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7 PM COMPILATION

September, 2023

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- ❖ Comprehensive coverage of a given current topic
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- ❖ Critical analysis, comparative analysis, legal/constitutional provisions, current issues and challenges and best practices around the world
- ❖ Written in lucid language and point format
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Money Laundering- Explained, pointwise

According to recent report of **Pandora paper investigation** two offshore shell companies registered in British Virgin Islands (BVI) that have invested in Adani Group stocks are linked to Adani Group Chairperson's Brother.

This news brings in focus the **menace of money laundering** which is prevalent from corporate sector to terrorist Groups. Money Laundering is a **heinous crime** that not only **affects** the **economic and social fabric** of a country but also **promotes** other serious offenses like **terrorism** and **drug trafficking**.

India has been **plagued with the problem** of money laundering. Some **famous Money laundering cases** that have dominated headlines and political narrative in India are-**Sharada Group Financial scandal**, **Satyam Scandal**, **PNB Fraud case of Nirav Modi** and **Kingfisher Airlines case of Vijay Mallaya.**

What is Money Laundering

Definition- According to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), money laundering is the **processing of money obtained from criminal activities** to disguise their illegal origin. These criminal activities include financial fraud, drug trafficking and terrorist activities.

Process of Money Laundering-Money Laundering involves 3 steps:

Step 1-**Placement**	**Injection** of the "dirty money" into the legitimate financial system.
Step 2-**Layering**	**Concealment** of the source of the money through a series of transactions and bookkeeping tricks
Step 3-**Integration**	**Withdrawal** of laundered money from the legitimate financial system by the criminals for their ulterior motives.

Common Methods of Money Laundering- Some common methods of money laundering are:

Smurfing	This method involves **dividing large sums of money** into smaller, less suspicious amounts. The money is then deposited into **one or more bank accounts over time** by multiple people (smurfs) or by a single person.
Shell companies	These are companies without active business operations. They **take in dirty money as "payment"** for supposed goods or services but provide no goods or services.They simply create the appearance of legitimate transactions through **fake invoices and balance sheets.**
Overseas banks	Use of **"offshore accounts"** in countries with **bank secrecy laws** like Bahamas, Bahrain, the Cayman Islands, Hong Kong, Panama and Singapore.
Hawala	It is a **parallel remittance system** which functions independently from or concurrently with "traditional" banking or financial channels.

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Electronic Money Laundering (EML)	EML takes place through online auctions and sales, gambling websites, and virtual gaming sites. The newest frontier of money laundering involves cryptocurrencies, such as Bitcoin. **The Paris attack in 2015** was funded through bitcoins.

What are the negative impacts and effects on money laundering?

Economic effects

Destabilisation of economy- According to studies conducted by the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** it was estimated that the **quantum of money** laundered is approximately **2 to 5 percent of GDP** of the world. Unpredictability of the economy increasing due to **pumping of illegal money** can lead to destabilisation economy of the country causing financial crisis.

Loss of revenue exchequer to Govt- Money laundering **decreases the tax funds** available for collection in the economy and **decreases government's revenues**. Social sectors like **health, education** suffer due to lesser allocation of budgetary resources.

Impact on financial sector- Money Laundering **discourages foreign investors** from long term investments in the financial markets. **FPIs pull out money** in the way money laundering scams from the Indian markets resulting in **exchange rates and interest rates volatility** in the financial market. It also encourages **tax evasion culture**.

Transfers of economic power from the right people to the wrong– Committing crime of money laundering transfers of economic power from the right people to the wrong. The **good citizens and the government are dispossessed from their right** making the criminals take the benefit to flourish in their criminality.

Social Effects

Decline of Social and Political morality of the society-Money Laundering leads to decline in the moral and social position of the society by exposing it to activities such as drug trafficking, smuggling, corruption and other criminal activities.

'Demographic Dividend' turns into 'Demographic Disaster'- Money Laundering **i**ncreases unemployment in the country as **legitimate business companies fail to compete** with operators operating through illegal money. It also increases criminal activities and more **youth get attracted** due to higher returns.

Political Effects

Policy Paralysis-Money laundering leads to policy paralysis due to measurement error and misallocation of resources. **Legislative bodies are unable to quantify the negative economic effects of money laundering** on economic development and its linkages with other crimes – trafficking, terrorism.

What are the Challenges in combating money laundering in India?

Increased use of digital currency like Bitcoins and cryptocurrency: The rise of cryptocurrency allows money launderers to conceal their illicit funds. According to IMF, more than $2.5 billion have been laundered since 2019 in cryptocurrencies.

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Presence of tax haven countries- Strict **financial secrecy laws** by tax heaven countries like **Bahamas, Bahrain, the Cayman Islands, Hong Kong, Panama and Singapore i**ncentivize the creation of anonymous accounts in these countries by launderers.

Laxity on part of banks: Increasing competition in the financial market is forcing **banks to lower their guards** which allows money launderers to use the black money illicitly in furtherance of their crime.

Collusion by employees of financial institutions in money laundering: Some employees of financial institutions like Banks,NBFCs collude with the money launderers which further accentuates the menace of money laundering. **PNB Fraud, Videocon-ICICI Bank cases** are prime examples of this.

Lack of Convergence among the different enforcement agencies– Separate wings of law enforcement agencies dealing with money laundering, cyber-crimes, terrorist crimes, economic offences lack convergence among themselves. **Lack of convergence** between **INTERPOL and CBI** in the arrest of **Indian fugitive Nirav Modi.**

Lack of awareness about the seriousness of crimes of money laundering: People shop from several **black markets which sell smuggled goods** in India like the **Chor Bazars**. This further aggravates the problem of money laundering**.** Preference of **Hawala system by the poor and illiterate population.** This system is a major source of money laundering.

What measures have been taken to combat money laundering in India?

Statutory Measures

Passage of PMLA Act in 2002 to combat money laundering- Prevention on Money Laundering Act was passed in 2002 with the **sole objective of combating money laundering** in India. It provides **greater power to the govt agencies** in attachment and confiscation of properties and provides for **stricter bail conditions**. It is gradually becoming a dread law in the country.

Institutional Measures

Enforcement Directorate: Investigation and prosecution of cases under the PMLA have been entrusted to Enforcement Directorate. Prosecutions of Individuals under PMLA act have increased in recent times.

Financial Intelligence Unit India (FIU-IND)- Established in 2004 to serve as the primary national organization in charge of gathering, analyzing, and disseminating data about improbable financial transactions.

International Cooperation Measures

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF)- India as a member of FATF has effectively used the grouping to push for sanctions against countries like Pakistan which indulge in money laundering to breed terrorism.

India is a signatory to various conventions of UN to combat money laundering- India is also signatory to the **International Convention for Suppression of Financing of Terrorism (1999)**; the **United Nation Convention against Transnational Organised Crime** (2000) and **United Nation Convention against Corruption (2003).**

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What should be the way forward to combat money laundering in India?

Money laundering has the potential to completely destroy the economic and socio-political fabric of the country. Hence, we need to take further measures to protect our country from this menace.

Addition of stricter provisions– More strict provisions must be added to PMLA because money laundering tends to corrupt even the most professional players in the market.

Criminalization of money laundering in tax haven countries- Money laundering should be criminalized in accordance with the **Vienna Convention and the Palermo Convention** which must ensure that financial institution **secrecy laws of tax haven countries** do not impede the implementation of the FATF Recommendations.

Sensitization- Public must be **sensitised** that money laundering is more dangerous than terrorism. Hence they **must refrain** from buying from black markets or using hawala transactions. There is a need to **sensitize the Private Sector** about their role in anti-money laundering activities

There is a need to build a **balance between financial confidentiality and this confidentiality turning to a money-laundering have**n. India must use its diplomatic heft to nudge the tax haven countries to end their financial secrecy laws.

One Nation One Election – Explained, pointwise

The Union government has constituted a committee under the headship of former President of India Ram Nath Kovind to look into the feasibility of **'one nation one election'.**

Over the years **PM Modi** has strongly pushed for **'one nation one election'**. **At present, elections** for state assemblies and the Lok Sabha **occur separately** either at the end of a five-year term for the incumbent government or in the event of dissolution due to various factors.

What is the One nation one election?

Definition- One nation one election refers to the **idea** of holding **simultaneous polls for State Assemblies and the Lok Sabha** instead of separate and continuous elections.

> **Historical Background-**
>
> **One Nation one election** was the **norm** in India **until 1967**. **Simultaneous elections** were conducted for the Lok Sabha and the state assemblies in **1952, 1957, 1962, and 1967**.
>
> However, due to the **premature dissolution** of some Legislative Assemblies in **1968** and **1969** the simultaneous election cycle got disrupted. Further in 1970, the Lok Sabha was dissolved prematurely and fresh elections were held in 1971.
>
> All these events led to the breakdown of the cycle of simultaneous elections in India.

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What are the arguments in favour of 'One Nation One Election'?

Reduction of Financial burden on state exchequer – Continuous election cycles are a financial burden on the state exchequer. 'One Nation One election' will **reduce the overall expenditure** on political process by ECI. E.g. The 2014 Lok Sabha polls cost Rs 3,870 cr to the exchequer and the 2015 Bihar elections alone cost the exchequer 300 cr. ECI has estimated the cost of 'one nation one election' to be around Rs.4500 cr.

Better utilisation of financial resources by political parties- Simultaneous elections will **reduce the campaign expenditure** of political parties and the candidates. This will **help smaller regional parties** in better management of financial resources.

Reduced duration of 'model code of conduct'-Frequent imposition of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) during polls **stalls all development work for months at a time.** It will **reduce 'policy paralysis'** that results from the imposition of the Model Code of Conduct during election time.

Focus on governance instead of being in 'election mode'- One nation one election" will **ensure continuity of policies and programmes** of the central and state governments. It will **reduce disruption of normal public life** as political rallies will be kept to a minimum. It will improve the delivery of essential services to public.

Increase of administrative efficiency- During elections the entire state machinery focuses on conducting a free and fair electoral process which impacts the everyday administration because officials are engaged in polling duties. 'One nation one election' will increase efficiency of administrative system.

Improvement of Internal security- Frequent Deployment of security forces during elections is use a considerable size of armed police forces which can otherwise be better deployed for better management of internal security problems like naxalism.

Reduced use of 'black money'- Elections involve considerable expenditure by prospective candidates most of which is black money. 'One nation one election' will **reduce the circulation of black money** in economy.

Reduction of populist measures-Frequent elections **forces the political class** to think in terms of **immediate electoral gains** rather than focus on **long-term programs and policies** which impacts the focus of governance and policymaking. Simultaneous elections would reduce the populist measures.

Increase of voter turnout- According to the Law Commission, simultaneous elections will increase voter turnout because it will be **easier for people to cast** many votes all at once.

Improvement in social harmony- Frequent elections perpetuate caste, religion, and communal issues across the country as elections are polarising events that have accentuated **casteism, communalism, and corruption.** Simultaneous elections would reduce the fault lines between communities created due to multiple elections.

What are the arguments against 'one nation one election'?

Reduced Accountability – Regular elections ensure that the government is under an obligation to listen to the will of the people regularly. Regular state elections serve as **feedback mechanism**

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for the political parties. Critics argue that if the government is assured of a fixed term it might lead to **autocratic tendencies.**

Undermining of Federal Power – In recent years, issues affecting the states have gained political value, which is demonstrated with more regional parties forming state governments like DMK in Tamil Nadu, TDP in Andhra Pradesh & Biju Janata Dal in Odisha. Due to simultaneous elections **union elections might overshadow the state election**.

Disadvantage for regional parties- Critics argue that simultaneous election would hamper the prospects of regional parties as **national issues would dominate the political narrative instead of local issues**. Regional parties would not be able to compete against national parties in both money and election strategies.

Against Spirit of Democracy: Critics argue that **forcing simultaneous elections** is against democracy because trying to **force an artificial cycle of elections** and **restricting the choice** for voters is not correct.

Influences choices and electoral behavior- Voters may **vote for the same party** both at the national and state level which might put regional parties at a disadvantage. According to **research report by IDFC Institute** if elections are held at six-month intervals, there's a 77 percent likelihood of voters favoring the same political party or alliance for both state assemblies and the Lok Sabha.This figure drops to 61 percent if elections are held six months apart.

Threat to internal security- Deployment of heavy security forces for simultaneous elections is a logistical challenge and might endanger the internal security in the country.

Tampering with the democratic will-The present system has been consciously chosen by our forefathers to uphold the will of democracy by providing for **regular elections so that people can express their will through the right to vote**. Modifying the election system would mean tampering with the power of people to express their democratic will.

Exclusion of local elections- Simultaneous election **excludes local body polls** for panchayat and municiplaties. Conduction of separate election for these bodies will be another additional exercise which might nullify the gains made by simultaneous election for both lok sabha and state assemblies.

What are the challenges in the implementation of One Nation One election?

Constitutional and legal challenges-'One nation one election' will require change in the Constitution and other legal frameworks. Simultaneous elections would require amendments in five articles of the Constitution –**Article 83** (relating to the duration of Houses of Parliament), **Article 85** (relating to dissolution of the Lok Sabha by the President), **Article 172** (relating to the duration of the state legislatures), **Article 174** (relating to dissolution of the state legislatures) and **Article 356** (relating to the imposition of the President's Rule in states). This requires **constitutional amendments with 50% ratification of states** which is challenging for the government.

Syncing the terms of various state assemblies with Lok Sabha- The terms of different state governments are ending on separate dates and years.To hold simultaneous elections, the Centre will have to make **some states agree to curtail the terms of their houses** while others to extend theirs. Curtailment and extension of assembly duration is a major challenge.

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Logistical challenge– Arranging of around **30 lakh electronic voting machines (EVMs) and voter-verified paper audit trail (VVPAT) machines** and **deploying central forces** around the country is a major logistical challenge in the implementation of simultaneous election.

What are the recommendations of various committees formed on 'one nation one elections?

Election Commission Report in 1983 proposed to bring back simultaneous elections.

170th Law Commission in 1999 also advocated simultaneous elections.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice, headed by E M Sudarsana Natchiappan in 2015 recommended simultaneous elections.

What should be the way forward on 'one nation one election'?

India needs to find innovative solutions to ensure that we can hold simultaneous elections like-

Coupling the 'no-confidence motion' along with the 'vote of confidence' in an alternative government-This vote of confidence will also mention a leader to head it. After passing both of them (no-confidence motion and vote of confidence), the alternate government will head the government for the remaining term. This will help to maintain the fixed term and can ensure proper simultaneous election cycle.

Categorizing states based on proximity to the next general election and having one round of State Assembly polls with the next Lok Sabha election and another round for the remaining States 30 months later can also help in ensuring simultaneous election.

Conclusion

Simultaneous election **is an idea whose time has come**. However, since the issue is concerned with the federal structure of the Constitution, it needs to be **discussed and debated properly across the political spectrum to assuage the concerns of regional parties.** This will make it easier to implement the idea in the country.

If India opts for 'one nation, one election', the **world's biggest democracy will set another unique example as India will be the 4th country** in the world after Belgium, Sweden and South Africa which conduct simultaneous election.

G20 and its Significance – Explained, pointwise

India is set to host the **18th G20 summit** in September 2023 at the **Bharat Mandapam International Exhibition-Convention Centre (IECC)** New Delhi. This is the **first G20 summit** to be **held in India as well as in South Asia**.

The **18th G20 Summit** in New Delhi will be a **culmination** of all the **G20 processes and meetings** held throughout the year among ministers, senior officials, and civil societies. These meetings were held in **different cities** of India to **showcase India's cultural and regional diversity at a global stage**.

Read More- From Magna Carta to Ashtadhyayi: artefacts to grace G-20 corridor

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What is G-20?

The G20 or Group of 20 is an **intergovernmental forum** comprising **19 countries** and the **European Union (EU).** It works to **address major issues** related to the global economy, such as international financial stability, climate change mitigation and sustainable development.

Members of G-20-The Group of G20 (G20) comprises Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, United Kingdom, the United States and the European Union.
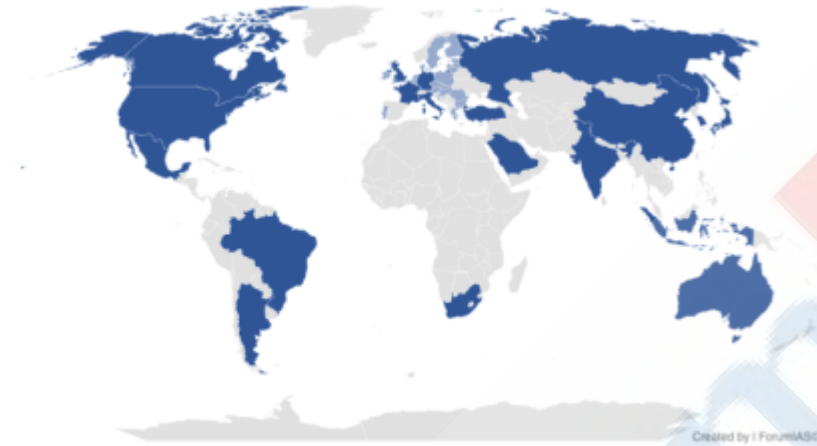
Countries in light blue are represented through the membership of the EU.

In addition to these member countries, the G20 each year invites guest countries and international organisations such as the United Nations, World Bank, IMF, OECD, ASEAN etc. to participate in its meetings.

> In addition to the regular International Organizations and Chairs of Regional Organisations India has invited **ISA**, **CDRI** and **ADB** as guests.

Features of G-20-

These members account for around **85% of the world GDP**, **75% of the total international trade** and **two-thirds of the global population**.

The G20 is **composed of most of the world's largest economies** including both industrialised and developing nations.

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Historical Background		
1999	Formation	G-20 group was founded in **1999 after the Asian financial crisis (**1997) as a forum for the **Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors** to **discuss global economic and financial issues.**
2008	Elevation to Leader's Level	After the **2008 global financial crisis** G-20 was **upgraded to the level of Heads of State or Government** from the Finance ministers and central bank governor's level.
2009	Declaration of G-20 as the "**premier forum for international economic cooperation**"	In 2009 G-20 was declared as the premier forum for forum for international economic cooperation. The G20 Leaders have met on a **regular basis** since then and the G20 has emerged as the **leading platform** for **global economic cooperation**.

Structure of G-20

G-20 does not have a charter or secretariat-The G-20 presidency is supported by the **Troika**, which includes the **previous, current, and incoming presidencies**. The G20 Presidency hosts the Summit and directs the agenda for a calendar year.

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G20 Presidencies

Troika of G-20

Structure of G-20-	While the head of states meet once a year, G-20 agenda is pursued by **two parallel tracks** which conduct regular meetings throughout the year.
Sherpa Track	The Sherpas of member countries are the **personal emissaries of the Leaders.** They **oversee all the negotiations over the year**, discuss the agenda for the Summit and coordinate the substantive work of G20. They **focus on socio-economic issues** such as agriculture, anti-corruption, climate, digital economy, education, employment, energy, environment, health, tourism, trade and investment.
Finance Track	It is headed by the Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors, who **generally meet four times a year** with two meetings being held on the sidelines of World Bank /International Monetary Fund meetings. They **focus on Fiscal and Monetary policy issues** such as global economy, infrastructure, financial regulation, financial inclusion, international financial architecture, and international taxation.

Objectives of G-20- Following are the objectives of G-20:

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(a) Policy coordination between its members in order to achieve global economic stability, sustainable growth

(b) Promote financial regulations that reduce risks and prevent future financial crises

(c) Create a new international financial architecture.

(d) Develop common vision to tackle challenges like climate change, environment sustainability, corruption and energy crisis.

India's agenda for 18th G-20 summit-

· Green Development, Climate Finance & Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE)

· Accelerated, Inclusive & Resilient Growth

· Accelerating progress on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

· Technological Transformation & Digital Public Infrastructure

· Multilateral Institutions for the 21st century

· Women-led development

What is the importance/significance of G-20?

Geopolitical Significance

Greater representation to developing countries-It is a **more representative** grouping in comparison to **groupings like G7** which comprised only industrialized economies and **ignored the interests of the global south**.

Global balance of power-G20 promotes a **more equitable distribution of power** among developed and developing countries than the earlier formed blocs such as **G-7 and P-5** (UNSC) which helps to maintain a balance of power at the global level.

