



Mains Marathon
Compilation

4th to 9th September, 2023

Mains Marathon Compilation for the Month of September, (First Week) 2023

- 1. Do you think that the system around the Right to Information Act is being made less and less effective, shutting off a crucial means to hold public officials accountable? Give arguments in favour of your opinion.**
- 2. Despite being a major food producer with extensive food security schemes and the largest public distribution system in the world, India still grapples with significant levels of food insecurity, hunger, and child malnutrition. Analyze the statement with reference to the State Hunger Index and discuss how it is different to the Global Hunger Index.**
- 3. Discuss the role of education in harnessing India's demographic dividend. How can the education sector drive and sustain economic growth?**
- 4. Examine the gender-specific impacts of climate change, particularly in low-income countries. Suggest measures to mitigate these impacts.**
- 5. Discuss the implementation of the Forest Rights Act in the Northeast. What challenges do states like Mizoram and Nagaland face in its implementation?**
- 6. Discuss the challenges of infrastructure development in hill regions compared to plains. What policy measures can be adopted to balance development and ecology?**
- 7. Examine the historical factors that have influenced the names "India" and "Bharat". Assess the multidimensional implications of changing the country's name from "India" to "Bharat".**
- 8. Discuss the role of the education system and coaching centres in exacerbating mental health issues among students. Critically evaluate the government's response to the mental health crisis among students.**
- 9. Critically evaluate the concept of jobless growth in India. Discuss the role of subsidies and safety nets in India's economic policy.**
- 10. Analyze the significance of the India-Republic of Korea (ROK) strategic partnership in the context of the Indo-Pacific. How can it contribute to India's Indo-Pacific strategy?**
- 11. Examine the paradox in India's digital landscape—being a leader in technology while also leading in internet shutdowns. What long-term impact could this have on India's global standing?**
- 12. Analyze the shift in India's multilateral approach from being a rule-taker to a potential rule-maker. What are the key factors driving this change?**

Mains Marathon Compilation for the Month of September, (First Week) 2023

1. Do you think that the system around the Right to Information Act is being made less and less effective, shutting off a crucial means to hold public officials accountable? Give arguments in favour of your opinion.

Introduction: Describe RTI Act briefly.

Body: Arguments which explain how RTI has been made less effective over the years.

Conclusion: Way forward.

The Right to Information (RTI) Act was passed by Parliament in 2005 to enable the citizens to exercise their freedom of speech and expression under Article 19(1)(a) of the Indian Constitution. The RTI Act provides for the timely disclosure of information to citizens by Union and State Public Authorities. It seeks to empower citizens and promote accountability and transparency. However, there are several arguments in favour of the opinion that the system around the RTI Act is being made less effective, thereby diminishing its ability to hold public officials accountable.

Some of these arguments are:

- **Exemptions:** Governments may introduce amendments or exemptions to the RTI Act, which can limit the scope of information that can be accessed. These changes often favour the interests of public officials and reduce the effectiveness of the act. E.g., issues related to national security and sovereignty reasons.
- **A blanket ban on disclosing personal data:** The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, of 2023 prohibits the personal data disclosure of citizens by the government which would make “social audits” impossible to carry out which would affect the implementation of welfare schemes.
- **New amendments:** The Right to Information (Amendment) Act, 2019, granted the Union Government sole discretion in determining the terms of appointment and compensation for information commissioners who consider appeals against absent or unsatisfactory RTI responses.
- **Cumbersome process:** RTI Act implementation is hindered by the subordinate rules made by the Union Government and State Governments. For eg, some states like Tamil Nadu do not accept Indian Postal Orders (IPOs), as a payment option.
- **Vacant Posts:** There is a large number of vacant posts of information commissions in CIC for the Union Government and various State Information Commissions. This has undermined the confidence of the public in the effective implementation of the RTI Act.
- **Slow transition to online system:** While the RTI portal is a welcoming step in enhancing transparency and accountability there is concern as some states have been reluctant to join the RTI portal or the number of government departments are too few to allow citizens to file complaints.

