase efforts to identify and report all MDR/RR-TB cases.

**Adopt Rapid Tests:** Embrace rapid molecular diagnostics as the initial test for suspected patients.

**Increase Molecular Testing:** Aim for all suspected TB patients to undergo the recommended molecular tests.

**Update Treatment Protocols:** Adopt WHO's recommendation of the BPaL regimen for DR-TB.

**Phase Out Injectables:** Heed WHO's advice to stop using injectable treatments from 2019.

**Expand Access:** Increase the number of patients receiving the bedaquiline-containing regimen and BPaL regimen.

**Utilize Resources:** Repurpose molecular platforms from the Covid-19 era for TB testing.

### 56. On Digital Personal Data Protection Bill

**Source:** The post is based on the article "**Digital Personal Data Protection Bill: Spectre of a Barbenheimer future**" published in "**The Indian express**" on 12th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

**News:** In this article author discusses two possible futures for India's digital landscape that is "Barbenheimer" future and an equitable digital future India's current decisions will determine its path.

### What are the potential digital futures of India?

Potential Digital Futures of India

#### The "Barbenheimer" Future:

This is named after an internet phenomenon combining "Barbie" and "Oppenheimer." In this scenario sees India heavily leaning on technology.

In this future, an elite group dominates the tech decisions. Privacy might often be compromised for perceived national benefits.

For escape, citizens could immerse themselves in virtual worlds, like a Barbie-themed metaverse, where tech corporations dictate experiences.

#### Equitable Digital Future:

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Here, the emphasis is on citizen rights and privacy. Strong data protection laws would be the foundation. Instead of broad exceptions in the name of security, there would be robust checks on surveillance, with judicial oversight ensuring citizen privacy.

This future envisions universal digital access, clear rules for AI, and encrypted data processing. It's a world where digital rights are central, and open engagements prioritize human rights, accountability, and trust.

### Why are these futures important?

**Decision Making Impact:** The choices India makes now in digital governance will shape its digital landscape for the next 25 years. Opting for one future over the other can drastically change societal structures and individual freedoms.

**Citizen Rights:** The “Barbenheimer” future could see reduced individual rights, with elites and tech giants dictating terms.

**National Interests:** Balancing privacy with perceived national benefits is critical, especially in a tech-dominated future.

**Public Engagement:** An equitable digital future emphasizes open engagements, prioritizing human rights and accountability.

**Technological Trajectory:** These futures determine India's tech direction, impacting areas like AI governance and data protection.

**Economic & Social Implications:** The direction India takes will influence its global tech position, economic prospects, and the well-being of its citizens. Ensuring an equitable future means prioritizing societal welfare and progress.

### 57. Arun Prakash writes: Delhi and Taipei, just friends – on India Taiwan relations

**Source:** The post is based on the article “Arun Prakash writes: Delhi and Taipei, just friends” published in “The Indian express” on 14th August 2023.

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

**News:** In this article author discusses the recent visit of retired Indian military chiefs to Taiwan, and its implications for Sino-Indian relations. The history of Taiwan (RoC) and its strained relationship with China (PRC) is explored. The author highlights mutual interests between India and Taiwan, especially given China's aggressive stance, but advises caution for India in deepening ties due to Taiwan's historical stances on territorial issues.

### What is the background of Taiwan (RoC) and China (PRC)?

#### Formation of Taiwan (RoC) and China (PRC):

The Republic of China (RoC) was established in 1912 after the fall of the Qing Dynasty.

In 1927, a civil war began between the Kuomintang (KMT) party of RoC and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

The Japanese invasion in 1937 led to a truce, with both parties joining forces against Japan.

The civil war resumed post-WW II, concluding in 1949 with the CCP's victory.

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### **Relocation to Taiwan:**

After their defeat, the RoC government under Chiang Kai-shek retreated to Taiwan.

### **International Recognition:**

Originally, RoC had a seat on the UN Security Council.

In 1971, the UN replaced RoC with PRC as the recognized China.

Today, only 13 countries, including small Pacific islands and the Vatican, officially recognize Taiwan.

### **How has the US responded to Taiwan and China?**

#### **“One China” Policy:**

Following their 1972 meeting, Nixon and Mao issued the “Shanghai Communiqué”, which acknowledged Taiwan as a part of “one China”.

#### **Defense Support for Taiwan:**

In 1979, the US passed the Taiwan Relations Act, committing to supply Taiwan with “defensive weapons”.

#### **US’s Ambiguous Stance:**

Despite the “one China” policy, the US has maintained relations with both PRC and Taiwan. Through diplomacy and military postures, the US deters China without a clear commitment to defend Taiwan militarily.

### **How has the relationship between Taiwan and India changed over time?**

#### **Before Independence:**

During WW II, the Chinese Expeditionary Force was deployed for Burma’s defense and retreated to India after facing defeat by the Japanese.

In 1942, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek of the RoC visited India. During his visit, Chiang expressed solidarity with India against Japanese aggression and supported India’s freedom struggle.

#### **After Independence:**

India recognized the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in 1950 and initially maintained a “one China” policy, recognizing PRC over Taiwan.

#### **Fall in Relationship:**

For years, India’s recognition of the PRC wasn’t reciprocated by China when it came to territories like J&K and Arunachal Pradesh.

Due to concerns about China’s reaction, India kept its relations with Taiwan under the radar for many decades.

#### **Rise in Relationship:**

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In 1995, despite the overarching “one China” policy, India and Taiwan initiated trade and cultural ties.

Both nations posted diplomatic representatives in New Delhi and Taipei, marking an unofficial yet significant recognition of each other.

Post the 2020 Galwan incident, with a drop in India-China relations, the bond between India and Taiwan has seen a renewed interest, especially in light of mutual security concerns and Taiwan’s leadership in semiconductors.

### What caution should India exercise with RoC?

India should approach its relationship with the Republic of China (RoC) or Taiwan with caution due to past territorial disputes. Historically, Taiwan introduced the contentious 9-Dash Line in the South China Sea.

Moreover, the RoC has not recognized the McMahon line and claims “Southern Tibet” as part of China, which could be a concern for India.

### 58. Personal data protection – A thinking person’s guide

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Personal data protection – A thinking person’s guide**” published in **Business Standard** on **14<sup>th</sup> August 2023**.

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

**Relevance:** **About** Digital Personal Data Protection law

**News:** Recently, the Parliament passed the Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2023.

### What is the Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2023?

**Read Here:** [Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2023: Explained](#)

### Why was the Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2023 needed?

Previously, privacy meant personal matters like income, caste, and health issues and the debate on data protection law usually revolved around these problems.

However, the negative uses of digital data went unquestioned for years until the **Cambridge Analytica Scandal in 2018**.

This scandal revealed that the British company had gathered data from 87 million Facebook users for aiding Donald Trump’s 2016 election campaign.

Hence, government around the world expressed worries about the potential misuse of the digital data. This made India to enact Digital Personal Data Protection law.

### What are the issues being faced by the government worldwide in implementing Digital Personal Data Protection Law?

**First**, governments face challenge with balancing the interests of businesses and citizens regarding personal data usage.

**Second**, governments find themselves competing with other nations in leveraging their citizens’ data for national defense and geopolitical objectives.

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### What lies ahead?

With the enactment of Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2023, India has taken a great step. Other countries should also consider taking similar steps while considering the concerns of all stakeholders.

### 59. Curing Medicine – On new rules by the National Medical Commission

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Curing Medicine**” published in “**The Times of India**” on **14th August 2023**.

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

**Relevance**: Issues related to regulation of healthcare sector

**News**– The National Medical Commission’s new rules on registered medical practitioners have tackled doctors’ irresponsible use of social media for the first time.

### What are the new rules by the National Medical Commission on registered medical practitioners?

On Twitter, doctors share detailed accounts of their **patients’ conditions, treatments, and results**. However, this practice has been **prohibited**.

NMC has introduced a requirement for ongoing “**continuous professional development**” throughout a doctor’s career.

Conferences or workshops eligible for CPD cannot receive **sponsorship from pharmaceutical companies**.

New regulations reiterate that doctors must **prescribe generic medicines**.

### What are issues with the implementation of these rules?

The Indian government needs to confront the **concerns related to generic medications** available in the public market. In situations where a recommended generic drug is unavailable, the substitution is frequently proposed by the pharmacist.

The **Jan Aushadhi stores** under the **government’s supervision** often have inadequate supplies. Therefore, the success of the regulations introduced will depend on the **formulation of appropriate penalties**.

Pharmaceutical firms and diagnostic chains have nurtured a **strong connection** with hospitals and medical professionals.

Historically, pharmaceutical companies have been instrumental in supporting the **professional growth** of doctors. As these companies withdraw their **financial support** for workshops, there are questions regarding fulfilment of this role by someone else.

The success of **overseeing medical engagements** on Twitter by regulatory bodies is still something that needs to be witnessed.

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### 60. Glaring omission – on appointment of Election Commissioners

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Glaring omission**” published in “**The Hindu**” and “**Let us retain structural neutrality on EC chiefs**” published in the “**mint**” on **14th August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Appointment to various constitutional posts

**Relevance:** Issues related to appointment of Election Commissioners

**News**– The Union government has proposed a three-member selection panel consisting of the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and a Union Cabinet Minister.

This runs counter to a recent judgment of a Constitution Bench that envisaged an independent selection committee that included the Chief Justice of India.

#### **Why is the SC ruling on appointment of Election Commissioner significant?**

The verdict also aligned with the suggestions of the **Dinesh Goswami Committee in 1990** and **the Justice Tarkunde Committee in 1975**. Government **dominant role in the selection process** will contradict the **essence of the Court’s suggestions**.

Maintaining a **balance of power** in the appointment process would ensure that process remains **impartial to political ties**. It will be important for **upholding democracy**, which places the equality of every citizen as a **fundamental principle**.

#### **Why is it important to have an independent Election Commissioner?**

The Election Commission of India is a **constitutional entity** with responsibilities for organizing elections. It performs **quasi-judicial functions** as well. Therefore, it’s reasonable that the selection process safeguards against **excessive executive influence**.

The Election Commission of India has played a crucial role in **facilitating periodic elections**.

Nonetheless, concerns have arisen.

For instance, prior to the 2019 general election, there was a one-month delay in **announcing elections** between February and March. The government **inaugurated multiple projects** during that time.

The application of the **Model Code of Conduct** was uneven. It favored the ruling party, which led to dissent by one of the commissioners.

The independent **V-Dem Institute in Sweden** downgraded India to an “**electoral autocracy**” due to the perceived decrease in the **ECI’s autonomy**.

To preserve the **stability of our constitutional framework**, it is necessary that citizens perceive electoral procedures as **independent, impartial, and beyond partisan influences**.

Indian voters are not concerned about **manipulated elections**. It’s imperative that we fortify this track record.

#### **What are issues with the Bill?**

The legislation permits the appointment committee to “**govern its own process with transparency**.” So, the methods employed by this committee are likely to **remain undisclosed**. The Selection Committee also retains the option to evaluate individuals beyond those **initially listed by the Search Committee**. This would grant the Selection Committee **complete authority** in determining the Election Commissioners.

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61. The 2047 Dream- Developed country? Provided India undertakes a tough but doable set of internal reforms

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**The 2047 Dream- Developed country? Provided India undertakes a tough but doable set of internal reforms**” published in “Times of India” on 16th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources. & GS3- growth, development and employment; Inclusive growth

**News:** In this article author discusses India’s potential to become a developed nation by 2047. For this, he emphasizes the need for economic reforms, better opportunities for the young population, increased women’s workforce participation, improved global trade, and enhancing the overall quality of life.

**What are the potential factors that could help India become a developed nation by 2047?**

**Young Population:** India has the world’s largest population below 30, providing a large workforce.

**Educated Women:** More girls than boys are studying in STEM fields.

**Global South Voice:** India’s position allows it to represent developing nations after the pandemic.

**Global Influence:** As G20 president, India addressed issues like the Global South’s debt crisis.

**What does India need to become a developed nation by 2047?**

**Reevaluate Economic Classifications:** India is currently a lower middle-income country as per World Bank. Relying solely on per capita gross national income might be misleading; Bermuda ranks higher than the U.S.

**Address Underemployment:** There’s a slow transition of youth from farms to industries. Focusing on productive sectors can create more opportunities for the young population.

**Boost Women’s Workforce Participation:** Women’s participation rate was only 24% in 2022, compared to the global average of 47%. Improved public safety and transport can enable more women to work.

**Redefine Trade Policy:** India is 18th in global merchandise export rankings. A shift from protectionist policies can promote cross-border trade.

**Implement Internal Reforms:** Embrace reforms to unshackle the economy’s potential. Improve human capital quality to support growth.

62. So Much Data But Not Much Protection

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**So Much Data But Not Much Protection**” published in “Times of India” on 16th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

**News:** In this article, the author criticizes India’s new Digital Personal Data Protection Law. He believes that this law will weaken user data protection, favor data collection without proper

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consent, and provide the government with too much power and control, potentially compromising citizens' privacy.

### What are the limitations of India's new Digital Personal Data Protection law?

Limitations of India's new Digital Personal Data Protection law:

#### Weak Notice Provision:

**Clause 5: Data collecting companies (data fiduciaries) don't need to inform users (data principals) about sharing their data with third parties.**

They aren't required to specify how long the data will be stored. No information on data transfers to other countries.

#### Consent Issues:

While the 'deemed consent' was replaced, the new law still has issues.

**Clause 7: Lists 'legitimate uses' of data, but they are vaguely defined.**

**Clause 4: Many uses don't require user consent**, including state functions and medical reasons, potentially undermining privacy.

#### Government Immunity:

The law allows the government vast powers to gather and process citizens' data.

**Clause 17: Expands exemptions for the government.** Data shared with certain government bodies remains exempt from the law, even if shared with non-exempt bodies.

#### Compromised Independence:

The Data Protection Board lacks independence as its members are appointed by the government.

#### Undefined Data Fiduciary Category:

Some entities, based on "**volume and nature of personal data processed**", **might get exemptions.**

These "super significant data fiduciaries" won't have to notify users about data collection, storage, or sharing.

The criteria for these exemptions are unclear, giving the government full discretion.

#### Overall Theme:

The law leans towards data collection and commercialization, rather than robustly protecting citizens' rights and data privacy.

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### 63. Consumption-based poverty estimates have relevance

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Consumption-based poverty estimates have relevance**” published in “**The Hindu**” on **16th August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Issues related to Poverty

**Relevance:** Measurement of poverty

**News**– A recent report by NITI Aayog on multidimensional poverty shows that the percentage of the poor has gone down from 25% in 2015-16 to 15% in 2019-21 and around 135 million people were lifted out of poverty during this period.

#### **What is the comparison of poverty estimation of Multidimensional Poverty Index and survey based on consumption expenditure?**

As per the report of the **Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2018**, India has made **significant progress** in reducing multidimensional poverty.

The prevalence of multidimensional poverty witnessed a **reduction of nearly 50% between 2005-06 and 2015-16**. It dropped to **27.5%**. In the last decade, the count of poor individuals in India decreased by over **271 million**.

The calculations of poverty based on methodology recommended by the **Tendulkar committee** reveal that the number of individuals living in poverty decreased by **137 million between 2004-05 and 2011-12**.

According to the approach suggested by the **Rangarajan Committee**, the reduction between 2009-10 and 2011-12 amounts to **92 million**. It means an **annual reduction of 46 million**. Over a decade, this reduction surpasses the global Multidimensional Poverty Index.

In terms of **absolute figures**, the poverty rates calculated using the **Tendulkar and Rangarajan Committee** methods are lower than those estimated by the global MPI.

#### **What are issues with the multidimensional poverty index?**

As per **Expert Group to review the Methodology for Measuring Poverty (2014)**, there are issues regarding the **use of multiple indicators**.

It is due to the various complexities like **measurement challenges, the need for aggregation across indicators, and the availability of suitable data** at reasonably frequent intervals.

These matters should be scrutinized and evaluated. For example, the **child mortality indicator** is calculated for a **population group rather than individual households**. So, **aggregation of the 2 types of data is difficult**.

Ideally, these indicators should remain distinct. For instance, an indicator like access to safe drinking water shouldn't be combined with an indicator like child mortality.

It's entirely possible to analyse the **non-income indicators** like education, health, sanitation, alongside income or consumption poverty. But transforming all these indicators into a **single index** presents numerous challenges.

For most individuals, wealth or poverty is associated with **income levels**. The various **non-income poverty indicators** fundamentally reflect **insufficient income**.

Defining poverty in **terms of income** or, when income data is unavailable, in **terms of expenditure**, appears most suitable. This is the method followed by most **countries**.

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Official data on **consumer expenditure** beyond 2011-12 is lacking. It makes it difficult to compare trends with the **multidimensional poverty index**. The **consumption expenditure survey** conducted in 2017-18 has not been officially released.

In the absence of such data, several studies have been conducted on poverty using **indirect methods and data sources** like the **CMIE and PLFS**. It results in varying conclusions.

### What should be done?

Past surveys have clearly demonstrated a **substantial decrease in the poverty ratio** during periods of robust economic growth. However, in recent years, including the period affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the **growth rate** has diminished.

It's reasonable to suspect that the rate at which the **poverty ratio** is decreasing may have slowed down.

The current **consumption expenditure survey** is going on. To ensure consistency for comparison purposes, it's advisable to adopt a **single methodology**. Hence, awaiting the publication of the survey results is the most **prudent course** of action.

It is crucial to complement the **outcomes of consumption surveys** with an examination of the **influence of public expenditure** on health and education.

The **disparity in aggregated consumption** estimates between the **National Accounts Statistics (NAS) and the NSS data**. Such disparities are not unique to India.

This **discrepancy in India** has been widening over time. It has escalated to 53.1% in 2011-12.

The National Statistical Office should investigate this issue and propose **potential measures** to enhance **data collection** through both avenues.

### 64. Why is the Cauvery water sharing issue flaring up again?

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Why is the Cauvery water sharing issue flaring up again?**” published in “**The Hindu**” on **16th August 2023**.

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

**Relevance**: Issues related to river water disputes between states

**News**– Recently, the Tamil Nadu government approached the Supreme Court to make Karnataka immediately release 24,000 cusecs water from its reservoirs and ensure the availability of the specified quantity at Biligundlu on the inter-State border for the remainder of the month.

### How is the water being shared?

As per monthly schedule, Karnataka is obligated to provide Tamil Nadu with a **total volume of 177.25 TMC** during a standard water year spanning from June to May.

Out of this quantity, **123.14 TMC** is slated to be transferred from June to September.

The **Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) and Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC)** has been established to ensure the **enforcement** of the court's decision.

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### Why has T.N. approached the SC?

During its session on August 11, the CWMA expressed the need for Karnataka to release **10,000 cusecs of water** at Biligundlu for the next 15 days.

Karnataka would be required to provide **0.86 TMC of water daily or a total of 12.9 TMC over the 15-day period.**

Tamil Nadu was upset over Karnataka's rejection of its commitment during the CWRC meeting, which was set at **15,000 cusecs for a 15-day duration.**

Karnataka stated its intention to release **only 8,000 cusecs.**

### How has Karnataka responded?

Karnataka has argued that **decreased rainfall** in the **Cauvery catchment area** has resulted in **insufficient inflow** into its reservoirs.

As per data from the Meteorological Department Kodagu district is experiencing **rainfall deficit.** It is the source of the Cauvery river.

### What lies next?

The people of Tamil Nadu are eagerly anticipating Karnataka's **stand** over the decision made by the Authority.

The **current storage level** of Tamil Nadu's Mettur reservoir is **critically low.** This amount would only be **sufficient for around 10 days.** However, water will be required for at least one more month to sustain the ongoing **short-term crop, kuruvai.**

The **perspective of the Supreme Court** on this matter is yet to be determined. It remains uncertain how the Supreme Court will perceive the situation.

## 65. An Act to cement digital authoritarianism

**Source:** The post is based on the article "An Act to cement digital authoritarianism" published in "The Hindu" on 17th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – Indian Polity – Government Policies for various sectors

**Relevance:** Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023.

**News:** The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, also known as the Data Act, was enacted recently.

### Why are critics concerned about the law?

Critics are concerned that this law **undermines transparency and accountability** instead of protecting citizens' data.

They say that the law seems to **facilitate data collection** by the government and private entities rather than safeguarding personal information.

They argue that the law was shaped by the government's desire for **more control**, influenced by the belief that **technology can solve all problems.** But this ideology gives rise to increased surveillance and control.

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The state views data protection as being a nuisance to its digital programmes which is inherent in their architectural design.

Examples like the **Aarogya Setu app and the Smart Cities Mission** show how data privacy is overlooked in favor of technological expansion.

There are also more direct measures for surveillance, such as the plan for a **“social media communications hub” and a facial recognition system**. These projects can be given legal sanctity through exceptions in the Data Act.

Rather than protecting the ordinary citizen, the Act imposes **finances on marginalized groups** that might provide incomplete or incorrect information for their personal safety.

### Will the Act improve over time?

It has been argued that with experience, the Data Act will improve over time. But this argument ignores the **decline in democratic qualities in a digital India**.

Recent laws in India have led to the creation of databases that have **authoritarian undertones**, storing personal and family information of citizens.

The **Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act, 2022, and the Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Act, 2023**, both contribute to these databases.

All these legislative actions seem to align with a **broader pattern** that culminates in the Data Act, suggesting a move towards **greater state control over citizens' data and lives**.

### Is the Data Act a “light touch regulation”?

Labeling the Data Act as “light touch regulation” would be inaccurate because it provides for **vast and vague ministerial discretion**.

The Union Government holds the power to exempt specific companies or even entire classes of companies from adhering to regulations.

Additionally, the government can initiate complaints against these companies on its own to the Data Protection Board of India, a body it both forms and oversees.

### What will be the impact of the Data Act on the private sector?

The inspiration for the Data Act seems to be the **National Intelligence Law of China**, where the government can now demand any “such information as it may call for”.

This could lead to a scenario where **private companies consistently seek favor from government officials** for ambiguous compliance requirements.

This system may allow the **government to decide winners and losers** in India's digital market. This aligns with a trend of centralized state control.

These developments coincide with a **decline in global rankings for economic freedom** according to organizations like the Cato Institute's Human Freedom Index, the Heritage Foundation, and the Hudson Institute.

### What should be the way forward?

The concerns raised echo a warning from the Supreme Court about the need for a strong data protection framework to ensure citizens' liberty and dignity.

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India needs a more comprehensive solution to this digital authoritarianism, as the Data Act is just a symptom of a bigger problem.

### 66. Our criminal laws must Uphold gender justice

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Our criminal laws must Uphold gender justice**” published in the “**mint**” on **17th August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS2 – Indian Polity, GS1- Social empowerment

**News**– Recently, Parliament introduced three Bills transforming India’s criminal laws — the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita to replace the Indian Penal Code; the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita to replace the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Bharatiya Sakshya Bill to replace the Indian Evidence Act.

#### What are some positive aspects of these laws?

The government’s intention to modernize our criminal justice system is **understandable and commendable**.

The proposed revisions aim to bring key aspects of the system into the **digital age**, streamline the process of **filing complaints, expedite legal proceedings**, and introduce **community service as a penalty** for minor offenses.

The **foundational framework** of our existing penal code is over a century old. There is a need for **legal revisions**.

#### What are some women-centric concerns related to these Bills?

The consideration of women’s safety is of utmost importance. The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) introduces more **stringent and comprehensive provisions** for offenses against women and children. It dedicates an entire chapter to these matters.

In contrast, under the Indian Penal Code (IPC), such crimes are part of a **broader chapter on offenses “affecting the human body.”**

The **choice of words** and the tone adopted in the proposed changes within the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) exhibit a clear **dichotomy in their view of gender**. It upholds the idea of **preserving women’s honor** rather than **treating women as equals**.

**Marital rape** would only be considered a **criminal offense** if the wife is below the age of 18.

This outdated assumption that a married woman is the possession of her husband limits **women’s control** over their **sexual and reproductive rights**.

This is the case despite India’s efforts to strengthen laws against violence towards women and the Supreme Court’s engagement with petitions seeking to **criminalize marital rape**.

In specific instances, the language used in the text provides **insightful viewpoints**. For example, **Section 73 of the BNS** characterizes acts of assault as intending to “outrage her modesty.

These words reflect outdated ideas about **women’s behavior, morality, and transgression**. It lacks an emphasis on women’s rights.

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The Bills also do not provide **sufficient remedies** for men or non-binary individuals encountering similar violations.

Ambiguities in certain other sections require careful reevaluation. For instance, the inclusion of “deceitful means” in relation to marriage could introduce new uncertainties when determining culpability.

### 67. Why is Bihar’s caste-based survey facing legal challenges?

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Why is Bihar’s caste-based survey facing legal challenges?**” published in “**The Hindu**” on **17th August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS1- Social issues. GS2- Vulnerable sections of the population

**Relevance:** Issues related to river water disputes between states

**News**– The Supreme Court is set to hear on August 18, petitions challenging the Patna High Court’s verdict upholding the Bihar government’s ongoing caste survey.

#### What is the ‘caste-based survey’?

The State government has launched a **two-phase caste survey** in Bihar. It has stated that detailed information on **socio-economic conditions** would help create better government policies for disadvantaged groups.

The survey is estimated to collect socio-economic **data** for the population of Bihar. The first phase of the survey involves a **house listing exercise**.

In the second phase, data related to **castes, sub-castes, and religions** of all people is to be collected.

#### Why the need for a caste census?

The Census, conducted at the beginning of each decade, only captures **caste data** for those classified as Scheduled Castes.

Due to this limitation, there is no **accurate population estimate** available for Other Backward Classes (OBCs), various subgroups within the OBCs, and other castes.

Despite this lack of clarity, the central government has definitively rejected the idea of conducting a **socio-economic caste census**. It cites it as **impractical, administratively complex, and burdensome**.

In 2011, the Union government initiated a caste survey through the **Socio-Economic and Caste Census of 2011**. However, the raw data collected from around 1.3 billion Indians was never disclosed publicly due to **data inaccuracies**.

Political analysts view the recent step taken by the Bihar government as an effort by coalition parties to counter the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)’s **Hindutva-oriented politics** with a resurgence of **Mandal politics**.

On August 13, 1990, the V.P. Singh government declared its intention to implement the recommendations of the **Mandal Commission report**, which proposed a 27% reservation for Other Backward Classes.

The Mandal Commission had estimated the **OBC population at 52%**. Nevertheless, there is ongoing debate regarding the **accuracy of this estimate** in the present day.

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### Why is it being challenged?

As per petitions in the Supreme Court, the State's order announcing the survey is **unconstitutional**. It is due to the fact that the **exclusive authority** to conduct a census lies with the Centre as specified in the Constitution.

The State Government lacks the **independent jurisdiction** to appoint District Magistrates and local authorities for collecting data **without a notification** issued by the Centre under **Section 3 of the Census Act, 1948**.

The High Court's decision is flawed on the grounds that it contravenes the **Puttaswamy judgment**. It permits the State to gather **personal information through an executive order**.

### 68. Unhealthy prescription – On National Medical Commission's regulations

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Unhealthy prescription**” published in “**The Business Standard**” on **17th August 2023**.

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

**Relevance**: Regulatory issues in healthcare sector

**News**– The National Medical Commission's regulation has stipulated that doctors can prescribe only generic drugs, failing which they would be liable to be penalised.

### What are the issues related to the National Medical Commission's regulation on generic drugs?

The exclusive reliance on generic drugs will contribute to **weakening the nexus** between doctors and pharmaceutical companies. But, the new policy **alters the dynamics** by shifting power to chemists and pharmacies

Even with the new regulations in place, pharmacists could easily offer pricier **branded versions of prescribed drugs**. It can undermine the **intended goal of the policy**. This situation might strengthen the **existing ties** between pharmaceutical firms and pharmacy networks.

The **subpar monitoring standards** in the pharma sector have contributed to the proliferation of **sub-standard or counterfeit medicines**.

The **Indian Medical Association** asserts that only **0.1 percent of medicines** undergo **quality checks**. The recent scandal involving **contaminated children's cough syrups** supplied to Africa exemplifies the **lax enforcement of good manufacturing practices**.

Experts within the pharmaceutical sector acknowledge that there are **generic drugs** available on the market that have not undergone **proper bioequivalence studies** to assess their **effectiveness**.

Physicians are apprehensive that the **variable quality of generic medications** might compromise the **effectiveness** of their treatments. It could lead to **reputational damage**.

In medical institutions like hospitals and clinics, the risks could multiply if **subpar generic drugs** lead to **suboptimal outcomes**. In such situations, doctors may face **physical assault** from relatives of patients.

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### 69. New Bills and a principled course for criminal law reforms

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**New Bills and a principled course for criminal law reforms**” published in “**The Hindu**” on **17th August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – Functioning of Judiciary

**News**– Recently, Parliament introduced three Bills transforming India’s criminal laws — the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita to replace the Indian Penal Code; the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita to replace the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Bharatiya Sakshya Bill to replace the Indian Evidence Act.

#### **What are the challenges in reformation of criminal laws?**

Incorporating the **collective aspirations** of the public into criminal law reforms poses a significant challenge. **Balancing the divergent views** prevalent in society with the perspective of the state is necessary.

Criminal law functions as a mechanism for **upholding societal stability**. The deeply rooted **perceptions of individuals** involved in the criminal justice system, add complexity in reforming criminal laws.

The success or failure of criminal law reforms depends on their **inception, formulation, resilience, and foresightedness**.

The political leadership has consistently aimed to utilise criminal law as a **preemptive instrument**. Criminal law continues to be a **crucial strategic resource** for the state.

#### **Which points must be considered while reforming the criminal laws?**

The discourse surrounding the Bills should extend beyond **evaluating favourable or unfavourable results**. The core emphasis should be on emphasising that **fundamental principles of criminal jurisprudence** are maintained,

There is a need to assess the degree to which reforms cater to the **requirements and apprehensions** of those impacted by the criminal justice system.

The revised laws must achieve a **careful equilibrium** between **state security and the individual freedoms**

The **effectiveness of reforms** depends on their capacity to prevent **potential misuse** by those in **positions of authority**.

Adhering to **principles of criminalization** when introducing new offences is equally important. The underlying basis for the harm or legal offence caused by the **criminalised behaviour** requires thorough examination.

Criminal laws in India perpetuate **class divisions**. They favour the **wealthy and privilege** in accessing justice over **marginalised and vulnerable individuals**. Therefore, ensuring **principles of equality and fairness** is crucial in evaluating criminal law reform.

It is not appropriate to assume that the general population opposes **stringent measures** against terrorists or organised criminals. However, enhancing the **severity of laws** does not automatically restore **public confidence** in the criminal justice system.

The **effectiveness of reforms** depends on the criminal justice system’s capability to **implement them efficiently**.

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The impact of the reforms on the vulnerable, victims, and the underprivileged will also determine their **effectiveness**.

70. Housing for all – Addressing housing shortage in urban areas requires urgent, concerted efforts

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Housing for all – Addressing housing shortage in urban areas requires urgent, concerted efforts**” published in **The Hindu** on **17<sup>th</sup> August 2023**.

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

**Relevance:** About the proposed housing scheme

**News:** The PM recently introduced a scheme for urban poor housing while PMAY-U was extended until December 2024. This raises concerns about PMAY-U’s goal achievement.

### **What are the concerns with Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U)?**

In the last eight years since the launch of PMAY-U, only two-thirds of the sanctioned houses were either completed or handed over.

Central assistance has been limited to 24.4%, with 16% from States and urban local bodies; the remaining 60% is to be borne by beneficiaries.

Out of the initially projected ₹8.31 lakh crore investment for 1.23 crore houses, the burden of ₹4.95 lakh crore falls on the beneficiaries, who are primarily the urban poor.

Hence, in such a situation a new scheme should include provisions that benefit the beneficiaries and are better than PMAY-U.

**Read More: PM announces new housing scheme for urban poor; low interest rate loans on offer and Cabinet approves continuation of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U) – “Housing for All” Mission up to 31st December 2024**

### **What provisions can be included in the proposed new housing scheme?**

In the suggested plan, the beneficiaries’ portion would be reduced to around 40%, due to their limited income.

Moreover, the Parliamentary Committee’s recommendations for PMAY-U should guide the new housing scheme’s design.

The Committee proposed moving away from uniform and fixed assistance and adopting flexibility based on factors like topography. Investigating causes behind poor housing quality and unoccupancy is also advised.

### **What is the way ahead?**

Expensive land, restricted floor space, and numerous certifications from various agencies impact urban housing success.

Hence, to address this, the central government should facilitate discussions involving State governments, local bodies, urban planners, professionals, financial institutions, and activists.

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### 71. Illegal, irrational, unconstitutional: The problem with recent suspensions of MPs

**Source:** The post is based on the article “Illegal, irrational, unconstitutional: The problem with recent suspensions of MPs” published in “The Indian Express” on 18th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Parliament and State Legislatures – structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these.

**News:** In this article author discusses the rules for suspending members from India’s Parliament if they disrupt its proceedings. Recently, suspensions, including key leaders, have been longer than usual, going against traditional norms and rules. These extended suspensions are controversial and might be unconstitutional. The author suggests finding better solutions to manage disagreements in Parliament.

#### What are the methods of suspending members from India’s Parliament?

##### Process of Suspending in Lok Sabha:

In the Lok Sabha, members causing disruptions can be suspended under Rule 374. When a member consistently obstructs business or shows disregard to the Chair’s authority, the Chair has the right to name them.

Once the member is named, the government introduces a motion for their suspension. If the motion passes, the member gets suspended.

For example, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, the leader of the Congress party, was recently suspended using this method.

##### Process of Suspending in Rajya Sabha:

In the Rajya Sabha, a similar procedure is followed under Rule 256. The Chair identifies any member causing undue disruptions. Following this, a motion is presented to the House for their suspension. If the House approves the motion, the member is suspended.

Recent instances include the suspensions of members like Sanjay Singh and Raghav Chadha.

##### Rule Used for Suspending:

Rules of the Houses of Parliament are framed under Article 118 of the Constitution and these can operate only subject to the provisions of the Constitution.

The standard procedure under both rules (374 and 256) dictates that suspension should typically last until the end of the ongoing session.

#### What are the implications of suspending members from India’s Parliament?

**Disruption to Proceedings:** Members can’t participate, potentially hindering legislative work.

**Legal Implications:** In 2022, the Supreme Court, in the Ashish Shelar vs Maharashtra Legislative Assembly case, declared suspensions beyond rule-prescribed periods unconstitutional. The plea of procedural irregularities under Article 122 was rejected. It was seen as substantial illegality, not just procedural error.

**Deviation from Rules:** Recent cases like those of Sanjay Singh, Raghav Chadha, and Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury show suspensions extending beyond typical limits or pending investigations, against traditional norms.

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**Challenge to Democracy:** Over-reliance on suspensions might stifle opposition voices, affecting democratic discussions.

**Need for Conflict Resolution:** Such suspensions highlight the need for better methods to handle disagreements in Parliament.

### What actions should be taken?

**Adhere to Established Rules:** Parliament should strictly follow Rules 374 (Lok Sabha) and 256 (Rajya Sabha) when suspending members.

**Avoid Extended Suspensions:** Suspensions should not exceed the ongoing session's duration. Cases like Sanjay Singh's extended suspension go against this principle.

**Review Recent Changes:** The recent indefinite suspensions, like that of Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, should be revisited to ensure they align with constitutional norms.

**Seek Judicial Guidance:** Referring to the Ashish Shelar vs Maharashtra Legislative Assembly (2022) decision can help clarify suspension durations' legality.

**Promote Dialogue:** Political leaders should prioritize dialogue over suspensions to address disagreements in Parliament.

### 72. Forest Rights Act in Jammu and Kashmir: A transformation in the making

**Source:** The post is based on the article "Forest Rights Act in Jammu and Kashmir: A transformation in the making" published in "The Indian Express" on 18th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- mechanisms, laws, institutions and bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of the vulnerable sections

**News:** In this article author discusses the Forest Rights Act (FRA) in Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) and its importance for tribal communities. J&K took longer to implement FRA, which recognizes tribal rights over forests. Since 2021, efforts have been made to grant these rights, but challenges remain.

### About India's tribal population

#### 2011 Census:

India's tribal population estimated at 104.5 million.

Tribals constitute 8.6% of the country's total population.

#### Jammu and Kashmir Tribes:

Tribes make up about 12% of J&K's population.

Ethnic migratory pastoral population stands at 612,000.

Major tribes: Gujjars, Bakerwals, Gaddi, Sippi, Dard-Shin, and Bot.

These communities rely on livestock husbandry and biannual migration.

### About Forest Rights Act (FRA)

Forest Rights Act (FRA) recognizes tribal rights over forests.

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Originally enacted in 2006, implemented in 2008.

Jammu & Kashmir began FRA implementation in 2021.

Since September 2021 to May 2023, 4,500 titles issued in J&K.

60,000 families in J&K benefited.

### **What are the benefits of the Forest Rights Act (FRA) in Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) for tribal communities?**

- **Land and Resource Rights:**

Acknowledges tribal communities' rights over forests.

Over 4,500 titles issued from September 2021 to May 2023.

60,000 families in J&K have accessed forest land/resources.

44.59% of the 9,423 claimants given titles for community forest resources.

December 2022 policy allows tribes to use non-timber forest produce.

- **Access to Services and Infrastructure:**

FRA facilitates services like healthcare, education, energy, and connectivity.

Tribes can avail essential services improving overall well-being.

- **Community Empowerment and Participation:**

Stresses on a community-led approach.

Only 7.43% of claims declined at higher administrative levels.

Acts against historic deprivation and exclusion faced by tribal communities.

- **Addressing Unique Tribal Challenges:**

Safeguards interests and seasonal migrations of J&K's large migratory pastoral population.

Efforts in place to support tribes with low literacy rates and socio-cultural challenges.

### **What challenges exist in implementing the Forest Rights Act (FRA) in Jammu & Kashmir (J&K)?**

- **Documentation Difficulties:**

Low disposal rate of individual rights shows many can't prove eligibility.

More than 92.57% of rejected claims declined by the Gram Sabha.

Tribes face challenges in producing required records.

- **Geographic and Lifestyle Barriers:**

The unique migratory pattern of tribes complicates FRA implementation.

Difficult terrains and geographical barriers in J&K pose challenges.

- **Literacy and Socio-Cultural Issues:**

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Low literacy rates hinder understanding and use of FRA: less than 50% among the tribal population, and just 16.74% among migratory tribes.

Local socio-cultural nuances can complicate the act's adoption.

- **Community Participation:**

Absence of strong leadership from within the community.

Gram Sabha, with tribal members, declined a significant number of claims, pointing to potential internal community disagreements or lack of understanding.

- **Outsider Perception:**

Many who overlooked the deprivation of rights in J&K questioned the delay in rights conferment after the FRA rollout, showing a lack of long-term engagement.

### What steps should be taken?

**Empower from Within:** Promote community-led FRA implementation to ensure tribal engagement.

**Education and Awareness:** Address low literacy rates (less than 50% among tribes, 16.74% among migratory tribes) with literacy and FRA-awareness programs.

**Streamlined Documentation:** Simplify the process for tribes to prove eligibility and claim rights.

**Capacity Building:** Strengthen the Gram Sabha's understanding of FRA, given 92.57% of rejected claims happened at this level.

**Robust Outreach:** The Tribal Affairs Department, NGOs, and youth groups should intensify efforts, ensuring tribes understand and utilize their rights.

**Address Socio-Cultural Barriers:** Recognize and accommodate unique migratory patterns and socio-cultural challenges of tribes.

### 73. Faizan Mustafa writes: New penal code falls short of its laudable objectives

**Source:** The post is based on the article "Faizan Mustafa writes: New penal code falls short of its laudable objectives" published in "The Indian Express" on 18th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Parliament (Law and Justice)

**News:** In this article author discusses recent changes in the Indian Penal Code, highlighting the updated definitions, the removal of some terms, and the introduction of new provisions. They critique some revisions, emphasizing the need for clearer definitions and alignment with modern legal standards and constitutional values.

### What is the importance of criminal law?

Importance of Criminal Law:

- **Instrument of Safety:** Criminal law ensures the safety and well-being of citizens by deterring and penalizing harmful actions.
- **Reflection of State-Citizen Relationship:** It is a direct representation of how the state interacts with its citizens, indicating the nature and priorities of governance.

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- **Community Impact:** Beyond individual consequences, criminal law affects the entire community's harmony and order.
- **Constitutional Vision:** Ideally, criminal law should align with a nation's constitutional principles, upholding rights and ensuring justice for all.

### What recent updates have been made in the Indian Penal Code of 1860?

- **Revised Definitions:** The new code has revised some definitions. For instance, it has broadened definitions in cases like rape.
- **Sedition:** The term "sedition" is removed, but its scope has broadened through terms like "subversive activities". No definition of subversive activities given in the code.
- **Death Penalty:** The death penalty remains, with added provisions for cases like the rape of a minor.
- **Adultery Modifications:** The offense of adultery has been reframed to address cases where sex occurs on the false promise of marriage or other deceitful assurances.
- **Mob Lynching:** There's a new provision to punish mob lynching by groups of five or more, though the term "mob lynching" isn't used.
- **New Penalties:** For specific crimes, community service has been introduced as a potential punishment, especially for first-time offenders in minor offenses.
- **Forensic Emphasis:** The code now includes provisions emphasizing the importance of forensic investigations in major crimes.

### What are the issues with these new updates?

- **Ambiguous Definitions:** Despite revisions, some terms remain unclear. The distinction between "culpable homicide" and "murder" is still not well-defined.
- **Sedition Ambiguity:** While the term "sedition" was removed, introducing terms like "subversive activities" without clear definitions can lead to misuse.
- **Controversial Death Penalty:** The retention of the death penalty, especially for the rape of a minor, reflects a belief in dated ideas of retribution and deterrence.
- **Gender Neutrality Absent:** Despite aims for gender-neutrality, the crime of cruelty remains gender-specific. The new code also fails to recognize marital rape as an offense.
- **Incomplete Hate Speech Provisions:** Sections 153A and 153B, dealing with hate speech, saw no substantial improvements, leaving gaps in addressing this crucial issue.
- **Conspiracy Concerns:** The current provision on criminal conspiracy can penalize individuals merely for agreeing to commit an offense, even if no action follows. This approach, inherited from colonial times, can potentially punish mere intentions, raising concerns about its misuse against political or social activists.
- **Blasphemy:** Retaining the blasphemy law places India alongside countries with restrictive views on freedom of expression.
- **Adultery Reappearance:** The revised code brings back the offense of adultery in a new form, potentially infringing on personal liberties.

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74. Licence To Skill – GOI's scheme for craftspeople is a good idea but its success critically depends on finding markets

**Source:** The post is based on the article “Licence To Skill – GOI's scheme for craftspeople is a good idea but its success critically depends on finding markets” published in **The Times of India** on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2023.

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

**Relevance:** concerns with the PM Vishwakarma Scheme.

**News:** Recently, the government came up with the PM Vishwakarma Scheme.

### What is the PM Vishwakarma Scheme?

**Read Here:** ‘Vishwakarma scheme will aid 30 lakh artisan families

It provides ₹13,000 crore over 5 years as concessional loans, mainly benefiting OBCs. Craftspeople with the relevant documents will be eligible for a loan of up to Rs 3 lakh.

### What are the challenges with the scheme?

**Market Access:** The scheme focuses on preserving family-based traditional skills. However, **the main obstacle is accessing markets because** traditional practices often can't match modern costs.

Hence, to be economically effective, the scheme needs to connect these skills to market value chains.

**Modern Job Skills:** The scheme's soft loan approach will benefit many involved in traditional jobs, but India's economic progress requires modern job skills.

Modern sectors align with the aspirations of young individuals from families with traditional occupations. However, **Vishwakarma's approach isn't sufficient** to create a workforce for a modern economy.

### What can be the way ahead?

Preserving traditional skills is important for India's cultural heritage. Hence, **India could learn from Japan's way of** using fiscal resources and laws to keep their traditional skills alive while becoming a developed country.

Vishwakarma can support traditional craftspeople, but its success in the long run will depend on making a market where they don't have to compete solely based on lower costs.