Opportunity to undertake bilateral meetings-It offers an opportunity to **undertake bilateral or trilateral meetings** with leaders of 20 countries on the sidelines of G20 summits. E.g., Indonesia G-20 provided meeting for India-China summit.
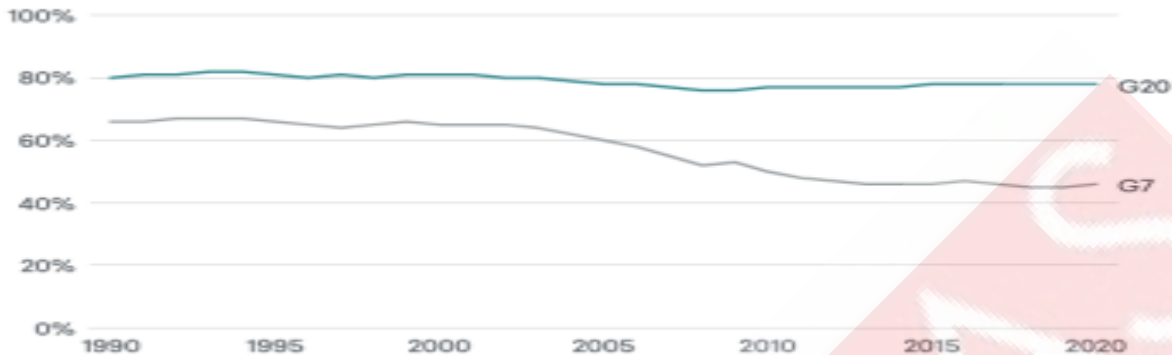
Bringing adversaries on a common platform- The importance of the G20 lies in its ability to bring together countries with **different ideologies, political systems, and economic interests** onto a common platform to discuss and address global economic issues. E.g.- India & China, US & Russia.

Economic Significance

More economic heft as a grouping-While the **share of G7 countries in the global economy has been falling, G20's share has been largely consistent**. The group carries more economic heft and hence it's discussions on financial and macro-economic policies influence the decisions of Bretton Woods institutions.

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The G20's Share of the Global Economy
Share of global gross domestic product (GDP)

Note: Countries that are G20 members through the EU are excluded.

Source: World Bank.

Source: Council on Foreign Relations

Tackling financial crises effecting global economy- G20 has played a critical role in responding to economic crises such as the **2008 global financial crisis**, **the Eurozone debt crisis**, and **the COVID-19 pandemic**.

Economic relief during recession induced due to COVID– G20 countries agreed to **suspend debt payments owed to them** by some of the world's poorest countries providing billions of dollars in relief to countries during COVID-19.

Social Significance

Widening areas of cooperation: The agenda of the G20 has been expanding from a broad macroeconomic policy to more socio-environment area of cooperation.

G20 summit in Hangzhou (China) 2016	Convergence of the US and China on the **Paris Agreement (Climate Change)**
G-20 summit in Argentina, 2018	Focused on **fair and sustainable development.**
G-20 summit in Germany, 2021	Issues regarding **money laundering, international tax havens, and corruption**.
G20 summit in Bali (Indonesia), 2022	Focused on **financial stability, humanitarian crisis, poverty,** aid,Food security (Black Sea Grains Initiative) and **gender equality.**

Addressing climate change: G20 has recognised the threat of climate change and has taken some initiatives to address it in the field of **energy efficiency and renewables; adoption of advanced and clean technologies; resilient infrastructure**; tackling environmental challenges like **biodiversity loss; adoption of the Circular Carbon Economy** etc.

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Vaccination during COVID-19- G20 leaders pledged to help vaccinate 70% of the world's population by mid-2022.

Significance of G-20 presidency for India

India's strategic importance: G20 presidency will provide a platform for India to engage with other major powers including the **United States, China, and Russia.**

Becoming the voice of Global South: India has become the voice of the erstwhile sidelined Global South by holding the **meeting of the Global South countries along with G20 meetings** and **pushing for inclusion of African Union (AU)**.

India's growing economic influence: It will help India further strengthen its economic ties with other G20 members as India is the fastest growing economy of the world.

India's leadership on climate change – As the world grapples with the challenge of climate change, India's presidency can help set the tone for global cooperation on this issue.E.g. **India's Mission LiFE.**

India's focus on inclusive growth: India's presidency will focus on issues such as **infrastructure development, job creation, and women's empowerment** which will have its spill over effect on Indian inclusive development.

What are the Challenges faced by G-20?

Structural Challenges

Informal structure of G20- G-20 has no permanent secretariat. The agenda changes every year according to the priorities of the presiding nation. According to critics G20 basically is an extension of the G7.

Limited membership-The G20 only includes 19 countries and the European Union which means that other important economies like **the African Union (AU) are not included.** Expanding the membership could help to ensure that the group is more representative of the global economy.

Non-binding decisions – Member countries are **not legally bound** to implement the decisions made at G20 meetings. For example, the G20 countries had agreed to a set of guidelines for preventing the **financing of terrorism** but there is **no mechanism to enforce compliance with these guidelines. G20 declarations are not legally binding.**

Geopolitical Challenges

Rising Geopolitical Rifts – The world economy is struggling with **geopolitical rifts** such as the **tensions between the US and China** the two biggest economies in the world, the decline in trade between the UK and the euro area in the wake of the **Brexit decision** and **sanctions on Russia.**

Russia-Ukraine Crisis – This is currently the **biggest roadblock** impairing functioning as the U.S and its allies are not willing to sit on the same table with Russia and its allies. This may cause a **severe stalemate** in the grouping's functioning and impair its progress.

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Influences decision-making of smaller countries- The **smaller countries** have to implement the declarations and commitments agreed by G20 nations for their growth. E.g., the G20 nations **agreed to end international financing for coal power plants.** So, a small nation cannot get any finance from G20 nations for a new coal power plant and must use its own limited financial resources or phase out coal and look for other alternatives.

Under representation of Africa- None of the African nations is a member of the G20 except for South Africa.

Economic Challenges

Rising Protectionism: G-20 is facing a credibility crisis due to **deglobalisation and rising protectionism**. Countries around the world are choosing to be **'G-zero'** over the G7, G20, BRICS, P5 (UNSC Permanent Members) and others.

Slowing down of Major Economies of G-20- China, one of the major engines for global growth, is witnessing a **sharp slowdown as it struggles with a real estate crisis**. US and UK are also facing recession.

Rising Inflation-In response to high inflation central banks across countries have raised interest rates which in turn have dampened economic activity further.

Read More- **Multilateral reforms as a priority in the G-20**

What should be the way forward for G-20 group?

Formalization of G20 – The G20 must include **objectives, vision and mission statements**, a **permanent secretariat** and staff to oversee commitments and ensure continuity in the agenda.

Make it more representative – G20 must make itself more representative by expanding membership. It must include **African Union (AU).**

Tax rate rationalisation to avoid protectionism-Rationalizing the **direct-indirect tax structure in member nations** and ensuring a parity in credit requirements shall ensure a more competitive market structure with easier entry and exit of firms

Bridging powers between the East and West-G-20 can act as bridging powers between the East and West. The global economic disruption caused by Western economic sanctions and the ongoing boycott of Russia in global economic forums need initiatives from the countries like India, Indonesia and South Africa in G-20. This will bridge out the differences.

Focus more on domestic commitments- G20 Nations should phase out domestic coal consumption. This will create a significant impact as **G20 nations represent more than 75%** of the world's greenhouse gas emissions

Global Financial Transaction Tax which was a consideration by the G20 in 2011 needs to be revived which can be used to fund green technology projects in Least Developed Countries.

Public health should be made a key agenda especially after the deadly impact of COVID-19.

Read More- **The G-20 can be the UN Security Council alternative**

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Increasing cases of Student suicide in India – Reasons and way forward- Explained, pointwise

The death of 23 students in Kota (the coaching hub of India) in 2023 so far, has again brought to our attention the **grave and often neglected crisis** of **student suicide** in India.

As per **National Crime Records Bureau's (NCRB), Accidental Deaths & Suicides in India (ADSI) report** more than 13,000 students commit suicide in India at the rate of more than **35 students per day** which comes down to **1 suicide every 42 mins**.

What is status of student suicides in India?

Definition-According to **Mental Healthcare Act MHA (2017)** suicide is the act of intentionally causing one's death.

Trend of Suicide in India according to NCRB Report-

The death by suicide of students has **increased by 32.15% since 2017.**

As per **Ministry of Education**, **122** students from IITs, NITs, central universities and other central institutions died by suicide over 2014-21. (**68 out of 122** belonged to the scheduled castes (SC), scheduled tribes (ST) or other backward classes (OBC)).

1% of the total suicides in the country are of students below the age of 18 years due to **'failure in examinations'**

The Indian **EXPRESS**

STUDENT SUICIDES OVER FIVE YEARS

YEAR	Total Student Suicides	Percent of male student suicides	Percent of female student suicides
2017	9,905	59.71%	47.56%
2018	10,159	52.85%	47.15%
2019	10,335	53.82%	46.17%
2020	12,526	55.62%	44.38%
2021	13,089	56.51%	43.49%

Source- The Indian express

Legal status of Suicide in India-

According to **Section 309** of IPC suicide is a **criminal offence punishable** with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year.

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Mental Healthcare Act (MHCA), 2017 has **significantly reduced the scope for the use of Section 309 IPC** and made the attempt to commit suicide punishable only as an **exception.**

However, Section 309 **continues to remain** in the IPC, and it is continuing to be **misused.**

What are the factors responsible for high rate of student suicides in India?

Student's suicide in India is driven by multitude of factors which have been listed below-

Economic Factors

Education becoming a means to livelihood rather than knowledge- Education in India has become a **means to climb up the economic ladde**r. Admission into IITs Medical colleges is seen as a gateway for financial freedom.

Unemployment-Prevalence of high rate of unemployment in India. According to the **National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) India's unemployment rate 6.1% is the highest in 45 years.** Such a high rate of unemployment lead to pressure among **youth and depression** which is one of reason of suicide.

Financial stress-The **steep cost** of **preparatory courses and tertiary education** acts as a burden on the students and put tremendous pressure on them.

Social Factors

Social pressure to get into government jobs or highly paid private jobs- 'Sarkari jobs','**high paying jobs' phenomenon** to **escape the social, class and caste predicaments** which the families of the students want to break. Children become their pawns to get them out.

Relationship Problems-Relationship problems such as **break-ups, family conflicts, and friendship issues** contribute to student suicides. These relationship problems become difficult to deal with for students who are far from home and have limited support.

Family problems-There has been a **breakdown of the traditional large family support system** which have also contributed to increase in suicide tendencies.As young Indians become more progressive, their traditionalist households become less supportive of their choices pertaining to financial independence, marriage age which have led to increase in suicides.

Lack of adequate social support- 'Log Kya Kahenge' attitude in Indian society is a permanent feature in the lives of competitive exam aspirants. This puts **undue pressure** on the aspirants who resort to suicides considering themselves as failure.

Social neglect- Low focus and the taboo associated around mental health is also one of the reasons for student's suicide. **Social stigma of mental illness** has also led to increase in the student's suicide.

Cyber Bullying-Cyber bullying and online harassment are becoming increasingly common and can contribute to student suicides. Cyber bullying takes many forms such as harassment, cyberstalking, or bullying through social media.

Forced career choices- Many students succumb to very high amount of pressure especially from their family and teachers in terms of their **career choices and studies.**

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Substance abuse-According to the **National Mental Health Survey (2015-16)** more than 22% of India's population over 18 years suffers from a substance disorder which includes **alcoholism, use of tobacco and drug abuse.**

Academic Factors

Academic Stress-High expectations from parents, teachers and society can lead to **excessive stress and pressure to perform well in exams**.This pressure to succeed becomes overwhelming for some students leading to feelings of failure and hopelessness.

Lack of support from Educational Institutions-Educational Institutions **lack trained human resource for guidance and counselling** and are **ill-equipped to tackle mental health issues** of children and adolescents.

Examination Centric Education- Equation of academic excellence with marks,pressure of studies and performance are critical factors in students' suicides in India.

Failure in exams-Students aged 16-18 are often subjected to undue pressure at home to succeed. This drives them to resort to suicides in case of failures in the examination.

Political Factors

Marginalisation of Students from vulnerable sectors- Marginalised section students are **pushed further to the margins** through a number of factors such as the lack of English-medium education; private institutions charging high fees; poor quality education in government-run schools and institutes and **caste discrimination**. **E.g. Rohit Vermula Suicide.**

Flawed neoliberal agenda for failure and success- The rise of neoliberalism as an economic and social ideology has **pushed the youth to blame themselves for their failure** to secure their 'dream job' while the government continues to shirk its basic responsibility.

What initiatives must be taken to reduce student suicides?

Increase employment opportunities-India **must focus on 'job creation'** to meet the employment demands presented with the demographic bulge of young population.

Reduce the financial burden of education- Provision of cheap study loans, reduction of cost of education with GDP allocation to education sector (6% of GDP as per NEP).

Improve Mental Health Services in educational institutions-Providing students with access to mental health services and resources such as **counselling services, support groups, and psychiatric services** can help prevent suicides. Schools and universities **must train** teachers, staff, and students in mental health **first aid.**

School reforms for mental health-Schools and colleges need to **foster a culture of understanding and trust** where students feel free and safe to talk about issues like bullying and anxiety.

Increase government expenditure on mental health-India does not spend enough on mental health **(0.06% of its health budget on mental health**). Government **must spend more on** mental healthcare. It is important to **increase medical seats** pertaining to mental health professionals.

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Family Support to students-Providing students with support from their families can help reduce the risk of suicide. This may include **offering support and resources for families and** encouraging students to maintain contact with their families.

Launch happiness curriculums in educational institutions- The 'Happiness Curriculum' launched by the Delhi government focuses on holistic education by including meditation, value education and mental exercises in conventional education curriculum. It should be adopted by other states also.

Revamp education system- It is important to **revamp the exam-centric education system** in India. The curriculum should be designed in ways that **stress the importance of mental exercises and meditation.**

Substance Abuse Prevention Programs-Implementing substance abuse prevention programs can help reduce the risk of student suicides.

Stricter Cyber Bullying Policies- Need proper monitoring of **social media sites, providing education about cyber bullying** and taking legal action against cyber bullies.

Address the Socio-economic Issues: Socio-economic factors such as **poverty, homelessness, and unemployment** should be addressed to improve students' overall well-being and reduce stress, anxiety, and depression.

Encouraging Participation in Sports-Sports can play a role in preventing suicides in educational hubs by providing a positive outlet for stress and emotions as well as increase self-esteem and confidence.

Focus on Overall Personality Development-By taking a **holistic approach** to personality development, educational institutions can create a supportive and inclusive environment that helps students thrive both academically and emotionally and can play a critical role in preventing suicides.

Embracing Positive Attitude towards Mental Health-Positive attitudes towards mental health and help-seeking must also be promoted through **open discussions about mental health and suicide.**

What are the initiatives taken by India to reduce Indian Suicides?

Following are the initiatives taken by India to reduce Indian Suicides-

Mental Healthcare Act (MHA) 2017-MHA 2017 aims to provide mental healthcare services for persons with mental illness.

KIRAN-The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has launched a 24/7 toll-free helpline "KIRAN" to provide support to people facing anxiety, stress, depression, suicidal thoughts and other mental health concerns.

Manodarpan Initiative-Manodarpan is an initiative of the Ministry of Education under Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan. It is aimed to provide psychosocial support to students, family members and teachers for their mental health and well-being during the times of Covid-19.

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National Suicide Prevention Strategy-Announced in 2023, National Suicide Prevention Strategy is the first of its kind in the country, with time-bound action plans and multi-sectoral collaborations to achieve reduction in suicide mortality by 10% by 2030.

<div style="background:black;color:white;padding:4px">**What should be the way forward to prevent student suicides?**</div>

Suicide should be perceived as a multidimensional public and mental health issue. There is a need to acknowledge its links to various aspects like social, economic, cultural and biological aspects.

Need guidelines from education board to ease pressure on students.E.g.T**he Andhra Pradesh Board of Intermediate Education** issued guidelines in **2017** to reduce the pressure on students. It called for **Yoga classes, Physical education classes** and I**mprovement of student-teacher ratio.**

Proper Implementation of NEP 2020 to reduce pressure on students.

The need of the hour is to learn from past failures to address the growing crisis and take urgent steps that involve all stakeholder -students, parents, teachers, institutes and policy makers.

<div align="center">**Modern Threats to Indian Financial System – Explained, pointwise**</div>

At the **Global Fintech Fest (GFF) 2023**, Union Finance & Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday said that **cryptocurrencies (crypto)** and **cyber intrusions** pose **major threats** to the **Indian financial system and financial systems across the world.**

Christine Lagarde, president of the European Central Bank and **former head of the International Monetary Fund (IMF)** has also warned that a **cyberattack could trigger a serious financial crisis. Cyberattack on Bangladesh Central Bank trying to steal $1 bn by exploiting vulnerabilities in SWIFT payment system** has also drawn our attention to these threats to our financial systems. In this regard, we are going to discuss the modern threats that Indian Financial System is facing, in the recent times.

<div style="background:black;color:white;padding:4px">**What are the modern threats to Indian Financial System?**</div>

Indian Financial System- Indian Financial system consists of financial institutions such as **banks**, **insurance companies**, **NBFCs**, **mutual funds**, **stock exchanges** and **pension funds**. These institutions are regulated by the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** and other regulatory bodies such as the **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)**, the I**nsurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)** and the **Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA).**

Modern Threats to Indian Financial system- Modern threats to Indian Financial system emanate are mentioned below-

Cyberhacking	According to the Bank for International Settlements the financial sector is experiencing **second largest share** of cyberhacking attacks after health sector.

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	Ex-Cyberhacking of Juspay systems which resulted in the theft of masked card data and card fingerprint data.
Ransomware attacks	Ransomware attack is the act of **encrypting the computer systems with malware** and locking the victims out of their systems. Financial services organizations are forced to comply with ransom demands as they are **threatened of data leakages on the dark web.** **Ex-WannaCry malware attack on Indian Banks.**
Phishing	Phishing is act of tricking users into **divulging login credentials to gain access to an internal network.** According to Akamai's 2019 State of the Internet report, almost **50% of observed phishing attacks** were linked to the **financial services sector.** **Ex- Credit card scams by getting access to OTP.**
Cryptocurrencies	Cryptocurrencies are used to commit 2 types of crimes: 1) it is becoming **medium of money laundering** which are posing major threats to Indian financial system. Wider proliferation of cryptocurrencies has the potential to **diminish the regulatory powers of Indian financial authorities.** 2) Cryptocurrency related frauds. **Ex-Bitcoins increased usage in India forced RBI to bring Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC). Crypto investors lost over $2.8 billion globally to various crypto scams in 2021.**
Data Thefts	Mining of customer data which results in leakage of customer information, results of product surveys, and generic market information. **Ex-Airtel payment bank data was mined like name,DoB,phone numbers, address were put up for sale for $35000 on Bitcoins**. In 2022, it was reported that the data of 9 million cardholders of several banks, including SBI, was leaked.

What are the negative effects of these modern threats to Indian financial system?

Negative Economic effects

Destabilisation of economy- Cyberattacks can **disrupt financial intermediation** and **undermine monetary policy**. They can have large fiscal costs that come from rescuing troubled financial institutions. As financial institutions and countries are increasingly connected, **financial shocks in one area can quickly spill across financial sectors and national borders.**

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Impact on financial sector- Cyberattacks on financial systems **discourage foreign investors** from long term investments in the financial markets. **FPIs pull out money** in the wake of such attacks from the Indian markets resulting in **exchange rates and interest rates volatility** in the financial market.

Transfers of economic power from the right people to the criminals– Cybercrimes of Indian financial system results in the transfer of economic power from the honest people to the criminals. The **good citizens and the government are dispossessed from their right** making the criminals take the benefit to flourish in their criminality.

Negative social effects

'Demographic Dividend' turns into 'Demographic Disaster'- Attacks on Indian financial systems increases unemployment in the country as **legitimate business companies fail due to these attacks**. It also devoid the individuals of their hard earned money by making false promises of high returns in short amount of time.

Increase criminal activities – It also increases criminal activities as more **youth get attracted** due to higher returns. At present, many criminal activities go untraced and unpunished, giving an additional motivation to cyber criminals.