Conclusion:

The RTI Act is a landmark act that allows any citizen to make requests for access to data, documents, and other information in the government’s possession. India’s RTI Act has been commonly cited as among the most comprehensive public records access legislations in the world. There is a need to remove the loopholes in RTI to further the objectives of transparency and accountability.

- 2. Despite being a major food producer with extensive food security schemes and the largest public distribution system in the world, India still grapples with significant levels of food insecurity, hunger, and child malnutrition. Analyze the statement with reference to the State Hunger Index and discuss how it is different to the Global Hunger Index.**

Introduction: Give brief context of the question.

Body: Give comparison between State Hunger Index (SHI) and the Global Hunger Index (GHI).

Conclusion: Way forward.

The statement highlights a paradox in India's food security situation. India is indeed a major food producer with extensive food security schemes and the largest public distribution system in the world, but it continues to face significant challenges related to food insecurity, hunger, and child malnutrition. As per fifth National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) data, 18% of children between ages 6-23 months, did not eat any food whatsoever in the 24 hours preceding the survey. This paradox can be analyzed in the context of the State Hunger Index (SHI) and compared to the Global Hunger Index (GHI) to gain a deeper understanding.

How is GHI different from SHI?

- **Scope:** SHI is specific to India and measures hunger at the state level, whereas GHI assesses hunger and malnutrition globally, comparing countries.
- **Measurement:** The Global Hunger Index (GHI), 2022, ranked India 107 among 121 countries. The GHI provides a composite measurement and tracks undernourishment and hunger at the national level across three dimensions: calorie undernourishment, child malnutrition, and under-five mortality. It is jointly published by Concern Worldwide and Welthungerlife. The State Hunger Index (SHI) is calculated using the same indicators as those in GHI except for calorie undernourishment, which is replaced by body mass index (BMI) undernourishment among the working-age population. It is published by the International Food Policy Research Institute.
- **Indicators of comparison:** Child stunting and wasting are two indicators included in the GHI that give a more complete picture of malnutrition. SHI primarily addresses food security and hunger.
- **Policy Implications:** While both indices can inform policy decisions, the GHI is more suitable for countries looking to benchmark their progress against global standards, while the SHI is tailored to the specific regional and state-level challenges within India.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, for Indian states to progress along the SHI, and to ensure that SHI scores for Indian states are more closely aligned with GHI scores of countries with comparable economic growth, investments will be needed to strengthen agriculture, improve overall food availability and access to all population segments, and to improve child nutrition and mortality outcomes. To better understand food security for all populations in India, assessments using household-level food insecurity modules developed by the Food and Agriculture Organisation can be adapted. India must achieve the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 of “zero hunger”, by 2030 through Mission Poshan 2.0 program while ensuring affordable access to sufficient quantity and quality of nutritionally diverse food, with a special and immediate focus on India’s youngest children.

3. Discuss the role of education in harnessing India's demographic dividend. How can the education sector drive and sustain economic growth?

Introduction: Define demographic dividend.

Body: Highlight role of education in demographic dividend and how can in further achieve goal of economic growth.

Conclusion: Way forward.

According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), a demographic dividend means, the economic growth potential that can result from shifts in a population's age structure. It occurs mainly when the share of the working-age population (15 to 64) is larger than the non-working-age share of the population (<14 but >65 years). India has one of the youngest populations in an aging world.

Role of education in harnessing this potential:

- **Human capital formation:** Education is the main way that people learn new abilities, skills, and knowledge. Increased economic output results from a workforce that is more productive and flexible. According to ASSOCHAM, only 7 % of MBA graduates have employable skills in India, and only around 20-30 % of engineers find a job suited to their skills. India may not be able to take advantage of the opportunities, due to a low human capital base and lack of skills.
- **Employment:** The nation needs to create ten million jobs per year to absorb the addition of young people into the workforce. Education and skill development programs can enhance employability by aligning education with the needs of the job market.
- **Culture of entrepreneurship:** By instilling problem-solving, critical thinking, and innovative skills, a robust educational system promotes an entrepreneurial spirit. Entrepreneurs can develop new ventures, goods, and services that can boost the economy and create jobs.

How can education drive and sustain economic growth?