75. Poverty declines, but battle not over

**Source–** The post is based on the article “Poverty declines, but battle not over” published in “**The Business Standard**” on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Issues related to poverty

**Relevance:** Measurement of poverty

**News–** The latest poverty numbers from the multidimensional poverty index (MDPI) for India for showed that about 415 million people have come out of poverty between 2005-06 and

2019-21.

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### What are some facts about MDPI?

The MDPI encompasses **health, education, and standard of living**. It utilizes the Alkire-Foster methodology for measurement.

The **standard of living** aspect considers factors such as housing, cooking fuel, sanitation, drinking water, and assets, excluding income. Therefore, it doesn't rely on data from the National Sample Survey.

In India, maternal health and access to banking have been incorporated as **additional indicators** in the MDPI.

MDPI provides a comprehensive understanding of the nature of poverty, especially in a diverse country like India. Relying solely on **measures of income poverty** can be problematic.

### What are some significant revelation from the survey?

The outcomes of the MDPI reveal **significant progress** in poverty reduction, particularly in rural regions.

During the period between 2005-06 and 2015-16, around **280 million individuals** emerged from poverty. 135 million people escaped poverty from 2015-16 to 2019-21.

There has been a **more rapid reduction** in poverty within **economically disadvantaged states**

There has also been a **marked decrease in poverty** in Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

The situation varies significantly across different parts of the country. Rajasthan demonstrated notable progress in terms of **years of schooling and school attendance**, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana did not fare as well.

Rajasthan faced challenges in terms of **access to cooking fuel**, along with several other states like MP, Bihar, UP, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Assam, Odisha, and Haryana.

**Sanitation improvements** played a significant role in poverty reduction in economically disadvantaged states like Bihar, UP, MP, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh.

States like UP, Bihar, Jharkhand, and Assam showed improvements in **electricity connections**, with Meghalaya lagging behind in this aspect.

Access to proper housing exhibited **minimal improvements** across most states in the country, indicating that a review of the PM Awas Yojana might be necessary.

**Nutrition** remains a significant issue in India, with insufficient progress seen in most states.

**Significant disparities** also exist among districts in addressing poverty. For instance, in Bihar, some districts have shown **substantial improvements**. However, districts continue to struggle in their anti-poverty endeavors.

Among the districts that witnessed the largest decline in poverty between 2015-16 and 2019-21 are Kalahandi (Odisha), Alirajpur and Barwani (MP), Udaipur and Barmer (Rajasthan), Maharajganj and Gonda (UP), and Dang (Gujarat).

The sole district where poverty increased was **Bijapur (Chhattisgarh)**.

### Way forward-

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There is need to **implement national programs** effectively at the district and municipal levels.

India still has the largest number of impoverished individuals globally, around 230 million in 2019-21. There is need to **enhance their nutrition** through improved **meal programs** in Anganwadis and schools.

The COVID-19 pandemic might have further **increased poverty**. It has pushed **300 million people in poverty**.

The **MDPI indicators** provide valuable insights on where to intensify the battle against poverty. The struggle against poverty cannot be won solely through a **top-down approach**. It demands a **concerted bottom-up endeavor**.

### 76. Is there a need to replace the IPC, the CrPC and the Evidence Act?

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Is there a need to replace the IPC, the CrPC and the Evidence Act?**” published in “**The Hindu**” on **18th August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Polity.

**Relevance:** Important Bills and Acts

**News**– Recently, three Bills were introduced in the Lok Sabha- the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita Bill to replace the Indian Penal Code, 1860, the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita Bill to replace the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 and the Bharatiya Sakshya Bill to replace the Indian Evidence Act, 1872.

### Why is there a need for change in criminal laws?

Indian Penal Code (IPC), the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) and the Indian Evidence Act were fully utilised in the **criminal justice system**. But, they did not reflect the **changing values and the democratic aspirations of the people**.

The entire **socio-economic scenario and political system** ever since the IPC was enacted in 1860 have changed.

In the IPC, 175 sections have been amended, **eight new sections** have been added and **22 sections** have been repealed to generate the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita Bill.

### What are issues with the Bill?

**Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita Bill**– There are issues in the bill regarding the time duration to keep someone in detention without being charged.

Earlier the **detention time** in India was 60 days. The new Bill proposes 90 days.

The new CrPC also seems to give a lot of **discretionary powers** to the police, like the ‘**right to handcuff**’.

There is to arrest women after sunset in **exceptional circumstances**, and to use any force and means necessary when arresting a person. That could **legitimise encounters** and all kinds of violence.

As per Supreme Court in the **D.K. Basu vs State of West Bengal (1996) case**, people should not be handcuffed.

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**Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita Bill**– There is substantial **alteration in the numbering of several critical sections**. For instance, **Section 302** of the IPC is set to become **Section 101**, and **Section 420** will be renumbered as **Section 316**.

These sections have been deeply ingrained in the **public consciousness** for the past 164 years of the IPC's existence.

The modification in these **numerical designations** will lead to significant challenges in maintaining **accurate documentation** within the National Crime Records Bureau and the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems.

A **separate chapter** is dedicated to **sexual offenses**. But, it is limited to those committed against women. The government seems to have overlooked sexual offenses involving men against men or women against women.

### What are some significant provisions of the Bills?

**Instances of violence and detentions** without charges persist as before. The Bills endorse, **legitimize, and formalize** these practices.

Key sections have been reorganized, resulting in increased ambiguity and confusion. For instance, the Bill replaces sedition with the term **subversive activities**. It introduces significant vagueness.

The new Bills provide their own definitions of terrorist acts, despite the presence of **specialized legislation** such as the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

Furthermore, causing damage to property is now included within the scope of a **terrorist act**. Another section addresses the **provocation and intimidation** of the government. Practically anything could be perceived as provocation and classified as a terrorist act.

**Mob lynching** is now classified as an offense. More **stringent penalties** have been suggested for crimes against women.

The **concept of Love Jihad**, defined as 'concealing one's identity before marriage' in the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita Bill, has been established as a **separate offense**.

### 77. Gaps in Births and Deaths Registration (Amendment) Act

**Source**– The post is based on the article **“Gaps in Births and Deaths Registration (Amendment) Act”** published in **“The Hindu”** on **18th August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Polity

**Relevance:** Important Bills and Acts

**News**– Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Bill, 2023 has been passed by Parliament and has got the assent of the President of India.

### What are significant provisions of the Bill?

The Bill makes it compulsory that the Registrar General of India maintains a **national level database of births and deaths**.

The **Chief Registrar of births and deaths** in every State is required to maintain a **State-level database** of registered births and deaths 'using the **portal approved by the Registrar General of India**'.

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These databases will provide **information to update** the National Population Register, the Aadhaar database, electoral rolls, ration card, passport, and other databases at the national level, as may be notified.

In the case of birth, the amendments provide for collecting the **Aadhaar number** of the parents. Nothing is mentioned about the Aadhaar number of the deceased.

The amendments mandate that for all deaths within medical institutions, a **cause of death certificate** must be forwarded to the Registrar of Births and Deaths. A copy should be provided to the closest relative.

In cases of deaths that transpire outside of hospitals, the medical practitioner who attended to the deceased during their recent illness is responsible for **issuing this certificate**.

### What are some facts about central and State databases of births and deaths?

The responsibility of **managing the registration** lies with State governments. The Registrar General of India's role is to **coordinate and unify** the registration system.

The Registrar General of India will now also oversee the **maintenance of the central database, alongside the existing functions**.

The Chief Registrars in the States are tasked with maintaining **efficient databases** to facilitate the issuance of **birth and death certificates**.

The national-level database will primarily consist of **State-level databases**, with the possibility of slight deviations to **accommodate additional data elements** that certain States may incorporate.

### What are issues relating to the creation of a national-level database?

The proposal suggests that the central-level database should be **accessible to authorities** managing databases for population registers, electoral rolls, Aadhaar numbers, ration cards, passports, driving licences, property registrations, as notified.

If these entities need to **access information** from the registered births and deaths database, they would be required to make **modifications to the laws or executive orders** that oversee their **respective databases**.

The **Registration of Births and Deaths (RBD) Act** only requires a provision enabling the **sharing of information** from the database.

Introducing a specific collection of databases for **parliamentary evaluation**, while also permitting potential future incorporations by the government, could be perceived as undermining the **supremacy of Parliament**.

The **subsequent inclusions** to this list might raise more **significant concerns** than those originally approved by the legislative body.

### What are the issues with the provision related to medical practitioners issuing death certificates?

Firstly, the attending medical practitioner might not always have arrived at a **definite diagnosis** before the person's passing.

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Secondly, the forms used for recording the cause of death adhere to **World Health Organization guidelines**.

If the deceased was under the care of a practitioner from the **AYUSH systems** of medicine, the recorded cause of death might not be applicable for **cause of death statistics** due to **non-classifiable under the International Classification of Diseases**.

Thirdly, a person undergoing treatment for a particular ailment could die from an entirely **different cause** outside of a medical facility, where the attending medical practitioner wasn't available for consultation.

In such cases, expecting the practitioner to issue a cause of death certificate becomes **problematic**.

Fourthly, while **Section 17 of the Act** prohibits the **inclusion of the cause of death** in any certificate issued under the Act, it now stipulates that the cause of death certificate should be furnished to the deceased's relative.

These provisions appear **contradictory**, as the cause of death entered in the death register is derived from the very **cause of death certificate** issued by the medical practitioner.

### 78. Word choice in data protection law, a dilution of rights

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Word choice in data protection law, a dilution of rights**” published in “**The Hindu**” on **18th August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Polity

**Relevance:** Important Bills and Acts

**News**– India finally has a data protection law, called the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023.

#### **What are provision in data protection law related to consent for providing their data?**

The enduring dilemma in data protection lies in establishing the **criteria for consent**. There are concerns related to individuals providing a **genuine choice** when their data is utilized.

The legislation includes two relevant clauses.

As per one provision, individual must be **properly informed** about the details of your consent. Only **clear positive signal** from the individual part will be **interpreted as consent**.

However, this provision is counterbalanced by a second one. It allows **data usage** if you have “**voluntarily provided**” the data and have not **indicated non-consent**.

If you have “not indicated” refusal, governmental bodies and corporations might presume your consent for **diverse uses** without formally notifying you.

This **lack of clarity** will **create confusion** in legal proceedings as well as uncertainty in business circles regarding the correct benchmark for obtaining consent.

#### **What are issues related to consent provision in new data protection law?**

Obtaining consent may not always be feasible for the **utilization of personal data**.

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For example, an individual's decisions regarding their data could hinder various **public operations** like identity verification, targeting welfare benefits, and enforcing laws.

In previous versions of law, personal data can be used without consent only if it was **"essential"** for a specific purpose related to **legitimate state functions, fulfilling legal obligations, and addressing emergencies**.

The data custodian had to establish that there were **no viable alternatives** to collecting and utilizing the information in the **specified manner**.

The 2023 legislation allows for **data processing** without consent when it is **"for" rather than "necessary for" certain legitimate purposes**.

This slight alteration in wording can have a substantial effect on the **actual level of protection offered**. **Privacy issues** will be there.

When the data undergoes processing without your consent, individual will not receive any **notification** of this occurrence. He will not have the opportunity to **rectify incorrect data or remove unnecessary information** afterward.

Data collected for one **non-consensual purpose** can be freely utilized for other purposes. This is in contrast to the stance of the Supreme Court of India. It has recognized principles like **necessity and purpose limitation** as integral to the **right to informational privacy**.

### 79. The power of an acronym

**Source:** The post is based on the article "The power of an acronym" published in "Business standard" on 19th August 2023.

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

**News:** In this article author discusses the evolution and relevance of the BRICS group, highlighting its inconsistencies and China's increasing influence, and questions India's position given its differing interests and relationships compared to other BRICS nations.

#### **About evolution of BRICS.**

**Origin:** Coined by Goldman Sachs, representing Brazil, Russia, India, and China as future dominant economies.

**Performance:** China and India thrived, entering top five economies. Russia and Brazil lagged; Russia isn't in the top 10 anymore.

**Addition of South Africa:** Diluted the initial economic focus, as its economy is much smaller.

#### **Initiatives by BRICS:**

BRICS nations hold regular summits to discuss collaboration.

One significant achievement is the "BRICS bank", established to support development projects, though its impact has been limited.

Proposals were made for a dedicated data cable to ensure secure communication, but progress has been slow.

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New currency arrangements were discussed to challenge the dominance of the dollar, but haven't been implemented.

### What is the relevance of BRICS in today's world?

**Economic Clout:** China and India are now among the top five economies, highlighting BRICS' economic significance.

**Alternative Voice:** BRICS is seen as a potential counter to Western-dominated global structures.

**Developmental Initiatives:** The establishment of the "BRICS bank" aims to support developmental projects.

**Diplomatic Platform:** Over 40 developing countries have shown interest in joining, suggesting its growing diplomatic importance.

### How is China influencing BRICS?

**Push for Expansion:** China is advocating for an increase in BRICS membership. They're keen to have more countries join, extending the group's reach.

**Diplomatic Strategy:** With limited regional allies like North Korea, Cambodia, and Myanmar, China sees BRICS as a way to gain broader diplomatic support.

**Countering Western Influence:** China aims to use BRICS as a platform to challenge and break Western dominance in global affairs.

**Engagement with Other Groups:** BRICS has initiated talks with the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, a China-dominated group, furthering China's influence within BRICS.

**Potential Data Control:** China's involvement in the proposed BRICS data cable raises concerns about its ability to access and control communication, given its technological prowess.

### Where does India stand?

**Economic Performance:** India has prospered, now ranking among the top five global economies.

**Relationship with China:** India has an adversarial relationship with China, blocking imports, investments, and market access for Chinese technologies.

**Diplomatic Challenges:** Many countries seeking BRICS membership, like Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, and UAE, pose diplomatic issues for India. Blocking them could strain relations.

**Membership Criteria:** India advocates for clear criteria for new BRICS members, highlighting the existing inconsistencies within the group.

**Alignment with Western Nations:** India is increasingly aligned with Europe and the US in defense, technology, and people movement, contrasting with China and Russia's stances.

**Political System:** India's political system is more open than China's or Russia's, potentially leading to differences in governance perspectives within BRICS.

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### 80. The custody question

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**The custody question**” published in “**The Indian Express**” on **19th August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Polity.

**Relevance:** Important Bills and Acts

**News**– The central government has introduced **three Bills in the Lok Sabha to reform criminal law**: The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 to replace the Indian Penal Code, 1860, the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 to replace the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 and the Bharatiya Sakshya Bill, 2023 to replace the Indian Evidence Act, 1872.

#### **What are some positive changes introduced by Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023?**

The **entire lifecycle** of a new case, starting from the first information report will now be **documented online** using **digital recordkeeping**.

This transition will greatly enhance the security of case records and enable faster access when needed.

When searches are conducted in our residences and items are seized, these actions must be accompanied by **mandatory video recording**. It safeguards against the **planting of evidence** and can be utilised by the defence to contest alleged seizures.

The Protection Code also includes the **concept of a “zero FIR.”** This type of FIR is filed when a police station receives a complaint about an alleged offence that falls under the jurisdiction of another police station.

In this scenario, the original police station initiates the FIR and subsequently transfers it to the **appropriate police station** for further investigation.

#### **What are the concerning aspects of the bill?**

Protection Code allows **trials in absentia** under **specific circumstances**. This occurs when the judge is convinced that the **physical presence** of the accused in court is unnecessary or when the accused persistently disrupts the court proceedings.

The broad discretion granted to judges in determining the presence of the accused opens the door to **potential misuse** of this provision.

Protection Code authorises magistrates to approve **extended periods of detention** in police custody. It surpasses the current 15-day limit and extends up to 90 days.

This **prolonged detention** up to 90 days is applicable to **offences punishable by death, life imprisonment, or imprisonment for a minimum of 10 years**.

The Protection Code allows individuals to be held in police custody for a maximum of 60 days. It is for “**other offences**” that carry **shorter prison sentences** than those outlined for the 90-day detainment offences.

**Prolonged detention** is detrimental to **fundamental rights** such as the **right to life, health and a fair trial**.

Ninety days of **uninterrupted police custody** would make any accused highly susceptible to **coercion and intimidation**.

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### 81. Mediation Bill: An incomplete settlement

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Mediation Bill: An incomplete settlement**” published in “**The Indian Express**” on **18th August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Polity.

**Relevance:** Important Bills and Acts

**News**– On August 1, the Mediation Bill, 2021 was passed by the Rajya Sabha.

#### What are some positive aspects of the Bill?

The Bill has reduced the **mediation period from 180 to 90 days**. It has transformed the **pre-litigation mediation** from **obligatory to voluntary**. It was also highly necessary, considering that **voluntariness** constitutes an **essential principle of mediation**.

The support for the **validation and implementation** of settlement agreements stemming from mediation is the right step. It aligns seamlessly with the **United Nations Convention on International Settlement Agreements Resulting from Mediation**.

#### What are the concerning aspects of the Bill?

There are limited grounds listed in the Bill to challenge the **enforcement of a settlement agreement** and a **period of 90 days** is given to raise the challenge. It needs a relook.

A settlement agreement is essentially a contract between the parties. Sometimes, **grounds for challenging** are detected at a later stage.

There are also some **technical flaws**. **Clause 8 of the Bill** entitles a party to move the Court, before the commencement or during mediation, for interim relief, only in “**exceptional circumstances**”.

The phrase “**exceptional circumstances**” is **lacking in definition** within the Bill. It also deviates from the established norms of seeking **interim relief in civil courts**.

Moreover, there is no **remedy of appeal** available against an order passed under this proposed section. Even our **arbitration regime** provides an **appellate recourse**.

The Bill introduces the concepts of “**online**” and “**community**” mediation. A recent **Niti Aayog report** reveals that only 55% of India have **access to the internet** and only 27% possess compatible devices.

As for **community mediation**, the Bill makes it mandatory to have a **panel of three mediators**. This requirement is **unnecessary** and impacts the **flexibility** that mediation brings.

Government is the **biggest litigant** in the country. Limiting the government’s willingness to engage in mediation processes solely to “**commercial disputes**” contradicts the intent behind the legislation.

#### Way forward-

The standing committee has recommended that government-related disputes be included in the Bill. The Bill provided a golden opportunity to the government to change that perception.

This will inspire **confidence amongst all stakeholders** and help in reducing the **pendency of backlog**.

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Mediation should be promoted as a **preferred and voluntary mode** of securing justice. The Bill is **prescriptive**. The regular individual will now need **additional guidance and support** to attain justice.

For online mediation, there is a need to scale the **bandwidth accessibility** to remote parts of the country. Setting up **legal aid or access to justice clinics** with adequate IT infrastructure could address this issue.

### 82. A 'fab' way to conduct India-Japan tech diplomacy

**Source:** The post is based on the article “A ‘fab’ way to conduct India-Japan tech diplomacy” published in **The Hindu** on **19<sup>th</sup> August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – International Relations

**Relevance:** India and Japan agreement on semiconductor technology

**News:** In July 2023, India and Japan reached an agreement to cooperate on semiconductor technology.

#### What is the agreement about?

The collaboration aims to establish a stronger supply chain for semiconductors and jointly develop the semiconductor ecosystem.

The partnership will focus on five areas: **1)** semiconductor design, **2)** manufacturing, **3)** equipment research, **4)** establishing resilience in the semiconductor supply chain, and **5)** talent development.

The partnership encourages sharing technical knowledge, research, and innovation between Indian and Japanese semiconductor industries, keeping Japan and India at the forefront of semiconductor progress.

The partnership aims for technology transfer, semiconductor research collaboration, and reciprocal trade. **It also prioritizes human resource development through** skill exchange programs, workshops, and training.

#### What measures have been taken by both countries in promoting semiconductor technology?

Both countries support semiconductor manufacturing and research through their policies. **India’s “Make in India” and Japan’s “Society 5.0” share self-reliance and innovation-driven growth goals.**

Both countries value semiconductors for innovation, growth, and security.

**Japan leads in chip production, while India’s IT sector is growing with increasing demand for semiconductors.** This provides a solid foundation for their partnership.

**Must Read:** [On the India and Japan relationship and challenges from geopolitical issues](#)

#### What is the significance of this partnership?

**Tackling Technological Challenges:** India-Japan partnership holds a key role in shaping the global semiconductor landscape. Their collaboration addresses evolving tech challenges like miniaturization, AI, and quantum computing.

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**Diversification:** In January 2023, Japan and the Netherlands joined the U.S. to restrict chip material exports to China, affecting Japanese chip firms. Thus, the India collaboration becomes vital for Japan in diversifying the semiconductor industry.

**Supply Chain Challenges:** Geopolitical tensions and supply chain issues underscore the need for diverse semiconductor supply chains and global cooperation.

Hence, collaborative research efforts help in pooling resources to tackle complex semiconductor challenges, driving innovation and solutions.

**Unity Among Indo-Pacific Partners:** This partnership comes after a recent US-India technological alliance which supports the development of interconnected semiconductor ecosystems.

Hence, **bilateral agreements with India by the US and Japan showcase unity among Indo-Pacific partners in critical technology**, reflecting shared geostrategic and security interests.

### What can be the way ahead?

**The agreements demonstrate Quad countries' trust in India**, highlighting India's semiconductor growth.

Hence, **agreement between India and Japan holds significance as it would combine** Japan's tech skill and India's innovation, fostering advanced electronics, connectivity, and shared technology progress.

### 83. "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.

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**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.

### 84. The Katchatheevu controversy

**Source:** The post is based on the article **“The Katchatheevu controversy” published in The Hindu on 21<sup>st</sup> 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 Katchatheevu?

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

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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 Katchatheevu?

Sri Lanka claimed Katchatheevu 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 Katchatheevu 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 Kachchatheevu 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.

**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.

### 85. 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.

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**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.

### 86. 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.

### 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.

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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.

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?'**

### 87. 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.

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### 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**.

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**.

### 88. 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.

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**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.

**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**.

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89. 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**.

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-**

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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**.

90. “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:

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**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:

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.

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91. “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”.

### 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.

92. “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.

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### 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.

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.

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**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.

### 93. 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.

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**.

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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-

**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**.

### 94. 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 **23<sup>rd</sup> 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](#)

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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 Jayalithaa 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.

### 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.**

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### 95. 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.

#### 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.

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### 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.

### 96. 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.

### 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.

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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**.

### 97. 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 **24<sup>th</sup> 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.

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.

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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.

**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.

98. [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.

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**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.

**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.

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### 99. 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.

**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.

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### 100. 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.

##### 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.

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

### 101. 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](#)

### **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.

### 102. 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.

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**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.

**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.

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**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.

### 103. 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.

#### **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.

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**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**.

### 104. The dopiness Bharat NCAP cannot solve

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

**"The dopiness Bharat NCAP cannot solve"** published in **Business Standard** on **25<sup>th</sup> August 2023**.

**"Make India a global hub for vehicle crash testing"** published in **Live Mint** on **25<sup>th</sup> 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.**

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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.

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.

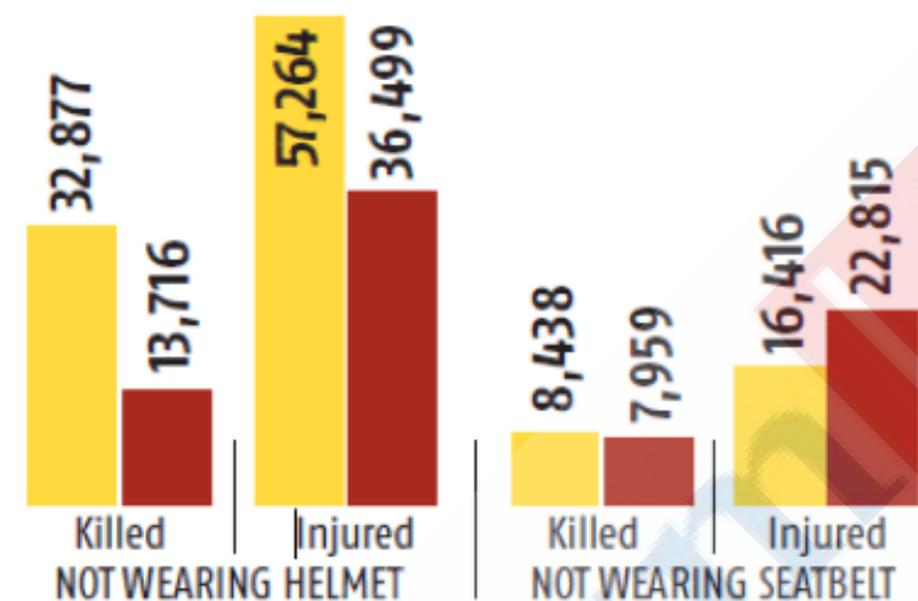
**Second**, car occupant fatalities declined from 18% (2016) to 13.6% (2020), while fatalities among vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and cyclists rose from 47% (2016) to 64% (2020). This emphasizes the necessity for broader safety measures for everyone.

**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

### 105. 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.

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### 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”.

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.

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106. Fallacy, fantasy, Global South

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Fallacy, fantasy, Global South**” published in **Business Standard** on **26<sup>th</sup> 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.

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.

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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.

107. [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.**

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.**

108. [Learning culture: Like schools, higher education needs creative solutions](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article **“Learning culture”** published in **“Business Standard”** on 28th August 2023.

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

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**News:** Recently, Union Minister for Education and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, released the National Curriculum Framework (NCF). It offers creative solutions to the weaknesses in the school-education system.

### What are the highlights of the NCF?

The NCF reduces curriculum load to promote critical thinking over rote learning by proposing board exams twice a year, offering a **“best of two” results system**.

Ultimately, the idea is to allow **“on-demand” board exams** by permitting students to take exams on their own schedule, allowing them to appear in subjects they have finished and feel prepared for.

The NCF also encourages **greater flexibility in subject selection**, allowing students to combine sciences and arts, as well as vocational education, fostering **interdisciplinary skills** that are highly sought after.

These suggestions will address the stressful competitive exam-driven mode of school education.

### What is the problem with the tertiary education system?

Access to prestigious universities and institutes in India, particularly the IITs and IIMs depends on passing competitive exams. This has led to the **proliferation of expensive coaching institutes**.

The introduction of the Common University Entrance Test for undergraduate admission is expected to **exacerbate this situation**.

There is a **significant gap between the number of students and the availability of quality institutions**.

**For example**, in 2022, approximately 900,000 students took the JEE, but only 250,000 qualified, and the 23 IITs could only admit about 17,385 students, leaving many to enroll in various engineering colleges with varying reputations.

The intense **peer and parental pressure is driving more students to suicide**. In 2020, the **National Crime Records Bureau** reported that 8.2 percent of student deaths in India were due to suicide, with over 34 student suicides occurring daily.

### Way forward

There is a pressing need for a creative solution to address the socio-economic crisis in higher education.

#### 109. Why duration of early literacy and numeracy programmes must be increased

**Source**– The post is based on the article **“Why duration of early literacy and numeracy programmes must be increased”** published in the **“The Indian Express”** on **28th August 2023**.

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

**Relevance:** Issues related to foundational literacy

**News**– In a recent decision, the Ministry of Education has rolled back the scope of NIPUN Bharat to children in Grades 1-2, leaving out children in Grade 3.

### The justification provided by the government behind this change?

It is to establish coherence between **NIPUN Bharat** and the recommended **curriculum framework outlined in NEP 2020** and the **National Curricular Framework 2023**.

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The **National Curricular Framework** document proposes an initial “**foundational stage of learning**,” including three years of **preschool education** along with the initial two years of **primary school**.

Therefore, the reasoning is that the **NIPUN Bharat initiative** should conclude at Grade 2.

### What are the issues related to this government decision?

**Anganwadi centers** cater to children aged three to six. They predominantly concentrate on **health, immunization, and nutrition**. Only a small fraction of these centers offers **consistent and high-quality preschool education**.

Around 68% of children aged three to six in India lack **access to educational services**. A majority of these children come from households with **limited literacy exposure** and encounter the **concept of literacy** for the first time in Grade 1.

Furthermore, 35% of children spend a significant portion of their primary school years dealing with the **linguistic differences** between their **home language and the language of instruction** in school.

There is a need to provide additional assistance to children in Grades 1 to 5 to ensure they have sufficient time to establish **strong foundations in language and numeracy skills**.

The **National Curricular Framework** has simply advocated for the implementation of **appropriate teaching practices** for children aged three to eight.

The **foundational phase** outlined in the NEP and NCF does not include the full spectrum of **literacy, numeracy skills, attitudes, and knowledge** necessary for all subsequent learning within school by the culmination of Grade 2.

One of the factors behind such decisions could be an **insufficient understanding** of the concepts of **literacy and numeracy**. Literacy is being interpreted as the skill to blend letters and read words at a **specific pace** within a **certain age bracket**.

### Way forward-

It is crucial to expand our understanding of **early foundational learning**. This expansion should encompass knowledge about **children’s lives, effective oral expression, profound inferential comprehension, enjoyment and appreciation of literature**.

These comprehensive foundations cannot be established by the conclusion of Grade 2 or even Grade 3?

There is a need for extension of the duration of programs aimed at reinforcing **early literacy and numeracy skills** to include children in **Grades 4 and 5**.

### 110. [Don’t shut down the debate on the Basic Structure of the Constitution](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Don’t shut down the debate on the Basic Structure of the Constitution**” published in “**The Indian Express**” on **28th August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS2 – Functioning of Judiciary

**News**– During a debate in Parliament, Ranjan Gogoi claimed that the “Basic Structure Doctrine” has asserted that basic structure has “a very debatable jurisprudential basis”.

### Why is there a need to carefully examine the Rajan Gogoi viewpoint about basic structure doctrine?

The importance of the broader matter cannot be exaggerated, especially in the **present context** of Indian politics.

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The Supreme Court will reexamine this matter when the hearings on the **revocation of Article 370 and the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act 2019** gain momentum.

The practice of **“cancel culture,”** which avoids discussions, is detrimental to both the **pursuit of justice and the strengthening of democracy.**

It is crucial to recall the words of Pandit Nehru and his **“Freedom at Midnight” speech.**

As per Nehru, the **collective voice** of the nation finds expression through the **instrument of Parliament.** The **independent and unimpeded functioning** of Parliament is indispensable for the **sustenance of Indian democracy.**

111. [India's health research is not aligned with its disease burden](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article **“India's health research is not aligned with its disease burden”** published in “The Hindu” on 28th August 2023.

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

**News:** The article discusses how India's healthcare research does not align with its actual health challenges. It uses data to show discrepancies between diseases' impact on India's population and the amount of research conducted on them.

### **What is Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALYs)?**

**Definition:** DALYs is a measure used to gauge the overall disease burden on a population.

**Components:** It combines two aspects:

1. Years of life lost due to premature mortality.
2. Years lived with disability or reduced health.

**Usage:** The World Health Organization employs DALYs to represent both mortality and morbidity in populations.

### **What are the issues with healthcare research in India?**

#### **Mismatch in Research Priorities and Disease Burden:**

A study by IISc in Bangalore and Leiden University revealed discrepancies between India's health research and the real disease challenges it faces.

While Diabetes Mellitus had 3.1% of DALYs, its research accounted for 7.5%.

Neonatal conditions made up 12.3% of DALYs but received only 1.3% of research attention.

#### **Under-Researched Major Health Challenges:**

Cardiovascular diseases represent 16% of India's disease burden, yet only 5% of research focuses on them.

In high-income countries, these diseases account for over 20% of DALYs but only 10% of research.

#### **Disproportionate Attention to Certain Diseases:**

Cancer, making up less than 5% of India's DALYs, dominates research with 22% of publications.

Tuberculosis aligns better: 7% disease burden with 5% research dedication, heightened by concerns of multi-drug resistance.

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### Global Threats Over Domestic Needs:

Diseases like malaria (0.5% DALYs) and HIV/AIDS (1% DALYs) command 2.5% of India's research because of their global significance.

### External Influences Skew Local Research:

The research direction in India is influenced by the health priorities of high-income countries. Major scientific journals also play a role in this misalignment by emphasizing global north issues.

### 112. The state of scholarships for minorities

**Source:** The post is based on the article “The state of scholarships for minorities” published in “The Hindu” on 28th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes.

**News:** The author talks about cutting budgets and stopping educational schemes for religious minorities in India. They stress how these schemes help minorities, particularly Muslims, with education. The author also gives ideas to make these schemes better and reach more people.

### Why are there scholarships for religious minorities?

**Large Population:** India is home to over 30 crore people from religious minority communities, making up 20% of the total population.

**Developmental Challenges:** The Sachar Committee found that the Muslim minority faced neglect in many dimensions of development. This committee, established by the UPA government, highlighted that Muslims generally ranked above SC/ST but below Hindu OBCs and other groups in various developmental indicators.

**Economic and Educational Lags:** Muslims often have low participation in salaried jobs and are mainly engaged in the informal sector with limited benefits.

**Focused Approach:** The Ministry of Minority Affairs was formed in 2006 to address issues affecting minorities, with an emphasis on educational and economic empowerment.

**Dips in Education:** Muslim representation in higher education enrollment decreases as education levels rise.

### What are the issues with educational welfare schemes for religious minorities?

**Discontinuation of Schemes:** Key educational schemes like the Pre-Matric Scholarship for classes 1 to 8 and the Padho Pardesh scheme have been discontinued.

**Budget Reductions:** The Merit-cum-Means based Scholarship Scheme's funding was cut from ₹365 crore to ₹44 crore in 2023-24. The Maulana Azad National Fellowship was cancelled in 2022 after having benefited over 6,700 candidates between 2014-15 and 2021-22.

**Narrowed Scope:** The Pre-Matric Scholarship Scheme now only covers class 9 and 10, leaving out the earlier beneficiaries from class 1 to 8.

**Drop in Beneficiaries:** In three years, the beneficiaries of six central educational schemes dropped by around 7%. Specifically, MANF beneficiaries fell from 2,580 in 2019-20 to 2,061 in 2021-22.

**Underutilisation of Funds:** More than ₹2,500 crore were allocated for certain schemes in 2022-23, but the actual expenditure was far less. For example, only ₹43.95 crore was spent out of the allocated ₹556 crore for the pre-matric scholarship.

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**Late Distribution:** A 2022 report by the Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability highlighted that scholarships were often distributed towards the end of the academic year.

**Enrolment Issues:** Muslim representation in total enrolment drops at higher levels of education. The All India Survey on Higher Education (2020-2021) revealed a decrease in Muslim student enrolment from 5.5% in 2019-20 to 4.6% in 2020-21.

**CBGA Report:** A 2022 report by the Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability (CBGA) highlighted a “declining trend” in the overall budget expenditure towards minorities. The report also pointed out that scholarship funds were often utilized towards the end of the academic year, causing delays for beneficiaries.

### What should be done?

#### Niti Aayog’s Recommendations:

The Niti Aayog suggests enhancing the pre-matric, post-matric, and merit-cum-means scholarships, as well as the MANF.

It also emphasizes a 15% annual increase in scholarships from 2019-20 and a 10% yearly increase in scholarships for girls from minority communities.

**Timely Distribution:** Ensure scholarships are disbursed at the start of the academic year, not towards the end, benefiting students when they need it most.

**Restore Budgets:** Reallocate and utilize the full budget for educational schemes to ensure no drop in beneficiaries.

**Promote Higher Education:** Address the dip in Muslim enrollment in higher education by introducing targeted initiatives.

### 113. [Express View on WFI suspension from United World Wrestling: On the mat](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Express View on WFI suspension from United World Wrestling: On the mat**” published in **The Indian Express** on **28<sup>th</sup> August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – Government Policies & Intervention

**Relevance:** About WFI suspension

**News:** Recently, the United World Wrestling (UWW) has suspended the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI).

#### Why was the WFI suspended?

**UWW took the action because of the failure of the WFI to hold elections in time.** The delay happened because some top wrestlers protested against the former president of WFI, causing disagreements.

UWW consistently advised Indian sports leaders to resolve the issue and hold elections. Initial warnings in June and July about potential suspension were issued.

However, **internal conflicts caused the courts to halt the elections, ultimately resulting in UWW’s decision to suspend the WFI.**

**Must Read:** [The problem with India’s sporting bodies and How we can democratise sports governance](#)

#### What may be the consequences of suspension?

**The wrestlers can still compete in international tournaments** despite the WFI’s suspension.

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However, **they can't show the Indian flag on their jerseys, and the national flag and anthem won't be played even if they win.** This situation is causing international embarrassment for India.

### What are the issues with other sports bodies in India?

Wrestling isn't alone in dealing with administrative issues. **FIFA suspended India last year due to election delays, and similar threats came from bodies like the International Olympic Committee and International Hockey Federation.**

In 2020, around 54 national federations lost recognition for not adhering to the [Sports Code](#). **The Delhi High Court also pulled up nearly twenty organizations for violating regulations.**

### What can be the way ahead?

Officials must promptly resolve the situation to avoid further harm. **This is because continuing suspension will** reduce international event invitations, hinder global funding, and ultimately, negatively impact the wrestlers in the long run.

#### 114. Old ties: India and Greece are finding new ways to revive an age-old relationship

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Old ties: India and Greece are finding new ways to revive an age-old relationship**” published in “The Hindu” on 29th August 2023.

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

**News:** The article talks about a meeting between Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Greece's Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis. They wanted to make India-Greece relations stronger by starting a “Strategic Partnership,” improving trade, and talking about shared worries like sea security and getting back historical items.

### What are the outcomes of the India-Greece Prime Minister meeting?

**Strengthened Relations:** Despite no Indian PM visiting Greece since 1983, the relationship remains warm.

**Strategic Partnership:** India and Greece decided to establish a new “Strategic Partnership”. Both countries announced plans for discussions between their National Security Advisers.

**Migration and Mobility:** They are looking into a skilled migration and mobility partnership.

**Trade and Connectivity:** They aim to finalize the India-European Union Free Trade Negotiation on Connectivity partnership.

**Economic Aspirations:** India's PM wants India's manufacturing growth to align with Greece's goal to be an economic gateway to the EU.

**Future Cooperation:** The intent is to foster closer ties without long gaps in high-level meetings.

### What common ground exists between India and Greece?

Common ground between India and Greece:

**Historical Relations:** Both countries share a past connection with Alexander's invasion in 326 BCE.

**Restoration of Artefacts:** Both were plundered by colonial powers and are discussing the restoration of historical items. They're considering collaborating through UNESCO for this.

**Geopolitical Ties:** Greece's relations with Israel and Cyprus provide common ground, especially given Delhi-Ankara tensions.

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**Maritime Concerns:** As former maritime powers, both nations share concerns over maintaining maritime security in line with international laws.

**Shared Democratic Values:** They represent the most populous democracy (India) and the first democracy (Greece), seeking to build upon these shared values.

### 115. [India needs comprehensive sexuality education](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**India needs comprehensive sexuality education**” published in “The Hindu” on 29th August 2023.

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

**News:** In this article, the author talks about the need for thorough sex education in India to stop child abuse. They stress the importance of learning about consent and propose using local languages to explain it. The author also points out that schools, parents, and caregivers have a crucial role in this education.

#### **What is sexual consent?**

Sexual consent is a mutual agreement between individuals to engage in any form of intimate activity. It's essential for maintaining healthy relationships and understanding boundaries.

Consent can be given, asked for, and withdrawn at any point. Many in India, especially teenagers and young adults, may not fully understand this concept.

There's a need for clear language and education in regional languages to discuss and teach about consent and its significance.

#### **Why is a better understanding of sexual consent important?**

Better understanding of sexual consent is important because:

**Protection from Abuse:** The NCRB reported 51,863 cases under The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act in 2021, emphasizing the need for awareness.

**Healthy Relationships:** Understanding consent helps maintain respectful and mutual relationships.

**Awareness Gaps:** A Tinder study showed over 64% of young Mumbaikars hesitated around the concept of giving, asking for, or withdrawing consent.

**Legal Implications:** High Courts in Madras, Delhi, and Meghalaya have highlighted the frequent criminalization of consensual adolescent relationships, indicating the need for clarity.

**Cultural Context:** Historically, discussions around consent have been limited in India, making education essential for the diverse population.

**Empowerment:** Knowledge of consent empowers individuals, promoting their well-being, dignity, and human rights.

#### **What are the challenges of sex education in India?**

Challenges of sex education in India include:

**Cultural Resistance:** Some state governments and societal sections believe it violates “Indian values”.

**Misunderstandings:** Concerns about it “sexualizing” children have led to watered-down programs.

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**Language Barrier:** Absence of vocabulary in regional languages for discussing concepts like consent.

**Teacher Preparedness:** UNESCO's 2021 report indicates teachers often lack knowledge on diverse topics in sex education.

**State Discretion:** Each state in India can design its own curriculum, leading to varied levels of education quality.

### What should be done?

**Comprehensive Curriculum:** Implement comprehensive sexuality education for children, parents, and caregivers.

**Emphasize Consent:** Develop clear language, especially in regional languages, to teach about sexual consent.

**Early Start:** UN global guidance suggests that comprehensive sexuality education should start at the age of five, paired with formal education.

**Teacher Training:** According to the UNESCO 2021 global status report, there's a need to enhance teacher capacity to ensure they are equipped to address these diverse topics.

**Incorporate NGOs:** Models like Jharkhand's Udaan can be integrated into the main education system.

**Holistic Approach:** Cover the broad relation between sexual health and human rights, not just legal aspects.

### 116. Why was the WFI suspended by United World Wrestling?

**Source:** The post is based on the article "Why was the WFI suspended by United World Wrestling?" published in "The Hindu" on 29th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2 – Governance – Important International institutions.

**News:** This article talks about the suspension of India's Wrestling Federation (WFI) by United World Wrestling (UWW) because of delayed elections and accusations against the ex-president. This led Indian wrestlers to compete using the UWW flag instead of their own country's flag.

### What are the reasons for the suspension of India's Wrestling Federation (WFI) by United World Wrestling (UWW)?

#### Election Delays and Legal Hurdles:

WFI didn't conduct its elections on time.

The Gauhati High Court and Punjab and Haryana High Court imposed stays on elections due to demands from various state associations.

#### Allegations and Athlete Protection:

Wrestlers, including Bajrang Punia, Sakshi Malik, and Vinesh Phogat, alleged sexual harassment, intimidation, financial misconduct, and administrative lapses against former WFI president, Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh.

The UWW Disciplinary Chamber highlighted concerns for the protection of athletes following these allegations.

#### Non-compliance with UWW Regulations:

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The ongoing situation, coupled with the absence of an elected president and board, contradicted UWW's membership conditions.

The chamber stressed the importance of restoring the federation's normal operation.

### What will be the impact of this suspension?

**Representation:** Indian wrestlers will compete under the UWW flag, not the Indian flag.

**National Pride:** No Indian national anthem will be played if a wrestler wins gold in UWW events, like the World championships in Belgrade.

**Administration:** In the absence of WFI's elected body, the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) appointed ad-hoc committee manages the federation.

### What is the way forward?

**Elections:** Conduct WFI elections in a transparent, free, and fair manner to regain UWW's trust.

**Unified Approach:** Different factions within WFI must recognize the sport's damage and work cohesively for its betterment.

**Limit Influences:** Wrestlers aim to keep loyalists of Brij Bhushan, the former president, out of power to ensure a fair administration.

**Inclusive Participation:** Wrestlers have identified preferred candidates for the elections, implying active involvement in the decision-making process.

**Address Grievances:** Prioritize addressing allegations and concerns raised by wrestlers to restore faith and confidence in the federation.

### 117. At Delhi summit, demonstrate climate leadership

**Source:** The post is based on the article "At Delhi summit, demonstrate climate leadership" published in "The Hindu" on 29th August 2023.

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

**News:** This article stresses the G-20 nations must work together for clean energy and climate goals. They point out the important G-20 summit in New Delhi as a chance for leaders to commit to fighting climate change.

### About G-20 countries energy shifts

**G-20's Shift:** Members increased their renewable energy mix from 19% in 2010 to 29% in 2021.

**India's Progress:** Became the third-largest renewable energy producer, aiming for 50% renewable energy by 2030.

**Support for Green Steel:** G-20 produces 90% of global steel, highlighting the importance of transitioning to low-carbon steel production.

**Unified Action:** The upcoming G-20 summit in New Delhi is a crucial platform for countries to further commit to clean energy and climate goals.

### What is needed by G-20 countries to create a significant energy shift?

#### 1. Improving Energy Transitions in Governments

**Set clear governance structures:** Ensure processes are inclusive and results are equitable, avoiding siloed operations.