Decline of Social and Political morality of the society-Money Laundering leads to **decline in the moral and social position of the society** by exposing it to activities such as cyberattacks, money laundering by cryptocurrencies.

Policy Paralysis- Legislative bodies are unable to quantify the negative economic effects of attacks on financial systems on economic development and their linkages with other crimes like trafficking and terrorism.

What are the challenges in countering these modern threats to Indian Financial System?

Lack of specialists – Globally India **ranks 2nd in terms of the number of Internet users** after China (Internet World Stats, 2017). However, India has a n**egligible base of cyber-security specialists** when compared to internet user base.

Lack of robust law enforcement mechanisms – India's approach to cyber security has so far been ad hoc and unsystematic. Despite a number of agencies, policies and initiatives, their implementation has been far from satisfactory.

Lack of Coordination between multiple agencies-Due to the existence of too many agencies with overlapping functions like the Serious Fraud Investigation committee (**SFIO**), Regulatory bodies like **RBI, SEBI** and National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre **(NCPIIC)**in the field of cyber security, there is lack of proper coordination between these agencies.

Lack of awareness- Digital illiteracy and lack of awareness about cybersecurity is a challenge. This results in **financial scams like stealing from debit cards through OTP**.

Increased use of social media- With the advent of social media and its increased adoption hackers have learned to exploit the medium.

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Weak identity and access management – Issues such as **one hacked credential can give a hacker access to the entire enterprise network**. Example- **Airtel database hacking through one account.**

Inadequate budget and lack of management – Budgetary allocations to cybersecurity is often neglected with the cost associated with the loss being very high.

What initiatives have been taken to counter these threats to Indian financial systems?

National Initiatives

Passage of Information Act 2000-The Information Act 2000 (amended in 2008) is the **primary law** for dealing with cybercrime and digital commerce in India.

National Cyber Security Policy 2013- The policy provides the vision and strategic direction to protect the **national cyberspace**.

Cyber Emergency Response Team India (CERT-In)- CERT-In has been operational since 2004. It is the **national nodal agency** for responding to computer security incidents as and when they occur.

Cyber Swachhta Kendra-Launched in **early 2017** the Cyber Swachhta Kendra provides a platform for users to analyse and clean their systems of various viruses, bots/ malware, Trojans.

Cyber Surakshit Bharat- Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology launched the Cyber Surakshit Bharat initiative to spread awareness about **cybercrime and building capacity for safety measures for Chief Information Security Officers (CISOs)** and frontline IT staff across all government departments.

Cyber Warrior Police Force-In 2018 the government announced its plans to introduce CWPF. It is proposed to be raised on lines of the Central Armed Police Force (CAPF).

Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)-The Union Government has decided to set up 14C. It will be apex coordination centre to deal with cybercrimes.

National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre (NCIIPC)– Established for protection of critical infrastructure of the country like the financial sector information.

International Initiatives

The Basel Committee on Banking Supervision (BCBS)- The Basel Committee on Banking Supervision constituted in 1974 by the central bank governors of the G10 countries responding to the financial market disturbances was established as a platform where members could discuss banking matters including cyberthreats.

International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Financial Stability Board (FSB)– Synthesis papers regularly released on cryptocurrencies.

Use of G-20 presidency- India's G20 Presidency calls for a framework for handling issues relating to crypto assets and guarding fintech industry against these threats.

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What should be the way forward in countering these modern threats to Indian financial system?

Investment in security systems-Fintech companies must invest heavily in robust security measures utilising **advanced encryption** to protect user data and financial transactions. A secured system will build trust and therefore it is a must for the financial ecosystem.

Strengthening of state cyber resilience-Governments and industry should strengthen security by sharing information on threats and by creating **financial computer emergency response teams (CERTs)** modelled on **Israel's FinCERT.**

Building capabilities-There is an urgent need to build capabilities and capacity for application, equipment and infrastructure testing.

Increase in cyber security experts- Immediate attention must be given to human resource development which would increase the number of experts who can effectively manage the cyber security of the country.

Increase expenditure on Research & Development- Investments should be made on R&D to develop more innovative technologies to address increasing cyber security threats.

Increase of Public Awareness-A periodic awareness campaign by the government and big private organizations should be conducted to **aware people about cyber security threats**. Usual practice of digital hygiene like keeping the **phone up to date, rebooting regularly can be done** and doing **finan**cial transactions on secured VPNs.

Strengthening Private Partnership-It is important to strengthen the public- private partnership on cyber security threats to Indian Financial systems.

Protection of financial systems is the need of the hour if India is aiming to become the 3rd largest economy of the world. Hence our focus must be on countering these modern threats which may disrupt our financial system and dissuade us from our goal.

India and Bharat Debate –Explained, pointwise

The **President's invite** for the **G-20 dinner** mentioned the **"President of Bharat"** instead of **"President of India".** There is speculation of an official change in the name of the country from India to Bharat.

Article 1 of the Constitution uses the two names interchangeably- "India, that is Bharat, shall be a Union of States." This has renewed a broader conversation regarding the **nation's nomenclature and its historical connotations**.

What are the origins of names "Bharat" and "India"?

Origin of name Bharat-

The origins of the name Bharat lie in the **Puranic literature** and **the epic Mahabharata**. The **Puranas** describe Bharata as the land between the "**sea in the south and the abode of snow in the north".**

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Bharata is also the name of the ancient king of legend who was the **ancestor of the Rig Vedic tribe of the Bharatas.** He is considered the progenitor of all peoples of the subcontinent.

Origin of name India-

The origin of the name India is derived from the word **Indus** which is the name of a river that flows through the northwestern part of the subcontinent.

The **ancient Greeks** called the people living beyond the **Indus as Indoi** which means **"the people of Indus".**

Later the Persians and the Arabs also used the term **Hind or Hindustan** to refer to the land of Indus.

The **Europeans adopted the name India** from these sources, and it **became the official name** of the country after the **British colonial rule.**

How were both "India" and "Bharat" adopted as the names of the country?

During the Constituent Assembly debates the **"Name and territory of the Union"** was taken up for discussion on **September 17, 1949**. When the **question of naming India** in the Constitution arose '**Hindustan' was dropped,** and **both 'Bharat' and 'India' were retained.**

Article 1 of the Constitution used the two names interchangeably- "India, that is Bharat, shall be a Union of States."

However, some members felt that **"India" was a reminder of colonial oppression** and sought to **prioritize "Bharat" in official documents.** Following are some of the arguments that **favoured the prioritization of the name Bharat.**

Hargovind Pant	Argued for the use of name "Bharatvarsha" and rejected the term "India" imposed by foreign rulers.
Seth Govind Das	Advocated for placing "Bharat" above "India and emphasized that the latter was merely a translation of the former in English.
Hari Vishnu Kamath	Cited the example of the Irish Constitution, which changed the name of the country upon achieving independence, as a precedent for using "Bharat."

Dr.B.R. Ambedkar cleverly forced a compromise between the names India and Bharat. While the **English version** mentions **"India that is Bharat",** the **Hindi name** mention **"Bharat arthaat India".** Several institutions such as Reserve Bank of India and the Indian Railways already have Hindi variants with "Bharatiya" in them.

> **Recent events for name change-**
>
> In 2015 **Centre opposed a name change** and stated that the **issue had been extensively deliberated** upon during the Constitution's drafting.
>
> **In 2016 and 2020**, **Supreme Court** has twice rejected pleas to rename 'India' to 'Bharat' and has reaffirmed that "Bharat" and "India" both find mention in the Constitution.

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What are the arguments in favour of changing name to Bharat from India?

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

Name Bharat is befitting to our history and our culture- Vishnu Purana and **Brahma Purana** mentioned the geographical area as 'Bharat'. Seventh-century Chinese traveller **Hiuen Tsang** has also referred to the country as Bharat.

Emotional Attachment to the name Bharat-Bharat or Bharatvarsha forms an **incredibly strong emotional attachment** which is rooted in the Puranas. Country is witnessing **'civilizational reincarnation'.**

Bharat connected to our National symbols-Indian National Anthem is woven around Bharat. The National Flags and emblems are connected to Bharat.

Name of the country as India was foreign imposition- Clinging to the word 'India' shows that we are not ashamed of having this insulting word which has been imposed on us by alien rulers.

Bharat is inclusive word for the supporters– Bharat word for the Hindi heartland's **'Bharat'** has its southern derivatives such as **"Bharatham"**in Tamil.

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

What are the arguments against changing name to Bharat from India?

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

Against the non-theocratical and inclusive nature of state- Renaming of name of the country as Bharat would be **against the non-theocratic and inclusive state** that India symbolises.

Both the names India and Bharat stir sentiments of National Belonging- Hindi language have used the name Bharat while **English and other local tongues** have been using the **name India**. Since India has **linguistic diversity** there will be several names which are used. However, both the names stir have the same sentiment of nationalism.

Undermining the country's soft power- Government's **name game** undermines the **confidence and soft power** of the nation. **India** name is registered with the **United Nations** and all foreign visits joint declarations use the name India. Ex-Recent **India-Greece joint Statement.**

Renaming is a cumbersome process- Renaming of name of the country would also require the **renaming of government institutions to corporate institutions**. This will be a cumbersome and tiring process. Also renaming of names will not serve much purpose as all **institutions have already Bharat names** in their **Hindi usage** like the **RBI and IITs.**

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India name has a wider acceptability- The name of the country as India has wider acceptability within the country as well as in international arena.

58th Amendment Act gives parity to both Bharat and India – 58th Amendment Act 1987 empowered the President to have published under his authority the authoritative text 'in the Hindi language' of the Constitution which could be used in the legal process also. Thus, the Hindi text of the Constitution published by the government following the amendment is 'authoritative'. This gave parity to both Bharat and India as hindi and English were both authoritative.

What will be the process of changing name to Bharat from India?

Legal experts are divided on the process of changing the name of India to Bharat. While the English version mentions "India,that is Bharat" the hindi name mention "Bharat arthaat India".

Special Majority required- One view is that a **wholesale switch to Bharat** may require an amendment with a 2/3rd majority of not only the two houses of Parliament but also of all the state assemblies.

No Amendment required-The other view is that Bharat could be used through simple notifications on a case-by-case basis.

Countries which have changed names after Independence

African Nations-Many African and Asian nations changed their names after being freed of colonial rule. For example-**Swaziland changing its name into Eswatini.**

Turkey and Myanmar-Turkey turned into Türkiye and Burma turning into Myanmar in recent times.

Conclusion

The name of the country has already been extensively debated in the constituent assembly by our learned forefathers. Dr.Ambedkar at that time reminded the House several times that the **civilisational debate was unnecessary** since the name Bharat was not opposed by members. Dr.Ambedkar was **apprehensive of such debates** on the name of the country. He was focussed more on development path the country should take to march ahead.

Today also we are at that juncture of our development journey where we look to become the third largest economy of the world by 2027. Indulging in these **regressive civilisational debates** would not be of much help in our development. "India,that is Bharat" and "Bharat arthaat India" are one and the same.

Global Biofuel Alliance and Significance of Biofuels-Explained,Pointwise

Formal establishment of Global Biofuel Alliance (GBA) **will be one of the key takeaways** under **India's G20 Presidency**.

Biofuels are the fuel derived from the **biomass of plants or animal wastes.** It is commonly produced from **corn, sugarcane and animal waste like cow dung**. These come under renewable energy as it sources are renewable unlike fossil fuels.These biofuels like bioethanol and biodiesel

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are blended with petrol or diesel which results in cost saving and reduces environmental pollution.

Global Biofuel Alliance will be the second India led multilateral platform after the International Solar Alliance **(ISA)** launched at Paris COP21 in 2015. Establishment of Global Biofuel Alliance will **catapult India at the centre stage of climate action** and **reinforce India's position in the fight against climate change**.

What is Global Biofuel Alliance and what are its objectives?

Global Biofuel Alliance- Global Biofuel Alliance is being **established by India, Brazil and US** which together account for **85% of global Ethanol Production.** It will be an **international platform** for sharing best practices, **promoting sustainable biofuel development** and enhancing its application. It aims to **impact global energy architecture** and achieve the target of **net-zero emissions.**

Core members-India, Brazil and US.

Membership and endorsement-Other members can join the Global Biofuel Alliance by **endorsing the foundation document**. The membership is open to **non-G-20** countries also. This alliance will be l**ike the International Solar Alliance** as the **membership will be open** for all countries to join. So far **19 countries** have shown interest to join other than the founding members which includes countries like **Italy, Kenya and UAE.**

Membership structure- GBA will have **three category membership structure** bringing together member countries, partner organisations and industries.

Objectives- Following are the objectives of Global Biofuel Alliance

1.Promotion of **International collaboration and cooperation** to encourage the acceptance and utilisation of **biofuels**.

2.Development of **robust markets for biofuels** and **facilitate global trade** in biofuels.

3.Intensification of the use of **sustainable biofuels in the transportation sector.**

4.Development of concrete policy lesson-sharing and **provision of technical support** for **national biofuels programs worldwide**.

5.Emphasization of the already **implemented best practices and success cases**.

6.Complement the relevant existing **regional and international agencies** as well as initiatives in the bioenergy, bioeconomy, and energy transition fields more including the **Clean Energy Ministerial Biofuture Platform**, the **Mission Innovation Bioenergy initiatives**, and the **Global Bioenergy Partnership (GBEP).**

What are Biofuels?

Biofuels are the fuel derived from the **biomass of plants or animal wastes.** It is commonly produced from **corn, sugarcane and animal waste like cow dung**. These come under renewable energy as it sources are renewable unlike fossil fuels.

Generation of biofuels

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1st Generation biofuel	Produced from **edible items** like sugar,corn,starch	**Higher carbon content** and emit greenhouse gases.
2nd Generation biofuel	Produced from **leftover food crops** like rice husk, wood chips	**Greenhouse content less than** 1st generation biofuel
3rd Generation biofuel	Produced from **microorganisms** like algae.	**Carbon Neutral** (CO2 emitted=CO2 sequestered)
4th Generation biofuel	Produced from **genetically engineered crops** like GM crops	**Carbon Negative**

Common biofuels used

Bioethanol	Produced from **corn and sugarcane** using fermentation process. **A litre of ethanol** contains approximately **two thirds of the energy** provided by a **litre of petrol.** It **improves combustion performance** and **lowers the emissions of carbon monoxide and sulphur oxide** when mixed with petrol. E10 is the most common blend in which 10 per cent composition is Ethanol
Biodiesel	Produced from vegetable oils like **soybean oil or palm oil, vegetable waste oils and animal fats** using transesterification process. It produces **very less harmful gases** as compared to diesel. It can be used as an **alternative** to **conventional diesel fuel.**
Biogas	Produced from **organic matter like sewage from animals and humans** by anaerobic decomposition. It is used for heating, electricity and for automobiles.

What is the Significance of Global Biofuel alliance for India?

Increased Technology transfers to India- The transfer of technologies and mobilisation of international climate funds through the Global Biofuels Alliance (GBA) will help India to move faster in the **compressed biogas sector and third generation ethanol plant capacities.**

Help in achieving higher Blending of petrol with ethanol- India which has already achieved **E-10** that is 10% blending of ethanol with petrol intends to achieve **E-20** that is 20% blending of ethanol by **2025-26.** However, we are still way behind **Brazil which has achieved E-85**. We can learn from Brazil through this platform of Global Biofuels Alliance (GBA).

Introduction of flex fuel vehicles in India- India can use the alliance and use Brazilian technologies for the introduction of **Flex Fuel Vehicles, capable of running on a wide range of fuel blends, from zero to E85** (an ethanol-petrol blend containing 85 percent ethanol and 15

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percent petrol). This would **significantly reduce emissions** and contribute to important **savings in India's crude oil import bill.**

India at the centre stage of global climate action- Establishment of Global Biofuels Alliance will **catapult India at the centre stage of climate action** and **reinforce India's position in the fight against climate change**.

Promotion of Biofuel exports- Today Brazil, US and India **constitute 85% of global** production of ethanol of which US produces 55%; Brazil produces 27% and India produces 3%. India can use the alliance to **increase its share in biofuel production** and can become a major exporting nation.

Greater energy independence for India-The establishment of the Global Biofuels Alliance (GBA) could assist India in achieving greater energy independence and **reduce its reliance on foreign crude oil** by promoting the increased utilisation of biofuels.

Reduction of Fiscal deficit and inflation-Crude Oil imports constitutes the highest component of our import bill. **Higher crude oil and gas prices lead to higher inflation**. Increased production of biofuels with the help of technology transfer from alliance members of Global Biofuels alliance would help us **maintain fiscal prudence and lower inflation.**

Increase in employment opportunities-Increased investments in the biofuel sector would create employment opportunities for thousands of youth and reap in **rich 'demographic dividend'.**

Improvement of financial status of farmers- Increased use of biofuel has supported farmers with payments worth **approximately USD 5 billion** over the past eight years in the country. Farmers of sugarcane crop who are reeling under the financial burden of low sugar prices have been relieved of their financial burden through biofuels.GBA will help in further **easing the farmer's financial burden and doubling their income.**

What are the challenges that Global Biofuels Alliance can face?

Transfer of Technology-US has generally been reluctant to share its technology with other countries. Global Biofuels Alliance (GBA) can also face this problem of '**technological secrecy**' which may hamper its overall objectives.

Geopolitical contestation-China and Russia have been averse to any platform led by the western countries. Membership expansion may face the **'Chinese hurdle'** as many countries are under the Chinese debt trap and their foreign policies are dictated by China.

Funds-The **funding mechanism needs to be structured** and put into place for ensuring sustainable financing of projects. With US experiencing recession and the global institutions like WB, IMF facing resource scarcity funds for Global Biofuels Alliance will be a major challenge.

Import restrictions on Biofuels- India has put import restrictions on import of biofuels in its National Biofuels Policy 2018. These **import restriction policies** are a major challenge for the development of global biofuels market. Global Biofuels Alliance faces a major challenge of **removal of these inward-looking policies.**

Environmental Concerns- As per Global Bioenergy Partnership **(GBEP)** report, one litre of ethanol from sugar requires about 2,860 litres of water and the growing demand for biofuels can

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change the cropping pattern and hit the crop basket.This would require huge amount of water and cultivable land areas and may make arid and water scarce countries of Africa averse to joining the alliance.

What is the significance of biofuels?

Global Biofuel Alliance will help in augmenting the production capacity of participating nations. Biofuels have several advantages which are enumerated below. Global Biofuel Alliance can help reap these advantages of biofuels which are mentioned below-

Environmental significance of Biofuels

Aid in fight against climate change- According to **International Energy Agency (IEA)** global **biofuel production needs to be tripled by 2030** to put the world's energy systems on track to achieve net zero by 2030. Biofuels lessen the global warming effect.

Decarbonisation of transportation sector- Blending of petrol with ethanol, use of **biodiesel** and **Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF)** reduces the emissions of greenhouse gases from transportation sector. Biofuels also help in reduction of emission of hazardous gases such as **Carbon monoxide (CO) and sulphur oxide (SO).**

Geopolitical Significance of Biofuels

Reduced dependence on OPEC and OPEC+- With increased usage of biofuels in blending **dependence on fossil fuels like petrol and diesel is reduced.** This reduces dependence of countries on the oil policies of OPEC and OPEC+.

Reduction of geopolitical contests for crude oil- In recent and past times, majority of the **geopolitical contests** like **South Sudan crisis, gulf wars etc.** were directly or indirectly linked to control of crude oil and gas resources. With reduction of dependence on crude oil resources due to biofuels these geopolitical contests and turmoil would be reduced.

Reduction of militarisation of energy supply routes- World today is witnessing heavy militirisation of ports and supply routes. **String of Pearls Policy of China** is one such example. With the use of Biofuels domestic source of fuel would be available, reducing need to secure supply lines of energy resources.

Economic Significance of biofuels

Saving lower- and middle-income countries from 'debt trap'- The **biggest component** of **import bill** of lower- and middle-income countries of the world is the bill of **crude oil and gas imports.** Biofuels save nations from these'debt trap' phenomenon.

Open avenues for 'new age energy enterpreneurship'- Biofuel sector has opened new avenues for investment and entrepreneurship.

Social Significance

Improve the socio-economic status of farmers- With **increased demand for food stocks** for biofuel production farmers **get due compensation** for even their damaged food crops. **For example –**In India increased use of biofuel has supported farmers with payments worth **approximately USD 5 billion** over the past eight years.