- **Skill development:** According to the 2015 Report on National Policy on Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, only 4.7% of India's total workforce had received formal skill training, compared to 52% in the United States, 80% in Japan, and 96% in South Korea. Skill development increases the employability of the young population. The government has established the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) with the overall target of skilling/upskilling 500 million people in India by 2022.
- **Internationalization of higher education:** NEP 2020 seeks to facilitate faculty/student exchanges & research, teaching partnerships & signing of MOUs. For eg, IIT Madras & IIT Delhi have signed MOU to set up foreign campuses in Tanzania & Abu Dhabi.
- **Collaboration with academia and global partnerships:** The focus is to make India an R&D hub and promote ease of doing research along with ease of doing business. Global partnerships with the US, Japan, and EU & programs like the Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (iCET) & Quad fellowship have enhanced collaboration in high-end technology areas.

Conclusion:

India can unleash the potential of its young people, increase productivity, foster innovation, and support long-term economic growth by investing in education. The education industry

Mains Marathon Compilation for the Month of September, (First Week) 2023

needs extensive reforms, more funding, and a focus on quality and inclusivity to meet these objectives.

4. Examine the gender-specific impacts of climate change, particularly in low-income countries. Suggest measures to mitigate these impacts.

Introduction: Give brief context of the question.

Body: What are gender specific impact of climate change and measures to deal with it?

Conclusion: Way forward.

Climate change has significant gender-specific impacts, particularly in low-income countries, where women often face greater vulnerabilities due to their socio-economic roles and limited access to resources and decision-making. Reports of UNO & ILO have highlighted that across genders, women are considered to be highly vulnerable and disproportionately affected by climate change than men to the impact of climate change.

Some Key Gender-Specific Impacts of Climate Change in Low-Income Countries:

- **Impact on Livelihood:** In low-income nations, women are frequently in charge of agriculture, water collection, and fuel collection—activities that are extremely vulnerable to climate change. Due to droughts, floods, and shifting weather patterns, they may lose their jobs and means of subsistence. According to the ILO, over 60% of working women in southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa are still in agriculture, where they are often underpaid and overworked.
- **Health:** Changing climate patterns can lead to the spread of diseases and illnesses, affecting women's health, particularly during pregnancy and childbirth.
- **Food security:** Crop yields and food availability are impacted by climate change, which may result in more food poverty. Women prepare the majority of the food for their families and frequently put their family's dietary requirements first. Despite being the backbone of the food production system, women own only about 10% of the land used for farming.
- **Displacement and Migration:** 80% of individuals displaced by climate-related disasters are women and girls, according to a UN report. Women, particularly those from at-risk populations, experience unique challenges both during and after natural catastrophes. Women who have been uprooted are more vulnerable to discrimination, exploitation, and gender-based violence. A McAllister (2023) study has highlighted how there could be 1.2 billion climate refugees by 2050.

Some measures to mitigate them:

- **Invest in education & training:** We must invest in women's access to resources, education, and training to withstand effects of climate change. By educating people on sustainable agriculture, water management, and energy production, we can lessen the detrimental effects of climate change on people's living conditions. For instance, the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) teaches women farmers in India how to adapt to changing climatic trends to better sustain themselves.
- **Decision-Making:** Effective mitigation and adaptation methods for climate change, as well as finding adequate work, depend on women's engagement in climate policy decision-making at all levels. Gender equality in the bodies that make decisions is crucial since women are more vulnerable to the effects of climate change. The Gender and Climate Change Development Programme is one such initiative in South Asia that seeks to give women a stronger voice and thereby improve their influence in policymaking.

Conclusion:

According to estimates, 130 million people could be pushed into poverty by 2050 due to climate change risks, natural disasters, and food inflation, impacting women's inequality. Gender equality and environmental objectives complement each other, forming a positive feedback loop that can expedite the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

5. Discuss the implementation of the Forest Rights Act in the Northeast. What challenges do states like Mizoram and Nagaland face in its implementation?

Introduction: Give description of Forest Rights Act.

Body: Highlight the challenges faced by northeastern states in implementation of FRA.