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**Emulate successful models:** Take cues from South Africa's just transition framework, which was spearheaded by the Presidential Climate Commission.

### 2. The Importance of Decarbonization

**Industrial shift:** As G-20 countries are responsible for 90% of steel production, there's an urgent need to transition to low-carbon steel.

**Green financial support:** Encourage financial institutions to support renewable projects and embrace low-carbon technologies. For example, Green Public Procurement could be beneficial in achieving this.

### 3. The Need for Transparency in Energy Transitions

**Accountability:** G-20 countries should regularly disclose their progress on energy transitions to ensure they are on track.

**Collaboration:** Utilizing platforms such as the G-20 Energy Transitions and Sustainable Finance Working Groups, along with the Just Energy Transition Partnerships (JET-Ps), can assist countries in collaborating and exchanging best practices.

118. [Keep Running – Athletics medal chances depend on not just picking winners but investing to create a large talent pool](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article **“Keep Running – Athletics medal chances depend on not just picking winners but investing to create a large talent pool”** published in **The Times of India** on **29<sup>th</sup> August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** **GS 2 – Governance – Government Policies & Intervention**

**Relevance:** **Achievements of Indian athletes**

**News:** The article explains the recent achievements by Indian athletes at the World Athletics Championships and more measures needed to enhance sports in India.

**What are some of the recent achievements made by Indian athletes?**

**Neeraj Chopra won India's first gold at the World Athletics Championships.**

The men's 4×400 relay team secured fifth place **setting an Asian record.**

**Parul Chaudhary broke the national record** and qualified for the Paris Olympics in women's 3000m steeplechase.

**What has enabled these achievements?**

A decade ago, India's global athletics performance wasn't impressive.

However, **recent success has been possible due to a model that links talented athletes with global trainers and resources.** This model is supported by entities like JSW Foundation.

Moreover, the government has also increased the funding for the sports sector and has allowed top athletes to train according to their preferences.

**Must Read:** [Sports sector in India: Issues and challenges – Explained](#)

**What lies ahead?**

This approach has shortcomings, and it would only benefit a few.

Therefore, to enhance India's sports sector – **a)** India's basic sports infrastructure should be improved, **b)** sports organizations need to work better, **c)** talent scouts must be very good at finding talented athletes, and **d)** stakeholders should understand that, just like in technology, sports also involve substantial failure rates.

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### 119. Too Few Seats For The Kotas

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Too Few Seats For The Kotas**” published in “**The Times of India**” on **29th August 2023**.

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

**Relevance:** Issues related to student suicides

**News**– The news of more student suicides in Kota should worry us greatly about the increasing numbers of such deaths countrywide.

#### **What are reasons behind the student suicides in Kota?**

The tuition centers fees are high. It adds a **significant financial load** on numerous parents. The students understand the sacrifices their parents are making for their education. It initiates **stress** right from the outset.

These exams have a **low acceptance rate, as low as 2%**. Succeeding in these exams is an extremely difficult task. The pressure intensifies when the results of the entrance exams are announced.

#### **Is student suicide issue limited to Kota only?**

It's important to recognize that this issue is not confined solely to Kota. In the year 2019, students accounted for **7.4% of all suicide-related deaths**.

According to the **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)**, more than **12,500 adolescents** took their own lives in India in just the year 2020.

Kota has been particularly impacted. Nevertheless, the **stress and suicides** among students are a **broader nationwide concern**.

#### **Way forward-**

**Indian parents-** They should **educate themselves** on this matter. They should refrain from imposing your **own aspirations** onto your children. Becoming a doctor or an engineer is not the sole purpose of life. There are countless other career paths available.

**Teachers-** They should recognize the **stubborn and narrow-minded nature** of some Indian parents. They must guide students not only on how to study for these exams but also on how to approach them mentally.

**Policymakers-** They should understand why only a handful of government colleges are **considered prestigious**.

Despite India's preference for private products and services, private colleges lack **credibility** and their **intentions** are often questioned.

Perhaps it's time to open doors for **foreign universities** or establish **partnerships between major Indian corporate entities and colleges**. The goal should be to increase the **availability of esteemed colleges and available seats**.

**Students-** They should embrace the **truth about life**. It is **challenging, uneven, and demanding**. Failing an entrance exam might be **disheartening**.

Failures, setbacks, and injustices will reoccur. The solution isn't to give up, but to adapt your **goals, strategies, and actions**.

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### 120. Express View on India and AI regulation: The cutting edge

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Express View on India and AI regulation: The cutting edge**” published in “**The Indian Express**” on **29th August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – Governance – Government policies, GS-3, Science and Technology- Awareness in the IT, computers

**Relevance:** Regulation of Artificial intelligence

**News**– Indian government has decided to move in the direction of actively formulating regulations.

#### **What is the approach followed by various jurisdictions for regulating AI?**

**European approach-** The **regulatory structure** aims to categorize artificial intelligence systems based on the **level of risk** they present. These levels of risk are divided into **four groups: minimal, limited, high, and unacceptable**.

This model also proposes the establishment of a **European Artificial Intelligence Board** responsible for supervising the enforcement of regulations.

**Indian approach-** A document published by the **Telecom Regulatory Authority of India** in July outlined a **potential structure for regulation**.

It suggested the creation of an **independent statutory body and a diverse stakeholder group** comprising **government, academia, and industry representatives** to provide guidance.

The document put forward a matrix for classifying AI applications based on their **risk levels** and recommended regulating them in accordance with **principles of responsible AI**.

These principles encompassed **inclusive growth, sustainable development, fairness, transparency, explainability, robustness, security, safety, and accountability**.

The TRAI document also discusses the establishment of a **global organization** responsible for the “**advancement, establishment of standards, and utilization of AI technology**.”

**Way forward-**  
**The influence of AI is poised to extend beyond the realm of information technology.** It is reaching **various domains** such as education, healthcare, and finance.

AI systems encompass matters ranging from **privacy concerns to biases and inequities, security vulnerabilities, intellectual property entitlements**. It demands a **forward-thinking strategy**.

Furthermore, **regulatory structures** cannot operate in isolation. AI’s impact is not confined by **geographic limits**. **Effective global cooperation** will be imperative as AI transcends **geographical boundaries**.

### 121. A question of trusts – regulations of NGOs

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**A question of trusts**” published in **Business Standard** on 29th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Development processes and the development industry —the role of NGOs, SHGs, various groups and associations, donors, charities, institutional and other stakeholders.

**News:** The government has tightened regulations for the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

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### How has the government tightened regulation for the NGOs?

In the past seven months, over 100 NGOs have lost their licenses under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) as the government has imposed **stricter disclosure requirements** and established **guidelines for fund utilization**.

The Central Board of Direct Taxes has introduced **changes to reporting rules**, mandating that NGOs specify whether their activities are charitable, religious, or both in order to claim tax exemptions.

Additionally, in April 2023, the Income Tax Department **issued 8,000 notices to large donors**, citing concerns that these donations might be linked to tax evasion.

### Why is the government cracking down on NGOs?

A **2022 report by the Comptroller & Auditor General (CAG)**, stated that about 21,000 unregistered charitable trusts took tax breaks between 2014-15 and 2017-18, which may have cost the exchequer Rs. 18,800 crores.

In **2014, an Intelligence Bureau report** said some NGOs were negatively impacting economic development to the tune of 2-3 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP), although no concrete data on NGOs' economic contributions to India's GDP exists.

### What are the concerns?

The arbitrary nature of the FCRA-related license cancellations **raises concerns about potential biases** related to the organizations' ideological affiliations.

Though punitive measures against corrupt trusts is justified, the current pressure being exerted on the voluntary sector is **counterproductive**.

NGOs and trusts play a crucial role in **channeling private funds for development**, especially when the government's performance in this area is inconsistent.

The sector is also a **major job creator**, accounting for over five million jobs, according to the government data, and plays a key role in **linking youth to the grassroots**.

While individuals may donate substantial amounts to NGOs to benefit from tax incentives, **these tax breaks are lawful**. If money laundering is suspected, the tax department possesses the necessary tools to detect such flows.

### What should be the way ahead?

Given the confusion over NGO activities, there's a need for a **streamlined law**.

**Charitable work should be as precisely defined** as it is in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) laws. This narrow rule would exclude elements like advocacy that can create political controversies.

Discouraging a sector that contributes to development is not a constructive way to address India's human development challenges.

### 122. Leveraging India's air power: A force to reckon with

**Source**– The post is based on the article **“Leveraging India's air power: A force to reckon with”** published in **“The Indian Express”** on **29th August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS2- International relations. GS3- Internal Security

**News**– The article explains the increasing significance of airpower for India in context of Chinese national security strategy.

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### How is India recognising the importance of the air force?

The concept of **national security** is evolving from being limited to the **land and sea domains**. It is moving gradually towards a **forward-looking strategy** that encompasses **multiple domains**.

The involvement of the Indian Air Force in the **regular border discussions** with the Army signifies a significant advancement.

The agreement to procure **26 naval variants of the Rafale combat aircraft** underscores the crucial role of air power in **maritime settings**.

It increases the **interoperability** between the **land-based air capabilities** of the IAF and the **carrier-based air capabilities** of the Navy.

New Delhi seems to recognize the pivotal role the Air Force plays in safeguarding **India's national and regional security**, and its **foreign policy objectives**.

This is evident from the participation in **seven air exercises** this year alongside the air forces of the US, France, Japan, UK, Greece, the UAE, and the upcoming **12-nation mega air exercise** planned for October-November.

It also signifies international acknowledgment of the IAF's professional capabilities and the broader significance of air power in the Indian Ocean and Indo-Pacific regions.

### Why is the air force becoming a strategic necessity?

The capabilities of the **People's Liberation Army Air Force** are increasing. Therefore, the utilisation of Indian air power for **diplomatic signals** and **coercive actions** in **disputed aerial territories** is necessary.

It's a **strategic necessity** to deploy Indian air power in the **Indian Ocean**. It is a **vital conduit** for India's **trade, business, security interests, and regional stability**.

China is persistent in its **strategy of expansion** to reclaim its **historical territories and maritime areas**. So, India's **border disputes with China** are expected to become more intricate.

The **China-Pakistan Economic Corridor**, and the **China-Myanmar Economic Corridor**, hold great significance for Beijing.

These corridors address its **Malacca Strait dilemma**. From India's standpoint, these routes provide China entry into the Indian Ocean and allows it to **strategically enclose India's eastern and western coastlines**.

Both countries similarly recognize the **strategic importance of the Gulf of Aden, Malacca Strait, and Sunda Strait**.

### What are the factors shaping the strategic outlook of China?

The United States' utilisation of aircraft carriers has been **politically influential in coercive diplomacy**. It seems to have influenced China.

**China's economic power** emanates from its **ports and the two seas** it borders.

Its **security perspective** is influenced by the **strategic interests of nations**, including the US, that traverse the regional waters and airspace for **reconnaissance** under the banner of **"freedom of navigation."**

China aims to acquire aircraft carriers to surmount its **geographical limitations**, pursue its **Taiwan reunification strategy**, counter **maritime assertions in the South and East China Seas**, and safeguard its **Pacific region sea routes**.

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### What are the potential benefits of airpower for India?

**Leveraging air power** yields several advantages.

It includes establishing a **distinctive hard power deterrent** in the South China Sea, ensuring **maritime and aerial freedom** across the Indian Ocean region, and enabling **aerial access to strategically positioned air bases** in friendly neighbouring nations.

It also grants India the option of utilising its **soft power** by **extending humanitarian aid and providing disaster relief**.

### 123. The Election Commission — autonomy in the crosshairs

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**The Election Commission — autonomy in the crosshairs**” published in “The Hindu” on 30th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies.

**News:** The article discusses the recent conflict between India’s government and judiciary over the appointment process of the Election Commission of India (ECI) officials. The government introduced a bill to change the Supreme Court’s directive on the appointment process, potentially giving the government more control over the ECI.

### What is the recent conflict over the appointment process of ECI officials?

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

### What past suggestions have been made for reforming the appointment process of ECI officials?

**Constituent Assembly Debates (1949):** Appointment of the CEC should be subject to confirmation by two-thirds majority in a joint session of both Houses of Parliament.

**Committees’ Suggestions:** Various committees, including the V.M. Tarkunde Committee in 1975 and the Dinesh Goswami Committee in the 1990s, along with the second Administrative Reforms Commission in 2009, emphasized a more inclusive appointment process. They recommended that the selection shouldn’t be left to the government alone but should involve a broader collegium.

### **B.B. Tandon’s Suggestion (2006):**

A seven-member committee should select the CEC and other ECs. The committee should consist of:

Prime Minister

Lok Sabha Speaker

Opposition Leaders in both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha

Law Minister

Deputy Chairperson of the Rajya Sabha

A Supreme Court judge nominated by the CJI

**BJP’s Previous Stand (2006 & 2012):** Prominent BJP leaders like Arun Jaitley and L.K. Advani supported a representative collegium that included the CJI for appointing top electoral officials.

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### What are the implications of this bill?

**Reduced Judiciary Influence:** By replacing the CJI with a Union Cabinet Minister, the judiciary's say in the appointment of ECI officials is effectively eliminated. The new composition gives the ruling government a dominant role in the selection process, potentially allowing it to have greater sway over the ECI.

**Historical Context:** Previously, suggestions from multiple committees and even from the current ruling party (BJP) emphasized the importance of including the CJI to ensure the ECI's independence.

**Democratic Concerns:** The bill could be perceived as an attempt to make democratic institutions more compliant to ruling government, leaving structures in place but potentially altering their core functionality.

**Erosion of Trust:** Given the ECI's reputation as a trustworthy institution, changes that give the appearance of partisanship might erode public confidence.

### 124. India, Kenya sign MoU for shipbuilding collaboration

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**India, Kenya sign MoU for shipbuilding collaboration**” published in “The Hindu” on 30th August 2023.

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

**News:** Goa Shipyard Limited in India and Kenya Shipyard Limited have agreed to work together on ship design and construction. They're also talking about boosting defense cooperation and maritime security between India and Kenya.

### What are the key outcomes of the meeting between India's Defense Minister and Kenya's Cabinet Secretary for Defense?

**Collaboration on Shipbuilding:** Goa Shipyard Limited and Kenya Shipyard Limited signed an MoU for mutual work in ship design and construction.

**Evolved Defense Ties:** The defense relationship between India and Kenya expanded from primarily training-focused to encompass strategic aspects.

**Maritime Security:** Both ministers emphasized the importance of deeper cooperation in safeguarding the Indian Ocean region.

**Gift Exchange:** As a sign of friendship, India presented Kenya with 15 pairs of parachutes, manufactured by Gliders India Limited, for the Kenyan forces. Additionally, India pledged support to establish an advanced CT scan facility in Kenya.

**Training Initiatives:** There was a suggestion for the 'training of trainers' of the Kenyan forces by Indian armed forces' instructors. They also decided on joint training in counter-insurgency and UN peacekeeping.

**Acknowledgment of Indian Defense Industry:** Mr. Aden Bare Duale appreciated India's growing defense industry and pointed out areas where India can cater to Kenyan forces' needs.

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### 125. Gig Workers Bill: reading between the lines

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Gig Workers Bill: reading between the lines**” published in **The Hindu** on 30th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation. & GS3- Employment

**News:** The article talks about Rajasthan government’s bill to give social security to gig workers. It mentions problems with definitions, rules, and how it’s done, which could make it less effective in protecting workers.

### **What are the provisions of the Rajasthan Platform-Based Gig Workers (Registration and Welfare) Bill, 2023?**

Read here: [Rajasthan Platform-Based Gig Workers \(Registration and Welfare\) Bill, 2023](#)

### **What are the issues with the Rajasthan Platform-Based Gig Workers (Registration and Welfare) Bill, 2023?**

4. **Ambiguous Definitions:** The Bill’s definitions for “gig worker” and “aggregator” are unclear. This uncertainty means aggregators might not treat gig workers as employees.
5. **Exclusion from Labour Laws:** Because the Bill doesn’t label gig workers as employees, they might miss out on benefits from existing labour laws. In 2022, major Indian platforms scored zero in Fairwork India ratings, showcasing the gap in worker benefits.
6. **Database Issues:** The Bill suggests a permanent gig workers’ database. Yet, it doesn’t address the changing nature of their jobs. There’s no protection against platforms using this data to possibly limit worker opportunities, especially those working for multiple platforms.
7. **Undefined Social Security:** The Bill wants to offer social security via a welfare board but doesn’t specify what this entails. Decisions are left to the board, raising concerns about the dominant say of powerful platform representatives versus worker representatives.

This Bill, despite its good intentions, has potential pitfalls that may hinder its success in protecting gig workers.

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

**Clearer Definitions:** Reframe definitions to specify the roles of “gig worker” and “aggregator”, possibly aligning with global standards like California’s ABC Test or the U.K.’s Uber driver classification.

**Integrate Labour Laws:** Amend the Bill to ensure gig workers are entitled to benefits under existing labour laws. Use the Fairwork India 2022 ratings as a benchmark to elevate worker rights.

**Flexible Database:** Revise the database proposal to account for the dynamic nature of gig work. Implement data privacy measures to prevent misuse, especially for workers on multiple platforms.

**Specify Social Security:** Clearly outline what constitutes “social security”. Instead of solely relying on the welfare board, draw inspiration from laws in Australia and New Zealand that focus on worker safety without rigid “employer-employee” terms.

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126. [Fali S Nariman writes: Why we need Basic Structure](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Fali S Nariman writes: Why we need Basic Structure**” published in “The Indian express” on 30th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Indian Constitution (Basic Structure)

**News:** This article discusses India’s “basic structure” doctrine of the Constitution. In 1973, a Supreme Court decision introduced this principle, which limits Parliament’s power to amend the Constitution’s fundamental nature. There were attempts to challenge and overturn this doctrine, but it was repeatedly upheld by the Court.

### What is the “Basic Structure” Doctrine?

**Origin:** The doctrine emerged in India from the landmark Supreme Court decision in the Kesavananda Bharati case in 1973. In this case, by a slim 7:6 majority, the Court held that Parliament cannot alter the fundamental nature of the Constitution, even with its amendment powers.

**Definition:** It restricts Parliament from changing the Constitution’s core principles.

**Inspiration:** Influenced by German expert Dietrich Conrad’s 1965 speech, emphasizing that a constitution’s foundational pillars shouldn’t be modified by the governing entity.

### How has the “Basic Structure” Doctrine been upheld over time?

Upholding the “Basic Structure” Doctrine Over Time:

**1975 Challenge:** The doctrine was tested in 1973 and faced a challenge in 1975. Chief Justice A N Ray formed a 13-judge bench to reconsider it, but the bench disbanded without changing the doctrine.

**Indira Gandhi’s Election:** In 1975, a crucial case involved PM Indira Gandhi’s election. An amendment, Article 329A (4), aimed to support her election despite court rulings. However, the Court found this amendment unconstitutional, violating the basic structure doctrine. This ruling reinforced the doctrine’s significance.

**Minerva Mills Case (1980):** The doctrine’s strength was highlighted when the Supreme Court upheld it, invalidating parts of the 42nd Constitutional Amendment and stressing Parliament’s limited amending power.

**IR Coelho Case (2007):** A vital judgment by a nine-judge bench solidified the doctrine’s importance. The Court ruled that any law added to the Ninth Schedule (which avoids judicial review) after 1973 would undergo the basic structure test.

**Parliamentary Acknowledgment:** The Constitution 44th Amendment Act 1978 accepted the doctrine, affirming that specific constitutional rights couldn’t be suspended, even during emergencies. This act showcased Parliament’s recognition of the doctrine’s supremacy.

127. [Vikram Patel on TB among the vulnerable: When food is a vaccine](#)

**Source–** The post is based on the article “**Vikram Patel on TB among the vulnerable: When food is a vaccine**” published in “**The Indian Express**” on **30th August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – Social Issues – Issues related to development and management of health

**News–** Recently, RATONS study, describing the results of research addressing the effectiveness of food supplementation for patients with TB in 28 public clinics in Jharkhand has been published in the Lancet journal.

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### What are important findings of the RATIONS study?

The first study observed that a **5% gain in weight** in the **initial months of food supplementation** was associated with a **60 percent reduced risk of dying** in case of TB.

The second study found that **providing food** to the family members of the infected individual was associated with a **50% reduction in the occurrence of TB infection** in these household members.

### What are important observations from this study?

**The largest declines in TB incidence and mortality** in the Western world occurred in the first half of the 20th century, before TB antibiotics had been discovered.

The reason was a **massive reduction in poverty** in those countries contributing to **more hygienic living conditions and secure food supplies**.

If **food supplementation** is effective for TB, then such benefits may be seen across **all infectious diseases**.

Working on the **social determinants of disease** through the health care system may offer **better outcomes** for all diseases associated with **deprivation and disadvantage**.

### What did these studies mean for the India TB programme?

The government has launched the **Nikshay Poshan Yojana** in 2018 to offer **food supplementation or cash transfers** to buy food for TB patients.

The **RATIONS studies** should give renewed impetus to **enhance the impact** of the scheme by ensuring that **food supplementation** is delivered with medication. There is need to **expand the coverage** of this benefit to all household members of the patient.

### 128. Crash test for BNCAP – Enforcement & education are the key

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Crash test for BNCAP – Enforcement & education are the key**” published in **Business Standard** on **30<sup>th</sup> August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** **GS 2 – Government Policies & Intervention**

**Relevance:** **concerns with Bharat New Car Assessment Programme (BNCAP) norms.**

**News:** The introduction of the Bharat New Car Assessment Programme (BNCAP) norms is a step in the right direction for passenger safety in India. However, there are some concerns with the norms.

### What are the concerns present with BNCAP norms?

The norms are voluntary, which could allow manufacturers to bypass safety tests.

In the US, Global NCAP norms are mandatory, while they are voluntary in Europe. However, in Europe, customer demand ensures that nearly 80% of cars undergo safety tests before coming in the market.

However, **safety has been a low priority for Indian car manufacturers, with only** about seven out of over 50 “Made in India” cars tested achieving five-star ratings.

Carmakers in India have often complained about government mandates for basic safety features, arguing that Indian buyers are unwilling to pay more for safety features.

However, the growing middle class is now shifting towards prioritizing safety.

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### What are the differences between BNCAP and GNCAP?

**The BNCAP norms are almost similar to the GNCAP norms in many ways. However, there are some differences between the two.**

**For example,** the BNCAP norms do not award any points for seat-belt reminders and give a three-star rating or higher only for front-seat belts.

This is despite the fact that back-seat belts were made mandatory in 2005 and the transport ministry recently mandated back-seat belt reminders.

**Another difference is the price of the tests.** The BNCAP is far cheaper than the GNCAP.

This raises the question of whether India-made cars can qualify for the export market if they have undergone BNCAP tests (**current export-ready vehicles need to pass GNCAP assessments**).

**Must Read: The dopiness Bharat NCAP cannot solve**

### What lies ahead?

The Indian NCAP norms could make domestically produced cars safer, but they are unlikely to significantly reduce road accidents in India.

**This is because most road fatalities involve** helmet-less two-wheeler riders, passengers, and pedestrians crossing the road.

Therefore, a comprehensive road safety education program and stricter helmet manufacturing norms are needed. **Imposing a duty on imported helmets is not the right way to promote self-reliance.**

### 129. Connecting SR and social stock exchange

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Connecting SR and social stock exchange- Allowing social stock exchanges to facilitate (SR funding of projects could catalyse change by improving outcomes**” published in “Business standard” on 31st August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Development processes and the development industry the role of NGOs, SHGs, various groups and associations, donors, charities, institutional and other stakeholders &

**GS4-** corporate governance

**News:** The author talks about combining India’s corporate social responsibility (CSR) spending with the social stock exchange (SSE) to improve the impact of CSR investments. They mention challenges like regional imbalances and the inclusion of smaller non-profits.

### What is CSR?

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a legal obligation for certain companies in India to allocate a portion of their profits towards socially beneficial activities. These activities are meant to have a positive impact on society, the environment, and local communities.

### Current Status of CSR in India:

India has a unique stance, making it mandatory for specific companies to spend on CSR activities.

This is governed by Section 135 of the Indian Companies Act, 2013.

As per recent data from the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA), companies in India spent ₹25,933 crore on CSR in FY22.

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### What are the challenges in current CSR spending?

**Regional Imbalance:** CSR spending is concentrated in a few states, neglecting others, especially the northeastern regions.

**Planning and Execution:** There's a lack of professional planning and broad scattering of funds across various sectors.

**Capacity Constraints:** Companies with smaller CSR budgets face difficulties in implementing meaningful projects.

### What is the Social Stock Exchange (SSE)?

**Purpose:** SSE is designed for eligible non-profit organizations (NPOs) to raise funds.

**Instruments:** SSE offers innovative financial instruments such as:

8. **ZCZPs:** Zero coupon zero principal mechanisms issued by NPOs promising social returns.
9. **SIFs:** Social impact funds investing in both NPOs and for-profit social ventures.
10. **DIBs:** Development impact bonds wherein grants are given to NPOs based on achieved social metrics.

**Regulatory Framework:** SEBI has set disclosure and reporting norms for participants in the SSE.

### How can SSE and CSR be integrated?

**CSR Funds in SSE Instruments:** Companies can channel their CSR funds into SSE instruments like ZCZPs and SIFs.

**Outcome Funders:** Corporations can act as "outcome funders" in Development Impact Bonds (DIBs), rewarding NPOs for achieving set social metrics.

**Escrow Account for CSR Capital:** CSR funds can be held in escrow accounts until NPOs achieve project outcomes.

**Trading CSR Credits:** Companies could trade CSR spends on the SSE, allowing some to meet their CSR commitments by buying credits from others that exceed their mandated spending.

**SSE Facilitation:** The SSE can help streamline CSR funding for impactful projects.

### What challenges exist for integrating CSR and SSE?

Challenges in Integrating CSR and SSE:

**Local Preference Dilemma:** Current laws, specifically Section 135 of the Act, mandate companies to prioritize local areas for CSR activities. Pooling funds on SSE might not align with this local focus.

**Crowding Out Smaller NPOs:** As more CSR funds might be channeled towards prominent NPOs listed on the SSE, smaller entities could get overshadowed, limiting their access to essential funding.

**SIF and ZCZP Constraints:** When pooling CSR funds in Social Impact Funds or investing in ZCZPs, ensuring adherence to the local preference mandate can be a challenge.

**Duration Constraints:** Using CSR funds in DIB structures would necessitate locking in the capital for several years, until NPOs materialize their project outcomes.

**Legal Adjustments:** To ensure a seamless integration of CSR and SSE, tweaks in the existing laws might be required.

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### What should be done?

**Facilitate CSR in SSE:** The government should enable companies to use the SSE for CSR funding of projects.

**Revise Local Preference:** Adjust laws regarding the local preference mandate to accommodate pooling of funds on SSE.

**Protect Smaller NPOs:** Set a ceiling on CSR funds directed towards larger NPOs on the SSE to ensure smaller entities aren't overshadowed.

**Introduce Robust Systems:** Implement systems to identify credible NPOs for efficient investment of CSR funds.

**Allow CSR Credit Trading:** Permit companies to trade CSR credits on the SSE to fulfill their commitments.

### 130. [The NCF will raise standards of school education in the country](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article "[The NCF will raise standards of school education in the country](#)" published in "Live Mint" on 31st August 2023.

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

**News:** This article talks about India's National Curriculum Framework (NCF) introduced by the Ministry of Education. The NCF gives school education guidelines, focusing on diverse learning and a balanced approach. It aims to improve teaching and learning while considering available resources.

### What is the National Curriculum Framework (NCF)?

**Nature:** It's a framework released by the Ministry of Education in India, meant to guide school education.

**Definition of Curriculum:** The NCF views curriculum as the entire experience of children in schools, covering learning goals, syllabus, teaching methods, materials, classroom practices, and the overall culture of schools.

**Function:** The NCF isn't a curriculum by itself. Instead, it describes the principles, goals, structures, and elements for the development of curricula.

**Depth:** The NCF provides clear guidance to educators by going beyond general principles. For example, it doesn't just mention the importance of equity and pluralism in schools; it also provides specific practices that can help instill these values in students.

### How does the NCF benefit the country?

**Harmony and Cogency:** The NCF provides a common framework that ensures consistency in school education across different states in India.

**Federal Integrity:** It supports the country's federal structure by offering a national perspective, while recognizing the authority of states over school education.

**Clear Guidance:** By blending broad principles with specific illustrative practices, the NCF aids education practitioners, from teachers to textbook authors, in translating its guidelines into actionable strategies.

**Inclusivity of Aspects:** Beyond academic subjects, the NCF emphasizes the importance of elements like arts and culture, illustrating its comprehensive approach.

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**Practicality:** It is designed to be implemented using the resources schools currently have, showcasing its realistic and adaptable nature for the diverse educational landscapes across the country.

### What are the major challenges of the NCF?

**Resource Dependency:** While the NCF emphasizes its ability to work with existing resources, schools still face the challenge of not having specialized resources. For instance, the article mentions the potential lack of arts teachers.

**Practical Implementation:** Achieving the learning standards set by the NCF, especially without specific subject teachers, presents practical challenges to schools.

**Misaligned Public Focus:** The media's primary attention on board exam suggestions reflects society's testing-focused mindset. This narrow viewpoint can overshadow the NCF's broader educational objectives.

**Delayed Resource Allocation:** Waiting for resources, such as specialized arts teachers, can take up to 10-15 years, making it challenging to implement the NCF's full vision immediately.

**Translating Guidelines to Action:** Despite the NCF's specific guidance, turning these guidelines into actionable classroom practices remains a task for educators.

### 131. The need for an Indian system to regulate AI

**Source:** The post is based on the article "**The need for an Indian system to regulate AI**" published in **The Hindu** on **31st August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 2- Governance – government policies for various sectors

**News:** In this article, the author talks about AI regulation differences in the West and East. They highlight how the West uses risk-based rules, while the East prioritizes values and morality. The author suggests India should make regulations based on its own culture and laws, rather than copying the West.

### What are the major differences in AI regulation between the Western and Eastern worlds?

#### Western World:

**Risk-Based Approach:** Western regulations categorize AI applications based on risk, e.g., the EU has 'unacceptable risk', 'high risk', 'limited risk', and 'low risk'.

**Specific Guidelines:** They provide explicit rules on what must be done and set penalties for non-compliance. For instance, the EU specifies prohibited activities for 'unacceptable risks'.

**Eurocentric Jurisprudence:** Rooted in a Eurocentric view of law, they focus on clear rules and punishments for violations.

#### Eastern World:

**Value-Centric Approach:** Asian countries like Japan and China focus on the values and ends, that AI should uphold and achieve.

**Intuitive Regulations:** The laws indicate desired outcomes and underlying moral principles. For example, Japan's "Social Principles of Human-Human-Centric AI" highlights principles society and the state should respect.

**Blend of Law and Morality:** Eastern regulations often merge legality and morality. China's regulations emphasize respecting social morality and ethics while using AI.

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### What needs to be done by India?

**Avoid Mimicking the West:** The author advises against copying Western models of AI regulation, as emphasized by NITI Aayog's references to Western countries.

**Embrace Eastern Ethos:** India should look to its cultural and legal traditions. Eastern models, like Japan's and China's, offer potential guidance.

**Reconnect with Roots:** Drawing from ancient Indian legal systems, which centered on end goals and moral values, can be invaluable.

**Consider Judicial Perspectives:** Justice V. Ramasubramaniam's judgments suggest that Indian regulations should include traditional Indian concepts, such as the Sanskrit epigram "neti neti," to contextualize them. This implies that India's approach wouldn't rigidly follow either Western or Eastern models but would discover its own balanced and distinctive path.

### 132. Share the distress – on Cauvery water sharing

**Source**– The post is based on the article "**Share the distress**" published in "**The Hindu**" on **31st August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – Indian Polity – Issues pertaining to federalism

**News**– The article explains the recent disputes between Tamil Nadu and Karnataka on sharing of Cauvery water.

### What is the point of contention between Tamil Nadu and Karnataka on Cauvery water sharing?

Tamil Nadu currently faces a **cumulative shortage** of approximately **51 thousand million cubic feet** in its **allocated water share** as of August 28.

The request has been for **24,000 cubic feet per second** (cusecs) at **Billigundulu on the interstate border** for the latter half of August.

Tamil Nadu has approached the Supreme Court to direct Karnataka to release the prescribed **36.76 tmc ft for September**, as defined by the **Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal's final award** in 2007 and modified by the Court in February 2018.

Karnataka, in its submitted affidavit, has informed the Court that the catchment areas of its two primary reservoirs have experienced **below-average rainfall**.

The CWMA has also evaluated that the **inflow deficiency** to Karnataka's four reservoirs in the basin stands at **about 51%**. The Authority's stance asserts that Tamil Nadu has "failed to comprehend that 2023 is a year of **water scarcity**."

### What is the way forward for dispute resolution on Cauvery River between India and Pakistan?

There is a necessity for a **distress-sharing framework** that is mutually preferred. This concept, initially endorsed by the Tribunal in its final ruling and reaffirmed by the Court's 2018 judgement revolves around a **proportional reduction** in allocated shares.

CWMA must ensure that its decisions are not perceived as being **influenced**.

It is imperative for both states to prevent the Cauvery River from becoming a **source of discord**.

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### 133. Cross the boulders in the Indus Waters Treaty

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Cross the boulders in the Indus Waters Treaty**”, Published in “**The Hindu**” on **31st August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – International Relations – Bilateral groupings and agreements

**Relevance:** India and Pakistan bilateral relationship

**News**– The Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), brokered by the World Bank, which has again become a source of contention between India and Pakistan, considerably encapsulates the principle of equitable allocation rather than the principle of appreciable harm.

#### What are some facts about the Indus water treaty?

India and Pakistan are both granted **exclusive privileges** to utilise the waters from their designated rivers without causing **harm to the interests** of others.

According to the Indus Waters Treaty, India possesses **unrestricted rights** over **Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej**. Pakistan holds similar entitlements over **Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab**.

India has been authorised to store a total of **3.60 million-acre feet (MAF) of water** (0.40 MAF on the Indus, 1.50 MAF on the Jhelum, and 1.70 MAF on the Chenab).

#### What are contentious issues between India and Pakistan regarding IWT?

**The current focal point of contention between India and Pakistan revolves around India’s Kishanganga and Ratle hydroelectric power plants** located in the Jammu and Kashmir region.

India views these projects as essential for meeting its **energy requirements and fostering regional development**. Pakistan alleged **violations of the treaty** and potential adverse impacts on its water supply.

The **Kishanganga project dispute** was brought before the **Court of Arbitration** in 2010. The CoA delivered its final verdict in 2013.

CoA determined that the Kishanganga hydroelectric project constitutes a **run-of-the-river dam**. India, under the IWT, is permitted to divert water from the **Kishanganga/Neelum River** for **power generation**.

The court specified that India must maintain a **minimum water flow of nine cubic metres per second** in the Kishanganga river.

Following the CoA’s decision, the two nations reached an **agreeable resolution** on only one of the four issues that were anticipated to be settled.

Despite numerous discussions, the other three matters related to **pondage and spillway configuration** remained unresolved.

As a result, Pakistan appealed to the World Bank. It accused India of **breaching the IWT** and the court’s ruling. Pakistan also voiced objections to the Ratle project.

In 2016, Pakistan requested the World Bank to **establish a CoA**. It prompted India to propose the appointment of a **neutral expert** to address the dispute.

The World Bank halted progress on the Kishanganga and Ratle projects to **explore alternative ways** by two countries to resolve their disagreements.

Despite the pause, work on the **Kishanganga project persisted**. In 2018, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated it. Pakistan raised its concerns with the World Bank.

In October 2022, the **World Bank** designated Michel Lino as the **neutral expert** and Professor Sean Murphy as the **Chairman of the CoA**.

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On July 6, 2023, the **Permanent Court of Arbitration** unanimously dismissed India's objections and confirmed its authority to *address and resolve* the disputes brought by Pakistan.

India has chosen not to engage in the **PCA proceedings** and was absent from the recent hearing as well. India asserted that it cannot be forced to **acknowledge or participate** in **unlawful and concurrent proceedings** not stipulated by the Treaty.

### What should be done?

Rather than resorting to **legal action**, the focus should be on integrating the **principles of "equitable and reasonable utilisation"** as well as the **"no harm rule"** into the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT).

This incorporation necessitates **improved relations and enduring trust** between India and Pakistan.

The involvement of **local stakeholders** in any negotiation process on shared water matters between India and Pakistan is crucial.

The establishment of a **collaborative team** comprising experts in technology, climate, water management, and scientific fields from both countries could be effective in **addressing the root** of the problem.

To ensure the **effectiveness of the IWT**, the exploration of **cooperative arrangements** is essential. Both countries must acknowledge their **shared interest** in the **optimal development** of the **Indus River System**.

134. Pratap Bhanu Mehta writes: [The current talk of decolonisation is about an exclusionary political agenda](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article **"Pratap Bhanu Mehta writes: The current talk of decolonisation is about an exclusionary political agenda"** published in the **"The Indian Express"** on **1st September 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Polity

**News**– The article explains the decolonisation concept being prompted by the current Indian establishment and issues related to it.

### What are some facts about the decolonization project?

It calls for **revamping the education system, revising laws, reinterpreting history, reimagining public spaces, rediscovering Indic culture, and even questioning the relevance of the Constitution**.

It represents a loosely **connected intellectual movement**, often discussed in prominent and widely circulated books like J Sai Deepak's "India that is Bharat".

This perspective shapes **intellectual discussions**, particularly in various vernacular languages, with Hindi playing a prominent role.

It increasingly provides the framework for making **significant policy changes**. It is seen most recently in the debate surrounding the Criminal Law Code.

The decolonization project had two main objectives: to **safeguard India's political self-determination and promote its economic development**.

It aimed to establish an **international system** that would prevent **global power imbalances** from making India vulnerable in the future.

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The core strength of the “decolonial” project lies in its promise to **decolonize the mind**. It correctly recognizes that colonialism primarily operated through **intellectual domination of the colonized population**.

The **emotional appeal** of this argument centers on the **language issue**. For instance, the act of renaming laws is a **symbolic gesture** indicating that English should not be the sole language of the future.

### What are issues with the decolonisation project?

It is often driven by hidden **intellectual and political agendas**.

It relies on an **oversimplified binary narrative**. It pits the **West against the Indic world** as two entities locked in confrontation. It disregards the fact that **Western modernity** can also be seen as a reaction against its own history.

It also overlooks the fact that the evolution of Indian thought is characterized by **profound transformations**. It enabled Indian thought to challenge **conventional beliefs**. Indian thought has its own **form of modernity**.

There is an **element of narcissism** in this discourse. For example, Ambika Dutt Sharma raises the issue that despite **advocating for pluralism**, the Indian tradition did not engage more deeply with other **intellectual traditions**.

Indian society was **inherently self-reliant and self-complete**. It never required **external engagement** or definition from an “Other.” This claim is marked by an overwhelming sense of **self-assuredness and complacency**.

Another issue is the language used to discuss bloodlines and identity in **intellectual discourse**. **Indian intellectual tradition** is determined by its origin or lineage.

There is also a **political dimension** to the current decolonial project. It tends to explain everything through **conspiracy theories**.

There is a lack of **self-awareness** regarding why previous calls to “decolonize” and establish **“Indian” versions** of science, sociology, or political science often resulted in products that were **neither truly Indian nor authentic representations of those disciplines**.

**Islam and Christianity** are explicit targets of this decolonial project. It is because the project is explicitly framed as having its own enduring imperial ambitions.

The only condition under which Muslims are deemed acceptable is if they acknowledge the **primacy of “Indic”**.

There is a discomfort with discussions of social and injustice within the decolonial project.

The decolonial project is highly cautious when it comes to examining Indian history from the perspective of **social justice** and addressing the **forms of oppression** that exist within our society.

It might reluctantly admit the significance of addressing **caste and gender issues**. But, its ultimate objective is to **downplay these concerns** under the guise of upholding the idea of an inherently **“self-complete” tradition**.

Its primary drive is to construct a **history and intellectual discourse** that avoids causing any discomfort, especially among the privileged class.

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135. BRICS is bigger now. Is it better too?

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**BRICS is bigger now. Is it better too?**” published in “**The Indian Express**” on **1st September 2023**.

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

**Relevance:** BRICS

**News**– Leaders of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa took a call last week to expand the BRICS grouping from five countries to 11.

### What are some facts about the origin of BRICS grouping?

BRICS is a grouping of five of the **largest emerging nations** worldwide. It represents approximately **41 percent of the global population, around 24 percent of the global GDP, and roughly 16 percent of global trade.**

The term BRIC was initially coined in 2001 by **Goldman Sachs** in their research paper titled ‘**The World Needs Better Economic BRICs.**’

The paper predicted that the four economies of Brazil, Russia, India, and China would become some of the **world’s largest economies** over the next five decades.

Formally, the BRIC grouping began to take shape after leaders from Russia, India, and China met in **St. Petersburg** during the 2006 G8 Outreach Summit.

The formal establishment of the group occurred during the first meeting of **BRIC Foreign Ministers** on the sidelines of the **United Nations General Assembly** in New York in 2006.

### How BRICS is expanding itself?

The **Johannesburg declaration** stated that the BRICS nations had agreed on the **fundamental principles, norms, conditions, and steps** for the **expansion process.**

Their efforts were driven by the goal of including **Strategic Partners** as new additions.

India holds **strategic partnerships** with four of the six new potential members, namely Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Iran, and Egypt.

With its expansion to 11 members, BRICS has now surpassed the **size of both ASEAN and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.**

Some have portrayed the expanded group as an **alternative to Western alliances** like the G7. But, India does not see it as an “**anti-Western**” coalition.

In fact, France, a G7 member, has reportedly shown interest in **more active engagement** with BRICS.

The new member countries are **emerging economies** with **significant growth potential.** Many of them belong to the **Global South or are developing nations.** They seek to diversify their options in the increasingly **polarised geopolitical landscape.**

### Which are the new members from Latin America and Africa?

In **Latin America, Argentina** was chosen as a new member. Argentina has a GD) of approximately US\$610 billion.

From Africa, **Ethiopia and Egypt** secured membership, despite competition from Nigeria, Algeria, and Senegal.

According to the World Bank, Ethiopia is the **second most populous nation** in Africa after Nigeria and one of the **fastest-growing economies** in the region, with an **estimated growth rate of 6.4% in FY 2021/22.**

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Egypt, strategically located with **12 percent of global trade** passing through the Suez Canal, plays a crucial role in the region. It is a **significant economic powerhouse**, considered an **emerging economy** with reforms.

Both Argentina and Egypt, however, have **strong economic ties** with China. Recently, Beijing assisted Argentina in avoiding a **default with the International Monetary Fund** for the second time.

**China's bilateral trade** with Egypt currently stands at **\$15 billion**, which is double that of India's \$7.26 billion in 2021-22. President Sisi has actively pursued **Chinese investments** and has made **multiple trips** to China over the past eight years.

Ethiopia is seen as carefully **balancing its relationships** with both the United States and China.

### Which are the new members from Asia?

Out of the three Asian nations, Saudi Arabia and the UAE are **strong allies** of the United States.

Iran, which has had a **complex relationship with the US**, has been courted by China in recent years.

The inclusion of Saudi Arabia and the UAE is anticipated to result in **increased financial support** for the **New Development Bank**.

By incorporating these four nations, BRICS has also addressed the issue of having **no Muslim-majority country** within the grouping.

Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Iran, Egypt, and Ethiopia all share a **common regional space**. This could bring prominence to the **West Asian and North African region**. The **rivalries and geopolitical tensions** in this area might influence the **dynamics of the grouping**.

These **internal contradictions** among the member countries could potentially limit the **potential of BRICS**.

### What is the perception about China and Russia with regard to their relationship with the grouping?

China is perceived as attempting to establish its **own alliance** in opposition to **Western powers**.

India has consistently emphasised the importance of **decision-making "through consensus,"** which is the fundamental principle of the group.

This incorporation of six new members is regarded as the **initial phase of expansion**, leaving room for a **potential second phase**.

Russia is scheduled to host the upcoming **BRICS summit in Kazan in 2024**.

With an expanded group of 11 members attending, this event will serve **Moscow's interests**, as Russia has been **facing diplomatic isolation**. It will seize the opportunity to underscore **Russia's significance** despite Western pressures.