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Development of Healthier population- With reduced pollution levels through the enhanced use of biofuels the population would be healthier. This would reduce the healthcare expenditure of developing countries of the world.

What are the other Initiatives for Increased usage of Sustainable Biofuels?

International Initiatives

Roundtable on Sustainable Biomaterials (RSB)	**International initiative** that brings together farmers, companies, governments, non-governmental organisations, and scientists who are interested in the sustainability of biofuel production and distribution. Launched the **"RSB Certification System."** Biofuels producers that meet these criteria can show buyers and regulators that their product has been obtained without harming the environment or violating human rights.
Bonsucro	It is an international not for-profit, multi-stakeholder organization established in 2008 to promote sustainable sugar cane.
Sustainable Biofuels Consensus	It is an international initiative which calls upon governments, the private sector, and other stakeholders to take decisive action to ensure the sustainable trade, production, and use of biofuels.
Global Bioenergy Partnership (GBEP)	GBEP was founded in 2006 on the idea that bioenergy can significantly contribute to energy access and security, climate change mitigation, food security and sustainable development

National Initiatives

National Policy on Biofuels 2018	It **expands the scope of raw material for ethanol** production by allowing use of sugarcane juice, sugar containing materials like sugar beet, sweet sorghum **Read More- National Policy on biofuels**
Pradhan Mantri Ji-Van Yojana	The objective of the scheme is to create an ecosystem for setting up commercial projects and to boost Research and Development in 2G Ethanol sector.
Ethanol Blending	India has already achieved E-10. We have advanced the target of 20% blending of petrol by 2025 instead of 2030.
GOBAR DHAN Scheme	It focuses on **managing and converting cattle dung a**nd solid waste in farms to **useful compost, biogas and bio-CNG.** **Read More- GOBAR DHAN**
Repurpose Used Cooking Oil (RUCO)	launched by **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)** and aims for an ecosystem that will enable the collection and conversion of used cooking oil to biodiesel.

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What should be the way forward for Global Biofuels Alliance?

Should not be limited as a stagnant forum-Global Biofuels Alliance (GBA) forum should not be limited to being a stagnant platform. It should have **specific goals** to be achieved in the **short and medium terms.**

Focus on strengthening biomass supply chains- Global Biofuels Alliance (GBA) immediate objectives must be on strengthening the **biomass supply chains.**

Focus on technology transfer-Global Biofuels Alliance (GBA) must focus on efficient transfer of technology for the **efficient production of second-generation ethanol from agricultural residue**

Promotion of sustainable finance-Global Biofuels Alliance (GBA) must showcase pilot-scale production facilities for Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) and promote sustainable financial support for bioenergy initiatives.

Global Biofuels Alliance (GBA) has the **potential to become another successful platform** like the International Solar Alliance (ISA) in the field of renewable energy led by India.

[Yojana September 2023 Summary] Direct Tax Reforms-Explained, Pointwise

Direct Tax remains one of the **major sources** of raising **government revenues**. Government raises revenues to **finance public service programmes** and to fulfil the social objectives of **inclusive growth.**

In Direct Tax the Government of India has undertaken substantial tax reforms in the last few years to ensure that **tax collection increases** in a **non-adversarial manner** through a **stable** and **predictable** tax regime.

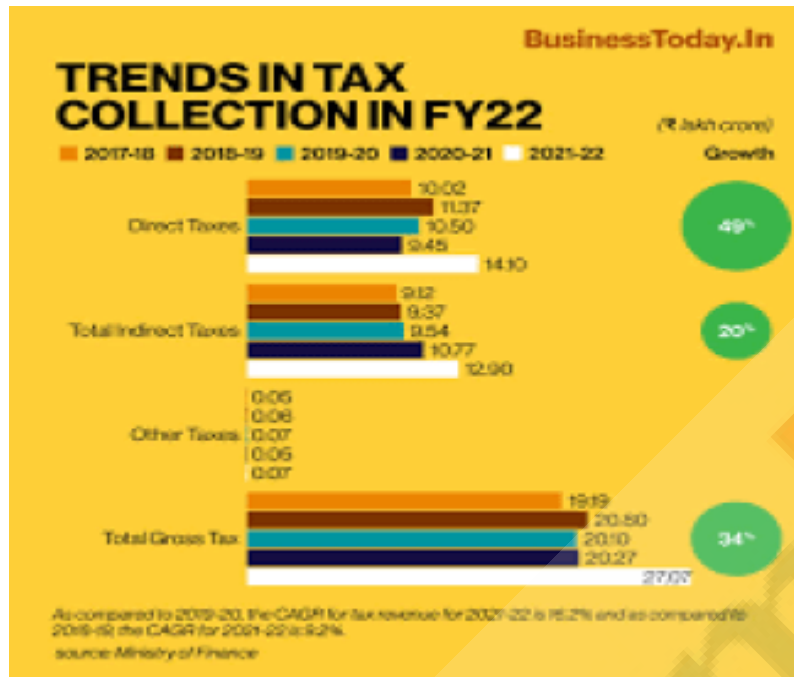## What are Direct Tax and Direct Tax Reforms?

Direct Tax Definition- Direct tax is a tax which an individual or organisation **pays taxes directly to the imposing body**. The **incidence and impact** of the tax **falls on the same entity**. Its **burden cannot be shifted** to a different individual or entity. Direct Tax is **progressive in nature** which means the **tax obligation increases in proportion** to an individual's or entity's income.

Examples of Direct Tax in India-In India direct taxes are regulated by Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT). CBDT imposes various direct taxes in India like **Income Tax**, **Corporate Tax**, **Capital Gains Tax, Securities Transaction Tax**, **Minimum Alternate Tax** etc.

Direct Tax Reforms Definition- Direct Tax reform refers to **bringing changes in taxation** to **maximize government's revenue and reduce the burden of taxation** on the people at the same time by ensuring **equitable, transparent,** and **fair taxation system.**

India has undertaken several Direct Tax reforms. A result of which the Direct Tax Collections have seen an increase. The **direct tax collection in the financial year 2021-2022 grew by 49**

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per cent while the indirect tax collection 30 per cent. A comparison of direct tax and indirect tax is presented below-

Source-Business Today

What are the Direct Tax Reforms Initiated by the Indian Government?

Reduction of Direct tax rates and abolition of direct taxes

Reduction in the corporate tax rate for all existing domestic companies- Government has brought in a historic direct tax reform through the **Taxation Laws (Amendment) Ordinance 2019** which **reduced the corporate tax rate to 25.17% (including surcharge and cess)** for existing domestic companies from the **earlier 30% tax rate**.

Direct tax incentive for new manufacturing domestic companies-A lower direct tax rate of **17.16% (including surcharge and cess)** is applicable to **new companies** which are formed after Oct 1,2019 and which start production before 31st March 2024 through the Taxation Laws (Amendment) Ordinance 2019.

Personal Income tax rebate- Direct tax reforms have been carried out in personal income tax in 2020 by providing an option for taxpayers to shift to the new tax regime with lower tax rates but without exemption/deduction. The **Finance Act 2023** has further reduced the **direct tax rates** in the new tax regime to make it more attractive.

Abolition of Dividend Distribution Tax (DDT)-The Finance Act, 2020 removed the Dividend Distribution Tax. The dividend income shall be taxed only in the hands of the recipients at their applicable rate. This was a major direct tax reform.

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Maintenance of stable tax regime despite COVID-19- During COVID time while many countries imposed new taxes and changed the tax rates, the Government of India continued its resolve to provide a **stable direct tax regime**.

Widening of direct tax base

Introduction of New Tax Deduction at Source (TDS) and Tax Collection at Source (TCS) provisions- Many direct tax reforms like **introduction of TDS on payment of rent by individuals/HUF**, TDS on **e-commerce**, TDS on **virtual digital assets**,TDS on **online games** have been introduced by the government which has increased the direct tax base.

Measures taken for High-Net-Worth Individuals paying Direct Tax- Direct tax reforms have been undertaken for high Net Worth individuals to pay direct taxes like **removing arbitrage** on the sale of **market-linked debentures and debt mutual funds**, **removing ambiguity** on the taxation of return from **business trusts classified as debt**, putting a **cap on saving long term capital gains tax** by way of investment in residential property, a **higher surcharge** for high net worth taxpayers.

Laws against black money which has increased Direct tax base- Direct tax reforms have been undertaken by introducing stringent laws against black money which have led to increase in direct tax collections like **Black Money (Undisclosed Foreign Income and Assets) and Imposition of Tax Act, 2015** and **Benami Transactions (Prohibition) (Amendment) Act 2016.**

Use of Technology for increasing Direct Taxes

Faceless E-assessment Scheme-The **faceless E-assessment Scheme, 2019** provides for a new scheme for making assessments by **eliminating the interface** between the Assessing Officer and the assessee, optimizing the use of resources through functional specialization, and introducing the team-based assessment.

Faceless appeals- Finance Act, 2020 empowered the Central Government to notify the Faceless Appeal Scheme in the appellate function of the department between the **appellant** and the **Commissioner of Income-tax (Appeals).**

Document Identification Number (DIN)- Every **communication** related to assessment, appeals, investigation, penalty, and rectification issued from 1st October 2019 onwards are mandatorily having a **computer-generated unique document identification number (DIN).**

Reduction of Litigation by Providing Direct Tax Certainty

Vivad se Vishwas- Direct Tax Vivad se Vishwas Act, 2020 was enacted on 17th March 2020 under which the declarations for settling disputes are currently being filed.This has brought down the litigation costs and has provided direct tax certainty.

Relaxation in the norms for Prosecution- The threshold for launching prosecution has been substantially increased. A system of the collegium of senior officers for sanction of prosecution has been introduced. The norms for compounding have also been relaxed.

Advance Pricing Agreements (APA)- Advance Pricing Agreement (APA) has been a success story in reducing litigation in transfer pricing. A record 95 APAs were signed in FY 2022.

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What are the advantages of Direct Tax Reforms for the government?

Widening of tax base-Direct tax reforms widens the tax base and **increases the government revenues.** It helps **deal with the problem of potential revenue** loss due to complicated direct tax structures and higher rates of direct taxes.

Reducing of direct tax litigation- There protracted tax litigation in India has not only put a burden on Indian judiciary but has also cost the government exchequer. There will be **reduction in tax terrorism** due to direct tax reforms.

Provide level playing field between large businesses and start-ups & young companies- Due to Direct Tax reforms there is reduction of **tax avoidance** used by large businesses and this helps in providing a level playing field between large businesses and startups.

Increases Ease of Doing Business- Direct tax reforms increase the ease of doing business ranking of India as it provides the **investors and the industrialists a clarity** about the stable tax regime. Non-oppressive and progressive direct tax regime helps in increasing India's ease of doing business potential.

Reduction of tax evasion- Direct tax reforms reduce the **base erosion and profit shifting (BEPS) and indirect transfers** from India which increases the revenues of the government and reduces international arbitrations.

Attracts Foreign Investments: Direct tax reforms help in attracting better **Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) and Foreign Portfolio Investments (FPIs)** since India is much more integrated with the world globally in terms of business linkages and capital account convertibility.

Catalyst to Inclusive Growth-Direct tax reforms increase the taxes and revenues of the government which helps in better redistribution of resources in the society leading to inclusive growth.

What are the Challenges in the implementation of Direct Tax Reforms?

Structural Issues-Structural issues such as **low financial literacy**, a **large share of the informal economy** and **large cash-based transactions** hamper in the implementation of Direct Tax Reforms.

Large tax exemptions and incentives- According to **G20 Development Working Group** by the IMF, OECD, UN, and World Bank concluded that **tax incentives** are redundant in attracting investment in developing countries. Increased threshold provided in case of **personal income taxes** and **exemptions, tax cuts, preferential tax rates, deferral of tax liabilities** lead to a lower direct tax base.

Complex Taxation laws and procedures-The **complex web of taxation** laws of the Central and State Governments cause complexities and litigation and hamper effective implementation of Direct Tax Reforms.

Resistance from stakeholders- Initiative of tax reform likely to face resistance from various **stakeholders** like **taxpayers, business community, tax professionals**. It has resulted in the delay in implementation of direct tax reforms.

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Large informal economy-A large population of India is engaged in **unorganized or informal** sector. This is **main hurdle** in creating a large direct tax base in country.

Tax Evasion and corruption-Tax evasion and corruption undermine the direct tax reform practices by the Indian Government.

Weak Tax Administration-Weakness of tax administration such as lack of technical expertise and financial resources, poorly drafted laws, and corruption.

What should be the way forward?

Simplification of Direct Tax on cross border transactions– **Arbind Modi Panel on Income Tax Reforms** has recommended simplification of rules of direct taxes on cross border transactions which will **reduce Base erosion and profit shifting and Indirect Transfers.** This will reduce International litigation cases like **Cairn case.**

Reintroduction of wealth tax-As Moderate rates of personal income tax are not sufficiently progressive to contain **growing inequality**, **wealth tax** can be reintroduced as part of Direct Tax Reforms.

Develop robust dispute resolution mechanism-Direct Tax reforms must focus on development of robust dispute settlement mechanism to reduce litigation and cost.

A robust Direct Tax Code is the **need of the 'new India'** aspiring to become third largest economy of the world by 2027.

G20 summit 2023 outcomes – Explained Pointwise

Recently 18th G20 summit 2023 concluded in India with the conclusion of final meeting of the 'Head of States' in New Delhi. The summit under India's presidency was a historic success. It ended with the adoption of **New Delhi Declaration** which was adopted with 100% consensus. This is a **huge diplomatic win** for India considering the stance taken on **Ukraine Crisis** was agreed upon by both Russia and China. The summit saw **several new global initiatives** which were launched which will change the global landscape.

Read More- **Delhi Declaration PDF**

This article focuses on major outcomes of G20 which have lot of geopolitical and geoeconomic importance.

G20 summit 2023 outcomes

1.Inclusion of African Union (AU) as a permanent G20 member.
Geo-Political Significance

G20 to become more representative – The **55-member African Union** was **formally made permanent member** of the G20 in order to make the grouping more **representative**. AU has been put on par with the European Union (EU).

Voice to the Global South – The entry of the AU would provide **greater voice to the Global South** within the G20 where the G7 countries have long played a dominant role.

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India as the leader of Global South – African Union's **(AU)** inclusion in the Delhi summit reinforced India's position as the leader of Global South.

Fresh Momentum to India-Africa Relationship – India's Africa outreach has witnessed several crests and troughs over the decades. Inclusion of AU is a **crest for Indian diplomacy** which must harness this opportunity and build upon a **stronger India-Africa Relationship.**

Geo-Economic Significance

Africa as the next Global Growth Hub – Inclusion of **African Union** (AU) in the G20 addresses the **economic imbalance in the representation** of G20. Africa is the next Global Growth Hub. AU makes G20 more representative.

Africa as hub of natural resources- Africa is a reservoir of natural resources. **DR Congo** is endowed with cobalt; **Morocco** has the largest phosphate reserve in the world and **Nigerian** gas can power all Europe. These resources must be harnessed in a judicious manner to power next gen climate friendly technologies like **e-battery and e-vehicles.**
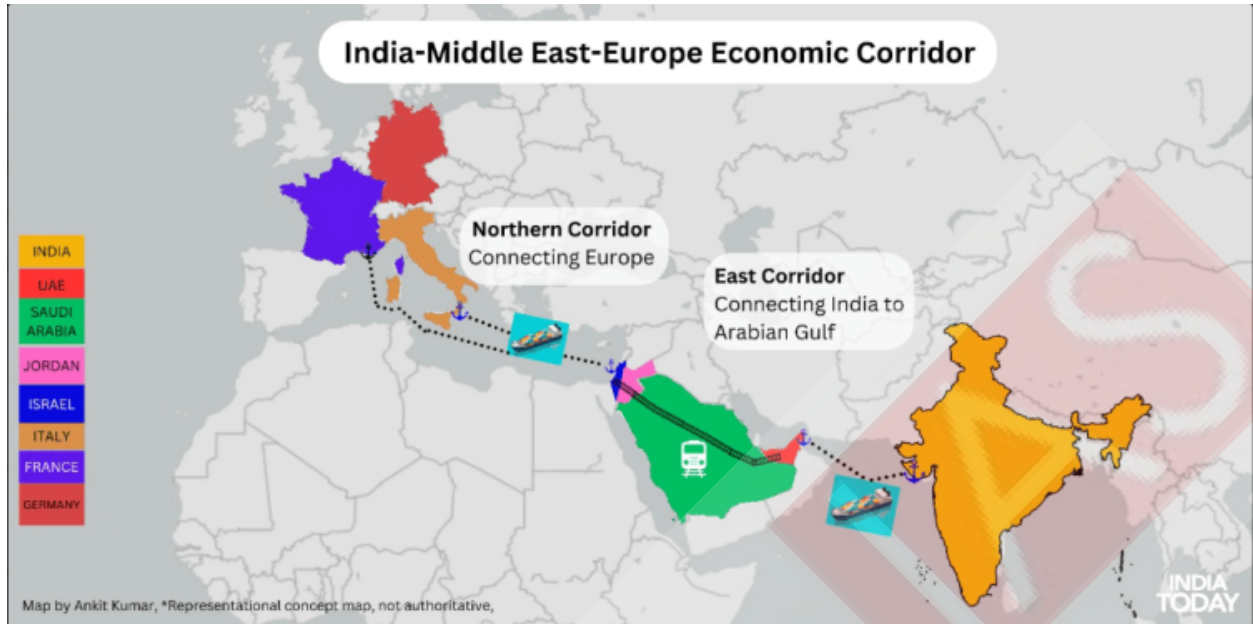
Possible Challenges-

Difficulties in reaching consensus- With the G20 now becoming G21 there is possibility of sharpening of ideological divide between the west and global south on **issues of global common** like funds for climate change mitigation with AU representing the voice of 55 African countries collectively.

Rise of Chinese Influence- China having made massive investments in the African countries can use AU to **act in its interest** on contentious issues.

2.Launch of India-Middle East-Europe Corridor (IMEC)

India-Middle East-Europe corridor aims at establishing railway and sea connectivity between Europe, Middle East and Asia. The project includes **India, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, the European Union, France, Italy, Germany and the US**. India-Middle East-Europe Corridor is part of the **Partnership for Global Infrastructure Investment (PGII)** which is a **collaborative effort by G7** nations to fund infrastructure projects in developing nations.

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Source-India Today

Geo-Political Significance

Counter to Chinese Belt and Road Initiative-It is one of the more **ambitious counters** to **China's massive infrastructure program** through which it has sought to connect more of the world to that country's economy. **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)** has created 'debt trap' and has diminished the sovereignty of member countries.

Strengthening of G20-The India-Middle East-Europe Corridor project is an attempt to further strengthen the **G20 group to counter the dominance** of China's Xi Jinping and Russia's Vladimir Putin.

Geopolitical Stability in Middle East- The India-Middle East-Europe Corridor project could help **reduce turbulence and insecurity** coming out of the Middle East due to greater economic integration of Middle Eastern Economies of the **UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Israel, and Europe.**

Geo-Economic Significance

Increased Prosperity- India-Middle East-Europe corridor (IMEC) would **increase prosperity** among the countries involved through an increased flow of energy and digital communications.

Developed Infrastructure- India-Middle East-Europe corridor (IMEC) would help deal with the lack of infrastructure needed for growth in lower and middle-income nations. IMEC will be a **green and digital bridge across continents and civilizations** as the corridor will include a rail link as well as an **electricity cable**, a **hydrogen pipeline** and **a high-speed data cable.**

Possible Challenges

Implementation on Ground- Early implementation and **construction of IMEC** is a challenge that member countries face.

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Finance-The Corridor would require **massive finance** for its construction. Arrangement of such funds is a challenge considering the recession that has been creeping in the world economy.

Chinese Resistance-IMEC may face Chinese pushback as China as **already invested** heavily in BRI project and has been making considerable investments in the middle eastern economies like Iran.

Read More-**India-Middle East-Europe corridor (IMEC)**

3.Launch of Global Biofuel Alliance (GBA)

Global Biofuels Alliance has been **launched by India, Brazil and US** which together account for **85% of global Ethanol Production.** It will be an **international platform** for sharing best practices, **promoting sustainable biofuel development** and enhancing its application.