Conclusion: Way Forward

The Forest Rights Act, also known as the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, is a significant piece of legislation in India aimed at recognizing and protecting the forest rights of indigenous and forest-dwelling communities. Recently, several states of the Northeast have opposed the Forest (Conservation) Amendment Act, 2023 which allows the diversion of forest land for roads, railway lines, or "strategic linear projects of national importance and concerning national security" without a forest clearance under the Forest (Conservation) Act (FCA) 1980.

Overview of implementation of FRA in the Northeast:

- **Constitutional safeguards:** Special constitutional provisions like 371A & 371B for Nagaland & Mizoram prohibit the application of any law enacted by Parliament that impinges on Naga and Mizo customary law and procedure, and ownership and transfer of land and its resources.
- **Slow implementation:** Northeast India is home to numerous indigenous communities with cultural & historical ties to forests. Another reason for the slow implementation of the act is the complex topography & post-independence insurgency in the area.
- **Non-implementation:** None of the Northeast States have implemented FRA except for Assam and Tripura with the reason being that most land is owned by communities, clans, chiefs, and individuals & limited presence of forest-dwellers who are totally forest dependent.

Challenges faced by Northeast states in implementation:

- **Complicated land tenure system:** Northeast India has a complicated system of land tenure that includes communal ownership, customary land rights, and shifting farming (jhum). It can be challenging to identify and recognize forest rights because of these complications, which can result in overlapping claims and disputes.
- **Lack of infrastructure:** In rural and hilly regions of the northeastern states, a lack of adequate infrastructure, like as roads and communication networks, might make it difficult to access government services linked to the FRA and file claims.
- **Balancing "rights" with "conservation":** The northeastern region is ecologically rich and home to several protected areas and biodiversity hotspots. Balancing the rights of indigenous communities with conservation goals has led to conflicts and debates about the implementation of the FRA.
- **Natural resources:** Natural resources including timber and minerals are abundant in certain northeastern states. Conflicts over land use may result from the extraction of these resources, endangering indigenous populations' rights to their forested areas.

Mains Marathon Compilation for the Month of September, (First Week) 2023

Conclusion:

There is a need to maintain a balance to provide tenurial security to forest dwellers and protect the forests. Both state government & Ministry of Tribal Affairs can help maintain this balance to ensure mandatory fulfillment of the FRA before diverting the land for other purposes

6. Discuss the challenges of infrastructure development in hill regions compared to plains. What policy measures can be adopted to balance development and ecology?

Introduction: Brief context of the question.

Body: Challenges of infrastructure development in hilly areas and measures to deal with.

Conclusion: Way forward.

Infrastructure development in hill regions poses unique challenges compared to the plains due to the rugged terrain, ecological sensitivity, and the vulnerability of hill ecosystems. Balancing development and ecology in these regions require careful planning, innovative policies, and sustainable practices.

Challenges of infrastructure development in hill regions:

- **Topography:** Construction and upkeep of infrastructure like roads, bridges, and tunnels are more difficult and expensive in hill regions because of the high slopes and unstable geology that characterize these areas.
- **Fragile ecosystem:** With their distinctive biodiversity and vulnerability to erosion, landslides, and habitat degradation, hill ecosystems are frequently fragile.
- **Natural resources:** Many regions rely heavily on hills as their principal source of freshwater. Reduced water availability downstream might result from infrastructure development without consideration of the influence on water resources.
- **Wildlife protection:** Many hill regions host important wildlife habitats. Infrastructure can fragment these habitats, disrupt migratory routes, and lead to human-wildlife conflicts.
- **Natural disasters:** Construction activities have the potential to weaken slopes, raising the danger of landslides and erosion. This not only puts infrastructure in jeopardy but also has an impact on nearby communities.