For India, the primary concern remains the **challenge posed by China**. Delhi faces the challenging task of safeguarding the group from being **unduly influenced by Beijing**.

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136. Omission of disability-related questions from NFHS-6 shows that disability remains misunderstood

**Source**– The post is based on the article “Omission of disability-related questions from NFHS-6 shows that disability remains misunderstood” published in “The Indian Express” on 1st September 2023.

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

**Relevance:** Issues related to disability

**News**– In May, the government decided to omit disability-related questions from the sixth round of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-6).

### Why is the decision to exclude disability-related questions not a right step?

Individuals with disabilities make up approximately **2.21 percent of the country’s population**. It amounts to **2.68 crore people** according to the 2011 Census.

These figures are currently **underestimated** due to both population growth in the past decade. They only encompass the **seven specified categories of disabilities**, and exclude the more general “others” category that was part of the Census.

**The National Family Health Survey-6** provided a valuable opportunity to **raise awareness** among the public, including **surveyors and enumerators**.

There is a **2030 deadline** for achieving the **SDG of “Leaving no one behind.”** There are concerns that disability rights could be relegated to a **secondary status**.

### What are other issues related to disability in India?

The understanding of the **term “disability”** has remained relatively limited over the years.

The **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation report** on ‘Persons with Disabilities in India — A Statistical Profile: 2021’ refers to **only eight categories of disabilities**.

It fails to acknowledge or account for the **21 categories of disabilities** recognized in the law after the enactment of the **Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016**.

There is a tendency to overlook the **recognition and consideration** of the **needs, perspectives, and fundamental rights** of individuals with disabilities, especially those with **less visible or “invisible disabilities.”**

The **2021 Statistical Profile report** documented that nearly 24 lakh individuals were affected by **mental health-related conditions**. They also failed to recognize or acknowledge the concept of **invisible disabilities**.

This situation persists despite estimates suggesting that as many as 20 crore people in India may be affected by psychosocial disabilities.

### Why is data on disability important?

Regular data collection is crucial for **achieving the SDGs and adhering to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**.

**Sections 28 and 27 of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act** mandate the government to **promote research** and create programs to **protect and empower** individuals with disabilities.

**Section 25** calls for government-conducted **surveys, investigations, and research centred on disabilities**.

**Niti Aayog’s ‘Strategy for New India @ 75**, acknowledges the challenges arising from the lack of **comprehensive data** in **formulating policies** for individuals with disabilities.

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137. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla writes: Parliament has created an elegant symphony of democracy, that rises above the occasional

**Source**– The post is based on the article “Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla writes: Parliament has created an elegant symphony of democracy, that rises above the occasional” published in “The Indian Express” on 1st September 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Parliament

**News**– The article explains the roots of Parliamentary democracy in India, and the role played by this institution in strengthening democracy in India. It also provides details about Parliamentary committees and Parliamentary privileges in India.

### What are some facts about Parliamentary democracy?

Parliaments represent the highest expression of the **will of sovereign nations**. In a **constitutional democracy**, elected representatives seek approval through elections for their **plans and policies**.

Parliaments formed through this **popular mandate** are granted authority to **pass laws, set political objectives, allocate resources, and amplify the voices of ordinary citizens**. It holds the executive branch **accountable** for their actions and inactions.

In essence, the people of a nation are the **lifeblood of parliamentary democracy**.

### How democracy is deeply rooted in the ethos of India?

India is widely acknowledged as the **birthplace of democracy**. This is evident from its **rich and diverse historical and cultural heritage**.

Indian ancient texts mention **institutions and political systems** that facilitated **discussions and deliberations**. They also reveal the existence of **participatory governance**, especially at the grassroots level of village communities.

Many parts of the country, inhabited by communities with tribal traditions, have demonstrated resilient **local self-governance**.

**Parliamentary democracy** has thrived in independent India. It shows the **democratic principles** cherished by our ancestors.

When India gained independence in 1947, there were widespread doubts expressed by international observers about the **democracy in the country**.

However, the founding leaders of the country did not share such reservations. India adopted an exceptionally **enlightened Constitution** at the outset of our independence.

The journey over the past seven decades has proven their faith in the Indian people’s ability to make the **right choices**.

### What is the role played by Parliament in strengthening democracy in India?

The parliamentary system has enabled the nation to **manage conflicts, celebrate diversity**, while fostering a **shared sense of unity**.

It has guided the nation forward on the path of **development and prosperity**, ensuring that even the most **marginalized individuals** benefit.

The Parliament of India has **respected diversity** in all its forms. It has treated all with **fairness** and consistently reached out to the **disadvantaged sections** of society.

In India, the Parliament is highly regarded by the people as the source of **transformative legislation**. It serves as the **ultimate guardian of public finances**, authorizing the **allocation and oversight of funds and expenditures**.

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Parliament is entrusted with ensuring **accountability of the Executive** through **various mechanisms** outlined in the **Constitution, procedural rules, traditions, and well-established precedents**.

The Parliament of India has played a **purposeful role** in driving positive **socio-economic changes** in India. It has achieved this through the enactment of **progressive laws** and through debates on matters of **contemporary national significance**.

To date, our Parliament has passed over **4,000 laws** since Independence. These **legislative measures** have firmly established India as a nation that upholds the **rule of law**.

### What are some facts about Parliamentary committees?

Parliamentary committees serve as **extensions of Parliament** and are often referred to as **miniature parliaments**.

These committees are endowed with **significant authority and responsibility** for conducting thorough **examinations of bills, budget proposals, programs, policies**, and the functioning of various ministries within the Union government.

These committees play a crucial role in **complementing and supporting** the work of Parliament, primarily because they have **greater flexibility** in their operations.

They can develop their **own approaches**, **gather input** from government officials, and **take opinions** directly from the public, organizations, and experts. These **feedback mechanisms** enhance the **effectiveness of parliamentary oversight**.

### What are some facts about Parliamentary privileges?

The Constitution grants members of Parliament **certain rights, privileges** to enable them to fulfill their responsibilities **efficiently and without fear of bias**.

**Parliamentary privileges** serve as a shield to protect the **independence, authority, and dignity** of Parliament from encroachments by other branches of the state. This is essential to allow members to **freely express** their opinions and ideas.

These privileges encompass **immunity from legal action** for statements made within the Houses of Parliament and **protection from arrest in civil matters** during parliamentary sessions or committee meetings.

### What is the way forward to improve the functioning of the Parliament?

**Right to question and dissent** should not be misused to create **disruption and chaos** within the legislative body. Disapproval can be expressed more effectively through **well-informed debates**.

The consequence of disruptive obstructionism is a decrease in the **productivity of the legislative body**, the passage of **important laws** without discussions, and a missed opportunity to **demand answers** from the government.

India should devise ways to transform this **representative institution** into a place deserving of the **respect and confidence** that voters have placed in their elected representatives.

Members of Parliament owe it to the citizens of the nation to uphold the **honour and dignity** of Parliament. Parliamentarians are regarded as **role models**.

Indian Parliament needs to **embrace technology** and should lead the way. Over the last few years, the Parliament of India has made **concerted efforts** to introduce **information technology**.

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### What are reforms introduced in the working of Parliament in recent times?

The new building of Parliament has incorporated **top-rated green building norms and modern technology** to reduce **carbon footprint and raise efficiency**.

The **Digital Sansad app** has been developed and is being continuously fine-tuned to serve members and stakeholders better.

**Social media coverage** of the activities and archival resources of Parliament is being upgraded to connect effectively with the youth. The Parliament of India is well on its way to becoming a truly “e-Sansad”.

### 138. A progressive UCC must protect the child's best interests

**Source:** The post is based on the article “A progressive UCC must protect the child's best interests” published in “The Hindu” on 1st September 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Mechanisms, laws, institutions and bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of vulnerable sections (child)

**News:** The article talks about the importance of India's Uniform Civil Code (UCC) giving more importance to the child's well-being in custody disputes rather than biological connections. It mentions recent court judgments that favored biological parents over adoptive ones, causing potential harm to child welfare and adoption rates.

### What is the current Indian law on child custody?

**Guardians and Wards Act, 1890:** This act emphasizes the child's welfare as the primary consideration in custody decisions.

#### Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, 1956:

Generally, the father is considered the natural guardian.

The mother becomes the guardian when the child is below five.

The Supreme Court in the Githa Hariharan case (1999) interpreted “after him” to mean in the father's absence, not necessarily after his death.

#### Islamic Law on Custody:

Custody is seen as the child's right, not the parents'.

The mother is the preferred custodian, with several relatives listed before the father.

Different Islamic schools have varied rules:

**Hanafi School:** Mother retains custody until boys are seven and girls are 17.

**Shafii and Hanbali Schools:** Mothers have custody until a daughter marries.

**Maliki School:** Mothers get custody of male children until puberty and female children until marriage. After these points, children can choose their guardian.

### How does the Indian law view biological parents vs. adoptive parents?

**General Trend:** Indian courts have recently shown a leaning towards the rights of biological parents over adoptive parents in custody disputes.

#### Bombay High Court (2023) Example:

A child resulting from an alleged rape was given up for adoption.

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On the biological father's petition, the court halted the adoption proceedings.

The court, sidelining the adoptive parents and Child Welfare Committee's reservations, awarded custody to the biological father.

### **Nasrin Begum Case (2022) Example:**

A child was with adoptive parents for six years.

The High Court gave precedence to the biological parents, emphasizing the child's right to know her identity and the rights of the biological parents, disregarding the adoption agreement.

### **What are the implications of the Indian law view for adoptions?**

Implications for Adoptions in India:

**Decreased Adoption Rates:** If biological parents are consistently favored, potential adoptive parents might be deterred from adopting.

**Child's Best Interests:** The child's welfare and trauma can be sidelined.

**Legal Ambiguity:** Adoption agreements can be overruled, leading to uncertainty. For example, despite an existing adoption agreement in the Nasrin Begum case, the High Court prioritized the biological parents' rights.

Current legal trends could jeopardize the stability and security of the adoption system in India, potentially putting child welfare at risk.

### **What should a progressive Uniform Civil Code (UCC) consider?**

**Child's Best Interests:** UCC should prioritize the child's welfare in all custody disputes, overriding biological or adoptive preferences.

**Rights of Adoptive Parents:** Protecting their rights is crucial; otherwise, adoptions might decline.

**Beyond Biological Ties:** The UCC shouldn't overemphasize biological connections; bonding through care and love should be equally recognized.

**Inclusive Guardianship:** Make provisions for various guardianship forms, including single parents, surrogate parents, and queer parents.

A modern UCC should prioritize child welfare and reflect the diverse nature of family structures today.

### 139. [Neighbours, rivals- The Asia Cup remains hostage to India-Pakistan relations](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article "Neighbours, rivals- The Asia Cup remains hostage to India-Pakistan relations" published in "The Hindu" on 1st September 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- India and its neighbourhood-relations.

**News:** The article talks about Asia Cup's history and challenges, focusing on political tensions, mainly between India and Pakistan. It also mentions teams preparing for the upcoming World Cup.

### **About Asia Cup**

**Origin:** Launched in 1984 to foster Asian unity in cricket.

**Participants:** Started with India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. Later included Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Hong Kong, UAE, and Nepal.

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**Current Edition:** 16th edition split between Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

**Format:** Currently in ODI format.

### What are the implications of this tournament?

**Regional Unity:** Initiated in 1984 to promote Asian solidarity in cricket.

**Political Narratives:** The India-Pakistan tension shapes the tournament's dynamics and venue choices.

**Team Preparations:** Serves as a preparatory stage for the World Cup, with teams like India working on squad balance.

**Rare Face-offs:** India-Pakistan matches, due to politics, are now limited to ICC events and the Asia Cup.

**Team Evolution:** Afghanistan's participation, despite domestic turmoil, showcases resilience.

**Performance Indicator:** Offers a glimpse into the teams' potential and strategies ahead of the World Cup.

140. [Altering status quo- Restoring popular rule in J&K and its statehood ought to be a priority](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article "**Altering status quo- Restoring popular rule in J&K and its statehood ought to be a priority**" published in **The Hindu** on 2nd September 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Indian Polity – issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure.

**News:** The article discusses the delay in restoring statehood to Jammu and Kashmir after its status was downgraded to a Union Territory, despite the government's claim of improved conditions in the region.

### What are the major issues with Jammu and Kashmir's statehood?

**State Downgrade:** Jammu and Kashmir were downgraded from a state to a Union Territory 4 years ago.

**No Restoration Timeline:** The Centre has not provided a specific timeline for restoring J&K's statehood.

**Delay Questions:** Past disturbances in J&K are being cited as reasons for the delay, raising concerns.

**Constitutional Challenge:** The manner of J&K's status alteration is under scrutiny in the Supreme Court.

### What does the centre say about Jammu and Kashmir's statehood?

**Temporary Status:** The Centre states that the Union Territory status for J&K is temporary.

**No Set Timeline:** When questioned by the Supreme Court, the Centre, represented by the Solicitor-General, was unable to provide an exact timeline for the restoration of statehood.

**Election Push:** The Centre is in favor of holding panchayat, municipal elections, and Assembly polls in J&K.

### What does the centre say about Jammu and Kashmir's statehood?

**Supreme Court Query:** The Supreme Court Bench queried the Centre about a timeline for the return of Statehood.

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**Constitutional Challenge:** J&K's special status abrogation under Article 370 is under constitutional challenge in the Supreme Court.

**Chief Justice's Observation:** Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud noted that post-2019 development work is not relevant to the constitutional challenge.

**Focus of Hearing:** The 14-day hearing by a Constitution Bench concentrated on the constitutional and historical issues tied to J&K's status alteration.

### 141. China's economic slowdown, its ripple effect

**Source:** The post is based on the article "**China's economic slowdown, its ripple effect**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 2nd September 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Indian Polity – Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests. & GS3- Effects of liberalization on the economy.

**News:** The article discusses China's economic challenges, its shift from rapid growth to focusing on quality-of-life, political interventions in the economy, and the potential impacts on the global market, especially India.

#### What are the reasons for the economic slowdown in China?

**Infrastructure Emphasis:** China chose infrastructure projects over fixing core issues, neglecting consumption gaps and regional disparities.

**Transition to 'New Normal':** Growth from exports and major investments ended, shifting focus to quality-of-life, leading to lower growth rates.

**Labor Cost Surge:** Incidents like the Foxconn suicides resulted in wage hikes and more social security investments, raising production costs.

**Sectoral Overproduction:** Industries, especially housing, energy, and construction, produced beyond demand, amassing unsold inventory.

#### Political Economic Choices:

**Capital Expansion Control:** Xi Jinping's mention of "Disorderly expansion of capital" after the Ant Group IPO issue signaled tighter control over capitalist activities.

**Backtracking on Promises:** Although the 18th Central Committee in 2013 suggested markets would play a greater role in resource allocation, many of these promises were later revoked. For instance, the government intervened when the stock markets tumbled in 2015 and tightened currency convertibility, locking savings longer due to speculations.

#### Ineffective Economic Strategies:

**Saving Tendency:** Chinese save over 50% of their income, impacting consumption.

**Common Prosperity:** Intended to distribute economic growth benefits more broadly but hasn't reached leadership's expected success levels.

**Dual Circulation:** Designed to boost domestic consumption and improve domestic market competitiveness while reducing bureaucratic red tape. Yet, the results haven't been as effective as hoped.

**Trade Wars & External Conflicts:** The US-China trade tensions hampered trade dynamics.

**Strict COVID Measures:** The zero-COVID policy disrupted goods flow, causing economic disturbances and cash conservation.

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### What is the potential impact of China's economic slowdown on India and the world?

#### Impact on India:

**Reduced Commodity Prices:** China's slowdown could lead to decreased prices for commodities. For instance, China's demand for crude oil, cement, and steel might drop.

**Border Dynamics:** Given the underlying economic tensions, China's approach to its borders with India might shift. The exact nature of this shift remains an important issue to watch.

#### Impact on the World:

**Trade Disruptions:** China's role as a major global trading partner means its slowdown can influence global trade dynamics. An example is the U.S.-China trade war that already strained economic relations.

**Commodity Market Impact:** A dip in China's demand can affect global commodity prices. China's previous role as a major market for commodities can lead to significant global price shifts.

**Investment Cautiousness:** The current atmosphere in China makes global investors wary. Recent data suggests companies are becoming more cash-conscious, potentially indicating a trend of increased saving over investing.

**Economic Dependencies:** Given China's global economic influence, many countries might face challenges due to China's slowdown.

#### 142. Centre's criminal code bills: Weakening criminal law's guardrails

**Source:** The post is based on the article "**Menaka Guruswamy on Centre's criminal code bills: Weakening criminal law's guardrails**" published in **The Indian Express** on 2nd September 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Indian Polity – Parliament and State Legislatures – structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these

**News:** The author discusses changes in India's criminal law with three new bills introduced by the government. These bills merge "special statutes" into general criminal law, potentially harming procedural safeguards for the accused. This could lead to innocent people suffering unfairly. The article emphasizes the need for checks and balances in criminal proceedings.

#### About India's new criminal law

**Introduction of Bills:** On August 11, the government introduced three new bills to replace three longstanding laws, giving them new names.

#### Three bills are:

The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (to replace the Indian Penal Code, 1860),

the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (to replace the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973) and

the Bharatiya Sakshya Bill, 2023 (to replace the Indian Evidence Act, 1872)

**Shift in Approach:** Traditionally, India had special statutes for complex crimes. Now, these special laws are being incorporated into general criminal law.

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### Why are there chances of mixing special laws into general ones?

**Change in Legislative Practice:** Historically, India used special statutes for complex crimes, ensuring both stringent punishments and procedural safeguards. The new bills deviate from this approach.

**Treatment of Organised Crime:** In the past, organized crime was handled by special legislation like Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act, 1999 (MCOCA). The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 now includes provisions for organized crime within general law, broadening its definition to include activities like fraud, money laundering, and more.

**Absence of Procedural Safeguards:** Previously, MCOCA required high-ranking police approvals and had specific safeguards. The new proposed laws lack such detailed procedural protections.

### What are the other concerns?

**Potential Harm to Innocents:** Without the traditional checks and balances, there's a risk that innocent individuals might be unfairly treated under the new legal framework.

**Trust in the Legal System:** The dilution of procedural protections and the absence of clear checks can erode public trust in the criminal justice system.

### What should be done?

**Maintain Distinction:** The historical practice of having distinct special statutes for specific crimes should be maintained to ensure checks, balances, and targeted procedural safeguards.

**Refine Definitions:** The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 has broad definitions, especially concerning "organised crime". This implies a need to make definitions more precise to avoid misinterpretation.

**Prioritize Fair Trials:** Emphasize and safeguard the principles of a fair trial and the rule of law in any legal reforms.

### 143. Ahead of G20, India's road safety challenge

**Source:** The post is based on the article "**Ahead of G20, India's road safety challenge**" published in **The Indian Express** on 2nd September 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – Social Issues – Road Safety

**News:** The article discusses the urgent need for better road safety worldwide, especially in developing countries like India. While awareness is increasing, many countries still face high road accident deaths. The G20, a group of major economies, hasn't focused enough on this issue.

### Why is road safety important?

**High road accident deaths:** Many countries, especially like India, face alarming numbers.

**Economic impact:** The World Bank highlights its effect on India's health and growth.

**Vulnerable sections at risk:** In India, 70% of road deaths are from economically productive sections.

**Impact on society:** The majority affected include pedestrians, cyclists, two-wheelers, and children.

**Direct link to prosperity:** Road safety is essential for a country's overall economic growth and well-being.

### What actions have been taken by the G20 to address road safety?

**Limited focus:** So far, the G20 hasn't given road safety a central spot on their agenda.

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**2016 initiative:** They were approached with a proposal to cut road deaths by half by 2030, but it didn't gain much traction.

### What role can India play in addressing road safety?

**G20's Spotlight:** With its G20 presidency, India can prioritize road safety on the global agenda.

**Steering Resources:** India can guide the G20's resources towards evaluating and implementing road safety practices.

**Inspiring Global Initiatives:** India introduced the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act 2019, showing its dedication to improving road safety. By sharing its road safety achievements and issues, India can inspire G20 countries to take action.

**Track Record of Crisis Management:** India's effective response to the Covid-19 pandemic showcases its capability to tackle challenges.

### What should be done?

**G20 Special Meeting:** Convene a specific G20 session to discuss and strategize on road safety challenges.

**Collaborative Approach:** Countries with strong road safety records in the G20 should assist nations struggling with high road accidents.

**Establish G20 RSF:** Create a Road Safety Fund (G20 RSF) to financially support nations in reducing road crashes.

**Evaluation Mechanism:** Monitor the effective use of the G20 RSF every six months. Future financial aid should be based on the success and utilization of previous funds.

**Set Clear Targets:** Every country should have a detailed plan with goals to cut down road accidents.

**Zones of Excellence:** Consider privatizing road safety in high-risk areas, creating Zones of Excellence in Road Safety (ZoEs). These zones should emphasize education, engineering, enforcement, and emergency care.

### 144. Neta Ramaswamy – Diaspora is rocking it, from tech to politics

**Source:** The post is based on the article “Neta Ramaswamy – Diaspora is rocking it, from tech to politics” published in *The Times of India* on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – International Relations – Indian Diaspora

**Relevance:** contribution of Indian diaspora in America

**News:** Vivek Ramaswamy, a child of Indian immigrants, is being considered for vice president candidate by former President Donald Trump. About 10% of Republicans plan to vote for him as president, showing his increasing popularity.

### What has been the achievements of the Indian diaspora in the United States?

Indian Americans have made significant contributions to the United States in a variety of fields, including business, technology, education, and healthcare.

They are increasingly visible in media and politics, and their representation in government is also growing.

Moreover, in the United States, **Indian Americans aren't mainly found in areas where there are lots of other Indian Americans, unlike Latinos and Black Americans.**

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This shows that the skills Indian Americans learn in their home country to work with diverse groups can help them make connections in other countries.

**Must Read: Indian Diaspora in US and its Impacts on India- US Relations**

### What lies ahead?

The initial concern that talented Indians leaving the country for better opportunities abroad would be a “brain drain” has shifted to the understanding that their success abroad can benefit India in the long run.

The increasing diversity of those who leave India is a positive development. Therefore, **even as India creates more job opportunities domestically, it should continue to embrace a global perspective for its talented individuals.**

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# General

# Studies

# Paper –3

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### General Studies - 3

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#### 1. [Incentivising fiscal prudence for states](#)

**Source:** The post is based on an article “**Incentivising fiscal prudence for states**” published in **Business Standard** on **31<sup>st</sup> July 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Indian Economy – Public Finance

**Relevance:** measures needed to reduce debt of states.

**News:** The article explains the increasing debt of state governments and measures needed to reduce it.

#### **What is the present situation of debt?**

**States, at 28 percent of GDP, account for nearly a third of the total debt** of Indian governments. The central government accounts for the rest.

There is also variation among states holding debts. **For example**, debts of Gujarat and Maharashtra remain below 25 per cent of their respective GDP.

Whereas, debts of Punjab, Rajasthan, and Kerala as a proportion of their state GDP have exceeded 40 per cent at the end of 2020-21.

#### **What is the predicted situation for states' debt?**

**The debt-to-GDP ratio of the states is projected to increase on average.** The states with the highest levels of debt now are also those where debt is expected to rise the greatest.

**For example**, Punjab's debt is expected to rise sharply from its present level of about 48% of state GDP to almost 55% in 2027-28.

#### **What are the differences between states with high levels of debt and states with low burdens of public debt?**

**The primary budget deficits and contingent liabilities of more indebted states are more than twice** as high as those of less indebted states. Higher indebted states also show slower GDP growth.

However, **one thing that doesn't vary across high- and low-debt states is borrowing costs.** Gujarat and Punjab, despite differences in the level of debts, issue debt at the same interest rate.

#### **What are the concerns with the same borrowing cost for all the states?**

**Due to the absence of interest rate variation, there is absence of market discipline** because states with higher debts are not prohibited from borrowing by paying higher interest rates.

Even though the RBI implements measures to keep interest rates stable, it grants some flexibility to states with higher debt to avoid the perception of debt distress spreading to other states. This, in turn, leads to a loosening of market discipline.

Further, the horizontal devolution of taxes among states, awarded by the Finance Commission, mandates to allocate more resources to states with larger revenue deficits. This again gives an advantage to states that have higher debts.

#### **What can be done to strengthen state finances?**

**First**, states could increase revenue mobilization through expanding digitization, widening the tax base, raising property taxes, implementing new taxes, and increasing privatization receipts.

**Second**, states should redirect their spending towards capacity- and infrastructure-building investments, which promise to improve state GDP and income.

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**Third**, states should pursue fiscal-management reforms to reduce the dangers that contingent liabilities pose to their public finances.

**Fourth**, the RBI should oblige states that vary with their present and future debt levels to pay market interest rates.

**Fifth**, there is a need to strengthen the finance commission. The commission gets dissolved after they submit the report and there is no parallel institution or body to monitor states' finances. Hence, there is a need to establish a permanent fiscal or expenditure council to monitor state finances.

**Sixth**, fiscal experts and the media need to scrutinize the budgetary processes of the states.

### 2. [Hurdles to overcome before becoming 'Digital India](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article "**Hurdles to overcome before becoming 'Digital India**" published in "The Hindu" on 31st July 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life

**News:** In this article author discusses how UPI has grown rapidly in India, outpacing other digital payment methods. Despite this growth, many bank accounts remain inactive, and digital transactions are not widespread across all demographics. Comparing to other countries, India's digital adoption, especially among women and rural areas, lags.

#### About UPI payments in India

**Growth:** UPI payments have seen rapid growth, with its share in digital retail payments rising from under **20% in 2021 to 27% in 2023**.

**Comparison:** UPI's growth outpaces other methods like NEFT, IMPS, and debit card payments. For instance, from June 2021 to April 2023, UPI payments grew at an average monthly rate of 6%. The corresponding figures for NEFT, IMPS, and debit card payments were 3%, 3%, and 1.5%, respectively.

**Financial Inclusion:** While 80% of Indians have bank accounts, only 35% conducted digital transactions in 2021 (22% in 2014 and 29% in 2017).

**Gender Gap:** More **men (41%) than women (28%)** made digital transactions in 2021. Comparatively, in Vietnam, 48% of men and 44% of women did. Brazil had 80% men and 73% women, China saw 87% men and 85% women, and Kenya reported 82% men and 74% women.

#### What are the benefits of UPI payments?

**Rapid Adoption:** Since its introduction in 2016, UPI transactions have shown consistent growth. By March 2023, UPI accounted for 27% of digital retail payments in India.

**Speed and Efficiency:** UPI is a real-time payment systems, unlike NEFT. This means faster and instant transfers, making it preferable for many users.

**Push for Financial Inclusion:** The rise of UPI payments has the potential to enhance financial inclusion. As of 2021, 80% of the Indian population had bank accounts, with UPI simplifying transactions for them.

**Wider Acceptance:** The reach of UPI is evident when even local shops or "kirana" stores adopt it, showcasing its ease and accessibility.

**Shift from Traditional Methods:** The increasing UPI usage led to a decrease in NEFT transactions from 64% in mid-2021 to less than 54% by 2023.

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### What are the challenges of UPI payments?

**Inactive Accounts:** While 80% of Indians had bank accounts in 2021, 38% of these were inactive. This high rate of inactivity could hinder the broader use of UPI.

**Limited Use:** Only 35% of the population carried out any digital transaction in 2021, showing limited UPI penetration despite its growth.

**Gender Disparity:** A significant gap exists between men (41%) and women (28%) using digital transactions, indicating potential barriers for women to access or trust UPI.

**Rural-Urban Divide:** Digital payment adoption is lower in rural areas (30%) compared to urban areas (40%).

**Global Comparison:** India's digital adoption lags behind countries like Vietnam, Brazil, China, and Kenya, both in overall usage and gender parity.

### 3. [Feroze Varun Gandhi on cities' flooding: Perils of unplanned urbanisation](#)

**Source-** The post is based on the article "**Feroze Varun Gandhi on cities' flooding: Perils of unplanned urbanisation**" published in "**The Indian Express**" on **31st July 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS1- Urbanisation. GS3- Disaster management

**Relevance:** Issues related to flooding in cities

**News -** In the past few weeks, three major cities — Delhi, Ahmedabad, Mumbai — have been flooded.

### Why has damage and disruption caused by flooding have increased after independence?

Due to unplanned urbanisation and population growth, there has been a surge in **construction**, particularly in low-lying areas. It has resulted in the **depletion of water bodies**.

The **process of concretization** has reduced **rainwater percolation**. It has led to an increase in **stormwater run-off**.

Most Indian cities are situated on the bank of rivers, having **extensive floodplains and wetlands**. India has lost **40% of its wetlands** in the last three decades.

For instance, Baroda experienced a 30% decline in its wetlands between 2005 and 2018. This loss of natural "**blue infrastructure**" has heightened the **risks of flooding**.

### What should be done to stop flooding?

**Understand the gravity of the problem-** It is essential to conduct studies in all cities to assess the **catchment area** and **flooding risks** associated with urban water bodies and land use.

**Comprehensive lake and river management plans** need to be developed. **Active involvement from the local community** is needed to ensure **proper maintenance and the removal of encroachments**.

**Geographic information systems** can be utilised to tag local water bodies. It will aid in the **monitoring of encroachments** and understanding their **seasonal variations**.

There is a need to enhance **early warning systems** for providing **real-time updates on local weather patterns**. Local rainfall data should be integrated with the **Central Water Commission and regional flood control efforts** to improve **flood preparedness**.

As rainfall patterns change, **simulations** will be essential. These simulations can be incorporated into **flood risk maps and insurance products**.

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**City-wide databases** should also be established to facilitate **immediate relief efforts** in the event of a **flooding-related disaster**.

**Improve drainage and stormwater networks**– Most of India's cities and towns lack a **well-functioning sewerage network**. In Delhi, the drainage system has a limited capacity. Its **stormwater drains** are quite old.

In Delhi, there are areas where the **drainage slopes** are incorrectly positioned, leading to issues against gravity. In other places, there is **no clear distinction between drainage and stormwater drains**.

To address these issues, most cities need to develop **comprehensive drainage master plans**.

It is essential to conduct **surveys of existing pipelines** to identify locations prone to waterlogging.

There is a need to ensure that **stormwater networks** remain separate from the **drainage network**.

### **Improving urban planning-**

In Delhi, the city drainage system is managed by a range of civic agencies. It leads to **coordination challenges**. Information is not shared or shared with delay. It leads to a lack of transparency. Coordination between agencies and institutions must improve.

**Awareness generation**– Furthermore, there is a need to **enhance awareness** about wetland and water body conservation.

The efforts made by the Central government, such as promoting the **National Mission for Clean Ganga**, conducting a **Census on Pan-India water bodies**, are encouraging steps. However, a **well-defined urban water policy** is necessary.

**Regulatory bodies** like the **Central Wetland Regulatory Authority** should be granted **statutory powers** to enforce conservation measures. Additionally, **involving local communities** in the **conservation efforts** would be beneficial.

### **Identify and replicate local examples-**

1. **Mangalore**– Earlier, wastewater flowed through **open drains** and into the city's water bodies, polluting the freshwater sources.

The Mangalore City Corporation established **wastewater treatment plants** and created **connections for end-users**, particularly for industries. These industries faced challenges due to a **limited and irregular water supply**.

To address this, the MCC proposed **supplying treated effluent** to industries to fulfil its industrial water requirements. Private entities within MSEZL contributed to 70% of the **operations and maintenance costs** for the **pumps and sewage treatment plant**.

- **Kaikondrahalli Lake in Bengaluru** – It suffered from **sewage inflow and eutrophication**. There was encroachment on the lake bed.

BBMP went for a **community-driven approach** to revive the lake in a phased manner. BBMP demarcated the lake's boundaries.

Pollution was tackled by **diversion of sewage flow through tapping pipelines**.

**Development of inlets and outlets** for the lake was carried out. **Embankments and a pathway** around the waterbody were created. All of this was done with **local participation**.

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### 4. [Manmohan Bahadur writes: Soldiers in the digital age](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Manmohan Bahadur writes: Soldiers in the digital age**” published in the “**The Indian Express**” on **31st July 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Security

**Relevance:** Issues related to armed forces

**News-** The article explains the issues of impact of social media on armed forces recruits

**What are issues faced by armed forces due to increasing use of social media in recent times?**

There is a significant lack of research on how the **modern-day recruit**, influenced by social media, differs from his counterpart of twenty years ago upon entering service.

Recently the Army has issued a directive suggesting the **potential suspension of pension** for veterans whose remarks on social media spoil the Army.

There is the **attraction of consumerism** and the irresistible desire to move ahead quickly. Combined with the allure of **social media fame**, it is causing a shift in the **standards of political and social norms, values, and ethics**.

There is the growing trend of polarisation based on cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and religious differences.

Social media platforms are filled with videos **showcasing the divisions** that have seeped down to even the school level. The armed forces recruit their personnel from this environment.

**Way forward-**

There is a need to **detoxify the mass** that enters at the training institution level. They need to be taught that in the armed forces, all Indians are seen as **just Indians**.

Existing **organised and structured training programs** should be **thoroughly reviewed**. The **actions of junior leaders** play a crucial role as **effective training tools** in this regard.

The **reduced training duration** for enlisted Agniveers presents a new challenge in this regard. Their **four-year engagement period** is not sufficient to assimilate the **values and norms of their service**.

### 5. [Pathways for digital inclusion](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Pathways for digital inclusion**” published in **The Indian Express** on **31st July 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – e-governance. GS 3 – Inclusive growth

**Relevance:** Issues related to flooding in cities

**News-** The article explains the Indian DPI and issues related to it.

**What are some facts about DPI in India?**

DPIs replicate **physical infrastructures**. These DPIs are **digital pathways** for **seamless provision of essential services**.

The Indian DPI ecosystem is envisioned as “**India Stack**”. India Stack is interconnected yet independent “**blocks of a stack**”. Each block ensures **financial and social inclusion** across sectors and benefits a diverse population.

It has **multiple use cases**. It generates **novel solutions that drive innovation, inclusion and competition** in the digital space.

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### What are successful examples of DPI in India?

**Aadhaar** has facilitated **financial inclusion**.

The **Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile trinity** has ensured the direct **benefit transfers of welfare subsidies** to bank accounts of the beneficiaries.

**Unified Payments Interface** has enabled citizens to **transfer money** from one bank account to another bank account digitally.

Future of India's DPI involves **sector specific DPIs** such as **account aggregators, Open Network for Digital Commerce, Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission and Agristack**.

### What should be done?

**Placing users at the forefront-**

**User-centric design** is needed to reduce the risks related to use of technology and **reduce the inequalities** amongst rural and urban populations, genders or economic groups.

For DPI usage, **compatible protocols** for feature phones, **assisted-tech models and Interactive Voice Response System** should be implemented. These should provide support to consumers with **limited smartphone access or low digital literacy**.

The RBI's launch of **UPI123Pay** is an example of inclusivity. It gives feature phone owners an app that enables them with most UPI features.

**Inclusion**– It should be a **key policy objective** for DPI participants. It must be embedded within the **regulatory framework**.

Several countries like Nigeria, the UK and Brazil, have adopted **open banking for financial inclusion within the regulatory framework**. Estonia's information policy emphasises avoiding **information disparities** between regions or communities.

There is a need to identify the **underserved target segments** and **develop use cases** that caters to their needs for promoting inclusion.

For instance, MSMEs have limited access to **formal sources of credit**. The **account aggregator ecosystem** can ensure access to **low-cost, low-ticket-size, collateral-free sources of credit** by utilising the **digital trail** of all consented transactional data.

For the successful implementation of any digital public infrastructure on a large scale, it is essential to establish **meaningful engagement with the DPI. Digital connectivity and literacy** are big challenges in India, and addressing these issues becomes crucial.

**Offline channels** should be considered, alongside efforts to enhance **institutional capacity for generating trust and awareness**. This approach not only ensures **access to the last mile for vulnerable consumers**.

**For example, business correspondents** play a crucial role as intermediaries that banks rely on to expand access to and usage of financial products.

### 6. [In the wilderness: Forest Bill defeats purpose of the law](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article **"In the wilderness: Forest Bill defeats purpose of the law"** published in **Business standard** on **1st August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, Environmental Impact Assessment

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**News:** Last week, the Lok Sabha passed the Forest Conservation (Amendment) Bill, which makes significant changes to the original law.

### What are the major changes to the Forest Conservation (Amendment) Bill?

**Renaming the law in Hindi:** This might exclude non-Hindi speaking regions, especially the northeast.

#### Exemptions for Forest Land:

Alongside rail lines or public roads leading to habitation or amenities up to 1,000 sq. metres.

Within 100 km of international borders for “national importance” projects.

Up to 10 hectares for security-related infrastructure.

Up to 5 hectares in areas with left-wing extremism.

Land not marked as forest on government records after October 25, 1980.

#### Limiting the Act:

Only applies to land notified before October 25, 1980. This challenges the 1996 Supreme Court’s Godavarman judgment.

#### Definition Changes:

Includes man-made constructions like zoos, safari parks, and eco-tourism under forestry activities.

#### Power to Central Government:

The Bill gives more powers to the central government, even though forests were included in the Concurrent List of the Constitution.

### What are the implications of this change?

**Decreased Forest Cover:** Exemptions can reduce India’s forest area.

**Biodiversity at Risk:** Relaxations threaten fragile ecosystems, like the Aravalli hills.

**Indigenous Communities:** Changes may infringe on the land and rights of these communities, especially in the northeast and central India.

**Legal Conflicts:** Limits challenge the 1996 Supreme Court’s Godavarman judgment.

**Zoos and Parks:** They aren’t natural forests but are now under forestry activities.

**Tensions in Governance:** More central government power could strain relations with states.

### [7. The debate on data](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**The debate on data**” published in “The Hindu” on 1st August 2023.

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

**News:** The author discusses concerns over India’s statistical system and the accuracy of its data. Once admired globally, the system’s reliability has declined. There are issues with data credibility, multiple agencies providing conflicting data, and delays in publishing essential data. The author emphasizes the need for an overhaul to provide credible data for better policymaking.

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### What are the major issues with India's statistical system?

Major issues with India's statistical system:

#### Data Credibility:

Surveys, like household ones, face credibility questions.

Concerns about samples selected and non-response from households.

EAC-PM paper says urban data isn't captured well.

#### Conflicting Data Sources:

Different agencies give different numbers for the same indicators.

Example: Manufacturing data from the Ministry of Corporate Affairs' MCA21 portal differs from the Annual Survey of Industries.

A 2019 report found 36% of MCA21 companies, used for GDP, were not traceable or classified properly.

#### System Competence:

Delays in conducting and publishing surveys.

Example: Processed data of completed surveys withheld, hindering assessments of poverty.

Macroeconomic data like wholesale price series and consumer price index are overdue for revisions.

#### Data Non-availability:

2021 Census yet to happen.

Policymakers use thin samples, like NITI Aayog's 2023 index based on 6 lakh households, while India has over 30 crore households.

### What should be done?

#### Improve Data Credibility:

Use realistic samples to reflect the transforming economy.

Re-examine definitions, like 'urban', to ensure accuracy.

#### Standardize Data Sources:

Address issues like the MCA21 portal's glitches and inaccuracies.

Reduce conflicting data from different agencies.

#### Enhance System Competence:

Timely conduct and publication of surveys.

Revise outdated macroeconomic data series.

#### Transparent Data Dissemination:

Move beyond dashboards for clear data sharing.

#### Review Past Recommendations:

Revisit reports, like the Rangarajan Committee Report (2001), to assess and implement past suggestions.

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### 8. [Success with chips will take much more effort](#)

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

**“Success with chips will take much more effort” published in Live Mint on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2023 and**

**“Chip tactics: on India’s bid to attract major global chip manufacturers” published in The Hindu on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2023.**

**Syllabus: GS 3 – Industrial Policy**

**Relevance: challenges associated with establishing semiconductor industry in India**

**News:** Taiwan has been a cause of tussle between China and the West, due to its significance in manufacturing advanced microchips for digital devices. India has also entered into the race to become a supplier of advanced microchips.

#### **How is India trying to become a supplier?**

Despite the setbacks faced by India in failed [Foxconn-Vendanta venture](#), the PM has still taken efforts to move ahead to attract investment for the establishment of semicon fab units.

**At the [Semicon India 2023 conclave](#)**, PM offered 50% financial backing to companies looking to establish chip manufacturing facilities in India including offer for low corporate tax rates.

**US-based companies like AMD and Micron** have shown interest in investing in India to cover their supply risks. However, looking at the the challenges, it remains uncertain if India can become a significant global player in the chip industry.

#### **What are the challenges with India in becoming a leader in the semiconductor industry?**

**Lack of Capabilities:** Chips are of various kinds and manufacturing of sophisticated chips is dominated by Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (**TSMC**).

While a few other companies can produce these chips, catching up with TSMC’s capabilities is challenging.

**Supremacy of the Advanced Economies:** The US has shifted away from free trade and adopted an inward industrial policy, **under the Chips Act to enforce technology denial to China**. China also has its local chip fabrication projects.

The U.S. has also announced \$52 billion in financing support and drawing over \$200 billion in commitments. Intel alone has committed \$80 billion in investments across the European Union.

In India, a \$10 billion production-linked incentive scheme was introduced, however, a \$20 billion venture by Vedanta and Foxconn failed.

Therefore, while India has an opportunity to establish a modest chip-making ecosystem, **becoming a global supplier would remain a challenging task given the geo-strategic interests of the advanced economies.**

**Must Read:** [Semiconductor manufacturing in India: significance and challenges](#)

#### **What can be the way ahead?**

**Diplomacy:** Diplomacy could play a significant role in India’s bid to join the global chip race. Indian Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar encouraged global chip investors **to optimize globalization** by investing in chip fabrication units in India, combining the advantages of offshore production with risk reduction goals.

However, **India’s best chance of becoming a major player in the chip industry lies in its own R&D efforts.**

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**Efficient Policy Framework:** To encourage semiconductor investments and attract other investors, India must support Micron through its incentives. Additionally, India also needs a stable operating environment with predictable policies framework and trade linkages with global markets to attract investors.

### 9. [Recalibrating India's clean cooking strategy](#)

**Source-** The post is based on the article "**Recalibrating India's clean cooking strategy**" published in "**The Hindu**" on **1st August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Infrastructure: Energy

**Relevance:** Issues related to cooking fuels

**News-** The article explains the issues related to LPG adoption in India and need for alternate clean cooking fuels.

#### **What are efforts by the central government to improve LPG adoption in poorer and rural households?**

The **Grameen Vitrak Yojana** was launched in 2009. With its help, the **rural distributor base** has grown from 18% to 60% of the total LPG distributor base today.

The **Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana** has provided more than 9.5 crore new households with LPG connections since 2016.

#### **What are issues with LPG adoption in India?**

LPG consumption saw an **absolute reduction** in FY23 after years of steady growth.

As per **Council on Energy, Environment and Water data**, the share of Indian households using LPG as the **primary cooking fuel** had risen to 71% in 2020 from 33% in 2011.

However, COVID-19 pandemic, the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the resulting volatility in crude and product prices on the other, have impacted **universal use of LPG** in Indian households.

In 2020, **subsidy for LPG consumption** was withdrawn for all consumers. **Average refill rates** for active non--PMUY consumers are in slow decline. **40% of PMUY consumers** get two or less refills in a year now.

India's dependence on **imported LPG** has steadily increased to over 64% in FY23 .

#### **Way forward-**

India's clean cooking policy must adopt **clean- cooking technologies**. **LPG- only strategy** needs a relook. **Electric cooking**, including **induction cooktops**, can be adopted.

Rural households have the potential to switch some of their **cooking requirements to electricity**. According to a **study conducted by CEEW**, cooking with electricity remains more **cost-effective** than using LPG even at a high tariff of ₹8 per unit of electricity.

In urban areas, around 10% of households already employ **electric appliances for their cooking needs**. They can set an example for the **larger transition** in rural regions.

One possible approach is gradually **increasing LPG prices** beyond a certain threshold. This strategy could displace LPG in higher consumption groups. It will create a demand for **new e-cooking technologies and models**, and trigger a **domino effect of adoption**.