Significance

Increased Technology transfers- The transfer of technologies and mobilisation of international climate funds through the Global Biofuels Alliance (GBA) will help member countries move faster in the **compressed biogas sector and third generation ethanol plant capacities.**

Help in achieving higher Blending of petrol with ethanol- Countries like **Brazil have achieved E-85** that is 85% blending of biofuel with petrol. Countries can learn from Brazil through this platform of Global Biofuels Alliance (GBA) by adopting their technology.

Aid in fight against climate change- According to **International Energy Agency (IEA)** global **biofuel production needs to be tripled by 2030** to put the world's energy systems on track to achieve net zero by 2030. GBA will enhance the production and consumption of biofuels which will help in reduction of global Warming.

Decarbonisation of transportation sector- Blending of petrol with ethanol, use of **biodiesel** and **Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF)** reduces the emissions of greenhouse gases from transportation sector. GBA will promote decarbonisation of transportation sector.

Reduced dependence on OPEC and OPEC+- With increased usage of biofuels in blending **dependence on fossil fuels like petrol and diesel is reduced.** This reduces dependence of countries on the oil policies of OPEC and OPEC+.GBA will reduce our dependence on these organisations.

Possible Challenges-

Transfer of Technology-US has generally been reluctant to share its technology with other countries. Global Biofuels Alliance (GBA) can also face this problem of '**technological secrecy**' which may hamper its overall objectives.

Geopolitical contestation-China and Russia have been averse to any platform led by the western countries. Membership expansion may face the **'Chinese hurdle'** as many countries are under the Chinese debt trap and their foreign policies are dictated by China.

Import restrictions on Biofuels- India has put import restrictions on import of biofuels in its National Biofuels Policy 2018. These **import restriction policies** are a major challenge for the

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development of global biofuels market. Global Biofuels Alliance faces a major challenge of **removal of these inward-looking policies.**

Funds-The **funding mechanism needs to be structured** and put into place for ensuring sustainable financing of projects. With US experiencing recession and the global institutions like WB, IMF facing resource scarcity funds for Global Biofuels Alliance will be a major challenge.

4.Launch of One Future Alliance and Creation of a Global Digital Public Infrastructure Repository

One Future Alliance is a voluntary initiative aimed at building capacity and provide technical assistance and adequate funding support for implementing digital public infrastructure in low- and middle-income countries. A voluntary and suggested framework for the development, deployment and governance of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) has been unanimously accepted by all G20 member countries.

Significance-

Economic Development of Global South- Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) can be **powerful financial inclusion mechanism** for the countries of global southern economies.

India as a leader in the digital public infrastructure-The adoption of **Indian UPI and India Stack** would boost fintech, entrepreneurship and existing businesses. This would enhance India's leadership role in the global south economies.

Enhancement of Productivity of economies- Adoption of Digital Infrastructure would **increase productivity** of global south economies with reduction in Incremental Capital Output Ratio (ICOR).

Challenges-

Need for Investment- The creation of digital public infrastructure requires investments which may be difficult for the global economies to pump on their own. This also opens spaces for colonising powers like China who engage in 'debt trap' diplomacy.

Need for Data protection laws- Digital Public Infrastructure generates a lot of data which are used by the MNCs as data is the new oil. Global south countries need to have strong data protection laws to prevent themselves from 'tech colonisation'.

5.Progress on climate change

The G20 leaders agreed to pursue **tripling renewable energy capacity globally by 2030** and accepted the need to phase-down unabated coal power.

However, the group **did not provide any plan** to amend existing policies and targets to achieve the target of ramping of renewables. G20 estimated that $4 trillion a year would be needed to pay for a green energy transition but **did not lay out any pathway to it**. G20 stopped short of setting major climate goals.

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New Delhi Declaration

Decisions that will resonate for a long time

G20 summits are held every year. But rarely is it that a single presidency is able to deliver a declaration that has the potential to alter and shape the trajectory of global development in its multiple dimensions. The Indian Presidency can take justifiable pride in doing so. Here are the seven big takeaways from the New Delhi Declaration that will reverberate for years to come, even if the actual shape they take is unclear at the moment:

DIGITAL PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

The G20 has accepted the idea of digital public infrastructure as a "set of shared digital systems, built and leveraged by both the public and private sectors, based on secure and resilient infrastructure" that can "enable delivery of services at societal-scale". By accepting a G20 framework for DPI systems, welcoming India's quest to build a Global DPI repository and noting its efforts to set up the One Future Alliance, the Delhi Declaration gives the world a new template and India a global role in an area where it is far ahead of almost every other country.

MDB REFORM

Multilateral development banks, set up after the Second World War, needed reform. The World Bank is in the middle of expanding from ending extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity to incorporating transboundary challenges, global public good, and most importantly climate. But how would these additional mandates be supported financially? The Indian Presidency, and the independent expert group set up under it, has delivered a road map for additional resource mobilisation through a variety of mechanisms, including additional funding from shareholders, balance sheet optimisation and private finance involvement. If implemented, this will reshape the architecture of global development.

CLIMATE

The G20 declaration set a target of global net-zero emissions by 2050. It identified the financial need to meet the climate challenge for developing countries — $5.8-5.9 trillion in the pre-2030 period to implement their NDCs, and another $4 trillion per year for their transition to clean energy technologies by 2030 to reach net-zero emissions by 2050.

CRYPTO

The Indian Presidency has put the issue of regulation of crypto assets at the forefront of the global agenda. Consistently articulating the position that this required a global rather than national approach, it has built on an IMF-FSB synthesis paper to push forward a road map "for the regulation, supervision and oversight of crypto-assets activities and markets, and of global stablecoin arrangements".

AI

The Indian Presidency has, for the first time, also brought artificial intelligence into the conversation at G20, and got members to agree on principles of "the protection of human rights, transparency and explainability, fairness, accountability, regulation, safety, appropriate human oversight, ethics, biases, privacy, and data protection" for the development and deployment of AI.

DISASTERS

The Indian Presidency institutionalised the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Working Group, while the declaration has asked for progress on early warning and action by strengthening national capacity and finances; it has welcomed the Global Platform for DRR; and has reiterated commitment to the Sendai Framework. In an uncertain world, the only certainty is that disasters will increase. India has put the issue on the global agenda.

IMMEDIATE CHALLENGES

The Delhi Declaration has tackled two immediate challenges with medium-term implications. On Ukraine, it has simply offered a road map of how the great geopolitical divide of our times can be prevented from crippling global cooperation. On debt, by pushing forward the management of debt crises in four nations — Zambia, Ghana, Sri Lanka, and Ethiopia — the Indian Presidency has provided a road map for other such cases.

Source-The Hindustan Times

Read More-**New Delhi Declaration**

Conclusion

Leadership of the G20 has been a year-long opportunity to showcase India as an influential diplomatic and economic power, and drive investment and trade flows into the world's most populous country.

India Middle East Europe Corridor-Explained Pointwise

India Middle East Europe Corridor was launched at the recently concluded G20 summit 2023 in India. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Governments of **India**, **the US**, **Saudi Arabia**, **the European Union (EU)**, **the UAE, France, Germany** and **Italy** to establish this economic Corridor.

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What is India Middle East Europe Corridor (IMEC)?

India Middle East Europe Corridor is a network of **transport corridors** comprising **railway lines** and **sea lanes** to **promote economic integration** between Asia, the Arabian Gulf, and Europe.

Project Details- The proposed corridor will comprise of **two separate corridors**- the **Eastern corridor** and the **Northern corridor**. The **Eastern Corridor** will connect India to the Arabian Gulf and the **Northern Corridor** will connect the Arabian Gulf to Europe.

It will **involve transit by ship between India and Saudi Arabia**, followed by a rail link to the UAE and likely to Jordan from where the shipment will move by sea to Turkey and further by rail.

Along with the railway track, cables for **energy and digital connectivity** as well as a **pipeline** for **clean hydrogen export** will be laid.

Member Countries – India, US, UAE, Saudi Arabia, European Union (EU), Italy, France and Germany.

Part of – It is part of the **Partnership for Global Infrastructure Investment (PGII)** which is a **collaborative effort by G7** nations to fund infrastructure projects in developing nations. PGII is the G7 bloc's counter to China's Belt and Road Initiative. PGII is part of G7's vision of **Build-Back-Better** framework.

Graphical Representation of the project-
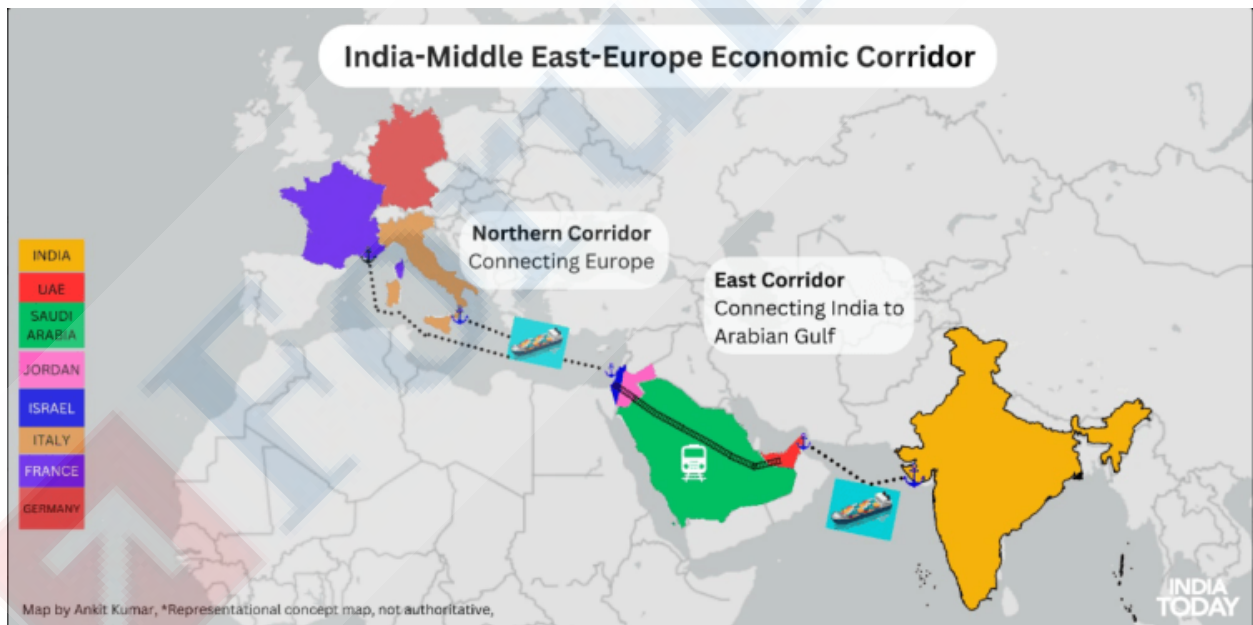
Source-India Today

What is the Significance of India Middle East Europe Corridor?

Geo-Political Significance

Counter to Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) – India Middle East Europe Corridor (IMEC) is an **ambitious counter** to **China's BRI project. BRI** has created a **'debt trap'** and has

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diminished the sovereignty of member countries. It will be a counter to the expansionist policies of China.

Counter to China's growing geopolitical Influence in Middle East- China's geopolitical influence has been growing in the Middle East region. China has helped to **broker a deal between Saudi Arabia and Iran**. **Saudi Arabia and the UAE**-both old allies of US-have been strengthening their ties with China. It also provides an opportunity to counter the growing Chinese geopolitical influence.

Geopolitical Stability in Middle East – This Corridor will help to bring countries in the Middle East together and establish that region as a **hub for economic activity instead of** as a **"source of challenge, conflict or crisis"** as it has been in recent history.

Normalisation of Diplomatic Relations- It would help **normalise diplomatic relations in the Middle east** with possibility of establishment of diplomatic relations between **Israel and Saudi Arabia** both of which are part of the project.

Reduced geopolitical dependence on Suez Canal and red sea – Suez Canal has been witnessing congestions in the recent times. Further the Red Sea with **straits of Bab-al-Mandeb** and **Gulf of Aden** is being militarised by China through its militarised naval bases like the **Port of Doraleh.** It will open an alternate route for transportation.

Expansion of G20 role from purely economic grouping to geo-political grouping- This project is also an attempt to further strengthen the G20 group by expanding the role of G-20 to geo-political domain **to counter the dominance** of China's Xi Jinping and Russia's Vladimir Putin.

Geo-Economic Significance

Increase in Trade and employment opportunities- This proposed corridor project would **increase** the **trade of manufactured goods** and facilitate the **development of clean energy.** It would increase efficiencies, save costs, promote economic cohesion, create jobs, leading to a **radical integration** of Asia, Europe, and the Middle East.

Development of Infrastructure- This proposed economic corridor project would help deal with the lack of infrastructure needed for growth in **lower and middle-income nations**. IMEC will be a **green and digital bridge across continents and civilizations** as the corridor will include a rail link as well as an **electricity cable**, a **hydrogen pipeline** and **a high-speed data cable.**

Promotion of Intra-regional Connectivity- It will promote Intra-regional connectivity and enhance trade, prosperity and connectivity.

What is the Significance of IMEC for India?

Launch of this connectivity corridor project is of immense significance to India.

Indo-US convergence in Middle East- India and US have **converged** their interests in **Middle East after Indo Pacific**. This economic and connectivity project is the second mega convergence between India and the United States in Middle East after the I2U2 forum. It can turn out to be far more significant for Indo-US relationship.

Read More-**I2U2**

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Strategic engagement with the Arabian Peninsula- Through this connectivity project the Indian govt now has an opportunity to build enduring connectivity between India and Arabia. The current project will strengthen **India's role as a driver in shaping regional connectivity.**

Breaking Pakistan's dominance- It breaks **Pakistan's monopoly** over **India's overland connectivity to the West.** Since the 1990s Delhi has sought various trans-regional connectivity projects with Pakistan. But Islamabad was adamant in its refusal to let India gain access to land-locked Afghanistan and Central Asia.

Reduced dependence on Iran- It also provides India an **alternate transport corridor** route for Europe by reducing over dependence on **Chabahar Port and INSTC.**

Opportunity to join Trans-African Corridor- Trans-African corridor is an **envisaged US and the EU** plan to build a corridor connecting Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Zambia. Effective implementation of **Indian Middle East Europe Corridor** project would **increase India's chances** of getting an opportunity to join Trans-African corridor.

Increase in Trade Competitiveness-According to US report this economic corridor will make trade between **India and Europe 40% faster**. This will increase the trade competitiveness of Indian exports.

What are the possible challenges for India Middle East Europe Economic Corridor?

Non-binding MoU- MoU of IMEC does not create any rights or obligations under international law. The memorandum only sets forth political commitments of its participants which are non-binding.

Implementation on Ground- Early implementation and construction of this corridor is a challenge that member countries face. As per the MoU, the members intend to meet within the next **sixty days to develop** and commit to an action plan with relevant timetables. Early groundbreaking of the project is a major challenge the corridor faces.

Finance-The Corridor would require **massive finance** for its construction. Arrangement of such funds is a challenge considering the **recession** that has been creeping in US and other advanced economies. **Scale of investments** that can be raised by China is higher than that of the G7. **Mobilisation of Private-sector finance** also remains a major challenge.

Chinese Resistance-This economic corridor also faces the challenge of Chinese pushback as China as already **invested heavily in BRI project. It** has been making considerable investments in the middle eastern economies like Iran, Saudi Arabia and UAE.

Conclusion

Success of **Indian Middle East Europe Corridor** could help **diversify the options** available to the countries who have **infrastructure requirements.** The **speed of implementation** of the corridor and its ability to **avoid the problem of financial and ecological sustainability faced by BRI** will determine the success of IMEC.

Further Reading-**IMEC Indian Express**

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Morocco Earthquake-Explained Pointwise

Morocco Earthqauke of 8th september 2023 has resulted in casualties of more than 2500 people. This Morocco earthquake has been described as the **strongest ever recorded** in the mountain region as Earthquakes are **relatively rare in North African countries.**

What are the reasons behind this dangerous Morocco Earthquake?

The morocco earthquake has a magnitude of 6.8. Its epicentre was located in the **Al-Haouz province** in the Atlas Mountains of the historic city of Marrakech.
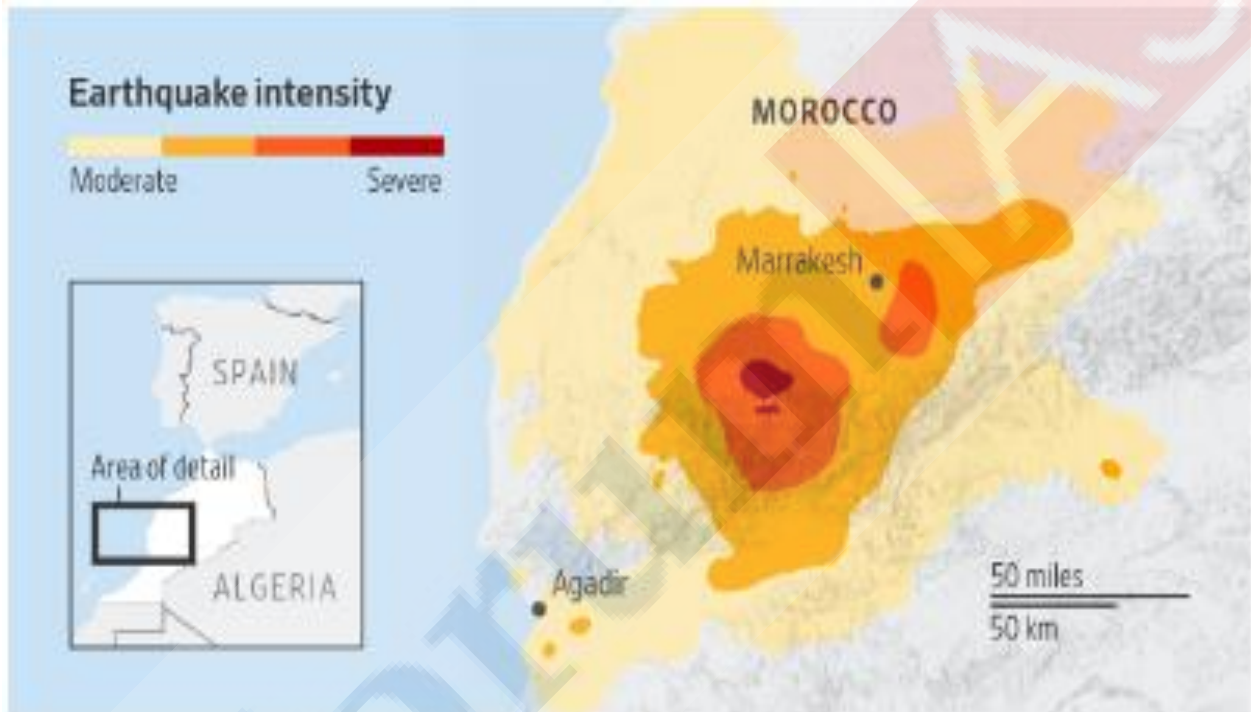
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The earthquakes in the North Africa are the result of northward convergence of the African plate with the Eurasian plate along a complex plate boundary.

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A map of the major tectonic plates on our planet. The quake occurred roughly 500 km away from the point where the African and Eurasian plates meet. (Wikimedia Commons)

Source-The Indian Express

Reasons for Morocco Earthquake

The morocco earthquake resulted from a geological phenomenon called a "**reverse fault**". This occurs when tectonic plates collide which cause thickening of the Earth's Crust. The stress along these fault lines induce earthquakes as rocks abruptly shift to release accumulated stress.

Reverse fault

The earthquake resulted from a geological phenomenon called a "reverse fault," which occurs when tectonic plates collide, causing the Earth's crust to rise up.

The upper block moves upward relative to the lower block.