Policy Measures Taken to Balance Development and Ecology in Hill Regions:

- **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA):** Before beginning any infrastructure projects in hilly areas, thorough EIAs should be done. These evaluations must take into account ecological, social, and cultural effects.
- **Innovative solutions:** The need is to invest in innovative engineering solutions such as elevated roads, tunnels, and eco-friendly construction materials that minimize the environmental impact of infrastructure.
- **Wildlife Corridors:** The Forest Department should design infrastructure projects to include wildlife corridors, underpasses, and overpasses to facilitate the movement of wildlife across roads and prevent habitat fragmentation.
- **Community Engagement:** The need is to engage with local communities, including indigenous groups, to seek their input and consent for infrastructure projects. This will ensure that development benefits the local population and respects their cultural practices. Local communities can further be engaged in reforestation programs and erosion control measures to mitigate the risk of landslides and soil erosion.

Mains Marathon Compilation for the Month of September, (First Week) 2023

- **Legal accountability:** There is a need to enact and enforce laws and regulations that prioritize ecological conservation in hill regions and hold developers accountable for any environmental damage.

Conclusion:

Central Government & state governments should formulate development plans for hilly areas based on the principle of “carrying capacity” to minimize disastrous effects as seen in Himachal Pradesh & Uttarakhand. The complicated issue of balancing development and ecology in hilly areas calls for a multi-disciplinary strategy that includes environmental scientists, engineers, social scientists, and local populations. Planning, making informed decisions, and a dedication to preserving the distinctive ecosystems and cultures present in hill regions are all necessary for sustainable development in these locations.

7. Examine the historical factors that have influenced the names “India” and “Bharat”. Assess the multidimensional implications of changing the country’s name from “India” to “Bharat”.

Introduction: Give a brief context of the question.

Body: Highlight the historical factors that have influenced the names and their implications.

Conclusion: Way forward.

The names "India" and "Bharat" both have deep historical and cultural significance in the context of the Indian subcontinent. Article 1 of the Constitution uses the two names interchangeably: “India, that is Bharat, shall be a Union of States. Recently, the Union government has decided to use Bharat instead of India in some official communication and documents which evoked strong reactions from opposition parties raising many implications of changing the country’s name from “India” to “Bharat”.

Some historical factors which have influenced the names “India” & “Bharat”:

- **Historical references:** Ancient texts like Vishnu Purana and Brahma Purana, Mahabharata mention ‘Bharat’ while "India" is believed to have originated from the Greek word "Indos," which referred to the people living along the Indus River. Seventh-century Chinese traveler Hiuen Tsang had referred to the country as Bharat while “India” became the official name of the country when it gained independence in 1947.
- **Cultural significance:** The name "Bharat" holds a special place in Indian culture and tradition. Bharata is also the name of the ancient king of legend who was the ancestor of the Rig Vedic tribe of the Bharatas, and by extension, the progenitor of all peoples of the subcontinent. The name “India” on the other hand has been used by foreign powers, including the British, who colonized the region. It also represents a diverse and pluralistic nation with a rich cultural heritage.
- **Constitution debates:** Several debates in the Constitution Assembly show that leaders were divided on the words India & Bharat. Leaders like Nehru, and Ambedkar favoured both ‘Bharat’ and ‘India’ while Hargovind Pant & Hari Vishnu Kamath suggested only the use of the term “Bharat”.

What are the multidimensional implications of changing the country’s name?

- **Administrative Challenges:** The name "India" is well-established in legal documents, international treaties, and administrative systems. Changing it to "Bharat" would require extensive administrative adjustments in various official documents, symbols, and infrastructure.

Mains Marathon Compilation for the Month of September, (First Week) 2023

- **Political implication:** The name "India" is associated with the modern, democratic nation-state established in 1947 & reflects India's identity as a secular republic. Changing the country's name to "Bharat" could have political implications, as it might be seen as an attempt to emphasize a particular cultural or historical identity.
- **Linguistic identity:** There can be an issue of national & linguistic identity with North Indian states favouring the usage of Bharat while Southern states prefer to use "India" as it is a name that transcends linguistic boundaries.
- **International Implications:** The country's official communicate or international personality continues to be denoted by the word "India" which reflects a modern, secular, and inclusive nation that strives to accommodate diverse cultures and religions.

Conclusion:

Both words are used interchangeably & have constitutional backing with India gaining its primacy from Article 1(1) & "Bharat" from the 58th Amendment empowering the President to have published under his authority the authoritative text 'in the Hindi language' of the Constitution.