The initial demand from t could drive the growth of the domestic **manufacturing ecosystem for e-cooking technologies**.

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To support this transition, **targeted assistance** should be provided to manufacturers. They can be encouraged to focus on **efficiency and design** catering to the needs of Indian households.

There is a requirement for **financial support and business strategies** that recognize the significance of India's **clean cooking shift** by taking into account its **positive impact on climate and air quality**.

### 10. [Express View on India's economy: Sweet and sour](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Express View on India's economy: Sweet and sour**” published in the “**The Indian Express**” on **1st August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Indian economy and growth

**Relevance:** Growth prospects of Indian economy

**News-** The article explains the present economic scenario

#### **Which indicators show a favourable economic situation?**

The IMF has recently upgraded its projection for the country's **economic growth to 6.1%**. **Inflation** has been kept below the upper limit set by the central bank's **inflation targeting framework**.

India's **foreign exchange reserves** are at approximately \$600 billion. The government has also successfully maintained its investment in **infrastructure development** throughout the nation.

MNCs are increasingly considering India as a **viable option** in their business strategy, often referred to as the “**China plus one**” approach.

#### **What are challenges for economic growth?**

Economic growth has been **uneven**, leaving significant segments of the population with **limited benefits**. Lower sections have not experienced **substantial improvements**, especially after the Covid pandemic.

Several indicators show signs of distress. **Real wages** in rural areas have remained nearly stagnant, and more households are resorting to work opportunities provided by the MGNREGA compared to pre-pandemic levels.

FMCG companies have not witnessed significant volume growth in consumer staples. Two-wheeler sales remain below pre-Covid levels, and **non-suburban railway traffic** has declined.

#### **Way forward-**

**Complacency** is not an option. While some countries have experienced periods of growth, only a small subset has achieved **sustained high growth rates** over several decades.

According to a recent study conducted by economists at the RBI, the Indian economy must maintain a **growth rate of 7.6 per cent** over the next twenty-five years to attain high-income status by 2047.

The policy framework must be designed with the aim of enhancing the country's **growth prospects over the medium to long term**. This calls for **focused and urgent action** to ensure progress in the desired direction.

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### 11. Core comfort – On Infrastructure development in India

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Core comfort**” published in the “**The Hindu**” on **2nd August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Infrastructure

**Relevance:** Core sector of economy

**News**– Output at India’s eight core sectors strengthened in June.

#### **What are some facts and statistics related to core sector output?**

The overall **year-on-year growth** in production estimated at a five-month high of 8.2%.

Seven of the sectors, including steel and cement and electricity, achieved high growth. Steel was the best performer. **Steel output** was increased by 21.9%.

The growth in **Cement sector** was in double-digit. It reflects the continuing momentum in demand.

Steel grew 15.9% and 12.2%, respectively, over the April-June period in the fiscal first quarter.

**Infrastructure sector** is key factor in growth of these two sectors

As per Controller General of Accounts data, **total capital expenditure** by the Centre in June increased by 62% year-on-year to ₹1.10 lakh crore.

**Electricity growth** was strongest in four months despite a cyclonic storm that impacted Gujarat and reduced the demand.

**Coal output** also increased by 9.8% in June. The growth in first-quarter’s production was 8.7%.

#### **What are areas of concern?**

The country is still heavily dependent on **crude imports** for its overall fuel needs. The crude oil production contracted by 0.6%.

Crude oil, in addition to refinery products, carries the **most significant weight of 28%** on the index. It experienced a **consecutive decline**. It highlights the ongoing challenges faced by the entire oil sector due to **regulatory inconsistencies**.

### 12. Climate finance adds another layer of inequity to climate change

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Climate finance adds another layer of inequity to climate change**” published in the “**The Hindu**” on **2nd August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Environment – Climate Change

**News**– The article explains the position of various countries on carbon dioxide emissions, investment in climate related activities and climate vulnerability.

#### **What are facts and statistics related to carbon dioxide emissions of various countries?**

According to the Institute for **European Environmental Policy**, the target baseline for **carbon dioxide emissions** to restrict global warming to 1.5° Celsius is **2.3 tonnes per capita**.

However, the current **global average emissions per capita** have been twice this target. It has remained above **4.7 tonnes per capita** since 2010. Notably, Africa and India have consistently maintained emissions below this target.

China surpassed the **global average** in 2004 and steadily increased its emissions to 8 tonnes per capita by 2021. It is now **at par with Europe and Oceania**.

The overall **emissions of the UAE and the U.S.** have declined. But these countries still had the **highest emissions per capita**. These are 21.8 tonnes and 14.9 tonnes, respectively.

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### What is the position of countries on investment in climate activities?

In 2019 and 2020, Sub-Saharan Africa led in **climate-related investments**. They allocate **1.3% of its GDP** to such activities.

**East Asia and the Pacific** followed closely with **1% of their GDP**. South Asia allocated 0.9%. The **U.S. and Canada** had the lowest proportionate investment. They dedicate **only 0.3% of their GDP** to climate-related initiatives.

A significant portion of the funds for **climate mitigation and adaptation in the Global South** originates from **international multilateral climate funds**, including the **Green Climate Fund and the Clean Technology Fund**.

These funds mainly come from **economically developed countries**. However, there have been some discrepancies in the disbursement of funds. For instance, since 2003, \$3.3 billion was approved for South Asia, but only \$1.3 billion was disbursed.

### What is the position of various countries on climate vulnerability and debt stress?

**Climate vulnerability index** by country is calculated annually by the **Notre-Dame Global Adaptation Initiative**.

It is calculated by a **country's exposure, sensitivity, and capacity to adapt to climate change**.

The **risk of debt distress** is based on the **International Monetary Fund's Debt Sustainability Framework reports**.

Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest number of countries facing **debt distress**. It is also the region **most vulnerable to climate change**.

Generally, countries categorized as **high risk or in debt distress** are more susceptible to the **impacts of climate change**. In South Asia, three out of the eight countries fall into this category.

### 13. Forest law amendments: Rich in rhetoric, poor in substance

**Source**– The post is based on the article **“Forest law amendments: Rich in rhetoric, poor in substance”** published in **“The Indian Express”** on **2nd August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Environmental Conservation

**News** – The government is introducing the Forest (Conservation) Amendment Bill 2023.

### What led to the introduction of the Forest Conservation Act, 1980?

It originated in the belief that state governments were very liberal in **diversing forest land for non-forest activities**, particularly for cultivation.

The **42nd constitutional amendment** brought forests into the concurrent list. It enabled the passing of a central Act .

The **Forest Conservation Act, 1980 (FCA)** was introduced due to concerns that state governments were excessively allocating forest land for **non-forest purposes**.

It mandated that states should seek approval from the central government before diverting forests for **non-forest activities**.

### What was the effectiveness of FCA in reductions of forest diversion?

In the beginning, there was a notable **decrease in diversions**. However, after 1991, the pressure to permit diversions for **development projects** grew. Only **diversions for agriculture** were restricted.

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Despite this, the **regulatory process** did have some impact in slowing down diversions.

The **compensatory afforestation requirement**, while seeming significant, often resulted in failed plantations.

### What was the stand of SC ON forest conservation and its impacts?

In 1996, the Supreme Court, in the **TN Godavarman case**, raised concerns about the consistent application of the **Forest Conservation Act** to all forested areas.

There were regions across the country where land covered by natural forests had not been officially **classified as “forest” under any law**. It led to **unregulated diversion** without FCA oversight.

The Court ruled that the actual vegetation present on the land should determine the **applicability of the FCA**. This decision led to the establishment of a **new legal category known as “deemed forest” land**.

### What is the effectiveness of the Forest Rights Act in 2006 in forest conservation?

The Forest Rights Act in 2006 provided **rights over the forests to the local community**. In the **Niyamgiri case** in 2013, the Supreme Court affirmed the local community's right.

However, the **development lobby** has consistently opposed such regulations. Since 2014, there has been a concerted effort to weaken the **Forest Conservation Act (FCA)** and other environmental regulations significantly.

A narrative emphasizing **“delays in clearances”** was constructed to exert pressure. The absence of clear thresholds or criteria in the FCA regarding permissible diversions was exploited opportunistically.

The **Forest Advisory Committee** was openly influenced to prioritize **developmental and national security** concerns above all else. Despite the **Niyamgiri judgment**, consent from local rights-holders was frequently disregarded.

In many instances, district collectors allegedly certified the **absence of community rights**, even when the process of **community rights** recognition under the Forest Rights Act (FRA) had not been initiated.

Moreover, **“linear projects”** like railways and highways were exempted from obtaining community consent by the Environment Ministry.

### What are the issues with FCA Amendment Bill 2023?

One amendment restricts the scope once again to land that is officially **“recorded as forest,”** effectively. It nullifies the **impact of the Godavarman order**.

Another amendment grants **complete exemption for “linear projects”** categorized as **“strategic projects of national importance and concerning national security”** within 100 kilometers of the national border.

Almost anything can be labeled as **“strategic” and of “national importance.”**

A third amendment exempts **security camps** in districts affected by Maoist insurgency, despite the **emerging issue of deforestation** caused by such camps in the Bastar region.

A fourth amendment categorizes the **establishment of zoos and safaris** as still falling under a forestry purpose.

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### 14. What the data hides and shows

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Madan Sabnavis writes: What the data hides and shows**” published in **The Indian express** on 2nd August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Indian Economy and issues relating to planning.

**News:** In this article author discusses the reliability of economic indicators in India. The Purchasing Managers Indices (PMI) and other data often suggest strong economic health, but actual growth rates can be different. Issues arise from limited sample sizes, unaccounted informal sectors, and biases in monthly figures. While data availability has improved, its accuracy for policymaking remains questionable.

#### How high-frequency economic data add value to economic understanding?

**Timely Insights:** High-frequency data like PMI is available on the first of every month, offering quick snapshots of the economy compared to other data released with a 40–45-day lag.

**Sectoral Performance:** PMI informs about the state of industry and services monthly, providing sector-specific insights.

**International Comparisons:** PMI and similar indices are available for many countries, allowing for international economic comparisons and understanding global trends.

**GST Collections:** They give insights into tax compliance and the extent of formalization in the economy.

**Indication of Demand:** While they might have limitations, high-frequency data can still hint at consumption trends and sectoral demand, aiding in economic analysis.

#### Why do high-frequency economic data tend to be misleading in India?

**Limited Sample Sizes:** One problem is the limited sample sizes in surveys. For instance, the Purchasing Managers’ Index (PMI) is based on only 400 businesses. Such a small number doesn’t represent India’s diverse and massive economy well. So, while PMI might show strong growth, the real GDP growth can be much lower, as seen last year.

**Unaccounted Informal Sector:** India’s economy has a big informal sector. However, many economic indicators do not account for this. For example, the National Statistical Office’s data, released 40-45 days later, mainly covers the organized sector, leaving out a large portion of the economy. This omission can lead to inflated growth rates.

**Biases in Monthly Figures:** Monthly data like export numbers, industrial production, or GST collections can be affected by temporary factors such as commodity prices, compliance changes, or logistical issues. They may not reflect long-term trends, leading to erroneous conclusions if extrapolated.

**Over-reliance on Announcements:** Investment announcements by companies and Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) signed at summits often don’t materialise. Despite this, they’re taken as positive economic indicators, which can be misleading.

### 15. Killer On The Train: Why was a railway cop his bosses say was suffering mental health issues, put on armed duty? RPF committee must answer

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Killer On The Train: Why was a railway cop his bosses say was suffering mental health issues, put on armed duty? RPF committee must answer**” published in “Times of India” on 2nd August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Various Security forces and agencies and their mandate

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**News:** An RPF jawan assigned to the train shot dead his superior and three others with his assault rifle. The RPF claims the jawan had mental health issues.

### **What are the reasons for jawans having mental health issues?**

The Central Armed Police Forces have reported instances of fratricide linked to personal issues. The job within such forces is acknowledged as stressful.

### **What are the implications of having jawans on duty with mental issues?**

Implications of Having Jawans with Mental Issues on Duty:

**Increased Violence Risk:** An RPF jawan with mental concerns killed four aboard the Jaipur-Mumbai Express.

**Threat to Passengers:** The jawan targeted specific community members, causing panic.

**Potential Fratricide:** GOI stated personal issues often lead to such incidents in Armed Forces.

**Public Trust Erosion:** Incidents like these can diminish faith in security forces.

### **What should be done to address this?**

**Regular Health Checks:** Mandatory mental health evaluations for all personnel.

**Training Programs:** Sensitize forces about mental health issues and their impacts.

**Immediate Off-Duty:** Temporarily relieve those identified with severe issues.

**Support Systems:** Establish counseling and therapy facilities.

**Review Protocols:** Consider private security options in light of the 2015 suggestions of a railway reform commission chaired by Bibek Debroy.

## 16. Digital public infrastructure ought to girdle the globe

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Digital public infrastructure ought to girdle the globe**” published in **Mint** on **2<sup>nd</sup> August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Infrastructure

**Relevance:** About Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)

**News:** Last year, India and the US jointly stated that Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) like UPI could establish a new norm for public-private digital partnerships.

However, during the recent PM’s visit to the US, no discussions were held on this matter.

### **How is infrastructure usually funded?**

Historically, **the public sector has been responsible for funding physical infrastructure** such as road and rail networks. However, **public-private infrastructure partnership has become the new standard.**

**For example,** in India, the public sector has less than a 10% share in India’s telecom and internet infrastructure.

Similarly, many infra-like elements of online apps necessitate a public-private interface. **It can aid in the establishment of ‘public’ digital infrastructure.**

Moreover, India’s DPI experience is now part of its G20 presidency agenda but doubts about DPI persist among several G20 countries.

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### What are the G20 countries' concerns?

**These countries have little clarity about India's DPI.** Hence, an open discussion is needed about the advantages and possible shortcomings of the DPI with those countries.

### What are some of the advantages of the DPI that could be highlighted during the discussion?

**First**, DPI can reduce market entry barriers and pave the way for the emergence of new industries. PhonePe, Google Pay, and PayTM are three instances that account for more than 95% of all UPI transactions.

**These apps have taken use of UPI's open architecture and offered users a service level that ensures high adoption rates.**

**Second**, DPI set-ups are also inclusive by design. **Civil society stakeholders play** a key role in their development.

**For instance**, the 'Modular Open-Source identification Platform' (**MOSIP**) is an open-source architecture for establishing identification systems

Several countries including Burkina Faso and Madagascar have signed up with MOSIP to design and deploy population-scale identity schemes.

However, new infrastructural paradigms often raise concerns, especially when the public interest is involved.

For this reason, **the Indo-US Joint Statement expresses a bilateral commitment to** "protect privacy, data security, and intellectual property (IP)" in DPI deployment.

**Must Read:** [India's Digital Public Infrastructure \(DPI\) and associated challenges – Explained](#)

### How can privacy and data security concerns with the DPI be addressed?

The model where consent managers, intermediaries who collect approval from website and app users to use and process their personal data can be considered. They also allow users to cancel their consent.

**This model empowers users while also holding intermediaries accountable** for preventing data leaks and unauthorized third-party surveillance.

Moreover, **India, like the US, has robust IP protections and is a signatory to the World Trade Organization's Trade-Related Aspects of IP Rights.**

Therefore, if a business demonstrates significant skill and creativity in the compilation and organization of a database, it can claim copyright protection of it.

### What can be the way ahead?

**G20 presidency since 2016 emphasized digital technologies' role in inclusive and sustainable economic development**, but adoption has been limited.

Therefore, India's willingness to co-conceptualize the principles that encourage DPI adoption is a positive sign.

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### 17. [Axe the oil windfall tax: It's outlived its rationale](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Axe the oil windfall tax: It's outlived its rationale**” published in **Live Mint** on **2<sup>nd</sup> August 2023**.

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

**Relevance:** **concerns with windfall tax**

**News:** According to a recent government notification, India's windfall tax on petroleum crude has increased significantly to ₹4,250 per tonne from ₹1,600, and diesel now incurs a levy of ₹1 per litre, which was previously nil.

#### **Are these windfall taxes justified?**

The windfall tax was first introduced in India's oil sector in mid-2022, shortly after the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine war. At that time, it was considered justifiable as **it aided in the fiscal recovery of the nation after the pandemic**.

Since the extra profits earned by the oil companies arose from external factors rather than any strategy, **windfall taxes appeared reasonable and beneficial for the government**.

However, despite the economic recovery, these taxes persist, worsening the tax situation in India.

**Must Read:** [Explained | What is windfall tax and why are countries imposing it on the energy sector?](#)

#### **What are the concerns with these windfall taxes?**

**First**, these taxes are being levied even though price of crude has decreased below early war levels, representing normalcy.

**Second**, the fortnightly tax review on oil and diesel is perceived as a means to extract revenues from the sector.

This state intervention results in business uncertainty and distorts not only the oil industry's operations but also India's energy outlook.

**Third**, state intervention also raises concerns about attracting investments for the green transition in India, given the lack of policy stability.

Hence, the state intervention to control retail fuel prices has failed to allow market forces to reshape the sector. Any such reform becomes more complex due to the frequent changes in windfall taxes.

#### **What can be the way ahead?**

**First**, taxes tend to become permanent. Therefore, it has been more than a year since the windfall taxes, and it requires them to be rolled out.

**Second**, the hydrocarbon sector should be protected from other taxes and integrated into the GST regime.

**Third**, a system of carbon pricing should be implemented in the oil sector. However, before implementing such a system, there is a need to address the current complex tax liabilities in the sector.

### 18. [Electricity: Getting the timing right](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Electricity: Getting the timing right**” published in “**Business standard**” on 3rd August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS3- infrastructure (energy)

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of August 2023

**News:** In this article author is discussing a new electricity pricing system in India called Time-of-Day (ToD) tariff. This system changes prices based on demand, encouraging less use during peak hours. Smart meters are needed for this and could help manage renewable energy sources better.

### What is Time-of-Day (ToD) tariff?

Time-of-Day (ToD) tariff is a system that changes electricity prices based on demand throughout the day.

During peak usage hours, electricity costs more. During off-peak hours, it's cheaper.

The aim is to encourage consumers to use less electricity when demand is high.

This system is being introduced in India in 2024 for commercial and industrial users and in 2025 for other users.

ToD tariffs are already used in many countries, including the US, UK, and Japan.

For this system to work, smart meters are needed to track electricity use every 15 minutes.

### What are the benefits of Time-of-Day (ToD) tariff?

**Shifts Demand:** ToD tariff incentivizes consumers to use electricity during off-peak hours, reducing strain during high-demand periods.

**Improves Grid Management:** Helps in managing fluctuations in renewable energy sources like solar and wind.

**Saves Money for Consumers:** Those who adjust their usage to off-peak times can save money.

**Supports Renewable Energy:** India's shift towards renewables benefits from ToD. For instance, using electricity during "solar hours" will be cheaper.

**Helps Climate Goals:** By optimizing renewable energy usage, India moves closer to its target of 65% energy capacity from non-fossil fuels by 2030.

**Consumer Empowerment:** Allows consumers to actively participate in energy decisions, rewarding those who adjust their consumption based on varying rates.

**Boosts Renewable Integration:** Encourages using more renewable energy when it's abundantly available, aiding in grid integration.

### What are the limitations of Time-of-Day (ToD) tariff?

**Increased Complexity:** ToD pricing makes billing more complicated. Consumers need to track their usage across different times.

**Behavioural Changes Needed:** Consumers must adjust habits, like when they charge vehicles or use appliances.

**Higher Costs at Peak Times:** If users can't change their habits, they'll pay more during peak hours.

**Depends on Smart Meters:** ToD's success relies on the widespread installation of smart meters. India has a target of 250 million smart meters by 2026.

**Possible Resistance:** Not all consumers may be willing or able to adjust their usage patterns.

**Storage Challenges:** Renewable energy has storage issues, making constant supply hard, despite ToD incentives.

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### 19. The trajectory of progress must change

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**The trajectory of progress must change**” published in the “**The Hindu**” on **3rd August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Economy

**Relevance:** Issues related to global economic development

**News**– The article explains the challenges faced by the global community and potential solutions to these challenges.

#### **What are the challenges faced by the global community?**

The state of **global governance** is concerning. The world is experiencing **divisions and conflicts** among nations, leading to wars. There are issues of **rising inequalities**. Migrants are risking their lives in search of safety and improved living conditions.

The current path humanity is on is **unsustainable**. Economists often use **statistical data** to argue that poverty is decreasing and incomes are rising for everyone. However, it is essential for them to observe the **ground realities**.

Earth is experiencing **continuous warming**. The current **consumptive model of economic growth** is unsustainable.

**Employment instability** is on the rise, even in wealthy nations.

In 2015, the world community adopted the 17 UN **Sustainable Development Goals**.

Not all 17 issues are prevalent in every country. For instance, **island nations** face immediate life-threatening problems related to the oceans, while **landlocked countries** may not experience the same issues.

#### **What are the potential solutions to challenges faced by the global community?**

More economic growth will not solve the **global issues**. Economic growth must transform into a **sustainable and equitable approach**.

As per Einstein, persisting to address systemic issues with the same flawed methods that caused them is **irrational**. He advocated for a **new paradigm in global governance**.

It is evident that a single global solution for **environmental, societal, or economic challenges** cannot be **universally applied**. Instead, **tailored and localised solutions** are necessary. **One-size-fits-all approaches** cannot adequately address the diverse array of challenges we encounter.

These solutions should encompass a **combination of approaches** to tackle **economic, environmental, and social challenges** collaboratively.

**The McKinsey Global Institute** recently published a comprehensive report titled “**Pixels of Progress: A granular look at human development around the world**”.

It delves into the actual progress experienced on the ground. It goes beyond the **conventional statistical methods and GDP**.

The report focuses on **life expectancy and incomes**, to assess the **well-being of individuals**. Surprisingly, the findings reveal that only 20% of the progress observed can be attributed to the country-level GDP growth.

The vast majority, **80% of the progress**, is intricately tied to **local factors and specific conditions**.

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### What is the approach of India for resolving the challenges faced by the global community?

As the chair of the G-20, India has put forward a vision of **Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam**. It aims to foster **global unity** and improve conditions for all individuals worldwide.

India has also introduced an approach known as **LiFE to the G-20**. It advocates for **synchronised efforts** among **various stakeholders** at all levels, underpinned by **collective actions** across society.

**Principle 7 of LiFE** emphasises the importance of acknowledging and enhancing the contributions of local communities, local and regional governments, and **traditional knowledge** in promoting **sustainable ways of living**.

### 20. Deep tech startups taking brave risks

**Source**– The post is based on the article “Deep tech startups taking brave risks” published in “The Hindu” on **3rd August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Indian economy

**Relevance:** Issues related to manufacturing sector

**News**– The article explains the progress on startups and deep tech startups in India.

### What is the progress of India in the area of startups?

In the past decade, the Great Indian Startup Boom has generated a **thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem** in India. It is led by **young entrepreneurs** and supported by the government’s Startup India initiative.

This phenomenon extends beyond **metropolitan cities**. **Entrepreneurs from suburban and rural areas** are adopting it.

Presently, the government recognizes **over one lakh startups**. Nearly half of them are originating from **Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities**.

### How deep tech startups are making significant progress in India?

The Startup movement has evolved beyond **consumer Internet and e-commerce**. It has now expanded to **deep technology domains** like space and remote sensing, artificial intelligence, robotics, biotechnology, drones, defense, telecommunications, semiconductors.

**IIT Madras’s Research Park**, has incubated over **200 deep tech companies** valued at more than ₹50,000 crore. It includes those in space and aviation; C-CAMP, and the National Chemical Laboratory’s Venture Centre.

It demonstrates how science from **publicly-funded institutions** can be made accessible to citizens and consumers through startups.

The industry has shown a clear inclination towards investing in **deep-tech startups** and acquiring well-established scaled technologies.

This trend is supported by the acquisition of **deep tech startups** by prominent **Indian legacy corporations**. For instance, the Tatas acquired Saankhya and Tejas Networks, Reliance acquired Faradion, and Hero Motors purchased equity in Ather Motors.

### Way forward

The government should support the **second phase of entrepreneurship, a Startup India 2.0**. This support must come through two routes-

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- There should be a significant increase in the **availability of risk capital** for deep tech startups. The government should prioritize these sectors and allocate more resources to the existing **SIDBI Fund of Funds**.

The industry should redirect and enhance their **research funds** to support the financing of deep tech startups.

- There is a need to facilitate the widespread adoption of **domestically developed technologies** through **mass procurement**. More **coordinated efforts** across the entire government are required.

Industry players and industry bodies can contribute by promoting the **adoption of locally-made technologies**.

This can be achieved through **collaborative efforts** in incubators to co-create products and solutions, conducting **rapid testing and certification processes**, and providing support for **large-scale procurement of innovative goods**.

### 21. The contours of India's 'formal jobs' crisis

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**The contours of India's 'formal jobs' crisis**” published in the “**The Hindu**” on **3rd August 2023**.

**Syllabus**: GS3- Indian economy and employment

**Relevance**: Statistics on employment

**News**– The article explains the EPF numbers on employment in India. It also explains the issues related to employment and employment statistics in India.

#### What is the employment scenario in India as revealed by EPFO data?

The **monthly enrolment data of the Employees' Provident Fund (EPF)** typically indicates a rise in contributors.

**EPFO annual reports** talk about the regular contributors. **Regular contributors** refer to employees who are enrolled in the EPF scheme and consistently make PF contributions throughout the year.

**EPF Organization's annual reports** indicate that the number of **regular contributors** to the scheme has shown little to no growth. It has even declined in recent years in some stances.

Between 2012 and 2022, the count of **regular contributors** witnessed a **substantial increase from 30.9 million to 46.3 million**.

However, the growth in the number of regular contributors has **significantly slowed down** over the past five years. From 2017 to 2022, the count of regular contributors only **marginally increased from 45.11 million to 46.33 million**.

This growth occurred during a period when **overall EPF enrolments** escalated from 210.8 million to 277.4 million.

#### What can be inferred from EPFO data on employment?

The number of individuals enrolled in the EPF is generally expected to be higher than the count of regular contributors due to issues like **duplication and outdated membership data**.

However, it is concerning that in recent times, the gap between these two figures has been widening.

EPF data suggests that over the past five years, there has been a mere **net creation of 1.2 million formal jobs**.

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The **divergence between EPF enrolments and regular contributors** implies that a significant portion of EPF enrolments is associated with jobs of a **temporary, subcontracted, or casual nature**.

### What are challenges related to employment in India?

India is witnessing a growth in **employment opportunities**, but most of these jobs are not **formal, stable, or well-paid**.

Numerous highly qualified young individuals compete for a limited number of **public or private sector job openings**.

The stagnation in formal employment can partly be attributed to the impact of the pandemic. The **COVID-19 crisis** led to a decline in the number of EPF contributors,

### What are issues related to employment statistics in India?

Earlier, the EPFO used to release **monthly reports on regular contributors**. However, when the media highlighted the decline in EPF contributors, the EPFO disputed its own data and ceased to publish the **monthly data series**.

The Indian government has shown neglect towards other potential sources of formal employment and labor data.

For instance, the **Directorate General of Employment and Training (DGET)** used to collect employment market information, but it hasn't been published since 2013.

Historically, DGET data served as the original source of **formal sector payroll employment data** in India since the 1950s. The Reserve Bank of India relied on it for **formal sector employment numbers and related calculations**.

## 22. Forest law amendments: Rich in rhetoric, poor in substance

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Forest law amendments: Rich in rhetoric, poor in substance**” published in “**The Indian Express**” on **2nd August 2023**.

**Syllabus**: GS3- Environment. GS3- Science and Technology

**News**– A new genetically modified (GMO) corn varietal called ‘smart corn’ has been introduced by Bayer. This is designed to withstand the increasingly costly pressures of climate change.

### What are some facts related to GMO corn developed by Bayer?

Bayer genetically engineered the corn plant by introducing a **foreign gene** that **suppresses the production of gibberellic acid, a plant growth hormone**. As a result, the corn can now produce the same quantity of fruit on significantly **shorter and stronger stalks**.

**Purpose**– It is specifically developed to combat **environmental challenges**.

Climate change has led to more **severe and costly damage** to corn and soy crops due to **intensifying high-wind storms**. In the United States, these storms are known as **derechos**. They have caused **immense devastation** to farms in the Midwest.

In 2020 alone, with winds reaching 160 kmph, they caused billions of dollars worth of destruction across millions of acres of crops.

As a result, there is a growing demand for a crop variety characterized by **shorter and thicker stalks**, providing **better resistance** against these high-wind storms.

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### What are other recent notable crop varieties designed for climate adaptation?

Last year, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) granted approval for HB4. It is a **novel wheat variety** developed to **withstand drought conditions**.

It was achieved through the incorporation of a **gene sourced from a sunflower**. This wheat variety is pioneered by the **Argentine company Bioceres**.

In a recent development, **Nutrien**, a prominent fertilizer company, revealed its intentions to distribute a new **genetically modified soybean created by the startup ZeaKal Inc.**

This genetically modified soybean includes a **foreign gene that enhances photosynthesis**. It enables the crop to capture more carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

### What are issues related to newly developed GM crops like smart corn?

This **innovative adaptation** allows policymakers, investors, and voters to **evade the core issue of climate change**. While new approaches to adapt to the climate crisis are appreciated, they should **tackle the problem at its source**.

These innovations cannot completely solve all climate-related challenges faced by farmers.

Bayer's smart corn may not be sufficient to overcome problems caused by derechos, which can bring **heavy rains** leading to machinery sinking in the fields.

Additionally, excessive rainfall can **saturate plant roots**. It will cause them to **rot and perish**, regardless of the **corn's height**.

Moreover, there is the issue of **rising temperatures**. Future agriculture will require plants engineered not only for **wind resistance** but also for **resilience to drought, heat, and floods**.

#### Way forward-

These plants must be capable of **enduring changing seasons, temperature fluctuations, and invasive pests**. The crops of tomorrow won't rely on just **one foreign gene**. But, they will need a **multitude of genetic modifications**.

### 23. [Haryana violence was preventable. Why did it happen?](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article "**Monu Questions – Haryana violence was preventable. Why did it happen? What do such incidents around business hubs cost?**" published in **The Times of India** on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Internal Security

**Relevance:** About communal clashes in Haryana

**News:** Recently, communal clashes took place in Nuh, Haryana which raised various concerns over the state administration.

### What are the different issues arising out of the clashes?

The clashes that erupted in the Nuh spread to Gurugram where many big companies are situated. **This raises concerns about the lack of preventive measures by the state administration.**

The Chief Minister referred to a "conspiracy," as explanation for the violence **but the state failed to prevent the "conspiracy"**.

**Both sides had access to weapons, raising questions about the police's knowledge and action.** The police's lack of knowledge about the video's origin and failure to remove it in time also raises questions.

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**Despite the Supreme Court's directive to prevent hate speech and violence**, VHP and Bajrang Dal conducted more assemblies in Delhi-NCR.

These organizations, including individuals like Monu Manesar, appear to act without facing consequences, as the state machinery seemingly ignores their actions.

**Must Read: [Killer On The Train: Why was a railway cop his bosses say was suffering mental health issues, put on armed duty? RPF committee must answer](#)**

### **What can be done to prevent such incidents?**

This lawlessness has severe consequences for India, as it disrupts businesses and deters new investments, impacting the country's economic growth and social harmony.

In order to seize the China+1 opportunity and promote prosperity, **India must tackle the issue and take measures to prevent the recurrence of such incidents.**

The government should also recognize the importance of maintaining peace and stability for the nation's progress.

### 24. [How a nuclear 'chain reaction' and neighbourhood challenges led to India acquiring its n-weapons](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article "How a nuclear 'chain reaction' and neighbourhood challenges led to India acquiring its n-weapons" published in "The Indian express" on 4th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Security challenges

**News:** In this article author discusses J. Robert Oppenheimer's regret over creating the atomic bomb. The article traces India's nuclear journey, from Nehru's early decisions to Vajpayee's nuclear tests in 1998. Current global tensions around nuclear weapons are highlighted, with India's role in promoting disarmament emphasized.

### **How did India evolve its nuclear power?**

India's Evolution of Nuclear Power:

#### **Initial Approach:**

Prime Minister Nehru was against atomic bombs but wanted nuclear power.

Dr. Homi J Bhabha was chosen to lead India's nuclear program.

#### **Reason for Development:**

After China's nuclear test in 1964, India felt the need for its own nuclear capabilities.

#### **Early Testing:**

India conducted its first nuclear test in 1974 under Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

#### **External Influences:**

In 1985, US President Reagan informed Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi about Pakistan's nuclear capabilities.

Rajiv Gandhi then began considering developing India's own bomb.

#### **Further Testing and Evolution:**

Prime Minister Vajpayee oversaw nuclear tests in 1998.

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These tests were a response to perceived threats from China.

### **Diplomatic Moves Post-Testing:**

India engaged with the US, resulting in a strategic partnership involving technology cooperation.

### **What is India's current stance on nuclear power?**

India's Current Stance on Nuclear Power:

### **Political Utility Emphasized:**

After the 1998 tests, India highlighted the political benefits of its nuclear actions.

Despite international criticism, these tests boosted India's strategic autonomy in decision-making.

### **Strategic Partnerships Formed:**

Talks between Jaswant Singh and Strobe Talbott solidified the India-US relationship.

This led to the Indo-US nuclear deal, promoting cooperation in defense and technology sectors.

### **Promotion of Peace and Deterrence:**

India's nuclear weapons are primarily for deterrence.

In the 2019 Balakot surgical strike, even though India had nuclear capabilities, it opted for conventional warfare, ensuring peace.

### **Global Leadership in Disarmament:**

Ahead of the G7 summit in Hiroshima, Japan emphasized a nuclear-free world.

As the G20 chair, India has the moral authority and opportunity to spearhead efforts in nuclear disarmament.

Overall, India maintains a careful balance between demonstrating its nuclear capabilities and promoting global peace.

### **What's the Global Perspective on Nuclear Weapons?**

#### **Oppenheimer's Remorse:**

Oppenheimer regretted his role in creating the atomic bomb.

He believed it would end wars, but it started a US-USSR nuclear arms race.

#### **Cold War Impact:**

After the bombings in Japan, a nuclear race began, defining the Cold War era.

#### **Current Tensions:**

President Putin uses strong nuclear rhetoric regarding the Ukraine conflict.

India has voiced concerns over such aggressive postures.

#### **Push for Disarmament:**

Japan's Prime Minister, Fumio Kishida, seeks a world without nuclear weapons.

India, being the G20 chair, can lead global disarmament initiatives.

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### 25. Lessons from a load carrier

**Source:** The post is based on the article “Lessons from a load carrier” published in “Business standard” on 4th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Security challenges and their management in border areas;

**News:** The author highlights the Indian Army’s use of Stallion vehicles and their costs. He suggests standardizing military gear for easier logistics. The article promotes involving civilian networks in military logistics and using retired military staff for maintenance. The aim is efficient logistics management.

#### **How would the Indian army be able to standardize a load carrier?**

The Indian Army can standardize a load carrier as follows:

**Single Vehicle Type:** Choose mainly one type of vehicle, like the Stallion by Ashok Leyland, which is already heavily used by the army. For example, the army operates about 50,000 Stallions today.

**Commonalities:** Even if different vehicles are used, ensure they have basic similarities with the primary chosen type. Like, base vehicle types should have common spare parts with marginally different types.

**Reduce Spare Parts Inventory:** By standardizing, the army can reduce the number of spare parts needed. For instances, the Soviets simplified logistics by using standard parts across different vehicles.

**Involve Civil-Retail Network:** Use Ashok Leyland’s wide truck network to simplify delivery and maintenance processes. Like, the Vehicle Factory Jabalpur can anticipate and cater to vehicle service needs through local retailers.

#### **What are the benefits of standardizing a load carrier?**

**Cost Efficiency:** Reduced need for various spare parts. For example, each Stallion costs 230 lakh, with a yearly fleet renewal of about 21,500 crore.

**Simplified Logistics:** Easier inventory management and reduced complexities. Like, Soviet Union simplified their military logistics by using standardized parts across different equipment.

**Maintenance Predictability:** Easier to anticipate servicing needs and spare parts consumption. Such as, Vehicle Factory Jabalpur can pre-ship components based on anticipated consumption.

**Civil-Retail Involvement:** Opportunity to involve local retail networks for better delivery and maintenance. For example, Ashok Leyland’s network can be used for transporting Stallions directly to military units.

**Re-employment:** Retired military personnel can maintain equipment they are familiar with. Like, Ex-servicemen can service equipment they used during service.

### 26. Six years of GST: Compensation cess still needs to be sorted out

**Source–** The post is based on the article “**Six years of GST: Compensation cess still needs to be sorted out**” published in the “**mint**” on **4th August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Government budgeting

**Relevance:** Issues related to GST

**News–** The article explains the issues related to GST compensation cess.

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### What are some facts related to GST compensation cess?

The **funding for GST compensation** was sourced from a cess imposed on **specific goods listed in a schedule to the 2017 Act**. These mainly include tobacco, coal-based solid fuels, and fossil-fuelled motor vehicles.

The schedule was also **open-ended**, allowing for the inclusion of any other supplies. This approach represented an **exceptional statutory commitment** to provide additional revenue.

### What are facts and statistics related to shortage in cess collection?

Pandemic led to a significant increase in the required compensation while the **collections from the cess** declined. To address this discrepancy, the Centre resorted to **special borrowing** to cover the deficit in GST compensation.

During the 49th meeting of the GST Council in February 2023, the **outstanding payments** for June 2022 amounting to ₹0.16 trillion, were announced.

During the five-year statutory period, states received a total of ₹5.89 trillion in **GST compensation**, averaging ₹1.18 trillion per year.

However, the **average annual revenue** from the cess was only ₹0.96 trillion. It is falling below the **average annual compensation** required.

The **cess collection** for the entire financial year 2022-23 is totaling ₹5.76 trillion. It is still lower than the ₹5.89 trillion payout.

The **shortage in cess collection** was not evenly distributed across all years. There was a surplus in the pre-pandemic year 2018-19. Yet, ₹0.15 trillion of arrears remained unpaid until the beginning of 2022-23.

The likely reason for this delay is the late supply of **audited figures of state revenues**.

### What is the government's future plan for cess?

In September 2021, during the 45th meeting of the GST Council, it was proposed to extend the cess until March 2026 to cover the **repayment of the Centre's special borrowing** used to compensate for the pandemic years.

In the most recent meeting, the GST Council recommended **amending the Compensation Act rules** to broaden the **definition of taxable vehicles** under the cess.

### Way forward-

**GST Compensation Act** does allow for a **surplus in the compensation fund** to be divided between the Centre and states in a specified manner. But, once its **statutory function** is fulfilled, it should be **reclassified separately from the Compensation Act**.

There is a need to consider **repurposing and renaming the compensation cess** on items like tobacco, coal, and fossil-fuelled transportation as a **Pigouvian levy** on goods with negative health or climate impacts.

However, the **utilization of the proceeds** from such a climate cess should be guided by experts working in India on climate action. Additionally, the process to **track the effectiveness** of these critical expenditures needs to be carefully designed.

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### 27. Why is the Biological Diversity Bill facing opposition?

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Why is the Biological Diversity Bill facing opposition?**” published in “**The Hindu**” on **4th August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Economy

**Relevance:** Issues related to global economic development

**News**– Recently Parliament passed the Biological Diversity (Amendment) Bill, 2021.

#### **Why are there issues with the Bill?**

The Bill provides exemptions for “**codified traditional knowledge**” and the AYUSH industry concerning benefit sharing. It deprives local communities of the advantages related to **accessing biological resources**.

The lack of a precise definition for “**codified traditional knowledge**” opens the door to potential exploitation.

This exemption is regressive because the legislation was initially enacted to guarantee “**fair and equitable sharing of benefits.**”

The Bill replaces criminal offences with **monetary penalties**. It raises concerns about **potential resource exploitation**.

#### **To what extent has the Act been implemented?**

According to a 2022 **investigation conducted by the Centre for Science and Environment**, many States lack **data on the funds** received from companies and traders for **access and benefit sharing**.

In cases where money was collected, it was not **shared with local communities**.

A 2016 study conducted by legal researchers revealed **numerous challenges** in various States regarding the **implementation of provisions of the Act**, particularly those related to **access and benefit sharing**.

#### **What is viewpoint of industry about the Act?**

The industry has expressed **dissatisfaction with the regulations** and has resorted to **legal action** seeking relaxation.

For instance, in 2016, the **Uttarakhand Biodiversity Board** issued a notice to Divya Pharmacy for violating the Act by using **biological resources** without **prior notification** to the Board.

The company challenged the notice in the Uttarakhand high court, but the court ruled against them.

In 2015, representatives from Gujarat’s Ayurveda industry requested the central government to postpone the **implementation of access and benefit sharing provisions**, seeking relief for the sector.

However, the then Environment Minister stated that the industry had to deposit an amount towards these provisions and **no exemptions** could be granted.

The Bill explicitly mentions that **stakeholders** from various sectors, including the Indian system of medicine, seed, industry, and research sectors, expressed concerns about the need to **simplify, streamline, and reduce compliance burden**.

The objective of the Bill is to create a **favourable environment for collaborative research and investments**.

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### 28. India needs evidence-based, ethics-driven medicine

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**India needs evidence-based, ethics-driven medicine**” published in “**The Hindu**” on **4th August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Science and Technology

**Relevance:** Issues related to traditional system of medicine

**News**– Supporters of Homeopathy have argued in *The Lancet Regional Health – Southeast Asia* recently for expanding its use by citing demand and decolonisation, disregarding its flaws.

#### **What are issues related to safety and efficacy of Homeopathy?**

The **evidence supporting the efficacy** of homeopathy is lacking in strength.

The initial **double-blind randomized controlled trial (RCT)**, conducted and well-documented is known as the **Nuremberg Salt Test (1835)**.

It concluded that the symptoms or changes attributed to the effects of homeopathic medicines were merely **products of imagination and preconceived notions**.

Multiple systematic reviews have consistently found that homeopathic treatments lack **clinically significant effects** across different ailments, population groups, study types.

Recently, researchers discovered that over half of the **193 homeopathic trials** conducted in the last two decades were not registered.

**Unregistered trials** displayed some **evidence of efficacy**, but registered trials did not. It cast doubt on the **validity and reliability** of the evidence.

The World Health Organization has issued warnings against **homeopathic treatments** for HIV, tuberculosis, malaria, flu, and infant diarrhea. It has asserted that it has no place in their treatment protocols.

There is a growing body of evidence suggesting that homeopathy does not **effectively treat cancers**.

On the contrary, homeopathic treatments have been linked to both **non-fatal and fatal adverse events**, and exacerbation of existing conditions.

#### **What are issues related to standards used in evidence-based medicine for judging the effects of homeopathy?**

Supporters of homeopathy argue that the **standards** commonly used in **evidence-based medicine** are not appropriate for evaluating its “**holistic effects**.” However, this claim can be refuted for several reasons.

- The standards used in **evidence-based medicine** are not **arbitrary choices** made by allopathic practitioners for their own benefit.

They are established through **collaboration among a global community** that includes epidemiologists, biostatisticians, quality improvement researchers, implementation managers, and others.

**Various disciplines** outside of medicine, such as psychology, economics, community health, implementation science, and public policy, have successfully adapted **evidence synthesis methods** to support their claims.

On the other hand, proponents of homeopathy have not been able to develop **valid alternative evidence synthesis frameworks** to test its **efficacy and safety**.

- The argument that **evidence-based medicine** is “**reductionist**” and cannot accommodate holistic approaches is not entirely accurate.

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- **Evidence-based medicine** does not solely focus on establishing **empirical evidence**. It also seeks to explain the **underlying mechanisms** that support the evidence.

However, over the past century, there has been no **substantial evidence** to explain the **proposed mechanisms of action** for homoeopathy.

There is an argument that a **pluralistic approach** in medicine can help to **decolonize medicine**.

However, homoeopathy's introduction in India was during the colonial period. It raises questions about its **traditional tag**, as it was brought in during colonial times for colonial benefits.

Some homoeopathy supporters offer **testimonials from prominent figures** like **Gandhi and Tagore**. However, there is **limited mention** of homoeopathy in Gandhi's writings. There is no evidence that Tagore favoured it.

### 29. Chawal Is The New Oil

**Source:** The post is based on the article "**Chawal Is The New Oil**" published in **The Times of India** on **4<sup>th</sup> August 2023**.