Source-The Washington post

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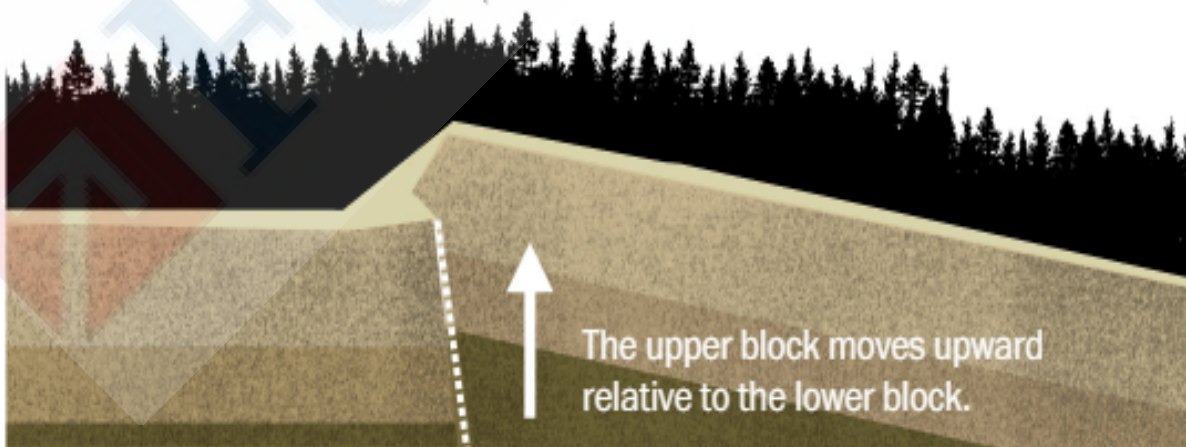
Geological map of the area

The Eurasian and African plates are moving closer to each other and this squeezing action is creating some of the tallest mountains in the area.

According to researchers, the Atlas Mountains were formed during the breakup of the Pangea supercontinent. It is now a mountain range that is actively rising, as evidenced by its high peaks and steep slopes.
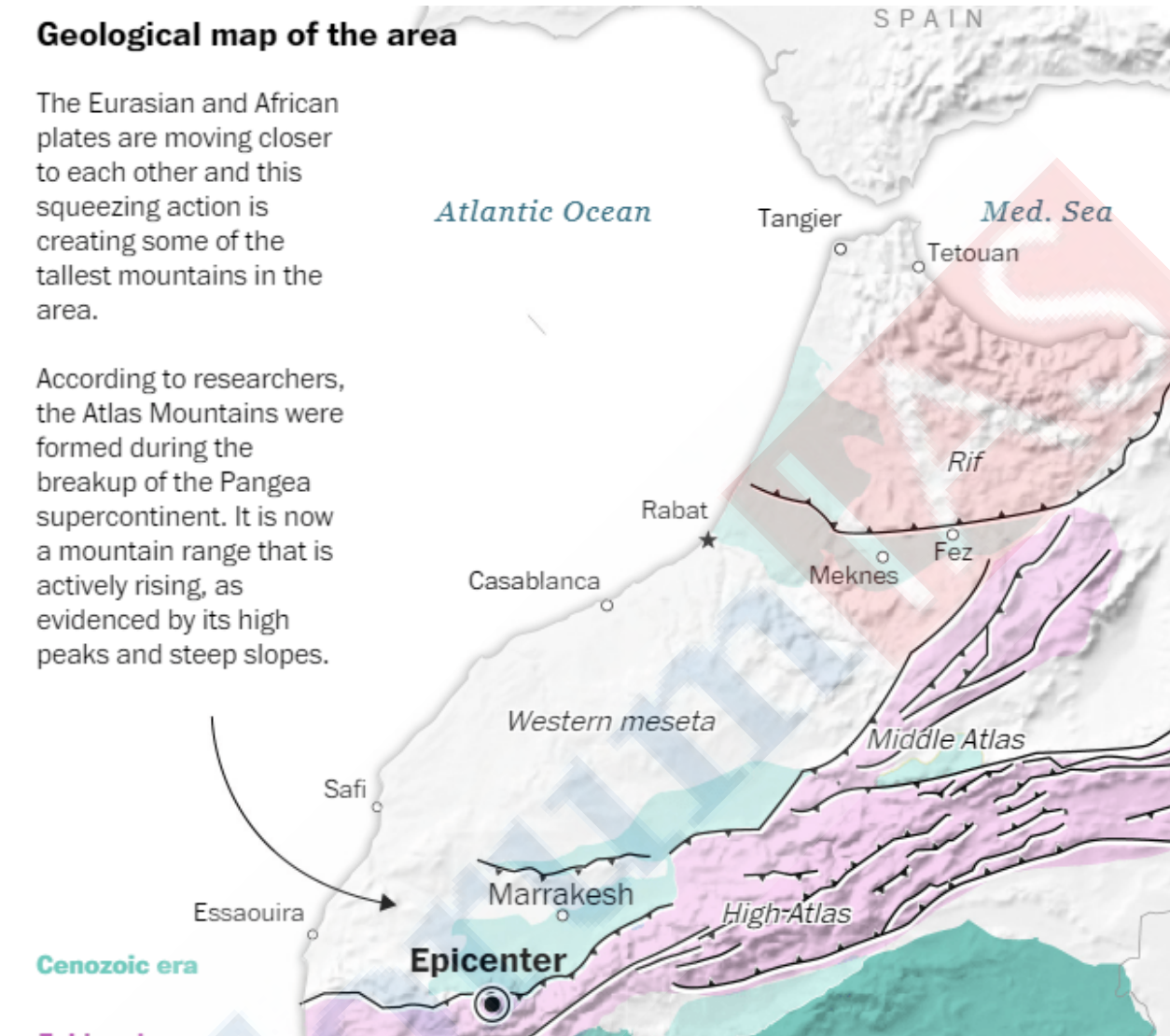
SPAIN

Atlantic Ocean

Tangier

Med. Sea

Tetouan

Rif

Rabat

Fez

Casablanca

Meknes

Western meseta

Middle Atlas

Safi

Marrakesh

High-Atlas

Essaouira

Epicenter

Cenozoic era

Source-The Washington Post

Reasons for High Destruction due to Morocco Earthquake-

The Morocco Earthquake was a **Shallow Earthquake.** Shallow earthquakes carry a much higher amount of energy when they hit the surface. Whereas earthquakes with deep epicenters lose energy when they hit the surface. Also buildings in rural areas and older cities are not built to withstand the earthquake. Many houses collapsed in Marrakech, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Read More-**Forum IAS**

Earthquake

An earthquake is the shaking of the Earth when two blocks of the earth suddenly slip past one another.

The surface where they slip is called the **fault or fault plane**.

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The location below the earth's surface where the earthquake starts is called the **hypocenter** and the location directly above it on the surface of the earth is called the **epicenter**.

Figure 1: Comparative fault behavior
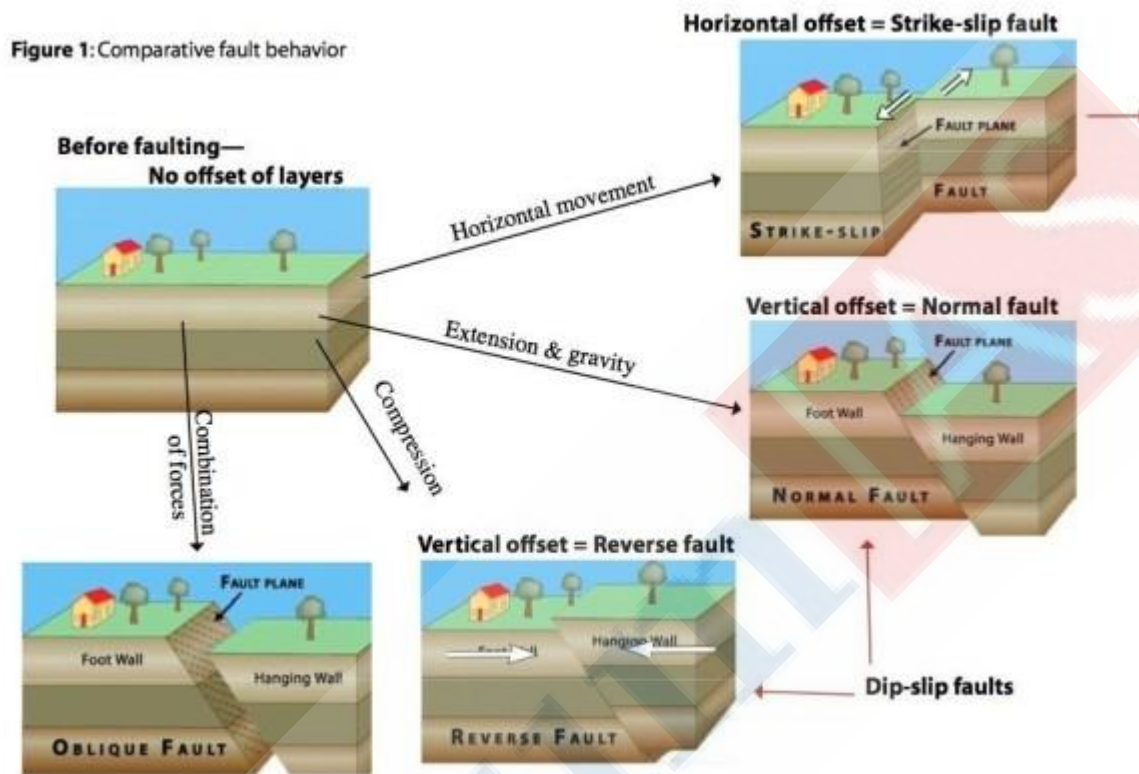
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What is India's susceptibility to Earthquakes like the Morocco Earthquake?

The Earthquakes in Turkey and Morocco have brought Earthquake as a disaster in focus. India is also highly susceptible to Earthquakes. The seismic zonation mapping of India also highlights India's susceptibility to Earthquakes.

Why are some parts in India are more prone to earthquakes

Himalayan belt- Collision between lithological plates **Indo-Austral plate with Eurasian plate** and **Burma Plate with Java Sumatra plate**. This collision between two continental plates cause lots of strain in underlying rocks. This strain is released in form of earthquakes

Andaman and Nicobar Islands-Sea floor displacement and **underwater volcanoes** disturb the equilibrium of earth's surface.

Deccan Plateau- Some earth scientists have come up with a theory of the emergence of a fault line and energy build-up along the fault line of the river **Bhima (Krishna) near Latur and Osmanabad (Maharashtra).**

Increasing population and unscientific land use in construction make India a high-risk land for earthquakes.

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Seismic Map of India
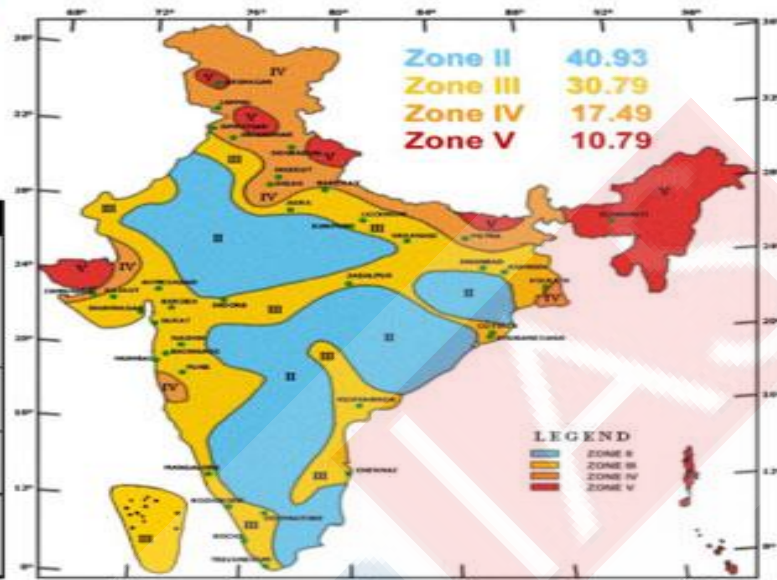
Fig. 1 Seismic zonation and intensity map of India

Source-National Institute of Disaster Management

Major Earthquakes In India and frequency of Earthquakes-

Some of the major Earthquakes in India are **Cutch Earthquake (1819)** which was 8.3 magnitude, **Assam Earthquake (1897)**, **Bihar-Nepal Earthquake (1934)** of 8.4 magnitude, **Koyna Earthquake (1967)** of 6.5 magnitude, **Uttarkashi (1991)** of 6.6 magnitude, **Killari Earthquake(1993)** of 6.4 magnitude, **Bhuj Earthquake (2001)** of 7.7 magnitude and **Jammu Kashmir Earthquake (2005).**

Seismic Region	No. of Earthquakes of Magnitude				Return Period
	5.0-5.9	6.0-6.9	7.0-7.9	8.0+	
Kashmir & Western Himalayas	25	7	2	1	2.5-3 yrs.
Central Himalayas	68	28	4	1	1 yrs.
North East India	200	128	15	4	<4 months
Indo-Gangetic Basin and Rajasthan	14	6	-	-	5 yrs
Cambay and Rann of Kutch	4	4	1	1	20 yrs.
Peninsualr India	31	10	-	-	2.5-3 yrs.
Andaman & Nicobar	80	68	1	1	<8 months

Table 1: Region wise major earthquakes in India

Source-National Institute of Disaster Management

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What are the challenges in Earthquake preparedness in India in the wake of Morocco Earthquake?

Structural Challenges

Retrofitting Challenges-The majority of the earthquake prone zone is hilly and mountainous area. Retrofitting is challenging and expensive in these areas.

Lack of proper structural Design-According to NDMA, **Ahmedabad's nearly 4,000 multi-story buildings won't withstand** a high-magnitude earthquake because of poor structural design.

Lack of Skilled Structural Labours-There is a shortage of skilled labour for designing and constructing earthquake-resistant structures.

Governance Challenges

Non Enforcement of Building Codes-Building codes for earthquake resistant buildings are not strictly enforced and safety requirements are no closely maintained. Furthermore the building code **ignores the buildings** that were **constructed before such codes were published in 1962**. These buildings form a large part of our cities.

Laxity in granting licenses to structural engineers-The licencing of structural engineers based on competency is not implemented properly.Buildings are not constructed with the help of certified structural engineers.

Lack of proper coordination-There are difficulties in coordinating the response to disasters in India. Example-**Uttarakhand floods** highlighted the shortcomings of disaster management in India. that the disaster response system has shortcomings.

Lack of awareness among the local population-The post disaster response is not properly implemented by the local population due to lack of awareness.

What measures have been undertaken by India to mitigate earthquake destruction in the wake of Morocco Earthquake?

According to the seismologists the earthquake itself is not the killer but it is the unpreparedness among the society and government in terms of inadequate infrastructure which kills thousands of people.

National Building Code (NBC) for India's Earthquake preparedness-India has set building regulations and requirements for construction that are earthquake resistant which are contained in the **National Building Code of 2005.**

National Retrofit Program for India's Earthquake preparedness-National Retrofitting Program was **introduced by the Home Ministry in 2014.**The RBI had instructed the banks to refuse loans to any construction that does not adhere to the regulations for earthquake-resistant structures.

National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)-The Disaster Management Act was passed in December 2005.The Disaster Management Act called for the establishment of **State Disaster Management Authorities (SDMAs)** led by the respective Chief Ministers to carry out similar functions at the state level and the **National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)** to oversee earthquake disaster management efforts in India.

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Launch of mobile apps-The government launched two Mobile apps –**'India Quake'** for dissemination of earthquake parameters and **'Sagar Vani'** to disseminate ocean related information and alerts (like high waves and Tsunami early warnings) to the user community in timely manner for their safety.

What Should be the way forward for reduction of destruction due to Earthquakes to avoid destruction like the Morocco Earthquake?

Earthquake monitoring centres-Earthquake monitoring centres **(seismological centres)** must be established for regular monitoring and fast dissemination of information among the people.

Preparation of Vulnerability Map-Vulnerability map of the country must be prepared and **vulnerability risk information** must be disseminated among the people to educating them about the ways and means minimising the adverse impacts of disasters.

Modification of houses in High Risk Areas-The house types and building designs in the vulnerable areas must be modified and construction of high-rise buildings, large industrial establishments and big urban centres must be discouraged.Ex-Traditional housing designs like **Khasi Housing design of Assam.**

Incorporation of learnings from Japan-Ensuring strict compliance of earthquake resistant buildings (80% in Japan).Use of **earthquake early warning system** which triggers an alert when seismic waves are detected. Since electric signals travel faster than seismic waves, the lead time is used to alert people via media, internet and trains, elevators, industrial machines are automatically stopped.

Providing tax Incentives-The governments must **grant tax breaks** and provide financial relief to corporates and individuals who construct structures with earthquake resistance.

Empowerment of Local Bodies and communities-The skills and capabilities of the local community must be enhanced through the empowerment of panchayats and municipal corporations in earthquake management.

Use of International Institutions and mechanisms-Countries must incorporate the **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction** in framing their policies of disaster management. Joint exercises of international organisations like **SCO JtEx-2019 of SCO** or the **BIMSTEC Disaster Management Exercise** must be used for disaster management and mitigation.

Further Reading-**Morocco Earthquake The Hindu**

Global Stocktake Report-Explained Pointwise

Recently,the **First Global Stocktake report** was released by the United Nations Climate Secretariat. According to the report while headway in reduction of global warming has been made, **countries are nowhere close** to achieving targets that would keep global warming under agreed levels as per Paris Climate Change.

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The first report this year is expected to significantly influence discussions in November when country representatives converge in Dubai for the 28th edition of the UN climate Conference of Parties (COP) in November.

What is Global Stocktake Report ?

The Global Stocktake Report is mentioned under **Art 14(1)** of the Paris Agreement. This report is designed to **'take stock'** of the **implementation of the Paris Agreement** and assess collective progress towards achieving the Agreement's goal.

> **Goals of Paris Agreement**
>
> Keeping a global temperature rise this century **well below 2 degrees Celsius** above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to **1.5 degrees Celsius.**
>
> Countries party to the agreement to put forward their "**Nationally Determined Contributions**"(NDCs) to reduce global warming and submit NDCs assessment reports.
>
> **Global Stocktake every 5 years** to assess the collective progress towards achieving the purpose of the agreement and to inform further individual actions by Parties.
>
> Read More-**Paris Agreement**

What are the key findings of Global Stocktake Report?

Positive Findings

Impact of Paris Agreement-The Paris Agreement has encouraged widespread Climate Action Worldwide.**194 Parties** (193 States plus the European Union) have joined this legally binding Paris Agreement and have submitted their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

Improvement in the Projected Global Temperature Rise- Global temperature rise is now expected to be between **2.4-2.6°C** which is a significant improvement from the earlier projection of **3.7-4.8°C** in 2010.

Negative Findings

NDCs of the countries insufficient to achieve Paris Goals-Current NDCs pledges by countries even if fully implemented would only cut 2-3 billion tonnes of CO2. 23 billion tonnes of CO2 are required to be cut to keep emissions in line with Paris agreements which leaves an **emissions gap of around 20 billion tonnes.**

Targeted reduction of Greenhouse gas emmissions- To meet the Paris Agreement Targets global greenhouse gas emissions need to be reduced by 43% by 2030 and further by 60% in 2035 and reach net zero CO2 emissions by 2050 globally. However the present emissions are far higher than the required levels.

Deficits in Climate Action-There are shortfalls in various aspects of climate action which includes mitigation,adaptation and finance.

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Recommendations of the Report

Eliminate all 'unabated fossil fuel'-All 'unabated fossil fuels'need to be rapidly eliminated. For example **coal plants without carbon capture and storage mechanisms** need to be shut down.

Enhance 'Carbon Sinks'-Deforestation and **land degradation have to be halted and reversed** and agricultural practices critical to reducing emissions and conserving and enhancing carbon sinks have to be encouraged.

Enhance access to Climate Finance-Enhance access to climate finance in developing countries to support adaptation and address '**loss and damage**'.

What are India's NDC targets and Indian Climate Change Initiatives which becomes important in context of Global Stocktake Report?

India's NDC targets-

In 2021, the Prime Minister of India had announced a **new 5-point set of India's NDC** at COP-26 called **Panchamrit. India** enhanced its own NDC targets committed at Paris Agreement.

Panchamrit

(a) India will increase its **non-fossil fuel energy capacity** to **500 gigawatt (GW) by 2030.**

(b) India will meet **50% of its energy requirements** from renewable sources by 2030.

(c) The total projected carbon emissions will be **reduced by 1 billion tonnes** from 2021 to 2030.

(d) Reducing carbon intensity by **45% by 2030.**

(e) India to achieve its target of **Net Zero by 2070**.

Read More- **India's new INDCs**

Status of India's NDC Targets-

Target(for 2030)	Existing-First NDC (2015)	New-Updated NDC (2022)	Progress
Emission Intensity Reduction	33-35 per cent from 2005 levels	45 per cent from 2005 levels	24 percent reduction had been achieved in 2016 itself. Estimated to have reached 30 percent.
Share of non-fossil fuels in installed electricity capacity	40 percent	50 percent	41.5 percent achieved.
Carbon Sink	Creation of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of additional sink through afforestation	Same as earlier	Tree cover has increased by 15000 sq kms by 2021.