8. Discuss the role of the education system and coaching centres in exacerbating mental health issues among students. Critically evaluate the government's response to the mental health crisis among students.

Introduction: Give context to the question.

Body: Highlight the role of education & coaching centre in impacting mental health.

Conclusion: Way forward.

Recently, cases of suicides among young students in Kota have raised concern regarding the role of the education system and coaching centres in exacerbating mental health issues among students in India. Although education is essential for both individual and societal growth, the Indian educational system's high competitiveness and pressure, together with a large presence of coaching centres, have serious negative effects on students' mental health.

What is the role of the education system and coaching centres:

- **Focus on the competition:** Academic achievement and competition are heavily emphasized in the Indian education system. A lot of pressure is placed on students to perform well on exams, especially board exams and competitive entrance exams for elite institutions and universities.
- **Peer pressure:** Peer pressure is very strong in India because of how competitive the educational system is. Students could feel pressured to compare themselves to their peers, which can cause anxiety and feelings of inadequacy.
- **Rote learning:** Lack of critical thinking and creativity may result from a curriculum that places too much emphasis on rote memorization. The resultant worry and anxiety among students who feel caught in a cycle of memorizing might therefore be attributed to this.

What has been the Government's response?

- **Counseling sessions:** Schools and colleges have been advised by the government to establish counseling services to help students cope with stress and mental health issues. However, these services are often under-resourced and insufficient to meet the demand.

Mains Marathon Compilation for the Month of September, (First Week) 2023

- **Policy initiatives:** The government has introduced policies to reduce the emphasis on board exams and promote holistic education. However, the implementation of these policies varies across states, and the pressure on students remains high.
- **Regulation of Coaching Centres:** The government has proposed regulations for coaching centres to ensure quality education and reduce the pressure on students. However, the effectiveness of these regulations remains to be seen.
- **Awareness Campaigns:** The government has launched awareness campaigns to reduce the stigma associated with mental health issues. While these campaigns are important, they do not address the root causes of the problem.

Conclusion:

Suicide is the number one cause of death amongst those between 15 to 30 years of age — by far the highest in the world in this age group. The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) reported, in 2020, that a student took their own life every 42 minutes; or, in other words, 34 students died by suicide every day. The government needs to focus more on providing budgetary support to the National Mental Health Programme.

9. Critically evaluate the concept of jobless growth in India. Discuss the role of subsidies and safety nets in India's economic policy.

Introduction: What is jobless growth?

Body: Evaluate the concept of jobless growth and the role of subsidies & safety nets in India's economic policy.

Conclusion: Way forward.

When the economy expands but unemployment holds persistently high, this situation is known as jobless growth. In other words, although the economy is growing, fewer people are employed as a result. Subsidies and safety nets play a significant role in India's economic policy, serving various social and economic objectives. They are integral to the government's efforts to address poverty, inequality, and food security, among other key issues.

Some important issues highlighting jobless growth in India:

- **Large population:** India's large population shows a large young demographic dividend with labour force expanding considerably. This large increase in the working population is not proportionate with the rate of job creation.
- **Structural challenges:** Agriculture and informal manufacturing are two labour-intensive industries that have historically characterized India's economy. Although the services sector has expanded significantly, it hasn't been able to efficiently absorb the excess labour from these sectors. Job creation has been hampered by structural issues, such as low skill levels and a lack of diversification.
- **Use of automation & technology:** The adoption of technology and automation in various industries has increased productivity and competitiveness but it has also led to job displacement in certain sectors, particularly in manufacturing.
- **Informal nature of jobs:** In India, a sizable segment of the workforce works in the unorganized sector, where there is no social safety, job security, or benefit system. Growth in the unemployment rate exacerbates the already insecure nature of work in this industry.

What is the role of subsidies & safety nets in India's economic policy?