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

**Relevance:** About ban on the export of rice

**News:** Russia's decision to abandon the **Black Sea grain deal** is contributing to the global food price volatility. Further, India's ban on exporting certain varieties of rice is further exacerbating the situation as India has a 40% share of world rice exports.

#### **What are the reasons for imposing a ban on the export of rice?**

**Political Reasons:** There are political reasons like the **upcoming election** which has made the government control the rising prices domestically.

**Strategic Reasons:** The government is using export restrictions not only for managing domestic inflation but also as a leverage tool.

In 2022, despite the wheat ban, India made exceptions for discretionary export approvals to support neighboring and vulnerable countries.

As a result, Egypt, which imported 80% of its wheat requirements from Russia and Ukraine, became the largest recipients of Indian wheat.

This support from India in the midst of the crisis helped in improving the **bilateral relations** between the two countries.

Hence, India strategically utilized a commodity to safeguard its political interests and it is likely to adopt a similar approach for the recent rice export ban.

**Read More:** [India's rice export curbs could prove too myopic for its good](#)

#### **What may be the impact of ban on farmers?**

The ban may upset those farmers who benefit from high-priced exports.

However, **the government has taken this political risk because the** number of large farmers with surplus for export or to sell under the MSP is relatively small compared to the majority of Indian subsistence farmers.

Moreover, while the MSP offers protection to farmers during periods of low global cereal prices, export curbs serve as a trade-off during years of high global prices.

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### What lies ahead?

Using essential commodities, including food for securing geo-political interest is not a new concept. Oil has been often used to secure geo-political interest by the OPEC countries in the response of geopolitical events.

**Even the American President Eisenhower used** food to support newly independent developing countries and gain their allegiance against communism.

Hence, prioritizing critical international relationships through a focused export program offers India greater benefits than a free market approach in cereals trade.

### 30. Cheetah deaths are a setback for the reintroduction project but they do not signal a failure

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Cheetah deaths are a setback for the reintroduction project but they do not signal a failure**” published in “**The Indian Express**” on **5th August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Environment

**Relevance:** Issues related to Wildlife conservation.

**News**– The cheetah was reintroduced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in September 2022, reinforcing the government’s commitment to conserving our natural heritage.

### Which factors led to the reintroduction of cheetahs in India?

Unlike tigers, leopards and lions, the cheetah hunts by **chasing its prey**. Therefore, it removes the sick, old, as well as young from the population. It ensures the **survival of the fittest** and keeps the **prey population healthy**.

Several ecosystems in India do not have tigers. Cheetahs could serve as a **flagship for conservation** there.

### What is the way forward for successful reintroduction of locally extinct species like Cheetahs?

There is a need to incentivize **voluntary relocation of communities**, similar to practices observed in tiger reserves.

These efforts require a **sustained allocation of resources** to at least three to five sites over the long term, spanning 25 to 30 years.

Most forest communities prefer to **integrate into mainstream society**, as it grants them access to various amenities and opportunities.

By implementing schemes prudently, the local people can benefit from **community-based ecotourism**, and an increase in real estate activities. These direct economic benefits can significantly contribute to the **well-being of the local communities**.

A scheme is needed which can **compensate for livestock predation** and is transparent. If people benefit economically from having cheetahs in their neighborhood, they will be more tolerant towards the animals. Example is Saurashtra.

India has approximately **one lakh square kilometers of protected areas** within the historic range of the cheetah.

However, individual protected areas alone are insufficient to support a **viable cheetah population** in the long run. There is a need to adopt **innovative approaches** and manage cheetah populations from these sites as a metapopulation.

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This involves artificially moving animals between sites, ensuring **demographic and genetic viability**.

Once the cheetah population reaches a **sustainable level**, they will **naturally disperse and expand** into larger landscapes dominated by human presence.

This **natural dispersal** may lead to the exchange of individuals between various conservation sites. However, each of these sites would require significant investment, ranging from Rs 250 to 500 crore, for restoration as **functional ecosystems**.

### Why is there reason for some hope regarding reintroduction of cheetahs?

Critics pointed out that Cheetahs will have difficulty in killing deer, they will be trapped by poachers, killed by leopards and village dogs. **Cheetah mortality** was anticipated. But, no cheetah has died of any of these causes.

Some deaths were **management related** within **enclosed protected bomas**.

Some cheetahs died due to **septicemia caused by skin lesions** that got infected by **maggots**. Southern Africa currently has a cold dry winter. Their **physiological cycle** is still tuned to the **photoperiod of Southern latitudes**.

In Kuno, they experienced a **hot and humid climate**. Their winter fur **accumulated moisture** and the radio collars aggravated the condition making their skin itchy and delicate. **Scratching** resulted in wounds that were infected by maggots.

### [31. Incremental injustice – on Places of Worship Act, 1991](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Incremental injustice**” published in “**The Hindu**” on **5th August 2023**.

**Syllabus**: GS3- Polity

**Relevance**: Issues related to disputed religious structures

**News**– Recently, the Varanasi District Court ordered the ASI survey of Gyanvapi mosque.

### What is the stand of High Court and Varanasi district court on right to worship certain Hindu deities inside Gyanvapi mosque?

Both the High Court and the Varanasi District Court had ruled that the lawsuit filed by certain Hindu devotees to assert their **right to worship** within the mosque precincts was not prohibited by the **Places of Worship Act, 1991**.

The courts justified their decision by stating that the lawsuit solely sought the **right to worship** and did not aim to declare the **building as a temple**.

### What are the issues related to the Varanasi District court decision for ordering the ASI survey of Gyanvapi mosque?

The worshippers have filed applications requesting a **scientific survey** by archaeologists to determine whether the Gyanvapi mosque was constructed on the site of a demolished Hindu temple.

Both courts have endorsed the approach of **acquiring official evidence** through the Archaeological Survey of India.

The High Court has rejected all objections regarding the court’s ability to seek **expert evidence** before **framing the issues for trial** and its ability to collect evidence.

However, the courts have not addressed why it is necessary to establish the **date of the structure** when the main claim in the suit pertains to the **right to worship deities**.

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The **request for a survey** and the intention to bring up the question of an earlier structure under the mosque suggest a plan to create circumstances that would enable a **change in its status**.

It is regrettable that the courts are facilitating **motivated litigation** specifically targeting **Muslim places of worship**.

### [32. Menaka Guruswamy writes on GST on online gaming: Taxing luck, not skill](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Menaka Guruswamy writes on GST on online gaming: Taxing luck, not skill**” published in **The Indian express** on 5th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Indian economy (taxation)

**News:** The article discusses a court case where Gameskraft, an online gaming company, challenges a large tax demand. The main issue is whether online games like rummy are based on skill (and not taxable) or chance (taxable). The Karnataka High Court sided with Gameskraft, but the decision will be reviewed by the Supreme Court.

#### **About Karnataka High Court’s decision in Gameskraft**

**Case Background:** Gameskraft, an online gaming company, challenged a GST notice of Rs 21,000 crore.

**Main Argument:** Gameskraft stated they merely provide an online gaming platform. Prize money is held in a trust and not owned by them.

**Key Distinction:** The court differentiated between games of skill and games of chance.

**Decision:** Online games like rummy, which are based on skill, aren’t taxable like gambling activities.

#### **How are games taxed in India?**

**Basic Principle:** Games of skill aren’t taxed, while games of chance are taxable.

**Relevant Law:** The CGST Act lists lottery, betting, and gambling as taxable under Entry 6, Schedule III.

**Finance Act Definition:** Section 65B(15) of the Finance Act, 1994 defines “betting or gambling” as staking something of value, especially money, aware of the risk and hope of gain, based on game outcomes or chances of events occurring.

**Court Interpretation:** Supreme Court judgments have differentiated between gambling activities and games of skill.

#### **For examples:**

**Rummy:** Viewed as a skill game due to memorizing card sequences, so not taxable.

**Horse Racing:** Seen as a skill game because of trained horses and jockeys; betting is based on assessment.

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### 33. Why gig work matters – Its rise can help improve labour force participation

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Why gig work matters – Its rise can help improve labour force participation**” published in **Business Standard** on **7<sup>th</sup> August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Indian Economy – Employment

**Relevance:** benefits of gig work

**News:** Gig works are often seen as insecure kind of job in India. However, given the number of jobs generated by it in the urban area, it has the potential of reshaping the urban labour market.

According to the NITI Aayog, about 7.7 million workers are engaged as gig workers.

#### **What are the benefits of gig work?**

**Lack of Salaried Job:** Gig work may appear less attractive compared to a regular salaried position. However, the majority of jobs in urban areas tend to be informal and temporary in nature.

Furthermore, out of the total urban workforce of 131 million, merely 52 million hold salaried jobs, making such opportunities challenging to obtain. Hence, **gig work aligns well with the dynamics of the Indian urban labor market.**

**Flexibility:** Gig works offer flexibility allowing women and disadvantaged groups like the elderly or persons with disabilities to work as per their convenience.

Given the rigidity in salaried jobs, **gig jobs fit well for the needs of these people.** Hence, given the low Labor Force Participation (LFP) rate in India, gig works have the potential to improve LFP rate.

**Minimum Wage:** Gig economy has proved to be like the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) in urban areas. Through gig works individual always has an option of doing some labor supply and earning the minimum wage.

Further, it would have been difficult for the government to launch a job guarantee program in urban India due to state capacity constraints. Thus, the gig economy represents a significant improvement for the urban work market.

However, despite its multiple advantages, gig works are not able to reduce the level of urban unemployment.

#### **Why are gig works not able to reduce the level of urban unemployment?**

There are many reasons behind this such as – **1)** Traditional social norms hold women at home, **2)** Women hardly get access to mobile phones or scooters, **3)** Rural-to-urban migration is constrained by social factors and various monetary and non-monetary costs.

These factors act as obstacles for the gig works to have an overall impact on the employment levels.

#### **What can be the way ahead?**

In a changing economy, companies succeed and fail, and jobs are both created and lost. Hence, criticizing gig work using the benchmark of salaried jobs is misguided as most work in India does not have these perks and security.

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However, **India faces challenges between** treating gig work on a par with the Indian informal labour market, or of bringing the burdens of the formal labour market upon it.

### 34. [Picking Up Peace – on economic costs of riots](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Picking Up Peace**” published in “**The Times of India**” on **7th August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Internal Security. GS1- Communalism

**Relevance:** Communal violence

**News**– Communal clashes broke out in Nuh, Haryana, a week ago. Media reports say that migrant workers in Gurgaon have begun to leave due to fear over their safety.

#### **How riots in Haryana are not good for its economic progress?**

The occurrence of riots contradicts India’s narrative of **economic progress**. Without **social harmony**, the **economic climate** becomes unfavorable for investments.

An encouraging economic trend is the emergence of **India-based Global Capability Centers (GCC)** that handle multinational firms’ operations.

Gurgaon stands out as a **significant hub for GCCs** and contributes to India’s **services exports**. However, Gurgaon faces tough competition from other Indian cities, particularly those in southern states .

It has impacted Gurgaon’s reputation as a **preferred economic location**.

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

There is a need for **proactive measures** by the Haryana government.

The state can learn from Tamil Nadu’s response to a similar incident in March. A viral fake news led to fear among Hindi-speaking economic migrants, with reports of attacks on them.

In that case, the state government **collaborated with industry associations** to reassure anxious workers. The political leadership took charge of the effort and even sought support from the Bihar government.

Haryana should adopt a **similar approach**. It cannot be left solely to a few police officers to address the **concerns of workers** who wish to leave Gurgaon.

### 35. [India’s mining policy shift](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**India’s mining policy shift**” published in “**The Hindu**” on **8th August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Economy

**Relevance:** Issues related to mining sector

**News**– Recently, Parliament passed the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2023, in a bid to attract private sector investment in the exploration of critical and deep-seated minerals in the country.

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### What is the importance of minerals for India?

Various minerals play a pivotal role in a nation's **manufacturing, infrastructure development, and progress.**

The **shift towards clean energy** in countries like India relies heavily on the **accessibility of essential minerals** like lithium, cobalt, graphite, and rare earth elements (REEs).

These minerals are also indispensable for **producing semiconductors** utilized in smart electronic devices, defense and aerospace gear, telecommunications technologies.

### How much of India's critical minerals are imported?

The scarcity of such minerals in **specific geographic regions** leads to a need for imports. It creates **vulnerabilities in supply chains** and the **potential for disruptions.**

For Example, China has **substantial ownership** of cobalt mines in the Democratic Republic of Congo, responsible for 70% of global cobalt production.

Prominent economies have recently taken measures to bolster their **supply chain resilience** for such minerals, and decrease their **reliance on countries like China for supplies.**

India's **dependence on imports** for the majority of minerals on this list remains significant. India is entirely reliant on countries such as China, Russia, Australia, South Africa, and the United States for essential minerals like lithium, cobalt, nickel, niobium, beryllium.

Even for **deep-seated minerals** like gold, silver, copper, zinc, lead, nickel, cobalt, platinum group elements, and diamonds, India's dependence on imports remains substantial.

In the fiscal year 2022-23, India imported nearly **1.2 million tonnes of copper** valued at over ₹27,000 crore.

### Why is the private sector vital for critical minerals exploration?

Research and the Centre for Social and Economic Progress (CSEP) highlight that India's **distinctive geological and tectonic conditions** offer a favorable environment for **potential mineral resources.**

Only about 10% of India's **Obvious Geological Potential (OGP)** has been explored, and less than 2% of this has been **extracted through mining.**

India has witnessed only a limited number of **significant mineral discoveries** over the past few decades.

Majority of exploration projects are undertaken by the **government entity** Geological Survey of India and other Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) like the Mineral Exploration Corporation Limited.

**Private sector involvement** remains minimal. **India's mining policy** had previously excluded private-sector explorers from participating in the **initial exploration of minerals** in untapped areas. Moreover, companies did not enjoy **appropriate incentives.**

The exploration process entails methods like **aerial surveys, geological mapping, and geochemical analyses.** So, it is a **specialized, time-intensive, and financial activity.** Less than 1% of examined projects ultimately progress into **economically viable mines.**

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PSUs were better suited for exploring surface and bulk minerals like coal and iron ore. However, they faced difficulties in dealing with **deep-seated and crucial minerals**.

In countries such as Australia, private mining firms referred to as junior explorers take risks by utilizing their expertise and **limited financial resources** to conduct exploration.

Following the identification of these prospects, these private enterprises can sell their discoveries to larger mining corporations.

### Is India's mining policy conducive to private participation?

The Mines and Minerals (**Development and Regulation**) Act of 1957, has undergone several revisions since its inception, including recent amendments in 2015, 2020, and 2021.

In 1994, amendments were made to the Act to enable interested parties to apply for **mineral concessions** through a **First Come First Served (FCFS) approach**.

In 2015, amendments were made to the MMDR Act to enable private companies to participate in government auctions for **Mining Leases and Composite Licences (CLs)**.

However, the inclusion of the **Evidence of Mineral content (EMT) rule** meant that only projects explored by the government were subjected to auction. It restricts the involvement of the private sector.

The amendments also allowed private firms to register as **exploration entities**, with funding provided by the **National Mineral Exploration Trust (NMET)** for exploration activities. Despite these changes, private sector engagement remained limited.

### How does the Mines and Minerals Bill 2023 aim to encourage private players?

Read – [Critical Minerals in India and Mines and Minerals Amendment Bill, 2023](#)

### What are some of the possible issues with the Bill's proposals?

Read – [Critical Minerals in India and Mines and Minerals Amendment Bill, 2023](#)

Companies would be more willing to **invest substantial sums** if they were assured of utilizing any resources they unearth.

The new policy only permits the government to auction what an explorer has discovered. This contrasts with practices in other **global jurisdictions**, where private explorers can sell their findings to mining companies.

### 36. [15 years after 2008, developed countries still making mistakes](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “Sajjid Z Chinoy writes: **15 years after 2008, developed countries still making mistakes**” published in “The Indian express” on 8th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilisation of resources, growth, development and employment. & Effects of liberalisation on the economy,

**News:** In this article discusses the aftermath of the 2008 Financial Crisis and how policy responses deepened economic issues. Tight fiscal policy led to loss of monetary policy, causing more problems. Now, there's a trend of countries turning protectionist, potentially harming global growth. The solution isn't protectionism, but a coordinated global response, education, and

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improved domestic policies. The world needs a major conference, like Bretton Woods in 1944, to address these challenges.

### What are the implications of the 2008 financial crisis on the world?

**Globalization Impact:** While globalization in the '90s and 2000s boosted economies, it led to job losses in the West due to the “China shock”.

**Fiscal Policy:** Western countries tightened fiscal policy significantly after the crisis. This impacted their GDP growth: by 2018, GDP was 13% below pre-crisis trend in France, 17% in the US, and 22% in the UK.

**Monetary Policy:** Tight fiscal policies led to very loose monetary measures. Central banks increased their balance sheets, pushing long-term low interest rates.

**Inequality and Economic Distortion:** Loose monetary policy inflated asset prices, increasing inequality. It also kept unproductive “zombie firms” alive, stifling growth and innovation.

**Protectionism:** Economic challenges led to protectionist policies, like Brexit and the US-China trade war.

**De-globalization Risks:** Recent policies aim at bringing production back home, but this might reverse the gains from globalization. Such changes risk global economic division and could undo the benefits of globalization.

**Bigger Current Threat:** Technology and AI advances might replace many jobs, similar to how the “China shock” affected blue-collar jobs.

### What should be done?

**Coordinated Global Response:** Countries should work together to address economic challenges, just as they did in the Bretton Woods Conference in 1944.

**Education and Training:** Equip workforces with skills to complement, not compete with, technology.

**Support Creative Destruction:** Encourage innovation and the phasing out of outdated practices, rather than preserving unproductive “zombie firms”.

**Robust Safety Nets:** Create systems to protect and support those adversely affected by economic changes.

**Fair Tax System:** Implement taxation that can finance the necessary changes and support the economy.

**Avoid Protectionism:** Instead of isolating economies, ensure that globalization’s gains are shared fairly.

**Recognize AI’s Impact:** Address the potential “ChatGPT shock” which might affect white-collar jobs, similar to how the “China shock” impacted blue-collar positions.

The focus should be on collaborative solutions, not counterproductive protectionist measures.

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### [37. Experimenting with cheetahs, applying copy-paste as conservation](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Experimenting with cheetahs, applying copy-paste as conservation**” published in “The Indian express” on 8th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Conservation & environmental impact assessment

**News:** In this article author discusses India’s cheetah reintroduction project led by Dr. Jhala. Originally, the project aimed to establish free-ranging cheetahs in Kuno. Due to changing prey densities and habitat challenges, the plan evolved to shuffle cheetahs between areas. This approach might undermine India’s broader conservation goals by accepting fragmented habitats and “assisted dispersal” instead of natural wildlife movement. The author questions the accuracy of Dr. Jhala’s estimates and the project’s long-term implications.

#### **What are the challenges to India’s cheetah reintroduction project?**

1. **Changing Project Goals:** Initially, the project aimed to establish free-ranging cheetahs in Kuno. Now, it leans towards “assisted dispersal”, which means moving cheetahs between areas artificially.
2. **Prey Density Fluctuations:** Cheetah, the primary prey for cheetahs in Kuno, has varied densities over the years:

2006: 5 per sq km

2011: 36 per sq km

2012: 52 per sq km

2013: 69 per sq km

By 2021, Dr. Jhala’s data showed a density of just 38 per sq km.

3. **Habitat Size and Carrying Capacity:** Dr. Jhala initially suggested Kuno sanctuary (347 sq km) could support 27 cheetahs, with the larger Kuno landscape (3,000 sq km) holding up to 100 animals. By 2021, the numbers dropped to 21 cheetahs for a 748 sq km park and 36 for a 3,200 sq km landscape.
4. **Legal Hurdles:** The Supreme Court initially barred the project in 2013 and only allowed it in 2020 on an experimental basis.
5. **Conservation Ethos Mismatch:** The approach of shuffling cheetahs might undermine India’s broader conservation goals. The traditional ethos supports natural wildlife movement and interconnected forests. Assisted dispersal could promote fragmented habitats.
6. **Doubts Over Data Accuracy:** There is inconsistency in Kuno’s cheetah density data provided by Dr. Jhala over the years.

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

**Reevaluate Project Goals:** Reconsider the idea of “assisted dispersal” and refocus on establishing free-ranging cheetahs in their natural habitat, as originally intended.

**Monitor Prey Density:** Given the fluctuations in cheetah density (from 5 to 69 per sq km in seven years), regular monitoring is essential to ensure stable prey availability.

**Legal & Ethical Considerations:** Ensure that reintroduction aligns with the Supreme Court’s guidelines and India’s broader conservation ethos.

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**Maintain Forest Connectivity:** Prioritize natural wildlife corridors and interconnected forests to avoid turning habitats into isolated genetic islands.

**Transparency in Data:** Ensure consistent and transparent data collection and sharing to maintain trust in the project's viability.

### 38. [Beyond the hype: Independent verification is crucial on claims about material LK-99](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article "**Beyond the hype: Independent verification is crucial on claims about material LK-99**" published in "The Hindu" on 8th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.

**News:** Recently, South Korean scientists revealed their discovery that the substance they termed LK-99 is a superconductor at room temperature and atmospheric pressure in two preprint paper uploaded to the arXiv repository

#### What is room-temperature superconductor?

A room-temperature superconductor is a material that can carry electric current without any loss or resistance at the temperatures we typically experience in daily life. Scientists have sought this for decades because it can revolutionize energy transmission and various industrial applications.

#### What is the significance of discovering a room-temperature superconductor?

**Energy Efficiency:** A large amount of electric current is lost during transmission from power plants to consumption points. A room-temperature superconductor could drastically reduce these losses.

**Industrial Applications:** Such a material would benefit heavy industrial processes. For instance, it could enhance the design and efficiency of nuclear reactors.

**Research:** Particle colliders, used in cutting-edge physics research, would see improvements in their design and operation.

**Medical Diagnostics:** Devices like MRI machines could become more efficient, potentially leading to clearer images and faster diagnostics.

**Cooling Costs:** Current superconductors need to be cooled to very low temperatures, which can be costly and challenging. For example, some superconductors require cooling with liquid helium, which is harder than using liquid nitrogen. Room-temperature superconductors eliminate this need.

**Historical Context:** There was a significant jump in superconducting capabilities in the late 1980s with the discovery of copper-oxide superconductors, showing the transformative nature of such breakthroughs.

**Economic and Prestige Value:** The discovery carries both material benefits and significant scientific honor, making it a sought-after achievement in the physics community.

#### What are the limitations for discovering a room-temperature superconductor?

**Verification Challenges:** Verifying superconductivity is complex. It requires sophisticated equipment and knowledge to ensure the material truly exhibits zero resistance.

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**Pressure Dependency:** Some materials, like LaH10, show superconductivity near room temperature, but only under extreme pressures, making them impractical for most applications.

**Scientific Rush:** The allure of prestige and potential benefits can cause researchers to hasten publications before thorough verification, risking inaccuracies.

**Historical Missteps:** Past claims of room-temperature superconductors often faced retractions after independent scrutiny. For instance, the German physicist Jan Hendrik Schön's claims were later retracted, casting doubt on new claims.

**Synthesis Complexity:** Creating the exact conditions for superconductivity, like with the South Korean LK-99, can be intricate and hard to replicate.

### What should be done?

**Independent Verification:** Any new claim, like the South Korean group's discovery of LK-99, needs thorough independent testing to confirm its properties.

**Avoid Rushed Publications:** Given past retractions, like that of Ranga P. Dias in 2020, researchers should avoid premature publications before comprehensive data verification.

**Maintain Skepticism:** Both the scientific community and the public should approach new claims cautiously, awaiting multiple confirmations before acceptance.

**Increase Transparency:** Open access to research, as seen with the South Korean group's preprint papers, fosters trust and facilitates wider scrutiny.

**Collaborative Efforts:** Engage multiple labs and experts for a combined effort, ensuring diverse perspectives and minimizing biases or errors.

### 39. The green tinge of local manufacturing

**Source:** The post is based on the article "**The green tinge of local manufacturing**" published in "Business standard" on 9th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Environment (Global warming) & GS3- Effects of liberalisation on the economy, changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth.

**News:** The author discusses global efforts to localize manufacturing to meet decarbonization targets. Countries are investing in local supply chains, especially in clean energy sectors, influenced by national goals to reduce carbon emissions.

### How are companies localizing manufacturing?

Schneider Electric has created regional supply chains since 2005, speeding up market entry.

Eel's 3Sun sets up gigawatt-scale solar plants in Europe.

Tata group plans a \$5.2 billion battery plant in the UK for electric vehicles.

ExxonMobil targets 100,000 metric tonnes of lithium extraction yearly.

Despite a drop in Apple's global production sites, China's manufacturing share for Apple increased to 38%.

### What incentives are countries offering?

The US's Inflation Reduction Act triggers billions in local manufacturing investments.

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Europe, especially the UK, is offering green subsidies, though not as substantial as the US.

India introduced a production-linked incentive scheme, targeting solar and battery sectors to promote high value-added product exports.

### How is investment shaping the landscape?

The US leads, raising \$3.5 billion in climate-tech venture capital.

India follows, with investments of \$1.8 billion, significantly influenced by Avaada Energy's \$1 billion.

### What's the future of clean energy manufacturing?

There's a global race to localize mature clean energy production, such as solar and wind.

Emerging technologies like green hydrogen, sustainable aviation fuel, and carbon capture are gaining traction.

The Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory made significant progress in nuclear fusion, although widespread application remains distant.

#### [40. Learning from the CHIPS Act of the U.S.](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article "**Learning from the CHIPS Act of the U.S.**" published in **The Hindu** on **9<sup>th</sup> August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** **GS 3 – Science & Technology, Industrial Policy**

**Relevance:** **comparison between India's and the US semiconductor policy**

**News:** The United States' Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors and Science Act of 2022 (**CHIPS Act**) has completed one year. The article compares the US semiconductor policy with India's.

### What are the differences between the US and India's Semiconductor Policy?

#### Semiconductor Policy

**US:** The [CHIPS Act](#) promotes intergovernmental collaboration and creates four funds for execution. The Department of Commerce oversees the \$50 billion CHIPS for America Fund for semiconductor advancement.

Allocations are also designated for specific purposes, such as \$2 billion for defense-unique technologies under the Department of Defense.

**India:** The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) oversees India's semiconductor policy. Specific segments like manufacturing, assembly, displays, and compound semiconductors are handled by the independent [India Semiconductor Mission \(ISM\)](#) under MeitY.

Chip design policy is managed by [C-DAC](#), an R&D organization under MeitY. However, to ensure that the semiconductor strategy persists beyond government terms, **a whole-of-government approach like to the CHIPS Act is required.**

#### Collaboration

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**US:** Firms applying for funding through the CHIPS Act must present workforce development proposals. A nodal agency, known as **the National Semiconductor Technology Center (NSTC)**, has been established to partner with businesses and educational establishments.

**India:** MeitY has initiated the [Chips2Startup \(C2S\) initiative](#), working with more than 100 universities and colleges. Similar to NSTC, **C2S seeks to enhance workforce growth by endorsing established high-quality training schemes.**

However, in India, many private training centres prepare chip designers outside the conventional university system.

Hence, **it is important for C2S to focus on** certifying good programmes of universities or private training institutes rather than running them.

### Feasibility Assessment Guidelines

**US:** The CHIPS Act has created a **CHIPS Program Office (CPO)** to lay down the guidelines for assessing the financial viability of a project. The CPO is hiring Investment Principals and Financial Structuring Directors to catalyse private sector investments.

**India:** While India has set up feasibility assessment guidelines, **transparency improvements are necessary.** Regular monthly progress reports on the semiconductor program, published by the government, will enhance confidence and expectation management.

### Packaging Research

**US:** The CHIPS Act allocates \$11 billion for research beyond domestic semiconductor manufacturing, focusing on advanced packaging. The **National Advanced Packaging Manufacturing Program (NAPMP)** is introduced to enhance the U.S.'s strategic position in this area.

**India:** India's semiconductor approach lacks a strong focus on advanced manufacturing and packaging research. Hence, India should learn a lesson from the CHIPS Act and invest in research on future technologies.

**Must Read:** [Semiconductor manufacturing in India: significance and challenges](#)

### What can be the way ahead?

The CHIPS and Science Act offers a valuable blueprint for semiconductor policy. Hence, India's strategists should thoroughly assess its strengths and weaknesses and implement relevant aspects in their semiconductor approach.

#### [41. It's time to double down on our digital expansion](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article **“It's time to double down on our digital expansion”** published in the **“mint”** on **9th August 2023.**

**Syllabus:** GS3- Indian economy

**Relevance:** Digital economy

**News**– The article discusses the rapid growth of India's internet economy. It highlights the uneven expansion and the need to broaden the internet base to reach everyone.

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### How has India's internet economy been growing at a strong pace?

The expansion of internet access, the affordability of connectivity are significant achievements. There is a rise in monthly Unified Payments Interface transactions. It has exceeded 10 billion with a value surpassing ₹15 trillion.

The Government also supports policies focusing on data security. Privacy regulations are aimed at creating more equitable online markets. Additionally, our export policy aligns with e-commerce.

The number of internet users has surged due to economical data tariffs. It has increased from 462 million in 2018 to 759 million users in 2022. This figure is anticipated to grow to 900 million by 2025.

### What are issues related to the internet economy in India?

According to **World Bank data** from 2021, our internet penetration rate lags behind the **world average**.

According to this data, India was positioned at the **120th spot in 2021 in terms of internet penetration**. The internet penetration rate is **standing at 46%**. This is below the **global average of 63%** and lags behind the mean for lower middle-income countries.

In comparison, the UAE led the rankings with 100% penetration, followed by the UK at 97%, and the US at 92%. China, which has a penetration rate of 73%.

The slower data speeds pose a hindrance, especially in case of **new technologies like artificial intelligence**. India's **median fixed broadband speed of 53.2Mbps** is slow in comparison to other places. In Singapore, the UAE, and even Chile, speeds **exceed 200Mbps**.

Most concerning aspect is the **unreliability of internet access**, as indicated by our record of **internet shutdowns**.

In 2022, the country experienced **84 sudden shutdowns**. The rest of the world combined had 99, according to Access Now's count. This accounts for **45% of the total shutdowns globally**.

### What should be done?

**It is essential to** establish **clear protocols** for internet shutdowns based on **thorough cost-benefit analyses**.

The vision of an **internet economy worth \$1 trillion by 2030** is promising. India's strides in this area have indeed been impressive.

However, there is still a need to substantially expand and stabilize our **internet infrastructure**. Taking **prompt action on multiple fronts** is imperative.

Clearly, there's substantial work left to be done: a larger portion of the population needs to be brought online, and fewer individuals should be left dealing with frustrating buffering issues.

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42. [That '70s show – Proposed licensing for computing devices' imports dents India's credibility](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**That '70s show – Proposed licensing for computing devices' imports dents India's credibility**” published in **The Hindu** on **10<sup>th</sup> August 2023**.

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

**Relevance:** concerns with import restrictions

**News:** The Commerce and Industry Ministry of India implemented abrupt restrictions on imports of laptops, PCs, tablets, and servers, necessitating importers to acquire licenses.

This action prompted worries about supply chain disruptions, possible scarcities, and increasing prices.

### Why did the government impose restrictions?

**The government cited security reasons** for the decision as imported devices could be utilized for surveillance, similar to the potential for spyware in mobile phones.

**This move will also encourage IT hardware manufacturers to establish** production facilities in India through a production-linked incentive scheme.

However, due to the complex nature of PC component value chains, these plans faced criticism and raised fears of impacting India's software and IT-enabled services exports.

Hence, the government postponed the restrictions until November 1, assuring quicker license approvals.

### What are the concerns with imposing restrictions?

While the government claims quick license issuance, this situation brings back memories of India's earlier IT industry stages (1970s and 1980s), **causing unease among industry players until the licensing rules clarify**.

**If concerns about security are arising due to PC and tablet imports from China**, the government could enforce testing requirements to ensure the safety of shipments.

Whereas, **if the goal is to encourage investments**, it becomes challenging to force major global players into making substantial investments when they have more convenient business options elsewhere.

Therefore, **such restrictions might increase costs and limit device choices, impacting Indian consumers and hindering digital access to government services**.

**Must Read:** [Express View on restrictions on laptop imports: Licence raj dot com](#)

### What lies ahead?

This situation, along with recent policies like the 28% GST on gaming bets and the freeze on prices of 'deregulated' petroleum products, is worrying for investors.

Hence, India's reform narrative might be derailed by unpredictable policies, exorbitant taxes, and a return to maximum government.

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### 43. [How sweet is India's spot? – on economic policies of India](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**How sweet is India's spot?** – The economy has a lot going for it, but a closer examination suggests some urgent policy priorities” published in “Business standard” on 10th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Indian economy

**News:** In this article, the author discusses India's strong economic recovery and growth prospects. He emphasized the need for fiscal reforms, improved trade policies, better education, and increased private investment. The article also highlights India's geopolitical position, benefiting from US-China tensions, but warns against over-reliance on such advantages.

#### **About India's Economic growth**

**Recovery Rate:** Bounced back from a 6.6% GDP slump in FY21 to 9.1% and 7.2% in the subsequent years.

**Exports:** Goods exports rose in 2021 and 2022, while service exports remain strong despite recent slowdowns.

**Digital Boom:** Expanding digital infrastructure facilitates smoother nationwide transactions. It has facilitated low-cost transactions nationwide, which aids in the delivery of expanded government direct benefit programs.

**Government Initiatives:** Increased spending on roads and infrastructure, aiding growth.

**Monetary Policy:** RBI's restrictive stance for 15 months has lowered inflation below 6%. Correction in commodity prices (but not tomatoes), also contributed.

**Growth projections:** The government and RBI project 6.5% growth in FY24.

A recent RBI paper stated India **needs 7.6%-9.1% growth to be considered a developed country by 2047.**

#### **Where does India stand Geopolitically?**

India has strengthened ties with the US and its allies, remaining neutral in the Russo-Ukraine war.

India benefits from US-China tensions but should be cautious about relying on it.

#### **How has government spending affected the Indian economy?**

**Infrastructure Boost:** There is a noticeable strengthening of physical infrastructure, especially roads. This has been a result of increased government capex (capital expenditure).

**Banking Stability:** Banks and companies' balance sheets have improved significantly, permitting more lending and borrowing.

#### **What challenges is the Indian economy facing?**

**Fiscal Concerns:** Fiscal deficits and government debt levels are high. Debt/GDP ratio stands at 80%, surpassing the recommended (by the N K Singh report on fiscal responsibility) 60% target.

Despite resolving the “twin balance sheet problem”, a resurgence in private investment is still awaited.

**Export Slump:** Despite a surge in 2021 and 2022, goods exports experienced a recent decline.

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**International Trade Policies:** Recent trade decisions, like increased tariffs since 2016, have been counterproductive. India's late-stage withdrawal from the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) in 2019 was a setback.

Resurgence of import licensing restrictions, evident in sectors like laptops are not good for industrial growth.

**Social issues:** Low learning outcomes in government schools require urgent attention. Improvement needed to cater to a skill-intensive global economy.

Concerning stats like female labor participation rates and youth unemployment compared to East Asian countries.

### What actions should be taken to address them?

**Fiscal Reforms:** Reduce fiscal deficits and target a debt/GDP ratio closer to the recommended 60%.

**Trade Policy Revamp:** Roll back the recent increase in customs tariffs. Consider re-engaging with at least one of the two Asian mega regional free trade agreements (FTAs). Remove unnecessary import licensing restrictions.

**Educational Improvements:** Leverage digital infrastructure to boost learning outcomes in government schools.

**Boosting Exports:** Enhance participation in global value chains by joining regional free trade agreements.

**Investment Climate:** Ensure policy stability and transparency to attract more domestic and foreign investments.

**Social Harmony:** Prioritize justice, law and order to encourage a conducive business environment.

#### 44. Gender sensitivity works in favour of economic growth

**Source-** The post is based on the article "**Gender sensitivity works in favour of economic growth**" published in the "**mint**" on **10th August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Economy. GS1- Social empowerment

**Relevance:** Issue related to women economic empowerment

**News-** The article deals with this issue of sexual harassment of women at workplaces

### What are some facts and statistics related to the prevalence of sexual harassment at workplaces across the world?

According to a **global survey conducted by ILO** in 2022, over one in five individuals employed have faced various forms of **violence and harassment** at their workplaces.

A study that examined **gender equality laws** across 193 countries discovered that sexual harassment can occur at **any stage of employment** and spans across **different geographical regions and occupations**.

Research further suggests that in the **majority of cases (72%)**, the harassment is done by individuals occupying people in senior positions.

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Instances of harassment do impact men. But, women are more than twice as likely to experience **gender-based harassment and sexual abuse**.

### What are the impacts of sexual harassment of women at workplace?

The **#MeToo movement** underscores the **detrimental consequences** of such harassment on women's economic prospects.

The impact of sexual harassment results in a **substantial economic setback**.

**75% of approximately 2.7 billion women aged 18 and above**, along with an **estimated 600 million men** have fallen victim to this issue.

**Research conducted by Chamie** in 2018 estimated the overall **financial consequences** of this problem at **approximately \$2.8 billion**.

For individual women affected by this phenomenon, **lifetime financial losses** were projected to **range from \$600,000 to over \$1.3 million**. It is indicated by the **Institute for Women's Policy Research and Time's UP Foundation in 2021**.

Furthermore, the **long-term repercussions** encompass **depressive disorders, reduced engagement, premature departures** from jobs, and **hindrances in career progression**.

### What are challenges in dealing with sexual harassment at workplaces?

The instances of workplace sexual harassment are significantly **underreported**. It is primarily due to concerns about **potential reprisals** or a perception that addressing the issue won't yield **positive outcomes**.

The **US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission** noted that a majority of harassed employees from 1995 to 2016 did not report the incidents.

Similarly, a **2017 BBC survey** revealed that over half of the victims chose not to disclose their experiences.

In 2021, the number of countries offering **some level of protection** against retaliation increased to 103.

Despite these advancements, women of working age across the Middle East and North Africa, as well as half in East Asia and the Pacific, and one-third in Latin America and the Caribbean still have no **legal protection**.

### What are the steps taken by various countries to address this issue?

Some nations have introduced legislation aimed at limiting the **utilization of confidentiality or non-disclosure agreements**. It can be employed to **suppress victims' voices**.

Certain US states have implemented new **sexual harassment prevention policies**. Hong Kong has recently broadened the **scope of protection** through a **revised code of practice**.

In the UK, there is now a **legal obligation** for employers to prevent harassment. It is backed by a **statutory code of conduct**.

Even major corporations like Microsoft have established **dedicated employee advocacy teams**.

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### What is the situation in India?

India has a codified legislation, known as the **PoSH Act**. However, this law has faced criticism for addressing violence against women in a **fragmented manner**.

Moreover, the Act has had limited impact on the **extensive female workforce** in the country's informal sector.

A **recent online survey by BBC** indicated that over 52% of Indian women and girls surveyed had declined **educational and job opportunities** due to feelings of insecurity.

Researchers have previously estimated that **India's GDP** could potentially rise to nearly **\$6 trillion by 2050** if the **existing employment gap** of 58 percentage points between men and women is eliminated (**Bloomberg Economics**).

In 2019, the ILO adopted a **landmark international treaty (C190)** on violence and harassment at work, India voted for it in 2019, but is yet to **ratify** it.

### 45. [Seeds for growth: How technology can boost Indian agriculture](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Seeds for growth: How technology can boost Indian agriculture**” published in “**The Indian Express**” on **10th August 2023**.

**Syllabus**: GS3- Agriculture. GS1-Economic geography

**Relevance**: Issues related to agricultural inputs

**News**– The article explains the issues related to the seed industry in India and suggests solutions for development of better seed varieties.

### What are the challenges faced by Indian agriculture?

There remains an **unmet demand** for coarse cereals, pulses, oilseeds, and vegetables. These essential food items are **not affordable** for a significant portion of the population. As a result, a substantial proportion of the population is **undernourished**.

**Diminishing natural resources, a growing population, severe weather patterns, and climate-related natural calamities** present significant obstacles to Indian and regional agriculture.

### How has the seed industry evolved in India?

The foundation of the Indian seed industry was solidified during the 1960s with the establishment of the National Seeds Corporation. It gained further momentum through supportive policies and regulations introduced in the late 1980s.

Significant developments such as the enactment of the **Protection of Plant Varieties & Farmers Rights Act in 2001** and the introduction of **Bt cotton hybrids for commercial cultivation** in 2002 has taken place. It has marked the transition to a technology-driven era in the seed sector.

The Indian seed market has expanded to an estimated value of **\$4.0 to \$6.0 billion**.

### What is the importance of seeds?

The key factors determining **agricultural profitability includes** input costs like seeds, fertilisers, pesticides, along with expenses related to land, labour, and water.

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**Seed costs** typically account for around **3 to 6 percent of the total production expenses**. Yet, they can contribute to a **yield advantage of 15-20 percent** beyond the **genetic potential**.

### What is the way forward for the seed industry in India?

**Crop variety development** can be achieved by **leveraging techniques** such as **molecular technologies, speed breeding, and gene-editing tools**. The effective use of applied seed technologies will guarantee **optimal functionality**.

Hence, contemporary seed technology should combine **genetic advancements with applied methodologies** to produce enhanced seed varieties capable of withstanding biological and environmental challenges.

These technologies would comprise: Genetic manipulation in variety development; priming or physiological advancement protocols; film coating, pelleting with or without active formulations; seed treatments with biologicals, or chemical pesticides having contact or systemic mode of action; bio-stimulants and nutrients for higher germination and faster seedling establishment; etc.

Most of these technologies are in **commercial use globally**, and some have been introduced in India.

A **robust regulatory mechanism** that includes quality seedlings and planting materials is needed under the newly proposed **“Clean Green Mission”** by the Government of India.

**Supportive regulatory guidelines** will play a crucial role in facilitating the adoption of seed technologies.

The **Fertiliser (Inorganic, Organic, or Mixed) (Control Order, 1985)** has been updated to the **Fertiliser (Inorganic, Organic, or Mixed) (Control) Amendment Order, 2021**, which now incorporates **bio-stimulants** as a vital element in seed-enhancement technology.

Furthermore, adjustments are required to include **coated or pelleted seeds within the Certified Seed (CS) category**.

Coated seeds are currently only permitted to be sold as **Truthfully Labelled (TL) seeds**. Film coating is widely recognized for its **farmer-friendly attributes** and has capacity to decrease **pesticide application** by as much as one-tenth,

In the past 10 to 15 years, a positive trend of **public-private collaboration**, facilitated by licensing agreements, has emerged.

This collaboration has effectively promoted various **open-pollinated and hybrid varieties**. As a result, there have been improvements in both **Variety Replacement Rates and Seed Replacement Rates** in field crops and vegetables.

Given this context, **sustainable seed technologies** accessible from the private sector can further enhance the value derived from seed planting.

Therefore, the **research and development efforts** of both public and private sectors can mutually complement each other in crafting **environmentally friendly and high-performing seeds** that remain affordable.

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### 46. [Mangroves offer a vital shield against climate change](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Mangroves offer a vital shield against climate change**” published in “Live Mint” on 11th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Environment conservation

**News:** In this article author emphasizes the importance of mangrove forests in India for environmental protection, biodiversity, livelihoods, and climate change mitigation. He also urges for their conservation and responsible management, while highlighting the threats they face and successful restoration efforts.

#### What is the importance of mangrove forests in India?

7. **Natural Protection:** Mangroves act as barriers against erosion, storms, and cyclones. They provide over \$7.8 billion in flood protection benefits annually.
8. **Biodiversity Hub:** India’s mangroves are home to diverse species. The Sundarbans, the world’s largest mangrove forest, shelters the Bengal tiger and Ganges river dolphin.
9. **Livelihoods:** Mangroves support 900,000 fisher households in India, aiding artisanal fisheries and boosting local incomes. Tourism potential in regions like the Sundarbans is significant.
10. **Environmental Filters:** Mangroves improve water quality by trapping sediments and pollutants, benefiting marine ecosystems.
11. **Climate Change Combatants:** They sequester large amounts of CO<sub>2</sub>, with global mangroves storing 22.86 metric gigatonnes, roughly half the yearly CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from various sources.