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India's Initiatives to Achieve its NDCs-

National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC)- The Action Plan identifies eight core **"national missions"** running through to 2017: Solar Energy; Enhanced Energy Efficiency; Sustainable Habitat; Water; Sustaining the Himalayan Ecosystem; Green India; Sustainable Agriculture; and Strategic Knowledge for Climate Change.

Bharat Stage (BS) Emission Norms- Emissions from vehicles are one of the top contributors to air pollution, which led the government at the time to introduce the BS 2000 (Bharat Stage 1) vehicle emission norms from April 2000, followed by BS-II in 2005. BS-III was implemented nationwide in 2010. However, in 2016, the government decided to meet the global best practices and **leapfrog to BS-VI norms by skipping BS V altogether.**

India's Support to EVs-India is among a handful of countries that support the **global EV30@30** campaign which aims for at least 30% new vehicle sales to be electric by 2030.

Reforms in Transport Sector-India is accelerating its e-mobility transition with the Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of **(Hybrid &) Electric Vehicles Scheme.**A voluntary **vehicle scrapping policy** to phase out old and unfit vehicles complements the existing schemes.

International Solar Alliance: ISA was launched at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris on 30 November 2015 by India and France.ISA has led to **increase use of solar energy.**

Hydrogen Energy Mission-Govt of India has launched **Green hydrogen energy mission** to increase the share of renewable energy.

Perform,Achieve and Trade(PAT) Scheme-It is a **market-based mechanism** to further accelerate as well as incentivize **energy efficiency in the large energy-intensive industries.**

What are the challenges in ensuring climate justice as per the Global Stocktake report?

Gradual Dilution of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR): Article 3 of the UNFCCC recognizes the principle of CBDR based on differences between developed and developing countries in terms of their **current circumstances and historical contributions**. However, developed countries have not fulfilled their obligations of higher emission reductions. They have been pushing the developing countries to pledge for higher emmissions reduction.

Avoidance of Binding Targets: The **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)** under the Paris Agreement are **voluntary in nature**. They are not binding and legally enforceable. Kyoto Protocol had binding targets for developed countries but it has been non-functional. Developed countries by avoiding binding targets have reneged on their responsibility owing to historical contributions.

Shortfall in Climate Finance: Despite their pledge, the developed countries have failed to provide **US\$ 100 billion per year** for Climate Finance. **Global Stocktake report estimates that US\$ 1.6–3.8 trillion** is required annually to avoid warming exceeding 1.5°C.

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What Should be the way forward according to Global Stocktake report?

Predictable and assured Climate Finance-There can be **binding targets on developed countries** to provide funding to vulnerable countries, commensurate to their historical contributions.

Augmentation of technology transfer- Augmented technology transfer to the developing nations and to accelerate their transition to low-carbon economies.

The first report of Global Stocktake is expected to significantly influence discussions in November when country representatives converge in Dubai for the 28th edition of the UN climate Conference of Parties (COP) in November. **Positive responses** from countries to improve upon the **challenges highlighted** by the report **can only save our planet.**

Read More- **Global Stocktake Report Reuters**

Global Stocktake Report The Hindu

India Saudi Arabia Relations-Explained Pointwise

India Saudi Arabia Relations touched a new high after the conclusion of the first summit level meeting of the **India Saudi Arabia Strategic Partnership Council (SPC).** India Saudi Arabia Strategic Partnership Council was co-chaired by Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi after the conclusion of G-20 summit 2023. India Saudi Arabia also signed eight agreements which will further strengthen the relationship between the two countries.

Major Outcomes of the recent India Saudi Arabia Strategic partnership Council Meeting

1. Upgradation of the hydrocarbon energy partnership to a comprehensive energy partnership for renewable, petroleum and strategic reserves.

2. Expedite the implementation of the USD 50 billion West Coast refinery project.

3. Creation of a joint task force for channelising the $100 billion Saudi investment in India.

4. Expedite negotiations for a free trade agreement between India and the Gulf Cooperation Council of which Saudi Arabia is a member.

5. Exploration of possibilty of trading in local currencies including the acceptance of RuPAY card in Saudi Arabia for the benefit of the Indian community and the Hajj/Umrah pilgrims.

Read More–**India Saudi Arabia Strategic Partnership Council**

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A Brief history of India Saudi Arabia Relations

Source-Wikipedia

Initial Warm Phase –India Saudi Arabia **established diplomatic relations in 1947** which was followed by high-level visits from both sides. King Saud of Saudi Arabia visited India in 1955 and the Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru visited the Saudi Arabian Kingdom in 1956.
Cold Phase During Cold War-During the **Cold War**, Saudi Arabia put itself in the American camp but India followed the policy of non alignment.This dampened the initial warmth in the relations. Also,the defeat of Pakistan in 1971 followed by the **oil crisis of 1973** and Soviet intervention in Afghanistan further deteriorated the India Saudi relation.
Normalisation of Relationship-In January 2006, King Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz visited India which was the first visit by a Saudi monarch in 51 years and the first top level bilateral visit since Indira Gandhi's trip to Saudi Arabia in 1982.**The Delhi Declaration 2006** was signed which aimed to strengthen ties in areas of energy, trade, science and technology, education, health, and political cooperation on regional and international issues.
Deepening of Strategic Relationship-The **Riyadh Declaration 2010** furthered on the Delhi Declaration 2006 agreement and focused on enhancing cooperation on counter terrorism, money laundering, narcotics, arms and human trafficking, and defence and economic cooperation.PM Modi visited Riyadh in 2016 and in 2018 met Saudi Crown Prince in Argentina on the side-line of the G-20 summit.Saudi Crown Prince held bilateral talks with PM Modi after the recently concluded G-20 summit.India Saudi Arabia have further deepened their strategic relationship by forming **Strategic Partnership Council(SPC)**.

What is the significance of India Saudi Arabia relations?

India and Saudi Arabia hold a lot of importance for each other and hence India Saudi Arabia relationship is seen as one of the most promising partnership in the 21st Century.

Geo-Political Significance

Saudi Arabia's growing geopolitical importance-Saudi Arabia has substantial geopolitical influence in the regional politics of Middle East especially on the **Israeli-Palestinian peace**

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process. Saudi Arabia has cultivated ties with major powers such as the US, Russia, China and the EU.This increasing geopolitical profile of Saudi Arabia has to led to deepening of India's geopolitical engagement with Saudi Arabia.

Deepening of Chinese geopolitical relation with Saudi Arabia-China has deepened its geopolitical relation with Saudi Arabia.China has initiated the **Saudi Arabia-Iran relations reconciliation.** Thus it becomes important for India to engage with Saudi Arabia in the geopolitical arena to counter the growing Chinese geopolitical influence.

Geo-Strategic Significance

Counter Terrorism Cooperation-Saudi Arabia has a substantial influence over Pakistan. India can use this influence to bring Pakistan to negotiating table for talks on terrorism.Saudi Arabia has shown an understanding of **India's terrorism-related concerns** and has agreed to work with India in countering the global menace.

Defence cooperation-Saudi Arabia has limited experience in countering threats from groups like **Houthi militias**.Both countries have conducted joint military exercises on tackling terrorism in the mountainous areas bordering Yemen.They are exploring the possibilities of joint development and production of defence equipments.

Fighting piracy and protection of oil routes-Piracy in the Gulf of Aden and surrounding regions remains a threat to Sea Lines of Communication.There is also an increase in naval cooperation between India and Saudi Arabia with two editions of the bilateral naval exercise-**Al Mohed al Hindi** conducted to protect the world's oil artery the Strait of Hormuz.

Geo-Economic Significance

Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030-Vision 2030 plan of Saudi Arabia calls for **diversification of** the oil-dependent economy by attracting tourism and foreign investment and turning it into a global hub for business and culture. Saudi Arabia needs India's technological assistance to execute Vision 2030.This Vision opens up immense opportunities for Indian businesses like the **IT sector** and the **infrastructure businesses.**

Energy security-Saudi Arabia is a **source of 17% or more of crude oil and 32% of LPG requirements** of India and thus a key pillar of India's energy security. With US sanctions on Iran**,** India needs to import crude oil from other sources to meet its energy need. Saudi Arabia have offered India with additional crude oil supplies to meet India's growing needs.

Investment-Saudi Arabia has one of the **largest Sovereign Fund** in the World. It is an important nation to invest fund in India particularly in National Infrastructure and Investment fund (NIIF).Saudi oil giant Aramco and the AbuDhabi National Oil Company have acquired 50% stake in the $44 billion project in Ratnagiri, Maharashtra.

Trade-India is Saudi Arabia's second-largest trade partner and Saudi Arabia is India's fourth-largest trade partner. Bilateral trade between the countries in FY2022-23 was valued at **$52.76 billion.**Trade between the countries is going to increase in the coming decades.

Cultural Significance

Cultural Connect- Saudi Arabia facilitates **Hajj pilgrimage** to over 1,75,000 Indians every year. This is why Saudi Arabia is culturally significant for India.

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Indian Diaspora- The 2.7 million strong Indian community in Saudi Arabia is the **'most preferred community'** in Saudi Arabia and act as gents of soft power diplomacy. They send remittances of over US $11 billion annually to India.

What are the Challenges in India Saudi Arabia Relations?

However this deepening relation between India and Saudi Arabia also face several challenges which have been enumerated below.

Complexity of Middle East Politics-The politics of the Middle East are complex and multidimensional. There exist several faultlines like **Saudi Arabia-Iran Rivalry, Saudi Arabia-Isreal animosity**. India faces a complex challenge to manage its relationship with all these countries without antagonising others.

Pakistan Factor-The Pakistan factor is also an important challenge in the development of strong India-Saudi Arabia relationship. **Saudi Arabia is one of the largest granter of loans to Pakistan**. Pakistan has been using its territory to breed terrorism and hatred towards India.This has also led to some discomfort in deepening of India Saudi Arabia Relationship in the field of counter terrorism.

Nitaqat Program of Saudi Arabia-The Nitaqat program was introduced in 2011 in order **to increase the employment of Saudi nationals in the private sector**.Saudi policy of 'Nitaqat' have upset the large expatriate community of Indian working in the Kingdom.

What Should be the way forward for India Saudi Relations?

Greater Integration of economies-Some **labour-intensive establishments** from Saudi Arabia can be shifted to India which would reduce Kingdom's expatriate population. This would also eliminate the need to bring Nitaqat Policies.

Increased Cooperation in Space-With India's growing space prowess , space becomes an important domain of cooperation between the two countries.**Newly established Saudi Space Agency** can engage with ISRO.

Increase in defence cooperation- India Saudi Arabia can uplift cooperation in the maritime security domain to safeguard the global oil supply chain.

Expanding the areas of bilateral cooperation- India Saudi Arabia should expand the potential areas for next stage of bilateral cooperation in **Indian infrastructure, agriculture, start-ups, skilling and IT**.

Conclusion

In the fast-changing geopolitical profile of the Middle East ,India and Saudi Arabia both need each other to balance their relationships for a **peaceful and stable West Asia** where more than 8 million people of Indian origin reside and contribute for the betterment of the economy of the region.

Further Reading-[The importance of Saudi Arabia for India-Indian Express](#)

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[Yojana September 2023 Summary]Administrative Reforms-Explained Pointwise

In the last decade India has undertaken several **transformational administrative reforms** bringing the government and citizens closer. As India celebrated its 75th year of Independence as Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, the Prime Minister has given a clarion call for the adoption of **next-generation administrative reforms** for Viksit Bharat.

What have been the transformational administrative reforms brought by govt in the Last Decade?

In the last decade, the administrative reforms were driven by the government's maxim of "Minimum Government-Maximum Governance".

Major Administrative reforms implemented in the last Decade	
E-Governance Models	India's public institutions have been transformed into fully digital institutions. The Central Government's e-Governance models like Ayushman Bharat, **PM's Jan Arogya Yojana**, **PM's Jan Dhan Yojana**, **One Nation One Ration Card** and **Passport Sewa Kendras** have been successful in bringing transparency and openness to government processes.
Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS)	Online web-enabled system developed by **National Informatics Centre (Ministry of Electronics & IT [MeitY])**, in association with **Directorate of Public Grievances (DPG)** and **Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG)**. It provides the **facility to lodge a grievance online** from any geographical location. It enables the citizen to track online the grievance and also enables DARPG to monitor the grievance.
e-Samiksha	A **real time online system for monitoring** and follow-up action on the decisions taken by the Government at the Apex level in respect of implementation of important Government programmes/projects. Govt has been using this platform to weed out inefficient Officers through **premature retirement.**
Good Governance Index	This index has been launched by the **Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions.** It provide quantifiable data to compare the state of governance in all States and Union Territories(UTs).
Citizen Charters	It is a written document that specifies **the commitment of the organisation** towards fulfilling the needs of the citizens/customers. Citizen Charters for all Ministries/Departments which are updated and reviewed on a regular basis.

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National Conference on e-Governance	It provides a platform for the government **to engage with experts, intellectuals from industry and academic institutions** to exchange experiences relating to e-Governance initiatives.
Mission Karmayogi	Mission Karmayogi is part of **National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB).** It aims to build a **future-ready civil service** with the right attitude, skills and knowledge which is aligned to the vision of **New India**.
Lateral Entry	Induction of **personnel from the private sector** to the administrative post of the government.Lateral Entry helps in bringing the values of economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the Government sector because the personnel are not part of the bureaucratic setup.

Read More-CPGRAMS Forum IAS,Lateral Entry Forum IAS

What are the next generation administrative reforms proposed for Vikshit Bharat?

Next Generation reforms are aimed at organisational reforms. These next generational organisational reforms when coupled with the already implemented reforms will make a Viksit Bharat as envisaged by the Prime Minister.

Next Generation administrative reforms	
Benchmarking Governance	All the Governance indices like the **Good Governance Index(GGI)**,**National e-governance service delivery Assessment(NeSDA) Framework** must be expanded to all the states, UTs to benchmark governance.
Secretariat Reforms	Increasing efficiency in decision-making of secretariat by focussing on **delayering**, **delegation of financial powers**, **adoption of e-office, swachhata campaigns** for weeding out irrelevant files and minimisation of pendency.
Chintan Shivir	Every Ministry should conduct **internal, in house deliberations** to take a fresh look at their governance models by conducting regular Chintan Shivirs.
Restructuring of award Prime Minister's for Excellence in Administration	The restructured programme aims at inclusion of **priority programs** of the government. Its objective is to encourage constructive competition, innovation, replication and institutionalisation of best practices.

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What is the significance of administrative reforms in India?
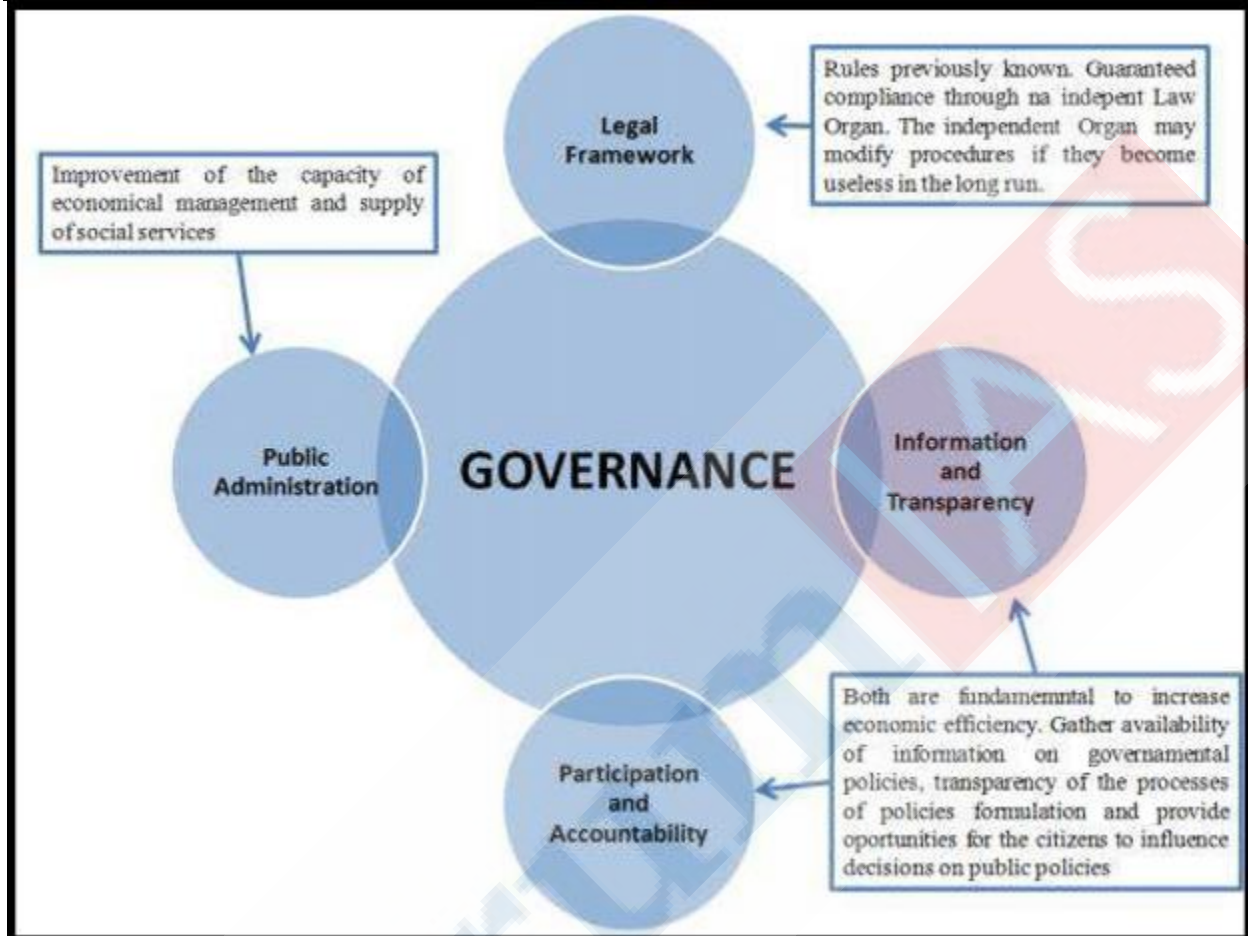
Source-World Bank

Efficient delivery of Government service – In recent times with the **technological advances, decentralisation and social activism** people's expectations of efficient delivery of government service has increased. These reforms help us fulfill these expectations.

Ensures transparency, accountability and rule of law-Administrative reforms ensures transparency, accountability and rule of Law. Fulfillment of these three objectives are of utmost necessity to develop a **Viksit Bharat**.

 Enhancement of govt capacity – These reforms enhance the capacity of governments to carry out core government functions. This enhanced capacities are of particular importance in times of **natural calamities, hazards and COVID.**

Propels the pace of economic development-The removal of **Red Tapism, bureaucratic hurdles in clearance of licences** helps in the economic development of the country.

What are the challenges in administrative reforms in India?

Assured promotion system – Assured promotion irrespective of performance deters young officers from taking new and innovative initiatives as they have fixed hierarchy of promotions.

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Prevalence of the 'transfer industry'-In most of the states, the principle of **three years regular tenure** of civil servants is not followed. These frequent transfers hamper the implementation of any comprehensive reforms.

Uneven utilisation of talent-There is **dominance of few elite services** in promotions, work allocations and assignments. Most of the coveted positions in the government are taken over by the elite services, which result in uneven utilisation of talent and adversely affect the morale of other services. For instance, specialist services like Indian Revenue Services, Indian Economic Services do not get adequate opportunities and representation in the work.

Red Tapism (Delay) and indecisiveness-This exists in many forms with the civil services. For example, regular queries by the superiors and delay in taking decisions. Sometimes it is necessary to take the opinion of the Ministry of Law or Ministry of Finance for taking an appropriate financial decision. All this delays the decision-making process.

Less Public Service Workforce – Only **4% of India's workforce** comprise public servants as compare to 22. 5% in the UK, 13.5% in the US and 28% in China.

Corruption nexuses-Corruption has become part of the bureaucratic machinery of India. The existence of corruption is a major challenge for initiating in any bureaucratic reforms.