Mains Marathon Compilation for the Month of September, (First Week) 2023

- **Poverty Alleviation:** Subsidies and safety nets are crucial tools for poverty alleviation in India. They aim to provide essential goods and services at reduced prices or free of cost to disadvantaged and vulnerable populations. Some of the programs like PDS, subsidies on kerosene, and cooking gas ensure that even the poorest citizens have access to necessities.
- **Livelihood Generation:** A safety net like MGNREGA provides 100 days of wage employment to rural households which also stimulates rural demand and boosts local economies.
- **Affordable healthcare & education:** Programs like Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (Ayushman Bharat) & Right to Education Act ensure affordable, accessible healthcare and education to the marginalized.
- **Support Farm income:** Subsidies on fertilizers, seeds, and agricultural inputs help support farmers and boost agricultural productivity. These subsidies are intended to keep farming costs low, making it financially viable for small and marginal farmers.

Conclusion:

The effectiveness & sustainability of subsidies and safety nets depend on careful design, implementation, and constant evaluation to address challenges and ensure resources are directed to those who need them the most.

10. Analyze the significance of the India-Republic of Korea (ROK) strategic partnership in the context of the Indo-Pacific. How can it contribute to India's Indo-Pacific strategy?

Introduction: Give a brief context of bilateral relations.

Body: What is the significance & how does it contribute to India's Indo-Pacific strategy?

Conclusion: Way forward.

In 1962, bilateral ties between India and South Korea were established. There has been an acceleration in the two nations' economic and geopolitical connections as a result of the convergence of India's Act East Policy and South Korea's New Southern Policy. India's Indo-Pacific strategy may include South Korea as a fourth pillar in addition to Japan, Australia, and Vietnam.

Significance of relations between the both nations:

- **Geopolitical:** Both India & Korea are concerned about China's assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific. This has led both countries to upgrade their bilateral relationship to a 'special strategic partnership'.
- **Economic cooperation:** India and South Korea have signed the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), 2010 which has facilitated the growth of trade relations. India and South Korea have set up a bilateral trade target of \$50 billion before 2030.
- **New Indo-Pacific Strategy:** The policy document lists India as its main actor in Seoul's South Asian outreach based on better communication and upgrading the defense, diplomatic, and economic security ties.
- **Maritime security:** The Indo-Pacific is crucial for both countries due to its maritime routes. Closer collaboration in maritime security, including joint naval exercises and information-sharing, can help safeguard sea lanes and maintain regional stability.

How can it contribute to India's Indo-Pacific strategy?

Mains Marathon Compilation for the Month of September, (First Week) 2023

- **Defense cooperation:** The defense relationship is further strengthened by Korea's willingness to partner in the Make in India program. E.g., K9 Vajra Howitzer & K2 Black Panther tanks. The two sides can also develop a 2+2 format dialogue to strengthen their relationship.
- **Nuclear cooperation:** Korea could help fulfill India's growing need for clean energy by supplying cheaper and faster nuclear reactors.
- **Like-minded ally:** ROK's location in the Indo-Pacific, close to China, while being a U.S. ally provides India with a like-minded strategic partner that could help in reordering Asian security architecture amidst the rise of China.
- **Quad Plus:** Korea expressed its wishes to be a part of the regional security framework & expand Korea's influence by providing support to Ukraine, articulation the China challenge, and a desire to play a bigger role in the Indo-Pacific.
- **Regional security:** Both India & Korea could cooperate on matters of regional security by strengthening the alliance structure AUKUS (the U.S., the United Kingdom, Australia), the Quad (India, Japan, Australia, the U.S.), or CHIP 4 Alliance (the U.S., Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea).

Conclusion:

Both countries are celebrating their 50th year of diplomatic engagement & new strategic outlook of ROK along with the U.S., Japan, and Australia, is uniquely placed to help India advance its interests in the Indo-Pacific.

11. Examine the paradox in India's digital landscape—being a leader in technology while also leading in internet shutdowns. What long-term impact could this have on India's global standing?

Introduction: Give the context of the question.

Body: Highlight the long-term impact of the internet shutdown on India's global standing.

Conclusion: Way forward.

The above paradox about India's digital landscape is being highlighted in Statista which shows that despite ranking second in the world in terms of active internet users, and also the second-largest social media user base India has imposed the maximum number of internet shutdowns for five years in a row, depriving millions of connectivity.