#### What threats are mangrove forests facing?

12. **Rapid Disappearance:** Since 1996, global mangrove coverage has declined by 11,700-sq km, equivalent to three times the size of Goa. South and Southeast Asia are witnessing the most significant mangrove loss.
13. **Human Activities:** 62% of mangrove loss is due to farming, aquaculture, and infrastructure development.
14. **Extreme Weather:** Though mangroves can recover from natural events like cyclones, human-induced changes, especially coastal modifications, can cause permanent damage.
15. **Global Warming:** Rising temperatures and other impacts of climate change pose challenges to mangrove ecosystems.
16. **Inappropriate Restoration:** Taking a cue from Sri Lanka’s experience, planting the wrong seedling in unsuitable conditions can reduce plant survival chances by over 50%.
17. **Economic Growth:** India’s push for economic growth sometimes comes at the expense of environmental conservation, potentially threatening mangroves

#### What should be done?

**Protection and Restoration:** Safeguard and restore mangroves to combat air pollution and secure coasts.

**Community Involvement:** Engage local communities for sustainable livelihoods, as seen in the Sundarbans region.

**Adopt Successful Models:** Emulate states like Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Odisha which have increased mangrove cover. Such as, establish dedicated conservation units similar to Maharashtra’s mangrove and coastal biodiversity conservation unit.

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**Government Initiatives:** Support efforts like MISHTI (Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats & Tangible Incomes), aiming to conserve mangroves across 13 states and Union territories.

**Collaborative Approach:** Foster teamwork among government officials, scientists, and communities.

### 47. Needed intervention – on Tiger conservation

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Needed intervention**” published in “**The Hindu**” on **11th August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Environment

**Relevance:** Issues related to conservation of ecosystem

**News** – The Wildlife Institute of India and the National Tiger Conservation Authority recently released the Tiger Census report.

### **What are factors behind good performance of Madhya Pradesh in maintaining a healthy tiger population?**

Madhya Pradesh, for the second time reported **785 tigers**. It is about a **fifth of the national count**. The State reported a **50% rise** in tigers since the last census.

Madhya Pradesh has developed a strategy over time that actively involves the **relocation of both tigers and their prey** within the state.

The objective of this approach is to **establish a balance** between the numbers of **predators and their prey**.

During the past couple of decades, M.P. has effectively reintroduced species like barasingha into habitats like Satpura and Bandhavgarh, and gaur into the Bandhavgarh and Sanjay-Dubri tiger reserves.

Additionally, they have successfully bolstered the populations of prey species like chital in regions such as Satpura and Sanjay tiger reserves, Nauradehi, Kuno, and Gandhisagar wildlife sanctuaries by transferring them from areas with higher densities.

### **What are issues with the current approach of the government towards conservation of animal species?**

The principles of ecology stress the importance of **relocating species** to environments that are not overly unfamiliar to them, to prevent **unintended adverse consequences**.

However, **recent amendments to the Forest Conservation Act** have introduced **greater flexibility** in diverting significant portions of forest land for industrial use.

It could result in **more fragmentation** within protected areas and an increased reliance on the practice of **relocating prey to sustain predator populations**.

This approach is increasingly at odds with **India’s conservation philosophy**. This conservation philosophy avoids creating isolated and enclosed spaces. It encourages species to inhabit **larger yet well-defined territories**.

### **Way forward**

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Government faces challenges in maintaining connected forest landscapes. Therefore, **relying solely on nature to restore the balance** between predators and prey becomes **unrealistic**.

It's now crucial for more states to adopt **proactive policies** for managing prey populations. It involves leveraging **scientific expertise** and **support from local communities** near reserves.

There is a need to shift from merely focusing on the numbers of carnivores. It is important to constantly **improve the habitat** required to sustain these animals.

### 48. The Tasks That Will Protect India's Tuskers

**Source**– The post is based on the article **“The Tasks That Will Protect India's Tuskers”** published in **“The Times of India”** on **12th August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Environment

**Relevance:** Conservation of animal biodiversity

**News**– The article explains the steps taken by Indian government for elephant conservation

#### **What are some facts about elephants in India?**

India takes great pride in its **substantial elephant population**. There exist **three distinct species** of elephants.

While elephants inhabit a total of 13 countries, it is noteworthy that India alone hosts over **60% of the worldwide wild elephant population**.

The elephant population within India is **spread across various regions** including the southern, northeastern, east-central, and northern parts of the country.

#### **What are steps taken by the Indian government for conservation of elephants?**

India has declared elephants as the **National Heritage Animal**. It grants them protection under **Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**.

**Project Elephant** was initiated during 1991-92 as a **centrally funded program**. It aimed to **safeguard and conserve** elephants, their natural habitats and corridors.

The elephant population in India has experienced a substantial increase, reaching approximately **30,000 individuals**.

#### **Protecting corridors-**

Elephant habitats and forests are **intersected by roads and railway tracks**. It **forms obstacles** for the movement of elephants and other wildlife. Obstruction caused by railways leads to **habitat fragmentation**.

The government is consistently **collaborating** with state governments to **mitigate the detrimental effects** of existing railway lines on elephants and other wildlife.

Recent developments include the **identification of 110 critical sites** spanning over 1,800 kilometers along existing railway lines.

The Ministry of Railways has adopted measures such as **constructing underpasses, overpasses, enforcing speed limits, establishing level crossings, and building ramps** to facilitate elephant movement.

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The Ministry of Railways is actively engaged in coordination with the MoEF&CC.

For instance, the Southern Railway has implemented **inventive measures** like **constructing underpasses** to reduce elephant fatalities on the **Coimbatore-Palakkad route** connecting Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

Similarly, the **Northeast Frontier Railway** is in the process of building an **elevated corridor** in **Assam's Deepor Beel** to prevent elephant accidents.

In states like West Bengal and Uttarakhand, pilot projects such as the **Intrusion Detection System using optical fiber cables, seismic sensors for animal movement detection, and infrared thermal cameras** have been initiated.

### Minimising human-animal conflict-

India has established a formalised process known as **Management Effectiveness Evaluation (MEE)**. It displays **proactive engagement** in evaluating its national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, and tiger reserves.

MEE procedure has been initiated for **elephant reserves** located in various regions: Uttarakhand's Shivalik Elephant Reserve, Tamil Nadu's Nilgiri Elephant Reserve, Odisha's Mayurbhanj Elephant Reserve, and Assam's Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong Elephant Reserve.

The Ministry has enhanced **natural habitats** through activities like augmenting water sources and planting fodder trees, as well as regenerating bamboo growth.

To mitigate conflicts, specific areas of **significant importance** for elephants are designated as **Elephant Reserves**. Presently, a total of 33 ERs have been established across 14 states where elephants reside.

India has initiated the creation of a **genetic database** specifically for captive elephants. This **comprehensive database** encompassing over 326 captive elephants has been developed and documented using the **Gaj Soochna App**.

This DNA profiling initiative aims to counter the **unlawful transfer of elephants** between states or individuals.

A **comprehensive field manual** designed for frontline staff to manage human-elephant conflicts has been introduced in multiple languages.

The Ministry conducts **Land Use Land Cover analysis** of Elephant Reserves in various states.

### [49. India needs a new economic policy](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article **"India needs a new economic policy"** published in **The Hindu** on **12<sup>th</sup> August 2023**.

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

**Relevance:** **measures needed to boost GDP growth rate**

**News:** The National Statistical Office (NSO) has released the fourth-quarter GDP growth rate figures for 2022-23. The current NSO data, when compared to the previous year, present a more pessimistic outlook.

Further, analyzing NSO data since 2014-2015 yields three important conclusions.

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### What conclusions can be made after analyzing NSO data since 2014-2015?

**First**, the GDP growth rate has been decreasing each year since 2015-16, and it has now dropped in the fourth quarter **to a level of 3.5%**.

**Second**, this growth is similar to the [Hindu Rate of Growth](#) observed during the 1950-77 socialism era.

**Third**, the economic reforms taken under the **leadership of P.V. Narasimha Rao and Manmohan Singh** led to increase in GDP growth to 6% to 8% annually, from 1991 to 1996 and 2004 to 2014.

However, recent years have seen a worrying and ongoing drop-in GDP growth rates since 2016.

### What measures can be taken to boost the growth rate of GDP?

**First**, abolishing personal income tax and eliminating the Goods and Services Tax (GST) are crucial steps to encourage investors and earners.

**Second**, the government should **raise funds through indirect taxes and by printing currency notes**, which can be circulated by paying wages to the employment generated in extensive public works.

**Third**, the government should **set fixed-term savings interest at around 9% to boost middle-class purchasing power, and limit loan interest rates for small and medium industries to 6%** to increase production and employment.

**Fourth**, India also requires a comprehensive **new economic policy** with clear objectives, priorities, a strategic approach to achieving goals, and a transparent resource mobilization plan.

**Fifth**, in India, the market system operates under rules and isn't entirely free. However, **market capitalism thrives on incentives and capital**, driving innovation, factory productivity, and GDP growth. **China also embraced this free market approach**, despite being a totalitarian.

However, it doesn't imply full deregulation. **Government intervention is needed for** safety nets, affirmative action, addressing market failure, and ensuring a level-playing field.

**Must Read:** [India's GDP Growth for FY2021-22 – Explained](#)

### What can be the way ahead?

Balancing public sector and deregulation, along with selling unprofitable units, boosting employment through affirmative action, and ensuring access to social security will help the poor in India.

This will also foster fairness in competition, ensures transparency, accountability, philanthropy, and corporate governance, legitimizing profitable operations that drive the market system.

### 50. PM Modi reopens security debate

**Source:** The post is based on the article "PM Modi reopens security debate" published in "Business standard" on 12th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Security challenges and their management in border areas.

**News:** In this article author discusses the challenges faced by India during the 1960s. He consider 1960s the most tumultuous decade post-independence due to multiple internal

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insurgencies, wars with neighbors, political instability, and economic hardships. He also touch upon the 1980s for comparison.

### What challenges did India face from its early post-independence years until the end of the 1960s?

**Pakistan as an Adversary (1947-1952):** Soon after gaining independence, India confronts Pakistan as a military threat.

#### **Naga Insurgency:**

Starts in the late 1940s.

Intensifies by the mid-1950s with China's support.

Military operations and resettlement initiatives like "Protected and Progressive Villages" lead to human rights issues.

#### **Emergence of China as a Threat:**

By the mid-1950s, China's looming presence becomes concerning.

The Dalai Lama's escape to India in 1959 strains relations.

Indian and Chinese forces clash in Hot Springs, Eastern Ladakh in 1959.

#### **Liberation of Goa (1961):**

India launches a military operation against Portuguese-controlled Goa.

**War with China (1962):** India faces a major military conflict with China.

**Kashmir Tensions (1963):** The Hazratbal incident sparks unrest in the region.

#### **Political Transitions:**

Nehru's death in 1964 creates a leadership vacuum.

Lal Bahadur Shastri takes over, facing multiple no-confidence motions before his sudden death in 1966.

**India-Pakistan War (1965):** A significant military conflict between the two nations erupts.

**Rise of Mizo Insurgency (1966):** Following Shastri's demise, the Mizo National Front proclaims sovereignty, leading to internal strife.

#### **Political and Economic Challenges:**

Punjabi Suba movement and Dravidian secessionist impulses emerge.

India grapples with famines, economic downturns, and food aid dependencies.

These challenges highlight India's tumultuous journey from its early post-independence years through the 1960s.

### What challenges did India face during 1980s?

#### **Punjab Insurgency:**

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Radical insurgency emerges in Punjab.

Operation Blue Star takes place in 1984, targeting Sikh militants inside the Golden Temple complex.

### **Kashmir Unrest:**

Return of terrorism in Kashmir.

Hindus face targeted killings.

**Mutinies in the Army:** Sikh units in the Indian Army revolt after Operation Blue Star.

**Massacres:** Mass killings of Sikhs in Delhi and other regions following the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

**Bhopal Gas Tragedy (1984):** A deadly gas leak in Bhopal causes thousands of deaths.

### **Border Tensions:**

Near-war situation with Pakistan over Exercise Brasstacks.

Stand-off with China over the Sumdorong Chu region.

**IPKF Operations in Sri Lanka:** Indian Peace Keeping Force sent to Sri Lanka faces challenges.

### **Internal Political Instability:**

Turbulence in politics, especially post-Bofors scandal.

These events marked India's challenges and struggles during the 1980s.

### **What lessons should India learn from these challenges?**

**Negotiation over Force:** Nehru's delay in military intervention, hoping talks would resolve the Naga insurgency, emphasizes the importance of early dialogue and negotiations.

**Internal Stability and National Security:** The political transitions of the 1960s and the 1980s, like Nehru's death without a clear successor and the challenges faced by Shastri and Indira Gandhi, underscore the interconnectedness of internal politics and national security.

**Human Rights Concerns:** The "Protected and Progressive Villages" initiative, which led to significant rights abuses, teaches the need for oversight and ethical considerations in security operations.

**Vigilance with Neighbors:** The Chinese threat in the late 1950s and early 1960s reminds India to maintain vigilance and regular diplomatic engagement with neighboring countries.

**Preparedness and Resilience:** The sudden Mizo insurgency at a time of national crises emphasizes the importance of always being prepared for unforeseen challenges.

**National Unity during Crises:** The diverse challenges faced, from the Punjab insurgency to the Kashmir unrest, highlight the need for promoting national unity and harmony.

Incorporating these lessons can provide India a holistic approach to handle current and future national security challenges.

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### 51. [A cycle of Reversal – on India's Protectionist Policies](#)

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**A cycle of Reversal**” published in “**Business Standard**” on **12th August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Effects of Liberalization on the Economy

**Relevance:** Issues related to protectionist policies

**News**– The article explains the significance of competition for businesses. It also explains the impact of protectionist policies on Indian consumers in the pre-liberalisation era.

#### **What is the impact of competition on businesses?**

In the absence of **competition**, businesses tend to become **complacent**. Service providers often **lower their standards**, and manufacturers may **compromise on quality**.

Businesses charge **higher prices** than warranted, and take advantage of **guaranteed markets and the lack of competition**.

#### **How protectionist policies in the pre-liberalisation era impacted Indian consumers?**

Between 1947 and 1991, the country's economic policy exhibited a distinct **trend toward isolationism**. The introduction of **red tape through licensing increased, import tariffs rose, and the prohibition of various imported goods** was common practice.

During this period, only a handful of companies held **manufacturing licenses**, and innovation was stifled.

Even **minor inventions**, like a new design for a bicycle lamp, **required licensing**. Additionally, major sectors like banking, aviation, mining, and telecommunications were **nationalized** and transformed into **government monopolies**. This further **restricted competition**.

Indian consumers had just two car models to choose from. Potential car buyers were obliged to **place a deposit** and endure months of waiting for delivery. Obtaining a **new telephone connection** took up to three years to become operational

In case of air travel, Indian Airlines was the sole option. It imposed **higher fares** compared to other prominent global airlines.

The **telephone service** was expensive, was also of poor quality and one of the priciest globally. Almost everything manufactured in India exhibited subpar quality. Plugs wouldn't fit into outlets correctly.

Most **household appliances** were absent. Microwaves, washing machines, dishwashers, high-performance bicycles, fashionable designer attire were non-existent.

**Importing goods** posed considerable challenges. **Stringent controls** were imposed on **foreign exchange**, and a significant number of items were prohibited. Indians traveling abroad were only allowed an **annual allowance of \$50**.

Even individuals who earned scholarships to pursue education abroad struggled with obtaining foreign exchange for their studies.

#### **How things changed after liberalization?**

Remarkably, **quality improvements** were noted in various sectors as competition was permitted. New players differentiated themselves by offering **higher quality products at lower prices**.

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**Telecom market**, swiftly transformed into the **most affordable**. Consumers gained access to over 100 models from numerous automobile companies.

Students could **secure loans** from private banks to pursue education abroad, even if they didn't come from affluent backgrounds.

### 52. How to make Urea more efficient as a fertiliser, and why that's needed

**Source:** The post is based on the article "How to make Urea more efficient as a fertiliser, and why that's needed" published in "The Indian express" on 14th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies

**News:** This article discusses the introduction of 'Urea Gold' in India, a fertilizer fortified with sulphur. This new fertilizer improves nutrient efficiency and reduces the need for frequent applications. Despite the benefits of such fortified fertilizers, pricing and government subsidies remain challenges, preventing widespread adoption.

#### What is 'Urea Gold'?

##### Introduction of 'Urea Gold':

'Urea Gold' is a new fertilizer launched by Indian Prime Minister and developed by Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilizers Ltd.

##### Composition and Benefits:

It's made up of 37% Nitrogen and 17% sulphur.

This combination addresses the sulphur deficiency in Indian soils, particularly beneficial for oilseeds and pulses.

It offers a more gradual release of Nitrogen, ensuring plants remain green longer. This means farmers might need fewer applications, possibly using two bags instead of three for crops like paddy or wheat.

#### Why is Urea consumption a concern in India?

##### Rising Urea Consumption Trends:

Urea consumption in India has increased from 26.7 million tonnes in 2009-10 to 35.7 million tonnes in 2022-23. Despite measures like mandatory neem coating and reduced bag sizes, there's been a noticeable uptrend in consumption since 2017-18.

##### Dependency on Imports:

Out of the 35.7 million tonnes consumed last fiscal year, 7.6 million tonnes were imported.

Even domestically-produced urea relies heavily on imported natural gas as its primary feedstock.

To highlight the magnitude, India's annual urea consumption is second only to China, which consumes 51 million tonnes, primarily coal-based.

##### Efficiency Concerns:

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The Nitrogen Use Efficiency (NUE) of urea in India is worrying. Only 35% of the Nitrogen applied through urea is actually used by crops. The remaining 65% is lost, either released as ammonia gas or leached into the ground as nitrate.

This efficiency has decreased from an estimated 48% in the 1960s. As a result, farmers apply more fertilizer for the same yield, leading to increased costs and potential environmental issues.

### What should be done?

#### Adopt Fortification Solutions:

Instead of plain fertilizers, India should use those coated with secondary and micronutrients. This enhances nutrient efficiency and delivers crucial nutrients to crops.

Yara International's 'Procote Zn', which coats urea with zinc oxide, is a prime example. It's more effective than conventional methods. In Yara's trials, paddy yields using 'Procote Zn' exceeded those with traditional zinc sulphate.

#### Address the Pricing Challenges:

The current government subsidies for fortified fertilizers aren't incentivizing companies. They can charge only an additional Rs 24 for a 45-kg bag of zinc-coated urea.

Yara International, for instance, sells urea and 'Procote Zn' separately. Farmers pay Rs 254 for a 45-kg bag of urea and an extra Rs 530-550 for 'Procote Zn'. This combined price is slightly more than using traditional zinc sulphate.

#### Streamline Production and Pricing:

To ensure even nutrient distribution, coating should occur at factories. This will also ease the farmers' work, eliminating the need for them to mix nutrients.

The government might consider revising the pricing structure. This could involve deregulating prices for fortified fertilizers while ensuring base products remain affordable.

### 53. China's economic slump may yet wash up on foreign shores

**Source:** The post is based on the article "China's economic slump may yet wash up on foreign shores" published in **Live Mint** on **14<sup>th</sup> August 2023**.

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

**Relevance:** About the global economic scenario

**News:** The current situation raises concerns over global imbalances arising out of China's declining economy.

#### What are the concerns with the Chinese economy?

**China is facing multiple challenges.** Recent reports indicate setbacks in its economic recovery, with notable declines in exports and imports, and even consumer prices falling in July, raising concerns over deflation.

There is also a lack of demand in China which raises worries about the overall health of global economic conditions. **The real estate sector is also a significant cause for concern**, with Country Garden, once a major sales leader, now facing instability.

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**The solution to this involves enhancements in fiscal measures and a reduction in interest rates.** Meanwhile, the global economy relies on the US to sustain growth.

### How is the US economy performing?

There are very less chances of recession or economic slowdown in the US. The job market in the US is doing well, and while prices are still higher than the goal set by the government, they might not go up much more.

Recently, JPMorgan also said that a big economic decline is unlikely. People are less worried about smaller banks now.

**However, according to the chief US economist,** the risk of the economy getting worse is still quite high. Hence, it would be a mistake if the current positive situation in the US led to overconfidence.

**For instance,** in the late 1990s the US experienced a technology-driven economic boom, low unemployment, and mild inflation. During that time, Japan, once seen as a major economic competitor to the US, was struggling, along with many East Asian countries.

This situation made people confident over the US economy. **However, in 2001, the US experienced a recession,** and this was followed by major European countries facing economic difficulties.

Hence, a key takeaway from this is that while the US economy is performing, the US should also be concerned about the possibility economic challenges witnessed in other parts of the world.

### What is the way ahead?

Despite concerns about China, its central bank doesn't seem to be taking strong action to deal with the problem. At the same time, in the US, prices for things are still quite high.

Hence, the global economic scenario raises worry and a suitable action is needed by both the countries to revive their economy.

### 54. Small With Smarts – On Air Pollution

**Source–** The post is based on the article “**Small With Smarts**” published in “**The Times of India**” on **14th August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Science and Technology

**Relevance:** Issues related to research and innovation

**News–** The article explains the recent developments regarding reducing the air pollution in Delhi.

### What are some recent developments regarding the tackling of air pollution in NCR?

Around half of Punjab's paddy cultivation area has been sown with the **short-duration variety, PR-126**. Punjab Agricultural University released it in 2017. It **matures early and produces less stubble**. This paddy variety will **lower air pollution**.

A **startup mentored by IIT-Delhi** has tested a device that reduced **PM2. 5 and PM10** in its reach area by up to 86% within two hours in the pilot project.

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This device has been validated by the atmospheric science department of IIT-Delhi. It **ionises the air** to make particle pollutants heavier and removes them from the air. It holds a **low-cost promise** for traffic junctions and other hotspots.

### What can be inferred by these developments on air pollutants?

There exists a vast world beyond **prominent research and development initiatives**.

Startups, equipped with proper access to funding and guidance, can provide **cost-effective solutions** across diverse sectors.

Recognizing that not every **entrepreneurial idea** proves successful in **practical applications** is crucial. Such outcomes are inherent to the **process of innovation**. They are entirely acceptable as long as **peer review procedures** continue to be **efficient and rigorous**.

### 55. Express View on Himachal Pradesh tragedy: A slippery slope

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Express View on Himachal Pradesh tragedy: A slippery slope**” published in “**The Indian Express**” on **16th August 2023**.

**Syllabus**: GS1- Changes to Geographical phenomenon, GS3- Disaster Management

**News**– recently cloudbursts and landslides in Himachal Pradesh claimed the lives of 50 people.

### What are the reasons behind the recent disaster in Himachal Pradesh?

**Floods and landslides** are frequent occurrences in the Himalayan region. These youthful mountains are characterised by **geological activity**. The area has a **prolonged history of landslides**.

As per the **ISRO’s Landslide Atlas of India**, all twelve districts in Himachal Pradesh are vulnerable to landslides. However, recent years have witnessed an increase in the **instability of the slopes**.

According to data from the state’s disaster management records, the **number of landslides** surged by nearly sixfold between 2020 and 2022.

**Climate change** and the rise in instances of **extreme rainfall events** have aggravated the **vulnerabilities**. Indeed, the average temperature in the Himalayas is increasing at a faster pace compared to the rest of the country.

The **ecologically insensitive development** has compromised Himachal Pradesh’s ability to withstand adverse weather conditions.

Over the last decade, the state has been **widening roads**. A total of **69 national highway projects** has gained approval during this period. Five of them are designated as four-lane highways.

Road development should consider the **ecological vulnerabilities** of the area. The road expansion initiatives have neglected to consider the **stability of slopes**.

Furthermore, there is **minimal planning** regarding the management of construction debris. The Himachal Pradesh High Court has expressed grave concerns about the “**poorly executed construction**” of roads within the state.

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**Early Warning Systems** designed to notify people about impending landslides are in their **initial stages of development** in the country. In Kangra, the EWS failed to effectively alert people about a landslide that occurred in the first week of this month.

### Way forward-

Effectively addressing the **uncertainties of weather** will necessitate **significant shifts in approaches and interventions at multiple levels.**

The tragic incident in Himachal should serve as a **cautionary signal for policymakers** against deferring such initiatives.

### 56. Disaster in the Himalayas: No one likes to say that tourism brings trouble

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Disaster in the Himalayas: No one likes to say that tourism brings trouble**” published in “**The Indian Express**” on **16th August 2023.**

**Syllabus:** GS3- Disaster Management

**News**– Article discusses the effects of infrastructure developments for tourism industry on Himalayas.

### What is the recent development in Amsterdam that sets an example for tourism industry?

The city’s mayor has decided to prohibit **cruise ships** from docking in the central area. A study conducted in 2021 revealed that a single large cruise ship emits as much **nitrogen oxide in one day as 30,000 trucks.**

Each cruise ship brings around **7,000 tourists**, contributing to **employment and local businesses** in the city.

### How development strategy adopted by Himalayan states are contributing to disasters?

The **landslides** along highways and the destruction of bridges has **minimal influence on the economic strategies** of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

There is a **clash of narratives** . On one side is the **discourse of development**, where tourism occupies a central role, particularly in hilly regions. On the opposing side, there is the **outcry of nature conservationists.**

Throughout the Himalayan region, **hospitality sector** has given little consideration to the disappearance of forests or the disposal of waste.

Rivers serve as the **ultimate drainage systems.** In the hills, **landslides’ debris** cleared periodically to alleviate traffic congestion on highways is deposited in rivers

The government prioritize **reconstructing** the damaged highway segments and bridge rather than rather than **changing its strategy.**

### How attitude of tourism industry is threat to Himalyan ecology?

The **prevailing policy** is guided by the belief that the tourism industry is the **linchpin of prosperity.** There is underestimation of the **ecological impacts of unrestricted tourism** on Himalayan ecosystem.

**Tourists’ behavior** increasingly aligns with **established stereotypes.** They are often perceived as **individuals seeking enjoyment.**

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Ensuring their **lavish experiences** is seen as a **fundamental aspect of hospitality**, even in pilgrimage destinations.

Occurrences like **forest fires** during the summer and the occurrence of landslides and floods during rainy seasons are now anticipated as **potential disasters**.

Tourists don't appear to recognize that their style of travel can **harm the mountainous regions**. They seem to be oblivious to news about these incidents.

### 57. Evolution will not save aircraft from bird hits

**Source:** The post is based on the article "Evolution will not save aircraft from bird hits" published in "Live Mint" on 18th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Bio-diversity & Environment

**News:** The article discusses the increasing number of bird strikes with aircraft in India, the challenges birds face adapting to modern aviation threats.

#### Why are birds collisions with planes rising in India?

Reasons for Rising Bird Collisions with Planes in India:

**Increased Incidents:** Data shows 1,149 bird strikes in the first half of 2023, a 62.3% rise from the previous year.

**Flight Growth:** While the number of flights has grown, the rise in bird strikes is even steeper.

**Airport Attractions:** Airports inadvertently attract birds. The rumble of runways can shake worms out of the ground, providing food.

**Urban Birds Behavior:** Birds might be traveling across different time zones due to flight noises.

**Slow Evolution:** Birds haven't evolved quickly enough to recognize and avoid the dangers of modern aviation, unlike other threats in their environment.

#### How are authorities addressing this issue?

**Clean-Up Campaigns:** Authorities clean around airports to reduce food that attracts avian scavengers.

**Sound Deterrents:** Sound buzz guns are deployed to scare birds away from airport areas.

**Consulting Experts:** Officials are consulting the Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History for flight safety insights.

### 58. Message from the mountains – Himachal, Uttarakhand must check construction projects

**Source:** The post is based on the article "Message from the mountains – Himachal, Uttarakhand must check construction projects" published in **Business Standard** on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Disaster Management

**Relevance:** reasons behind natural calamities in Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand

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**News:** The recent death in Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand due to natural calamities have raised concerns over the state government's decision to prioritize tourism revenue over the environment.

### What are the reasons behind natural calamities in both states?

**First,** both states are experiencing serious issues due to increased deforestation, which weakens the mountains and increases the risk of landslides.

**Second,** roads and tunnels are being constructed without considering the mountain terrain, making it even more unstable in an earthquake-prone area.

**Third,** waste dumped in rivers is worsening flood threats during heavy rains.

**Fourth,** hydroelectric dams, instead of controlling the floods, are contributing to flooding because operators haven't adjusted to climate change and unusual melting of ice on the mountains.

**Fifth,** the congested and poorly planned building construction is happening without considering proper systems for draining water and managing waste.

**Sixth,** the state administrations did not learn from the previous disasters of 2013 and continued construction in the ecological fragile regions to boost tourism.

**Seventh,** ecologists have also raised concerns about the Center's Char Dham Yatra project, which aims to expand roads to the pilgrimage sites of Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri, and Yamunotri in mountainous areas.

**Eighth,** over 50,000 trees were cut to build a new highway between Delhi and Dehradun, which passes through an elephant and tiger sanctuary, to reduce travel time. Parts of these constructions collapsed during heavy rainfall.

**Must Read:** [Express View on Himachal Pradesh tragedy: A slippery slope and Himachal floods: a man-made disaster?](#)

### What lies ahead?

Both states heavily rely on tourism revenue. However, they are now dealing with great losses. Hence, it is important for both the states to learn from such calamities and focus on sustainable development.

### 59. Express View on RBI studies: Carrying hope

**Source:** The post is based on the article "Express View on RBI studies: Carrying hope" published in "The Indian Express" on 19th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Indian economy

**News:** The National Statistical Office will soon release GDP growth estimates for the first quarter (April-June). The RBI predicts an 8% growth. Despite global slowdowns and a drop in exports, India's economy shows positive signs like increased private consumption and investment. However, some sectors, like auto sales, are weak.

### What are the major outcomes of the RBI's State of the Economy report?

RBI's State of the Economy Report Outcomes:

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### 13. GDP Growth Prediction:

The RBI expects 8% economic growth for April-June.

### 14. Global Recovery Status:

The global economic recovery is slowing down.

### 15. Export Situation:

Exports decreased by around 16% in July.

Merchandise exports were at a nine-month low of \$32.25 billion.

### 16. Positive Economic Indicators:

Private consumption and investment activity might balance the decline in exports.

E-way bill volumes showed strong growth.

FMCG sales increased.

Cargo at major ports and railway freight traffic rose in July.

Steel and cement consumption went up.

### 17. Areas of Economic Concern:

Automobile sales, excluding three-wheelers, are low.

More households/individuals are seeking MGNREGA work than last year.

Non-oil imports decreased, indicating weak domestic demand.

Uncertainty about how much investment will increase.

### 18. Investment Intention Study:

In 2022-23, plans for 982 projects with Rs 3.5 lakh crore were made.

In 2021-22, it was 791 projects worth Rs 1.96 lakh crore.

60% of these projects, funded by banks and institutions, are in infrastructure.

Major areas: power, roads, bridges, SEZs, biotech, and IT parks.

Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Odisha, Maharashtra, and Karnataka have more than half the project cost.

### 19. Future Investment Cycle:

Strong bank and corporate balance sheets suggest a good future for investment.

### 60. Climate crisis has hit home

**Source:** The post is based on the article "Climate crisis has hit home" published in "The Hindustan Times" on 19th August 2023. **Syllabus:** GS3- Disaster and disaster management.

**News:** In this article, the author discusses the severe climate changes in India, leading to disasters such as landslides and floods, and the impact on agriculture and living conditions. The

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author also emphasizes the need for policy changes and a stronger political will to address the environmental and climate crisis.

### About the 2023 climate crisis in India.

#### 20. Severe Weather Events:

Devastating landslides in Himachal Pradesh resulted in 70 deaths.

Uttarakhand faced extreme weather, leading to 13 casualties.

Shimla, a popular tourist destination, severely impacted with 11 deaths in a temple.

#### 21. Erratic Monsoon Patterns:

The monsoon in India showed inconsistent behaviors. June had a 65% rainfall deficit, but by July's end, it changed to a 4.8% surplus. By August 18, a 6% deficit was recorded.

### What are the three distinct dimensions of the climate crisis in India?

Three Distinct Dimensions of the Expanding Crisis in India:

#### 22. Uncontrolled Development in Himalayan States:

The Himalayan states face risks due to unchecked development.

Thousands of lives are endangered.

The Union government hasn't shown intentions to revisit development models.

Two controversial environmental laws prioritize business and national security over environment.

#### 23. Changes in Weather Impacting Livelihoods:

Altered weather affects crop patterns and food security.

Quality of living is compromised.

Anomalies in rainfall patterns are intensifying.

Policymakers must adjust policies to the changing climate.

#### 24. Need for Social and Political Will:

Addressing the crisis requires strong political commitment.

The environment currently lacks priority in the political arena.

### What should be done?

**Revisit Development Models:** Rethink unchecked development in Himalayan states.

**Strengthen Environmental Policies:** Balance business and national security with environmental needs.

**Adjust to Rainfall Anomalies:** Incorporate changing weather patterns into policies.

**Upgrade Infrastructure:** Ensure it adapts to the changing climate.

**Prioritize the Environment Politically:** Recognize its importance in the electoral arena.

**Foster Political Will:** Address environmental challenges with urgency.

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**Engage the Public:** Generate social will to push for environment-centric policies.

### 61. Where prices are hurting

**Source**– The post is based on the article “Where prices are hurting” published in “The Indian Express” on 19th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Indian economy

**Relevance:** Issues related to inflation

**News**– As the Reserve Bank of India has released its August monthly bulletin.

#### What are the inflation prospects of the country?

The **inflation** for July 2023 reached a 15-month peak of 7.44 percent. It indicates that the **issue of inflation** remains unresolved.

**Supply chain pressures** are gradually easing and **wage growth** is slower than anticipated. The conditions are becoming favorable for a reduction in core inflation.

**Geopolitical tensions** have increased the prices of agricultural commodities, metals, and energy. It has raised concerns about **food and energy security** and the potential impacts on core inflation.

This marks the third time when the **retail inflation rate** is higher than the upper boundary of the RBI’s **medium-term inflation target range of 4+ /-2 percent** in this calendar year.

#### What are the main revelations of the recently released RBI bulletin?

The **inflation rate** has risen, particularly for **essential items** like vegetables, cereals, pulses, milk, and dairy products. This increase in prices has impacted both **retail and wholesale inflation** levels.

In the month of July, India experienced a **retail inflation rate** of 7.44 percent, reaching its highest point in 15 months.

Among the 36 states and Union Territories, 15 of them registered a **retail inflation rate surpassing the national rate** of 7.44 percent in July. Additionally, 24 states and UTs had an inflation rate exceeding 6 percent.

The **eastern regions** and **Jammu & Kashmir along with Ladakh** exhibited better outcomes.

States in **eastern and Northeastern India**, excluding Manipur and Tripura, saw a retail inflation rate lower than 6 percent in July 2023.

**Food and beverages** observed a **significant surge** in inflation. It reached 10.57 percent in July compared to 4.63 percent in June.

The **inflation rate for cereals and related products** has remained in **double digits** for eleven consecutive months. It was 13.04 percent in July.

**Pulses** have experienced inflation of over 5 percent for the last four months. It has escalated to **double digits** since June.

After contracting for eight months, **vegetable prices** surged to 37.34 percent in July.

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### How rising inflation is impacting households?

The **upward trajectory** of food prices is expected to place **additional strain on household budgets**.

A recent **Crisil report** highlighted that the cost of preparing a **“thali” meal** at home increased significantly for the third consecutive month in July, primarily due to the price of tomatoes.

### 62. Material consideration: On the LK-99 ‘superconductor’ episode

**Source:** The post is based on the article **“Material consideration: On the LK-99 ‘superconductor’ episode”** published in **The Hindu** on **19<sup>th</sup> August 2023**.

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

**Relevance:** confusions over a recent discovery – LK-99.

**News:** Recently, scientists found that the material called LK-99 is not a room-temperature and ambient-pressure superconductor.

#### What is LK-99?

LK-99 has been claimed by South Korean scientists as a superconductor at room temperature and atmospheric pressure. However, currently scientists have discarded their claims.

#### What are the reasons behind discarding LK-99 as a superconductor?

**First**, when superconductors get cold, they push away magnets, causing repulsion below their transition temperature. The South Korean video showed LK-99 partly repelling a magnet. However, **independent researchers found that the material was an insulator whose impurities could be magnetized**.

**Second**, the South Korean scientists saw less resistance in LK-99 around 104°C, which could mean it’s a superconductor. However, **researchers found that this drop occurred due to the copper sulphide impurities present in the material**.

Hence, **as per the scientists, no formal confirmation aligns with the initial declaration** that this material can conduct electricity without resistance in regular conditions.

**Must Read:** [Beyond the hype: Independent verification is crucial on claims about material LK-99](#)

#### What lies ahead?

The LK-99 case raises concerns over misunderstandings caused in the open science competition. However, this misunderstanding shouldn’t stop open collaboration.

Moreover, now, the burden lies on South Korean group to show evidence for their claim.

### 63. 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

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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.

### 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.

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### 64. 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.

### 65. 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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.

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### 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.

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.

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### 66. 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.

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

### 67. 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.

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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.

### 68. 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**.

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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.

### **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.

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### 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.

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**.

### 69. “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**

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**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.

**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.

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### 70. “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 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.

### 71. 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

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**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 explains 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.

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.

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### 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.

### 72. 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**.

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-

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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.

### 73. 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 **23<sup>rd</sup> 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.

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**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.

### 74. 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.

**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.

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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**.

### 75. 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.

### 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.

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### 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.

### 76. 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.

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### 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.

### 77. 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**.

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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.

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**.

### 78. [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 **24<sup>th</sup> 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.**

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### 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**

### 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.

## 79. 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.

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**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.

#### 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.

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### 80. 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.

#### 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.

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**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.

### 81. 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.

### 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.

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**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.

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.

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### 82. 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.

**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.

### 83. 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.

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### 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.

### 84. 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.

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**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.

### 85. 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. 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.

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**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.

### 86. 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 26<sup>th</sup> 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](#)

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### 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.

### 87. 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,

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%.

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### 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.

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**.

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### 88. 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.

#### **What is the potential of cleantech 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**.

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**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.

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.

### 89. 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.

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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.

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**.

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### 90. Not Quite Jai Kisan – Exports restrictions

**Source**– The post is based on the article “Not Quite Jai Kisan” published in “The Times of India” on **28th August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Agriculture

**Relevance:** Agriculture pricing and marketing

**News**– GOI has tightened restrictions on basmati exports. A minimum price for exports has been fixed at \$1,200 per metric tonne. A contract below the floor price will be evaluated by a GOI committee for clearance.

In July, exports of **non-basmati white rice** were prohibited. On August 25, GOI imposed a 20% export duty on parboiled rice.

#### **What is the justification provided by the Indian government for this move?**

It is meant to prevent exporters **circumventing rice export bans** by **misclassifying** the product as basmati.

**Global rice prices** are increasing. The **FAO rice price index** reached its highest level in July 2023 since September 2011.

India has maintained its position as the **world’s largest rice exporter** for more than a decade. In terms of quantity, India’s rice exports are predominantly **non-basmati varieties**.

#### **What are issues related to government restrictions on basmati exports?**

Indian farmers are facing an earnings limitation during a time when **global supply and demand dynamics** are in their favour.

GOI’s efforts to manage **domestic food inflation** are understandable. **Controlling inflation** is crucial for maintaining India’s overall macroeconomic stability.

However, this objective need not come at the **detriment of farmers**. The current approach creates a situation where gains for consumers come at the **expense of farmers**.

#### **Way forward-**

GOI can purchase agricultural products that have been singled out for **export restrictions or bans** at an **export parity price**. The acquired stock could then be released into the market to **stabilise prices**.

This approach may incur a **fiscal cost**. But any **temporary financial implications** can be balanced through **savings achieved** in other areas.

Adopting **export parity prices** has **long-term advantages**. Limiting farmers’ income during prosperous years can hinder their willingness to **support agricultural reforms**.

If farmers are uncertain about **policy stability**, persuading them to **embrace reforms** becomes challenging.

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### 91. The importance of states in space missions

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**The importance of states in space missions**” published in “The Hindu” on 28th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Awareness in the fields of Space.

**News:** The article talks about how countries with fewer resources have achieved big space milestones. It highlights the importance of people, government help, and teamwork between public and private sectors.

#### How have countries with limited resources achieved significant space milestones?

**Human Resources:** Countries like China, India, and Russia emphasized science and technology education. Large populations meant more potential scientists and engineers. Like, China filed the most patents globally in 2019.

**Prioritizing Science:** These countries prioritized science and technology post-war or post-colonial. For instances, China, Russia, and India laid a lot of importance on science and technology in their post-war/post-colonial development trajectory.

**State Role:** An active state plays a crucial part in space exploration. Though the private space industry is growing, it is still only governments that have enabled spacecrafts to land on the moon.

**Collaboration Model:** In 2022, the head of the Emirates Mars Mission, Omran Sharif, stressed the importance of the “triple helix model”, where the government, the private sector, and academics worked together

**Cost Efficiency:** Achieving goals at a lower cost can attract global attention and business. For example, ISRO’s ability to launch satellites at low costs.

**Global Partnerships:** Collaborating with other countries can bridge resource gaps. Like, UAE launched its Mars probe with Japan’s help.

#### What are the major criticisms of the space program?

**Resource Diversion:** Concerns arise that developing economies divert valuable resources from pressing developmental needs to space programs.

**Developmental Needs:** Critics argue that issues like poverty should be prioritized over ambitious space missions.

**Selective Criticism:** The objections seem directed mostly at developing economies, implying developed nations have no pressing internal issues.

#### What should be done?

**State-Market Partnership:** Foster true collaboration between the state and private sectors to drive innovation.

**Harness Knowledge:** Utilize insights from space missions to contribute to human progress.

**Inclusive Governance:** Establish an inclusive and secular state focused on genuine human development.

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### 92. India's Rohingya refugee children are not criminals

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**India's Rohingya refugee children are not criminals**” published in “The Hindu” on 28th August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Internal security

**News:** The author talks about the mistreatment of Rohingya refugees in India, especially kids. They mention how these refugees are kept in prison-like places and how India lacks clear refugee policies. The author says we should follow human rights rules to keep them safe and well.

#### Who are the Rohingya?

The Rohingya are an ethnic group from Myanmar.

They are heavily persecuted in their homeland.

The Myanmar military launched mass atrocities against them in August 2017.

Over 770,000 Rohingya fled these genocidal attacks.

They sought refuge in various countries, including India.

In India, at least 20,000 Rohingya are present.

#### What challenges do Rohingya face in India?

**Detention:** Many Rohingya, including children, are confined in detention or holding centres in India. For example, over 250 have been in Jammu centre since March 2021.

**Lack of Legal Protection:** India does not have a specific refugee policy and isn't a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention. This means refugees can be detained under the Foreigners Act, 1946.

**Separation from Families:** Some children are separated from their parents and sent to juvenile justice homes, meant for children in conflict with the law.

**Lack of Rights:** Despite holding UNHCR cards, they are at risk of administrative detention and face limited freedoms in India.

#### What provisions exist in India for the protection of Rohingya?

**UNHCR Cards:** Many Rohingyas have UNHCR cards that validate their identity as refugees seeking safety.

**Foreigners Act, 1946:** Refugees are viewed as illegal immigrants under this act. It provides unchecked powers against foreigners, including potential detention and deportation.

**India's Ratification of the CRC:** India ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in December 1992. This asserts every child's right to life, survival, and development.

**Juvenile Justice Act, 2015:** Some Rohingya children are sent to juvenile justice homes under this act, which is primarily meant for children in conflict with the law.

**India's 2011 Guidelines:** These internal guidelines for the detention and treatment of refugees, which advocate for the release of detainees within six months, among other provisions.

#### What should be done?

**Follow India's Guidelines:** Authorities should adhere to India's 2011 internal guidelines on refugee treatment, which recommend releasing detainees within six months after collecting biometric details.

**Set Conditions for Release:** Detainees should provide local surety, assure good behavior, and report to the police every month.

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**Ombudsman Appointment:** The National Human Rights Commission, India should collaborate with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to appoint an ombudsman to investigate refugee detention centres in India.

