



**9 PM**

# **Compilation**

**28<sup>th</sup> Aug, to 2<sup>nd</sup> Sep, 2023**

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of August [Fifth Week] 2023

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# General Studies Paper – 1

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of August [Fifth Week] 2023

### General Studies - 1

#### 1. 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.

# General Studies Paper –2

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of August [Fifth Week] 2023

### General Studies - 2

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#### 1. 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.

**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.



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### 2. 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**.

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**.



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### 3. 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.

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**.

### 4. 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:**

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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.

### **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.

## 5. 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.

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**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.

**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.

### 6. 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.

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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.

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.

## 7. 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:



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**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.

**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.

### 8. 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.

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### 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.

**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.

### 9. 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:



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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:**

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.

## 10. 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.

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**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.

**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.

### 11. 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](#)

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### 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.

### 12. 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**.

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**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**.

### 13. 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**.



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### 14. 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).

#### 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.

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### 15. 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.

#### 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.



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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**.

### 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**.

### 16. 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

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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.

### 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.

### 17. 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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### 18. 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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### 19. 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.

### 20. 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, RATIONS 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.

### 21. 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.**

## 22. 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.

### 23. 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.

### 24. 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.

### 25. 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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### 26. 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**.

27. 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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28. 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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29. 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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30. 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”.

### 31. 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.

### **32. 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.

### 33. 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.

### 34. 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.

### 35. 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.

## 36. 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.

### 37. 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.**

# General Studies Paper –3

### General Studies - 3

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#### 1. 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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### 2. 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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### 3. 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.

### 4. 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

## 5. 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.

### 6. [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**.

### 7. 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.

### 8. 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.

### 9. 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**.

### 10. 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 CO<sub>2</sub> 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.

### 11. 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.

### 12. 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.

### 13. 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.

### 14. 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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### 15. 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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### 16. 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.

### 17. 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**.

### 18. 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.**

### 19. 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).**



## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of August [Fifth Week] 2023

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.