Issues raised in the context of this paradox:

- **Global tech hub:** India has always positioned itself as a global technology hub with immense potential for a thriving IT and software services industry, support for the startup ecosystem & large pool of skilled IT professionals.
- **Internet shutdowns:** According to the report of the Keep It On coalition and Access Now, India is the only G20 country to have shut down the internet more than twice (84 times) in 2022. These shutdowns disrupt communication, access to information, and the functioning of businesses, leading to concerns about freedom of expression and the right to access information.

What is the long-term impact of this on India's global standing?

- **Economic impact:** Regular internet outages can be detrimental to India's economic interests. It interferes with digital transactions, which are becoming more and more important in a globalized environment. It can discourage foreign investment because

Mains Marathon Compilation for the Month of September, (First Week) 2023

potential investors would be apprehensive about the stability of the digital infrastructure.

- **Freedom of expression:** Various civil society groups and UN reports have demonstrated the adverse effects of internet shutdowns including violation of human rights, and the right to free expression. This impacts India's reputation as a democratic and inclusive society.
- **Impact on Digital India:** Internet shutdowns risk ambitious projects like Digital India, Startup India, Aadhar, and UPI infrastructure impacting millions who depend on these services and affecting Digital Inclusion.
- **Innovation and Technology:** Internet shutdowns can stifle innovation and technological advancement. In an era where innovation relies heavily on access to information and global collaboration, frequent disruptions can impede India's progress in cutting-edge technologies.
- **Geopolitical Relations:** India's digital paradox may also affect its relationships with other nations. While it seeks to strengthen its tech ties with countries like the United States & EU, the shutdowns could raise questions about its commitment to an open and free internet.

Conclusion:

India being the chair of G20 must commit to reducing internet shutdowns in the digital age & maintain its ambition of digital growth and global leadership.

12. Analyze the shift in India's multilateral approach from being a rule-taker to a potential rule-maker. What are the key factors driving this change?

Introduction: Give brief introduction related to question.

Body: What are key factors driving India's shift in multilateral approach?

Conclusion: Way forward.

India being chair of the G20 summit this year showcases that India has leaped to be a rule-maker rather than a rule-taker in multilateral diplomacy. This also reflects the country's evolving role on the global stage.

Some of the key factors driving this change:

- **Economic Growth:** India's rapid economic growth, along with its large and youthful population, has enhanced its geopolitical significance. India is well on track to become the third largest economy in the world in the coming years, which will lead to high per capita income of the population & better quality of life.
- **Geopolitical influence:** India has positioned itself major Asian power that enjoys primacy in South Asia & Indo-Pacific & moving past the NAM grouping & inching towards alliance with the US, and ASEAN to expand its role in the Indo-Pacific.
- **Establishing alliances with diverse groups:** India has positioned itself as a reliable security & economic partner which has led to a deepening of relations with groups like QUAD, AUKUS, ASEAN, AU, etc. It has sought to assert itself as a key player in regional security and stability, and its growing military capabilities have contributed to this effort.
- **Global concerns:** India has been a foremost voice in raising concerns about global challenges such as climate change, cybersecurity, and pandemics, which require collective action and rule-setting. For eg, India has taken the lead in establishing forums like the International Solar Alliance & Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure.

Mains Marathon Compilation for the Month of September, (First Week) 2023

- **UNSC Aspirations:** India has long sought a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). To enhance its credibility and chances of securing this seat, India has engaged more actively in UN initiatives and peacekeeping missions. It seeks to play a pivotal role in shaping global security and peacekeeping policies.
- **Soft Power:** India's cultural and soft power, including Bollywood, yoga, and its rich history, have contributed to its global appeal. By leveraging its soft power, India can exert influence in shaping cultural and educational exchanges and international norms.
- **Development Assistance:** India has expanded its development assistance and humanitarian aid to other countries, particularly in South Asia and Africa. By doing so, it aims to establish itself as a responsible and influential player in the international development landscape.

Conclusion:

Finally, as India continues to assert itself on the global stage, its ability to shape international rules and norms in accordance with its interests is likely to grow, making it an increasingly influential player in global affairs.