### 93. Himalayan blunders that are ravaging the Himalayas

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Himalayan blunders that are ravaging the Himalayas**” published in “**The Hindu**” on **28th August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – **Environment** and disaster management

**Relevance:** Himalayan ecosystem

**News**– The article deals with the impact of Chardham Mahamarg Vikas Pariyojna on Himalayan ecosystem. It also explains the harm caused to the Gangotri glacier by human activities.

#### **What are some facts about the Chardham Mahamarg Vikas Pariyojna?**

It is a significant **infrastructure initiative** covering a 900-kilometre stretch of road in Uttarakhand.

The project aimed to widen the road from **single-lane to double-lane with a paved shoulder (DLPS) design** spanning 12 metres.

It led to the clearance of a substantial number of **trees and forest land**, and the loss of human and animal lives. The **fertile topsoil** in the delicate Himalayan region was eroded.

The immense **quantity of debris** produced by the project led to the **contamination of water sources**.

#### **What are issues related to Chardham Mahamarg Vikas Pariyojna?**

Legally, projects exceeding 100 kilometres require **environmental clearance**. In this instance, the massive project was divided into **53 smaller segments**, each under 100 kilometres. It was to sidestep the **necessity for environmental impact assessments**.

The only relatively untouched area is the **Bhagirathi Eco Sensitive Zone (BESZ)**. This zone received protective designation in December 2012 through the **Environment Protection Act** of 1986.

The project could not be implemented in the **Bhagirathi Eco Sensitive Zone** without an **approved zonal master plan** and a **comprehensive environmental impact assessment (EIA)**.

However, to facilitate the Chardham Mahamarg Vikas Pariyojna, the ZMP was **hastily sanctioned**. The **requirements of EIA** were neglected.

The approval from the **BESZ monitoring committee** was overseen by most of the state officials on the committee, lacking any meaningful discussion or input.

The Ministry of Road Transport’s decision to widen hill roads to a **DLPS alignment** contradicts its own notification.

It acknowledges the challenges of **implementing DLPS standards** in **hilly and mountainous terrains**. The notification recommends a **carriageway width with intermediate lane configurations**.

The Supreme Court directed the Ministry to follow its own notification in September 2020.

However, the government cited “**national security**” as a reason. In December 2021, a different Supreme Court Bench allowed the government to proceed without questioning.

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The Defence Ministry initially required a **two-lane, seven-meter width road** but later shifted to **DLPS standards**.

An **unstable road-width design** that leads to **unstable mountain slopes** cannot be suitable for a **strategic road**.

The Uttarakhand government increased the **carrying capacity** of all the Char Dhams, including the Gangotri shrine within BESZ, despite the BESZ notification calling for vehicular traffic regulation.

### What is one of the most daunting challenges in the Ganga's revival?

Gangotri glacier is experiencing the **fastest rate of retreat**.

The glacier's melting is being exacerbated by factors such as increased **vehicular traffic and instances of forest fires**. It has led to the accumulation of **black carbon deposits** on the glacier.

A **report by the Standing Committee** in March 2023 on water resources highlights that black carbon is **raising the temperature**. This contributes to the **accelerated melting of glaciers** in the high Himalayas.

### What should be done?

There is a need for **regulation of developmental activities**.

Within the Bhagirathi Eco Sensitive Zone (BESZ), the road improvement should include an **intermediate road width** that would cause **minimal harm to the environment**.

It becomes imperative to earnestly **reconsider the existing Chardham Pariyojana plan**.

There is a need for **proactive measures for prevention and preservation**. Any development activity jeopardising the lifeline for millions of people and future generations cannot be considered viable in the long run.

The **Parliamentary Standing Committee** has advised the MoEF against a **one-size-fits-all approach to environmental clearance**, particularly in **ecologically sensitive areas** like Joshimath

### 94. Lessons from our lunar landing go far beyond science

**Source:** The post is based on the article "**Lessons from our lunar landing go far beyond science**" published in Live Mint on **29<sup>th</sup> August 2023**.

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

**Relevance:** Lessons from Chandrayaan-3's success

**News:** Recently, India became the first country to land on the south polar region of the moon. This achievement has a lot of lessons to offer for everyone.

### What are the lessons provided by the success of Chandrayaan-3?

**Frugality:** The success of Chandrayaan-3 emphasizes the benefits of limited budgets in promoting innovation and sustainability. This approach can also be applied to various sectors.

India's lunar success proves that frugality and high ambition can go hand in hand.

**Learning from Failure:** Chandrayaan-2 and -3 failures taught scientists to enhance Chandrayaan-3, especially the lunar landing approach. US Apollo missions also succeeded through learning from failures.

India's government and private sector could greatly benefit from adopting this lesson to achieve significant rewards.

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**Preparedness and Planning:** Chandrayaan-3 landed a minute early. This approach, characterized by learning from failure, thorough planning, simulation, monitoring, should be embraced by Indian companies, state governments, and the Union government.

**Resourceful Supply Chain Management:** Chandrayaan project managers reduced costs by using local substitutes. **For example,** Tamil Nadu's anorthosite rock was used to resemble lunar soil, which replaced expensive imported rocks.

This practice offers India Inc. the chance to benefit from affordable and accessible alternatives.

**Partnerships:** ISRO collaborated with **various governments** (BHEL, Keltron, Kerala Minerals, etc.) and **private institutions** (L&T, Godrej & Boyce, etc.) to make this mission successful.

Therefore, partnering with vendors with effective coordination, design, and collaboration can yield significant advantages.

**International Collaboration:** International collaboration has been integral to India's space program.

India's desirability as a partner for Western nations has increased due to the emergence of strategic challenges posed by space efforts from China and Russia.

Collaborations with Nasa, Jaxa, ESA, and Roscosmos have strengthened India's missions, showing the benefits of mutual interdependence.

**Watching for Potholes:** Chandrayaan-3's notable achievement was its adaptable lander design, allowing it to adjust its final landing position. Two planned descent pauses enabled the lander to choose a spot with minimal risk.

This strategic flexibility in the face of uncertainties holds valuable lessons for both companies and governments.

**Marketing/Positioning:** India's south pole landing secured its place as the fourth lunar country and the first at the moon's south pole. This surpassed China's Chang'e 4, which landed far from the south pole.

This success has been possible due to India's strategic choice, effective presentation, while preparation and technology also played a crucial role. This lesson holds significance for India Inc.

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

### What lies ahead?

Chandrayaan-3's achievement goes beyond science, covering project management, collaboration, and organizational culture. It also highlights the need to prioritize the future based on modern science.

**Vikram Sarabhai's words,** "The development of the nation is intimately linked with understanding and application of science and technology by its people," remain significant.

### 95. The case for uniform minimum export price for rice, without basmati distinction

**Source-** The post is based on the article "**The case for uniform minimum export price for rice, without basmati distinction**" published in "**The Indian Express**" on **29th August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Agriculture

**Relevance:** Agriculture pricing and marketing

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**News**– The article explains the issues of recent government decisions on restricting the exports of wheat and rice.

### What government statistics say about rice and wheat production?

India achieved record-breaking levels of **rice and wheat production** in the previous year,

As per data from the Agricultural Ministry, rice output was **135.54 mt in 2022-23**.

Wheat production reached **112.74 mt in the fiscal year 2022-23**.

### What are actions taken by the Indian government for restricting the exports of rice and wheat?

In May 2022, the government implemented a **prohibition on the export of wheat**. In June 2023, **restrictions on stock holdings** were imposed.

In September, 2022, the **export of broken rice** was forbidden. A **20% tariff** was imposed on shipments of all **non-parboiled white grains**.

In July, 2023, the **export of non-basmati white rice** was entirely prohibited. Only **parboiled non-basmati and basmati rice exports** were permitted.

Recently, a **20% duty** was introduced on all exports of **parboiled non-basmati rice**.

### Why is the Indian government putting restrictions on exports of rice and wheat?

The implementation of this **minimum export price rule** aimed to prevent any potential **illicit exports of non-basmati white rice** disguised as basmati rice.

The government's aim has been to decrease o exports in order to enhance the **supply of grain** within the country.

According to the official **consumer price index, retail food inflation** was 11.5% in July. Over the past three months, the **cost of wheat flour** has risen from Rs 30 to Rs 32 per kg.

### What are the issues with the government initiative to limit the exports of rice and wheat?

Enforcement of limitations on exports can be evaded through **inaccurate classification**. In this instance, **export of white non-basmati rice** has taken place by utilizing the **Harmonized System codes intended for parboiled and basmati rice**.

There are instances where **basmati rice export agreements** have been established at prices as low as **\$359 per tonne**, even though **parboiled rice** is being shipped out at **\$480 per tonne**.

The majority of **basmati rice exports** are occurring within a **range of \$1,050 to \$1,100 per tonne** for the parboiled Pusa-1121 variety.

The **\$1,200 Minimum Export Price** is excessively high. Only **steamed Pusa-1121 and 1718 rice** are achieving prices of \$1,200-1,300, in addition to the **traditional premium basmati** priced at \$1,550 per tonne. These types account for just around **15% of our basmati exports**.

### Way forward-

The government should eliminate the **differentiation between basmati and non-basmati rice**. There can be a **consistent MEP of \$800-900 per tonne** for all types of rice, whether basmati or parboiled, including white non-basmati.

Implementing a uniform MEP of \$800 per tonne would enable the export of all these **premium rice types** without compromising **domestic food security**.

This approach would not only benefit **basmati farmers**, but also protect those who cultivate other **premium varieties** not distributed through the **Public Distribution System**.

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For the government, this approach would eliminate concerns related to **misclassification or unauthorized exports of non-basmati rice** disguised as **parboiled or basmati rice**.

### 96. Jan Dhan 2.0: Consider a universal basic income

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Too Few Seats For The Kotas**” published in the “**mint**” on **30th August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS3 – **Indian Economy** – Inclusive growth. GS2- Government policies and interventions

**Relevance:** Issues **related** to social safety net and financial inclusion

**News**– The article explains the successful implementation of Jan Dhan Yojana. It also explains the concept of Universal Basic Income.

#### **What are some successful accomplishments of Jan Dhan Yojana scheme?**

In less than ten years through the **Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana**, the Indian government has successfully established over **five hundred million Jan Dhan accounts**.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman recently highlighted that more than **55.5% of these bank accounts belong to women**.

The scheme has facilitated the **direct transfer of cash benefits** to various recipients. It has also provided a **formal credit avenue**, and saved many poor individuals from the **clutches of moneylenders**.

The scheme empowered the government to swiftly provide **aid during times of crisis**. In 2020, for instance, the Jan Dhan scheme proved instrumental in **responding to the COVID-19**.

The **monthly relief of ₹500** for three months, allocated to each of the 200 million Jan Dhan accounts held by women, played a crucial role in **alleviating panic**.

#### **What are some facts about Universal Basic Income (UBI)?**

Universal Basic Income (UBI) is a very straightforward form of redistribution. It places every individual under the government’s financial support.

The idea is that in addition to its **traditional roles of governance**, the state should **allocate public funds** to provide each adult a **fixed amount of money** on a **monthly basis for personal use**.

The typical objection to this concept is that it has potential for **moral hazard**. The concern is that it might lead to a **lack of motivation** to work.

The outcome is influenced by the **actual size of these monthly transfers**. **Modest transfers** are unlikely to distort the incentives in the labor market.

Providing support to those in need could actually **support an economy** driven by an **increasing demand** for goods and services.

The next significant question revolves around the **feasibility of the government** implementing such a program.

While the ultimate aim of a UBI is **comprehensive coverage**, the list of beneficiaries doesn’t necessarily need to be **truly “universal”**.

**High-income individuals** would certainly be excluded. Even if nearly 68 million people who filed income tax returns last year are excluded, there would still be **more than a billion Indians** to account for.

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A modest monthly UBI of ₹1,000 per person would result in an **annual fiscal expenditure of ₹12 trillion**.

This amount exceeds the budget **allocated for infrastructure** in the current year by about ₹2 trillion. It makes it a **less attractive proposition** at this current juncture.

### Way forward-

If the economy continues to grow at a **rate of 6%** or more annually, it could potentially alter the **financial calculation** within a decade or even sooner.

As **poverty decreases** and our **tax revenue expands**, the demand for **financial transfers** would decrease as well.

It's prudent to subject the concept of a Universal Basic Income (UBI) to a **comprehensive assessment**. Its **broader economic effects** would require **thorough examination** in advance.

### 97. Our DPI success could guide an energy transition too

**Source**– The post is based on the article **“Our DPI success could guide an energy transition too”** published in the **“mint”** on **30th August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS3 – Environment

**News**– During its G20 presidency, India has forcefully promoted digital public infrastructure (DPI) as a modern solution to many of the challenges faced by developed and developing countries alike.

#### How has India been able to promote DPI in the G20 forum?

One of the contributing factors to this achievement is the widespread **adoption and utilisation** of the Digital Public Infrastructure within the nation.

India has created **digital identity** for over 1.3 billion individuals. More than **9 billion digital transactions** are occurring every month.

It has captured the attention of other nations dealing with similar challenges.

Promotion of DPI required **coordinated and persistent diplomatic efforts**. This was aided by the fact that several countries in diverse international scenarios perceived India as an **impartial mediator**.

#### How India has potential to promote its leadership role in the area of climate change and sustainable energy?

India stands out as a **significant emitter** of **greenhouse gases**. But, it has ambitious growth goals that necessitate a **diverse energy portfolio**. Consequently, the choices it makes carry **substantial weight**.

The solutions proposed by India have the potential to find traction in numerous other countries within the **Global South**.

India's **determined actions** can serve as a safeguard against the **potential scenario** of other nations refraining from taking **necessary measures**. This aligns with the responsibilities that come with **global leadership**.

#### What is the way forward for India to show leadership in the area of climate change and sustainable energy?

**The effective strategy employed by India should work on functional systems and products** that could be efficiently scaled up to tackle challenges.

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There is a need for devising **indigenous solutions** and extending them to the international arena. A notable advancement in this path has been India's **expensive renewable energy program**.

India should find out **trustworthy solutions** to finance the energy transition that can be both **evaluated and implemented** on a **global scale**.

Research suggests that India might necessitate **\$7.2 trillion of green investments by 2050**.

The **transformation of the steel sector** alone would require an **additional \$16.4 billion annually**.

To realise the **nation's aspirations** in renewable energy **investments in the power sector** must surge fivefold.

The world possesses **enough private capital** to support **India's energy transition**. To tap into it, India must rapidly construct a **portfolio of products, mechanisms, and business models** tailored to its unique transition requirements.

A variety of strategies for managing risks, like **currency hedging tools, insurance products, and payment guarantee offerings**, are necessary in numerous sectors of the economy.

Policy mechanisms such as **carbon trading** as outlined in the Paris Agreement hold significant potential on a large scale. These mechanisms could bridge the **funding gap** for **crucial technologies like battery storage**.

India might explore **locally-appropriate financial arrangements** under the **Just Energy Transition Programme** to accelerate the process of **transitioning its power grid to renewable sources**.

These efforts will demand **extensive and rigorous collaboration** among Indian thinkers both inside and outside of the government.

A **domestic discourse on energy transition finance models** will be necessary. This endeavour should be accompanied by a **significant diplomatic campaign** to share concepts internationally.

### 98. India's G20 presidency: Financing the green transition

**Source**– The post is based on the article “India's G20 presidency: Financing the green transition” published in “The Indian Express” on 30th August 2023.

**Syllabus**: GS3- Environment

**News**– The article deals with the issue of climate finance.

#### **What are challenges in regard to climate finance at global level?**

The **current commitments** made by developed nations are **significantly inadequate**.

The **initial allocation of \$100 billion** for projects in developing countries, determined about 13-14 years ago, lacked a **solid foundation and logical reasoning**. Even during its **original estimation**, it was insufficient given the actual requirements.

Developing nations have been expressing dissatisfaction that the **sum of \$100 billion annually** has not been provided by the developed countries.

The developed nations have been **manipulating data** to argue that **nearly \$80 billion** was delivered to the developing world for **climate finance** in 2020.

However, critics contend that the **true resource transfer** likely falls within the **range of \$19-22 billion** only.

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The developed world is factoring in **regular commercial debt for climate-related initiatives** in their calculations. This approach is **misleading**. The intended \$100 billion is supposed to be in the form of **concessional finance or grants**.

The current requirement for **climate finance** is estimated at **\$4.35 trillion** to meet the objectives of the Paris Agreement. However, the **actual expenditure** in this area is only about one-seventh of this total.

**Climate finance** comprises two primary components: **mitigation and adaptation**.

The majority of funds allocated to climate finance are directed towards **mitigation projects**. It is **approximately 93%**. **Mitigation initiatives** often generate a **revenue stream**. It makes them viable for **financial institutions** to offer loans based on market terms.

On the contrary, **adaptation projects** come with substantial **upfront costs, extended gestation periods, and no clear income source**. They are viewed as **risky ventures** by banks and financial organisations.

**What is the way forward for climate finance?**

It is now an opportune moment for nations to **introspect and arrange funds** for **climate finance**. This would **necessitate collaboration** among various institutions that can complement each other.

Financial establishments must support **commercially established technologies**, such as wind and solar, as well as invest in electric mobility.

The government should take the lead in **backing technologies** that are not yet **commercially viable**, such as green hydrogen.

For **adaptation strategies**, involving the **private sector** is crucial. But, **government intervention** is required to facilitate this.

Worldwide, the primary portion of **adaptation funding** is sourced from **multilateral development banks** through loans. **Less than 2%** coming from private sector engagement.

The private sector hesitates due to the **perceived risks**, along with concerns about **information disparities** concerning climate matters. There is a **lack of incentives** for the private sector to participate in adaptation initiatives.

**Co-financing adaptation projects** with the government can mitigate risks. But, this will require **additional resources**. Possible means of generating these resources include implementing **carbon taxes, issuing green bonds, and utilising catastrophe (CAT) bonds**.

Hence, for climate finance, nations must predominantly rely on their **own resources**.

### 99. Rising climate risks

**Source:** The post is based on the article **“Rising climate risks” published in Business Standard on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Environment – Climate change

**Relevance:** About increasing **climate risks**.

**News:** The article explains the current situation of climate change and measures required to address it.

**What are some of the consequences resulting from climate change?**

**Global temperatures hit record highs** in June and July 2023. Forest fires, ocean temperatures, and extreme weather events are on the rise.

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Despite 30 years of climate action, **greenhouse gas emissions increased from 30 to 48 billion tonnes of CO2 equivalent between 1990 and 2019.**

### What are the causes of increasing GHG emission?

Developing countries are the major contributors to the increase in greenhouse gas emissions.

However, this is not a violation of the UNFCCC because it recognizes the legitimate needs of developing countries to achieve sustained economic growth and eradicate poverty.

**The Berlin mandate of the UNFCCC recognized** that developed countries have emitted more greenhouse gases historically, and they need to take the lead in reducing emissions.

However, China's emissions should not be included in the developing country emission estimates.

### Why should China's emissions be excluded from developing country estimates?

**China's per capita emissions have increased significantly since 1990**, accounting for 54% of the global emission rise and surpassing Western Europe's per capita emissions. Hence, China should be excluded from the category of developing countries.

However, between 1990 and 2020, emissions from developed countries have also decreased significantly.

### What factors have led to the reduction in emissions in developed nations?

GHG emissions fell by 2724 million tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e from 1990 to 2020. **This drop is mainly due to industry collapse** in Russia and East Europe, **rather than climate-friendly policies.**

Therefore, developed countries and China remain primary concerns for climate risk management because their per capita emissions are higher than India and other developing countries.

Moreover, the current efforts taken for climate justice is also not efficient.

**Must Read: On climate change, wealthy nations must show the way and The economics of climate change in India**

### What is causing the lack of effectiveness in current climate mitigation efforts?

**Climate justice hasn't influenced global climate diplomacy.** The **Paris Agreement** changed diplomacy by easing pressure on developed nations and including developing countries in mitigation commitments.

The **net-zero** announcements of high-emitting developing countries are also not fair because to limit global temperature increase to 1.5°C, total emissions should be averaging at 1.8 tonnes per capita until the net-zero target.

**Globally, India is the only country that is on track** to meet the 1.8 tonne target.

### What can be done to mitigate climate change?

**First**, major changes are needed in production and consumption patterns to prevent climate change.

**In developed countries**, the challenge is greater because the present production and consumption patterns enhance climate risks. **Whereas, in developing countries**, it is easier to reorient the future development patterns.

**Second**, developing country activist groups and research organizations need to increase their pressure-generating efforts, especially in India.

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**Third**, there is a need to project the significant shortfall in commitments from the US, China, and other developed countries. This projection should align with fair distribution of mitigation responsibility.

100. Ahead of GDP data release today, growth trends, outlook

**Source:** The post is based on the article “Ahead of GDP data release today, growth trends, outlook” published in **The Indian Express** on **31<sup>st</sup> August 2023**.

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

**Relevance:** About **GDP forecast of the first quarter for FY 2023-24**

**News:** The National Statistical Office (NSO) will release the official GDP data for April-June (Q1) on Thursday evening.

### What are the expected growth forecasts for the first quarter of FY 2023-24?

**India’s Q1 GDP is likely to increase due to increased** government spending, services sector growth, and a favorable base, with estimated growth of 7.7-8.5%.

However, **growth is also predicted to slow in subsequent quarters due to factors like** El Nino’s impact on monsoon, mining output decline, weak exports, and potential government capex slowdown.

Further, the RBI revised GDP growth forecast for Q1 FY24 to 8% from 6%, following higher-than-expected growth in Q4 FY23. Most economists also forecast higher GDP growth of 7.7-8.5%. RBI expects full year (FY24) growth at 6.5%.

Several agencies project India’s Q1 FY24 GDP growth at 7.7-8.5%, led by ICRA’s 8.5% and SBI Research’s 8.3%.

### What are the reasons behind this growth?

**This growth is being driven by** service demand recovery and increased investment, especially in government capital expenditure.

In Q1 FY24, capital expenditure surged, with the central government spending 27.8% of its budget and states spending 12.7% of their budget.

Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Madhya Pradesh recorded notable capital expenditure growth, reaching up to 41%.

### What are the predictions for growth in different sectors?

**Banking:** Incremental deposits have nearly doubled, and credit demand rose despite rising interest rates. Both public and private sector banks are expected to show similar loan growth in Q1 FY24. PSBs’ performance has also improved significantly.

**Construction:** The construction sector is likely to achieve its second consecutive double-digit growth in the April-June GDP data, due to the substantial government capital spending and increased corporate investments.

**Mining and Export:** Growth could be constrained by mining and export challenges due to external factors and lower demand during post-lockdown reopening.

Hence, this steady growth trajectory should allow the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to maintain a prolonged pause on interest rates.

### What is the way ahead?

**First**, the Indian economy is expected to slow down in the second half of the current fiscal year.

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**Factors like** uncertain monsoon, lower export demand, fading favorable comparisons, reduced commodity price differences compared to last year. Potential election-related decrease in government spending could contribute to this slowdown.

Therefore, the overall GDP growth estimate for the fiscal year 2024 remains at 6.0%, below the Monetary Policy Committee's forecast of 6.5%.

**Second**, industrial performance ahead could be shaped by two key factors:

11. A potential global economic slowdown or recession due to increasing interest rates, possibly affecting exports negatively.
12. The importance of the monsoon's performance, impacting inflation and rural demand, and subsequently influencing industrial outlook.

The RBI also acknowledged challenges in its recent monetary policy review, citing risks from weak global demand, financial market volatility, geopolitical tensions, and economic fragmentation.

### 101. Lives at stake – Poor air quality is a public policy failure

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Lives at stake – Poor air quality is a public policy failure**” published in **Business Standard** on **31<sup>st</sup> August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Environment

**Relevance:** concerns with rising air pollution

**News:** The results of the air quality life index study by the Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago highlight a concerning situation for India.

#### What are the findings of the index?

**The study found that all Indians live in areas with** air pollution above WHO limits. **Delhi is the world's most polluted city**, and people there lose 12 years of life due to air pollution.

However, the problem is not limited to Delhi, **as 67% of Indians live in areas that exceed India's national standard for air pollution.**

#### What are the reasons behind rising air pollution?

**Ineffective Policies:** Air pollution in India is primarily due to ineffective policies that neglect key pollution sources, especially PM 2.5 particles.

In 2019, India launched the **National Clean Air Programme** to lower PM2.5 and PM10 levels by 20-30% by 2024 from 2017. However, the policy has been ineffective.

Moreover, India remains one of the world's largest consumers of coal. Most of India's electricity comes from polluting coal plants while renewable energy, mainly solar, only accounts for 12% of the energy mix.

**High Cost of Renewable Energy:** The low share of renewable energy is due to high tariffs on imported solar panels, complex domestic sourcing norms, and unresolved power price and technical issues.

These factors discourage state-owned distribution companies from adopting renewables.

**Issues with Electric Vehicles (EVs):** India's push for electric vehicles (EVs) to cut emissions is hindered by its reliance on fossil fuels. Charging stations for EVs are powered by polluting thermal sources, exacerbating the issue. Misdirected subsidies have also affected the adoption of EVs by consumers.

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**Construction Dust:** Construction dust is another major source of pollution, and it is overtaking vehicular pollution. The National Green Tribunal has mandated several procedures for reducing dust pollution at construction sites, but these are not being followed.

**Stubble Burning:** Stubble burning is a problem that envelops north India in a grey haze each year. This problem is caused by agricultural policies that encouraged water-intensive crops to be grown in water-poor areas.

### What is the way ahead?

Air pollution disproportionately affects the poor and middle classes. The rich can afford to insulate themselves from the effects of pollution, but the average Indian has no escape. Therefore, politicians who care about the poor should make clean air a top priority.

### 102. Spare a thought for our food delivery personnel

**Source:** The post is based on the article “Spare a thought for our food delivery personnel” published in **Live Mint** on 31st August 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Indian Economy – Employment

**News:** In this article, the author talks about challenges for India’s food delivery workers in the gig economy. They mention issues like not enough work, bad working conditions, and lower wages. The author asks for better jobs and treatment for these workers.

### What are the major outcomes of the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) study?

The National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) study on India’s food delivery agents revealed:

**Demographics:** The majority of delivery agents are male, with nearly two-thirds under 30 years of age.

**Education Levels:** Surprisingly, over 45% have college degrees or technical training, suggesting underemployment.

**Work Conditions:** While they have formal contracts, their conditions aren’t necessarily better than informal-sector jobs.

**Benefits and Drawbacks:** Higher earnings and flexible hours attract many to the job. However, long-shift workers face tough conditions, with accident coverage as their sole health benefit.

**Expenses:** Agents must use their own phones, vehicles, and fuel. They aren’t compensated for advertising signage.

**Career Prospects:** Many view the role as a temporary job with limited growth potential.

**Earnings:** Over three years from 2019, their earnings did not keep up with inflation, effectively decreasing in real terms.

### What needs to be done?

**Fair Compensation:** Ensure wages keep pace with inflation.

**Benefits Improvement:** Beyond just accident coverage, explore more comprehensive health and safety benefits.

**Address Underemployment:** Utilize the educational qualifications of agents for better roles within the industry.

**Reimburse Expenses:** Compensate for personal items used, like phones and vehicles.

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**Career Growth:** Provide clear paths for upward mobility within the sector.

**Welfare Measures:** Explore levies on gig platforms, like Rajasthan's initiative, for worker welfare.

### 103. Understanding curbs on rice exports

**Source**– The post is based on the article “**Understanding curbs on rice exports**” published in “**The Hindu**” on **31st August 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Agriculture

**News**– The Indian government has prohibited the export of white rice, levied a 20% export duty on par-boiled rice till October 15, and permitted the export of Basmati rice for contracts with value of \$1,200 a tonne or above.

#### What is the rice production estimate in the country?

As per the **latest Advanced Estimate** from the **Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare**, rice production during the Rabi season of 2022-2023 witnessed a **decrease of 13.8%**.

It was **158.95 lakh tonnes** compared to the **184.71 lakh tonnes** recorded during the Rabi season of 2021-2022.

Regarding Kharif sowing data, it indicates that rice has been cultivated on **384.05 lakh hectares** up to August 25 this year, in contrast to the 367.83 lakh hectares during the same period last year.

However, in certain states like Tamil Nadu, some farmers anticipate **delayed planting** due to insufficient rainfall from the southwest monsoon.

#### What are statistics related to rice exports?

India holds the position of being the **world's largest exporter** of rice. It has a **significant 45% share** in the **global rice market**.

Shipments of **non-Basmati rice** recorded a growth of 7.5% in May despite the imposition of a **20% export duty on white rice** and the prohibition of **broken rice exports** by the government in September last year.

The **export of non-Basmati rice** has demonstrated a **consistent upward trend** over the past three years.

According to government-provided statistics, up until August 17 of this year, **total rice exports** have **surged by 15%**. It reached **7.3 million tonnes** in contrast to the 6.3 million tonnes during the same period last year.

#### What will be the impact of recent government decisions on rice farmers and consumers?

The government has raised the **Minimum Support Price** for rice. The rice millers are currently procuring paddy at **rates exceeding the MSP**. This means that farmers will not experience a **decline in prices**.

**Export restrictions** are in place to prevent a sudden surge in rice prices within the market.

There is a **marginal present** increase in **rice prices** for domestic consumers. But, the long-term outlook ensures both **availability and stable prices**. The situation regarding arrivals and government policy will become clearer around mid-September.

**For more reading-** <https://blog.forumias.com/the-case-for-uniform-minimum-export-price-for-rice-without-basmati-distinction/>

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### 104. Cost of IAF's lesson: 50 squadrons lost

**Source:** The post is based on the article “Cost of IAF’s lesson: 50 squadrons lost” published in “Business standard” on 1st September 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Various Security forces and agencies and their mandate

**News:** The article explores the history of aircraft accidents in the Indian Air Force from 1952 to 2021. It focuses on the significant number of aircraft and pilot losses, which have affected its operational capability and led to worries about training, equipment quality, and policy choices. The article also highlights the comparison with international benchmarks and underscores the requirement for improved aircraft and training approaches.

### Data related to Indian Air Force's (IAF) Accidents

**Total Aircraft Lost:** Over 70 years (1952-2021), the IAF lost 2,374 aircraft to crashes.

**Breakdown:** This includes 1,126 fighters, 1,248 non-combat aircraft, 229 trainers, and 196 helicopters.

**Pilot Casualties:** These accidents resulted in the deaths of 1,305 pilots.

**War Losses:** Only 143 aircraft, or about 1 out of every 8 lost, were combat casualties.

**Accident Rate:** In the 1990s, IAF’s accident rate was between 0.89 and 3.99 per 10,000 hours of flying. In comparison, the US Air Force’s rates were 0.29 in the 1990s, 0.15 in the 2000s, and 0.1 between 2010 and 2018.

### What are the reasons for the IAF's accidents?

**Human Error:** A significant number of crashes were ascribable to human error, encompassing not only pilot mistakes but also training lapses and potentially other human-involved errors in the broader scope of aircraft operation and maintenance.

**Technical Defects:** Crashes were due to technical issues, like poor maintenance and a shortage of spare parts, particularly for MiG variants after the Soviet Union’s dissolution.

**Nature:** Hostile weather and bird strikes were natural causes behind some crashes.

**Obsolete Aircraft:** The extended use of older aircraft, notably the MiG-21s referred to as “flying coffins” and “widow makers,” played a role in the high accident rate.

**Training Issues:** There were issues with basic training and the use of outdated trainer aircraft like the HPT-32. The absence of advanced jet trainers (AJT) was also a concern.

**Policy Delays:** Delays in decision-making, such as the time taken to introduce newer trainer aircraft like the Pilatus PC-7 Mark II and the Hindustan Turbo Trainer 40 (HTT-40), contributed to the accident rate.

### What's the Future for the IAF?

The IAF is transitioning from older, single-engine Soviet-era planes to newer, twin-engine Western aircraft. This could change the accident rates and operational capabilities in the future.

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### 105. Are natural disasters man-made?

**Source:** The post is based on the article “Are natural disasters man-made?” published in “The Hindu” on 1st September 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Disaster and disaster management.

**News:** The article discusses how human activities, poor urban planning, and climate change contribute to increasing natural disasters in India and highlights the need for sustainable development and better preparedness to mitigate these disasters.

#### What are the reasons for the increasing natural disasters in India?

Reasons for the increasing natural disasters in India:

**Human Influence on Disasters:** Building on floodplains, encroaching water bodies, and poor urban planning have led to enhanced risks.

**Anthropogenic Climate Change:** Human-driven climate changes have increased the frequency and intensity of hazards.

**Impact of Urbanization:** The rapid and unplanned movement to urban centers has exceeded some regions' natural carrying capacities, resulting in heightened disaster risks.

**Inadequate Preparedness:** Despite facing regular calamities, regions like Mumbai continue to experience recurrent flooding, indicating gaps in disaster preparedness.

**Data and Knowledge Gap:** There's often an underestimation of risks due to reliance on outdated datasets. For example, the Himalayan region lacks sufficient observational networks for rainfall.

**Development Conflicts:** There's a struggle between rapid infrastructure development, like connecting tourist destinations quickly, and environmental conservation needs.

Overall, while India has natural vulnerabilities, human activities and decisions are exacerbating the severity and frequency of disasters.

#### Has India's disaster preparedness improved?

**Mumbai's Initiatives:** Mumbai's storm-water drainage department has built larger water-holding tanks in the past decade, an improvement in flood management. Also, collaborations with the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology aim to enhance flood predictions.

**Institutional Knowledge:** There are government institutions continuously monitoring climate trends and risks. This ongoing surveillance suggests an evolving understanding of climate crises.

**Collaborative Workshops:** The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation's storm-water drainage department's workshop with various stakeholders indicates proactive efforts to address disaster challenges and find long-term solutions.

**Decision-making Disconnect:** While there's an understanding of increasing flood-prone regions, transformative thinking is required in planning and infrastructure.

India has made some progress in disaster preparedness, but gaps remain in decision-making, planning, and implementation across regions.

#### What should be done?

**Focus on Vulnerable Populations:** Recognize that certain groups are more at risk during natural disasters and tailor solutions towards their needs.

**Emphasize Sustainability in Urban Development:** Prioritize sustainable urban planning, avoiding harmful practices like building on floodplains and encroaching water bodies. Development pathways should be sustainable, emphasizing the environment alongside economic considerations.

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**Long-term Thinking is Essential:** Mumbai's efforts, like building larger water-holding tanks and collaborating with the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology for better flood predictions, highlight the need for long-term thinking.

**Encourage Collaborative Workshops:** Engage stakeholders, including private developers, landscape firms, and community-based organizations, in finding collective solutions.

**Preserve Natural Ecosystems:** It's crucial to retain the natural balance by preserving ecosystems, which play a role in mitigating disasters.

**Adopt Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** Adopting and implementing SDGs can ensure a balanced approach to development, where environmental, social, and economic dimensions are equally considered.

### 106. Financing cities: G20 infrastructure agenda

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Financing cities: G20 infrastructure agenda**” published in **Business Standard** on **1st September 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Disaster Management, Infrastructure

**Relevance:** measures needed to build inclusive, resilient and sustainable cities

**News:** Indian cities are important for economic growth. Sustainability, inclusivity, and resilience should be the central focus in city development to ensure a sustained economic growth.

In this regard, India is prioritizing urban infrastructure during its 2023 G20 presidency with the theme “**Financing Cities of Tomorrow: Sustainable, Inclusive, and Resilient**” for the G20 Infrastructure Working Group (IWG).

#### What are inclusive, resilient and sustainable cities?

**Inclusive cities** rely on equitable access to resources and opportunities, requiring national policies, accessible urban spaces, affordable housing, and essential services.

**Resilient cities** withstand environmental and economic shocks by having high-quality infrastructure that promotes climate resilience and energy efficiency, making it a top priority.

**Sustainability** incorporates principles like the efficient use of limited natural resources, circularity, and **LiFE**.

#### What are the factors required in building inclusive, resilient, and sustainable cities?

**Financing:** The G20 IWG offers a global platform for implementing innovative urban infrastructure financing mechanisms across developed and developing nations.

Public funds play a major role in global urban infrastructure financing, but there's a **crucial need to attract private investment**.

**This can be accomplished through** strategic planning, favorable policies, enhancing city creditworthiness, project development, thematic bonds, and strengthening capital markets.

**National and sub-national governments and multilateral development banks should play a key role in achieving these objectives.**

**Institutional Capacity:** City administrations must enhance their capabilities for future urban demands, including technical and financial capacity to plan, create viable projects, generate and protect revenues, access financial markets, provide efficient services, etc.

**Digital infrastructure and data-driven insights are crucial** for enabling these improvements.

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In order to assist city administrations, **India's G20 presidency created a versatile capacity-building framework suitable for** local governments of all sizes and developmental stages.

**It includes** tools, checklists, and case studies for assessing current capacity and identifying improvement areas. **It aligns with** national development plans, legal frameworks, urban planning guidelines, climate adaptation plans, PPP guidelines, etc.

**Must Read: G20 and its Significance – Explained and India's G20 presidency can show the way on disaster management**

### **What contribution has been made by India at IWG?**

India contributed significantly to the outcomes of the IWG by sharing its policy and programs in urban development.

**Some of these include** Ahmedabad's Transit-Oriented Development, the Integrated Control and Command Centre under the Smart City Mission, etc.

India's experience in implementing the **Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT)**, **Smart Cities Mission**, **Housing for All (PMAY)**, and **metro rail projects** were also instrumental in shaping the global urban infrastructure agenda.

### **What is the way ahead?**

India's G20 presidency influenced the IWG urban infrastructure agenda to align with the ambitions and growth priorities of the Global South.

India's focus on inclusive, resilient, and sustainable cities fostered global partnerships and contributed to shared prosperity.

Therefore, domestically, India will prioritize a people-centric approach in developing future-ready urban infrastructure as it **works towards the vision of India@2047**.

### 107. **Technology beyond space – Encouraging private sector will increase opportunities**

**Source:** The post is based on the article **"Technology beyond space – Encouraging private sector will increase opportunities"** published in **Business Standard** on **1st September 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Indigenization of Technology

**Relevance:** Measures required to enhance India's space sector.

**News:** India's space economy is currently worth around \$8 billion, **which is less than 2% of the global space economy**, estimated to be worth around \$500 billion.

However, India is trying to increase its contribution through a multipronged effort.

### **What efforts are being taken by India to increase its contribution in the space sector?**

**Space Policy:** The new **Indian Space Policy** aims to boost India's contribution to \$45 billion in the next decade.

**InSpace:** InSpace, ISRO's commercial arm, will explore new opportunities and provide technical expertise and facility access to Indian companies.

**Private Sector Involvement:** ISRO will emphasize the transfer of its technical expertise and offer assistance, including granting access to its facilities, to India's private sector.

**About 85% of Chandrayaan-3's components were already made by commercial organizations**, reflecting a shift toward capitalizing on space tech for commercial purposes and increased industry participation in India's space sector.

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**Artemis Accords:** India's involvement in the **Artemis Accord** opens up opportunities for Indian firms to bid for future contracts with NASA, further multiplying potential opportunities in the space industry.

### What have been India's achievements in the space sector?

India has over 400 aerospace startups and established engineering firms entering the space sector. Increased access to ISRO's technology and testing facilities will speed up this growth.

The next decade could witness 50,000 satellite launches, creating a substantial market opportunity for India. **Private sector involvement has lowered satellite launch costs** by nearly 90% per kilogram.

Indian consortiums also aim to enter the satellite launch market. Enabling technology transfer will help them to build rockets and establish their own launch facilities.

**Must Read:** [Explained | Why is India's space industry looking for private sector investment?](#)

### What can be the way ahead?

The space economy drives growth and innovation in numerous sectors like meteorology, agriculture, energy, and more.

It also offers opportunities in hardware, software, and defense applications along with possibilities like asteroid mining, marine habitat adaptation, etc.

India can benefit from these opportunities. However, **governments worldwide must balance private sector involvement with taking environmental and safety considerations along with minimal regulation.**

### 108. [Seven years on, mission to clean the Ganga remains a work in progress](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article "**Seven years on, mission to clean the Ganga remains a work in progress**" published in *The Hindu* on **2<sup>nd</sup> September 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Environment – Pollution

**Relevance:** Achievements of National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)

**News:** **National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)** has been allotted ₹20,000-crore to conserve and rejuvenate the Ganga River. The article explains the achievements made by the Mission till now.

### What have been the achievements of NMCG?

In seven years, NMCG has only managed to install sewage treatment plants (STPs) capable of treating 20% of sewage in five major Ganga states. **This is projected to increase to 33% by 2024 and 60% by Dec 2026.**

Based on an estimated 11,765 MLD sewage, **NMCG aims to create sewage treatment plants with 7,000 MLD capacity by 2026 while states will contribute to the remaining capacity through their efforts and government initiatives.**

**As of July 2023**, STPs capable of treating 2,665 million litres per day (MLD) have been commissioned and are now functional.

However, **there have been delays in commissioning some of the plants due to problems with land acquisition and the need to revise the Detailed Project Reports (DPRs).**

**At present, Uttarakhand (36) has the highest number of STPs, followed by Uttar Pradesh (35) and West Bengal (11).**

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The **Namami Gange Mission**, a flagship initiative under NMCG, constitute approximately 80% of the project's total expenditure.

### **Must Read: Cleaning of River Ganga – Explained**

#### **What have been the consequences of these achievements?**

**The number of dolphins in the Ganga River has increased from 2,000 to about 4,000.** Dolphins can now also be found in new areas of the river and its tributaries.

**Fishermen are also noticing more Indian carp**, a type of fish that can only live in clean water. These all signs show that there has been improvement in the river water quality.

#### **What is the way ahead?**

**The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) uses a number of parameters to** measure water quality, such as dissolved oxygen, biochemical oxygen demand, and faecal coliform.

**However, these parameters vary widely along different stretches of the river.**

Therefore, **the NMCG is in the process of creating a river-water quality index**, similar to the air quality index, to communicate better regarding the quality of river water.

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# General

# Studies

# Paper – 4

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### General Studies - 4

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#### 1. [A crisis of academic ethics in India](#)

**Source:** The post is based on the article “A crisis of academic ethics in India” published in “The Hindu” on 31st July 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS4- Codes of Ethics, Codes of Conduct, Work culture

**News:** In this article author discusses India’s potential in academic and scientific research but highlights prevalent unethical practices like data manipulation and plagiarism. Many Indian institutions lack ethical codes, and unethical behavior often goes unchecked. This harms India’s global academic reputation. Leadership must address and prioritize ethical conduct for India to truly excel in the global research arena.

#### **What are the reasons for the prevalence of unethical practices in academic and scientific research?**

**Absence of Ethical Code:** Many institutions lack guidelines to handle misconduct.

**Easy Data Manipulation:** Software makes data manipulation and plagiarism simpler.

**Authoritarian Behavior:** Those in power can misuse authority, discouraging genuine complaints.

**Defensive Academics:** Instead of investigating, academics often defend accused colleagues.

**Cultural Perspective:** Some students see cheating as “helping” rather than dishonesty.

**Fear of Losing Control:** Leaders see roles as power sources, not responsibilities. Leaders fear getting exposed for misconduct.

**Mishandling Opinions:** Leaders punish faculty for expressing opinions, curbing independent thinking.

#### **What are the implications of the prevalence of unethical practices in academic and scientific research?**

**Untrustworthy Research:** Manipulated data can’t be trusted, risking technologies and medicines.

**Global Perception:** India’s academic culture is seen as dishonest internationally.

**Student Opportunities:** Dishonest image affects students’ global competitiveness.

**Leadership Quality:** Ethical issues might come from top leadership’s approach.

**Suppressing Voices:** Faculty face consequences for sharing opinions, limiting free thought.

**Emigration of Talent:** Unethical environment may push researchers to work abroad.

**Compromised Future:** India’s potential as a global research leader is at risk if ethics aren’t prioritized.

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

**Implement Ethical Code:** Institutions should adopt clear ethical guidelines.

**Ethical Training:** Provide modules for students and faculty on ethics.

**Transparent Investigations:** Address misconduct allegations impartially.

**Encourage Reporting:** Ensure students and faculty can report unethical behavior without fear.

**Change Leadership Perception:** Promote leaders as responsible guides, not power sources.

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**Prioritize Ethics:** Institutions should communicate expected ethical standards clearly.

**Protect Expression:** Safeguard faculty's rights to express opinions without retaliation.