What should be the way forward?

Mid-Career Appraisals-Mid-career appraisals should be conducted to weed out inept officers, and it should be done alongside finding **meritorious replacements** through lateral entry.

Reformation of state govt public employment policies-State governments must also reform public employment policies as combined employment of states is much more than GoI and state bureaucracy's interface with the ordinary citizen is much larger.

National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building – This is aimed at reshaping the **post recruitment training mechanisms** and **GoI's HR policies.**

Read More- **Administrative reforms The Indian Express**

Project Cheetah – Challenges and Significance – Explained Pointwise

India's ambitious Cheetah reintroduction programme **Project Cheetah** completed one year on 17th September 2023. Project Cheetah is India's ambitious cheetah relocation program aimed at establishing a self-sustaining population of about 35 cheetahs in the country over the next decade. However the Project has faced several criticisms with the death of 9 cheetahs (6 adults and 3 cubs) out of the 20 translocated cheetahs from Namibia and South Africa.

What is Project Cheetah?

Project Cheetah-Project Cheetah is the **world's first intercontinental large wild carnivore translocation project.** The project aimed at the reintroduction of Cheetahs in the country which had become extinct in 1950s in the country.

Status of Project-

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Incoming Cheetahs	Status of Cheetahs	Future Action
First batch- 8 cheetahs from Namibia arrived on September 17, 2022 at Kuno Palpur National Park.	6 Cheetahs have died. 14 cheetahs are remaining.All the surviving 14 adult cheetahs and one cub are in captivity	There is talk of them being radio-collared again and released once the winter sets in. The project authorities are talking of additional sites being prepared for releasing the cheetahs such as the **Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary** and **Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary**, both in **Madhya Pradesh.**
Second batch-12 cheetahs from South Africa arrived on February 18, 2023 at Kuno Palpur National Park.		
*In late March 2023, one of the females gave birth to a litter of four cubs which were conceived in India.	*3 of the 4 cubs have died and 1 cub is being hand reared as the mother has rejected it.	

Key Facts about Cheetahs

CHEETAH FACTS:

- **Oldest** of the big cat species
- Ancestors can be traced back about **8.5 million years**
- Number of cheetahs just **under 7,500** individuals globally

- IUCN's Red List recognises cheetahs as "**vulnerable**" species
- The Asiatic cheetah and the Northwest African cheetah are **critically endangered**
- Cheetahs have **lost 90%** of their global habitat
- They now live in **9%** of its historic range

Source-The Indian Express

Read More-**Difference between Asiatic and African Cheetahs**

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Brief Historical Timeline of Project Cheetah

- **Earliest historical references of Cheetahs in India:**
- They are found in classical Greek records of India, from Strabo, about 200 years before the Common Era.
- In the **Mughal Period**, cheetahs were used very extensively for hunting. Emperor Akbar had 1,000 cheetahs in his menagerie.
- Central India, particularly the Gwalior region, had cheetahs for a very long time. Various states including **Gwalior and Jaipur** used to hunt cheetahs.
- **Extinction of Cheetahs:**
- The country's last spotted cheetah died in Sal forests of Chhattisgarh's Koriya district in 1948 and the **wild animal was declared extinct in the country in 1952**.
- Maharaja Ramanuj Pratap Singh, the ruler of a small princely state in today's Chhattisgarh shot India's last 3 surviving cheetahs.
- **1st plan to reintroduce the cheetah-**First solid steps were taken in the 1970s, during negotiations with **Iran**, then under **Shah Muhammad Reza Pahlavi**. Iran's cheetahs were Asiatic, like India's extinct animals.**The plan was to exchange Asiatic lions for Asiatic cheetahs.**
- **2009-**Another attempt to source **Iranian Cheetahs** was made in 2009 without success. Iran would not permit even cloning of its Cheetahs.
- **2012-**Supreme Court ordered a **stay on the reintroduction project.**
- **2020-**South African experts visited four potential sites: **Kuno-Palpur**, **Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary, Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary and Madhav National Park**.
- **2022-** Project Cheetah was officially launched by the Prime Minister.

What is the Significance of Project Cheetah?

Environmental Significance

Biodiversity restoration-Reintroduction of cheetahs helps in restoring the natural balance of the ecosystem by **reintroduction of a top predator** in the food chain. Cheetahs will help in the **restoration** of open forestland grassland ecosystems in India and enhances the ecosystem services like water security, carbon sequestration and soil moisture conservation.

Conservation efforts of other species-The success of Project Cheetah can serve as a **model for the reintroduction of other critically endangered species** which can motivate conservationists and governments to pursue similar efforts for other endangered species like the **Great Indian Bustard.**

Ecological research opportunities- Reintroduction of cheetahs provides unique opportunity for scientists to **study cheetah behaviour and ecology** in a new environment.

Economic Significance

Enhancement of tourism- The presence of cheetahs in Indian national parks **boosts wildlife tourism** and generates revenue. This has led to job creation like **Cheetah Mitras** and has benefited communities living around national parks and wildlife reserves by increasing their sources of income.

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Social Significance

Social awareness about conservation- Debates on success of Project Cheetah has **raised public awareness** about wildlife conservation and the importance of protecting endangered species.

Socio-cultural significance- The reintroduction of cheetahs have also helped in **reviving their cultural importance** in India, as Cheetahs have historically been symbols of strength and agility in Indian mythology and folklore.

What are the possible reasons behind high cheetah mortality in Project Cheetah?

There has been death of 6 Cheetahs and 3 cubs which have higlighted the Drawbacks in the implementation of Project Cheetah.

Improper implementation of Livestock Importation Act 1898-According to the Livestock Importation Act 1988 the **prescribed time period of quarantine of animals is 30 days.** However there was delay in release of Cheetahs from their quarantine. Cheetahs were released after 60 days of quarantine. This **prolonged confinement of cheetahs in quarantine** has had adverse effects on their ability to adapt and has led to psychological adjustment issues.

Improper Scientific Assessment-The Action Plan of Project Cheetah mandated scientific assessment to establish the prevalence of **potential carnivore pathogens/diseases** at the release sites. Critics point to the lack of scientific assessment report in public domain. Also the three cheetah deaths have been attributed to **native pathogens.**

Improper Verification of Cheetahs selected for Translocation- Action Plan of Cheetah Relocation laid down detailed guidelines for proper verification of Cheetahs for their relocation. However critics point to the laxity in following the detailed Verification guidelines as the cause of death of the first Cheetah has been attributed to **pre-existing renal disease.**

Improper implementation of stated release procedure- The Action Plan of Cheetah reintroduction laid down proper guidelines for the **quarantine compartments of male-female,radio collaring and stated release procedure.** However the timelines prescribed and stated release procedures were not properly implemented.

What are the challenges being faced by Project Cheetah ?

Less protected area available for thriving Cheetah Population-Cheetahs are a low-density species with **1-2 Cheetahs existing in 100 sq kms**. Thus the newly introduced cheetahs will need about **5,000 sq km of good-quality habitat** to establish a viable population in India. The country currently does not have this extent of habitat for the cheetahs.

Less Prey availability- Experts have raised concerns about the cheetahs travelling **large distances to roam and hunt** which is not optimal in the current environment for their long-term survival.

Fragile Creatures-Unlike tigers and leopards, Cheetahs are comparatively fragile creatures and are more **prone to sustaining fatal injuries** in the wild.

Climate change impacts-Adapting to the impacts of climate change on the habitat and prey availability have posed challenges for the cheetah population's long-term survival.

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Inter Species Competition- Tigers from the **Ranthambore Tiger Reserve** in Rajasthan, 140 km away from Kuno, migrate to the park. The proximity of these predators in the same ecosystem has also posed a serious challenge for Project Cheetah.

Genetic Differences- Many experts have expressed concerns over reintroduction of African Cheetahs instead of Asiactic cheetahs. They believe that **Asiactic cheetahs** would have been a **more suitable choice** considering historical survival of species in the region and their ability to quickly acclimatize.

What should be the way forward for Project Cheetah?

Improvement of health monitoring- Regular health checks and early detection of health issues can help prevent deaths like **Sasha's from kidney disease** and gastritis.

Strengthening collaboration- Enhancement of cooperation between Indian authorities, international conservation organizations and experts to **share knowledge and best practices** for cheetah reintroduction.

Coordination with other countries- Collaboration with countries like **South Africa and Namibia** to exchange knowledge and best practices in cheetah conservation.

Expansion of habitat area- Preparation of additional sites for release of the cheetahs such as the **Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary and Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary** so as to increase their habitat and prey areas.

Establishment of a long-term monitoring plan- Development of a **comprehensive plan** to monitor the cheetah population, track their movements and evaluate the overall success of the reintroduction project.

Encouraging community based conservation- Involvement of **local communities** in conservation efforts by providing economic incentives and opportunities for sustainable development such as ecotourism or community-led wildlife management.

Government has initiated efforts in removing the anomalies of Project Cheetah by constituting a 11 member task force under the chairmanship of **Rajesh Gopal**. Success of Project Cheetah will be a landmark success for conservation efforts in India.

Read More- **One year on, India's cheetah project shows a spotty report card**

Women Reservation Bill-Explained Pointwise

Women Reservation Bill has been tabled in the Lok Sabha as Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam 2023. Women Reservation Bill/Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam 2023 seeks to **reserve one-third of all seats for women** in the Lok Sabha and the state legislative assemblies.

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Key Provisions of Women Reservation Bill 2023/Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam 2023

Reservation for women- The Bill reserves one-third of all seats for women in Lok Sabha, state legislative assemblies, and the Legislative Assembly of the National Capital Territory of Delhi. Additionally, this reservation will also extend to the seats reserved for SCs and STs in Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies.

Commencement of reservation- The reservation will be effective once the census conducted after the commencement of this Bill has been published. Based on the census, delimitation will be undertaken to reserve seats for women.

Period of Reservation- The reservation will be provided for a period of 15 years. However, it shall continue till such date as determined by a law made by Parliament.

Rotation of seats- Seats reserved for women will be rotated after each delimitation, as determined by a law made by Parliament.

What is the Historical Background of Women's Reservation Bill/Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam 2023 ?

Political reservation of woman has been a long standing demand since the pre-independence period.Various committees have favoured political reservation of women.

Political Reservation of women- A brief journey

During the National Movement- The three women bodies sent a letter to the British Prime Minister in 1931 seeking political reservation for women.

Constituent Assembly- The issue of women reservation also came up in Constituent Assembly debates. However it was rejected on the grounds that a democracy is expected to give representation to all groups.

The Committee of the Status of Women in India 1971 and The National Perspective Plan for Women in 1988– Both these committees recommended reservation of women in the local bodies. These recommendations paved the way for the **73rd and 74th amendments** to the Constitution which mandate all State governments to reserve one-third of the seats for women in the local bodies.

However, the issue of reservation in the Parliament and Legislative Assemblies still remained and the Women's Reservation Bill was brought in this regard.

Historical Background of Women's Reservation Bill	
1996	The Women Reservation Bill was first introduced in 1996 as **81st Constitutional Amendment Bill by Deve Gowda Govt**. The bill was referred to the select committee of parliament headed by **Geeta Mukherjee.** However the Bill lapsed with the dissolution of the Lok Sabha as no consensus could be formed over reservation for OBC women.

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1999	The Bill was **reintroduced by the NDA government** in the 13th Lok Sabha and was subsequently introduced twice in the year 2003.However the bills could not be passed and hence they lapsed.
2004	The UPA government included reservation bill in its **Common Minimum Programme** and tabled it in Rajya Sabha to prevent it from lapsing again.
2010	Women's Reservation Bill introduced as **108th Constitutional Amendment Bill 2008** was passed in the Rajya Sabha and lapsed in the Lok Sabha. RJD, the JD(U) and the SP were its most vocal opponents. They demanded 33% reservation for backward groups within the 33% quota for women.

Read More- **Provisions of the Women Reservation Bill 2008**

What are the arguments in favour of the Bill?

Increase in the political representation of women- According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) 'Women in Parliament' Report (2021), India ranks **lower than 140 other nations** in terms of the number of women serving in their national legislatures. Even though the representation of women in Lok Sabha has increased post independence (~16% in 17th lok Sabha), India is **behind a number of countries** of Africa and South Asia.(Nepal,Pakistan,Sri Lanka).

Source-Forum IAS
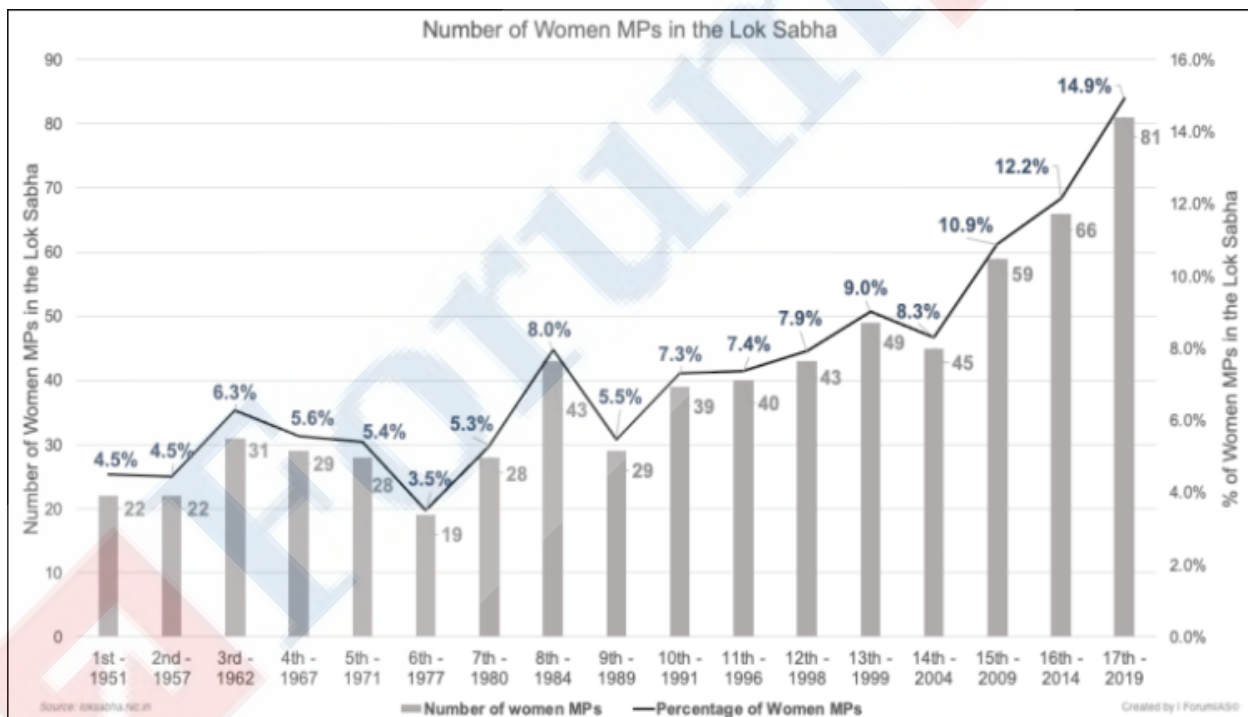
Ability of Women leadership in Bringing Change- A 2003 study about the effect of reservation for women in panchayats showed that women elected under the reservation policy **invest more in the public goods** closely linked to women's concerns. Ex-**Woman Sarpanch of Dhani Mayan Khan GP in Haryana** built a training centre for women and ensured that every village child went to school. A 2004 paper by Esther Duflo and Raghabendra Chattopadhyay on panchayats in

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West Bengal and Rajasthan found that women leaders invest more in public goods and ensure increased women's participation in panchayat meetings.

Step towards Decriminalisation of Politics- Reserved seats for women would help in decriminalisation of Indian Poliltics. In the present Lok Sabha **159 MPs have declared serious criminal cases against them** including those of rape, murder, attempt to murder, kidnapping, crimes against women.

Addressing Crime Against Women- Women Reservation Bill help in addressing crime against women in the society. **Rape cases and domestic abuse cases** will decrease with increased representation of women.

Increasing the number of seats commensurately with Vote share- Though women's vote share has increased, the number of women in positions of politics has not increased commensurately. Women In India vote at par with men but their representation is very low as compared to men. Reserved seats will bring some **parity between the vote share of women and their representation** in the parliament/assemblies.

Breaking the patriarchal Mould of Indian Politics- Indian Politics has been patriarchal with top party positions and positions of power have been occupied by male. Women reservation bill will dismantle this patriarchal nature of Indian politics by **increasing women representation in the top posts of Political Parties.**

Changing Stereotypes- Increase in women politicians will help in changing the stereotyped image of **'women as only homemakers'** and there will be gradual acceptance of **'women as lawmakers.'**

Improvement of Economic Performance and Infrastructure- According to UN University, Women legislators improve the economic performance of their constituencies 1.8 per cent more than male legislatures. **Evaluation of Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana** shows the share of incomplete road projects is 22 percentage points lower in female led constituencies.

Learning from International Experience- Rawanda has 61% women parliamentarians who have been doing commendable work in healing wounds from **Rwandan Genocide.** Mandating a fixed percentage of female representation leads to increase in the overall representation of women. Rawanda has provided only 30% reservation but their women parliamentarians have reached 61% in 2018.

What are the arguments against the Bill?

No separate OBC reservation- The Bill provides separate reservation to Scheduled castes and Scheduled Tribes women within the existing quota of one third reservation of seats. However **OBC women which constitute 60% of women population have not been provided separate reservation** within the quota.

No reservation in the Rajya Sabha and legislative Councils- The Bill does not provide reservation to women in the Rajya Sabha and the legislative Councils.

Enactment of the Bill- Reservation for women in Parliament depends on the census and delimitation process. However, the census has been delayed and delimitation could be **politically**

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sensitive,especially impacting southern India, which has seen slower population growth due to its development progress.

Use of Women as proxies- Panchayats have witnessed the evolution of 'Panchayat Patis' who use their wives as proxy candidates for reserved seats. They wield the real power.There are fears that we might witness the evolution of **'MP and MLA Patis'** with extension of reservation to women in Parliament.

Against the Principles of Equality enshrined in the constitution- Opponents of women reservation argue that the idea runs counter to the principle of equality enshrined in the Constitution. The bill can **perpetuate the unequal status of women** since they would not be perceived to be competing on merit.

Women not homogeneous group like caste groups- Women are not a homogenous community unlike a caste group. As a result, the same arguments used to justify caste-based reservations cannot be used to justify reservations for women. Women's interests **cannot be isolated from other social, economic and political strata**.

Restriction of Choice of Voters- Reservation of seats for women would restrict the choice of voters. Opponents of the Bill have suggested alternate methods like **reservation for women in political parties and dual member constituencies** (where constituencies will have two MPs with one of them being a woman).

Lack of widespread consultation before the introduction of bill in the parliament- The bill was introduced through a "supplementary list" in a hastily organised Parliament session. However something as vital as a constitutional amendment for women's reservation should have been introduced after widespread discussion and analysis.

What should be the way forward?

In addition to Women's reservation Bill India needs to implement the following reforms for political empowerment of women-

Address the larger issues of electoral reforms such as **measures to check criminalisation of politics and influence of black money** to achieve the desired results of women reservation.

Institutionalisation of Intra party democracy for wider pool of women candidates.

Every Political Party **must nominate 33% women and 67% men for every election to Rajya Sabha and State legislative councils** to achieve true women representation.

Promotion of women participation at panchayat level through strengthening women self-help groups. This will ensure able women candidates for MP/MLA elections.

Strengthening women's agencies and organizations for building a progressive society with equality of opportunities among all citizens.

Promotion of girl's participation in College/Universities student political parties and political debate to increase their political prowess for future.

Read More- **PRS**

Women Reservation Bill Indian Express

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India Canada Relations – Explained Pointwise

India Canada Relations are facing a serious downturn after Canada Prime Minister's Trudeau accused "**agents of the Government of India**" of killing of Canadian Khalistani leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar in June 2023. Mr. Trudeau's accusation has set off a **chain of events.** After Canada expelled a senior Indian diplomat, India summoned the Canadian High Commissioner and expelled Canada's Station chief for intelligence on Tuesday.

What is the history of India Canada Relations?

India Canada established diplomatic relations in 1947.This relationship was to be built upon built shared traditions of democracy, pluralism and strong interpersonal connections.

However, India Canada relations witnessed deterioration in the political domain despite economic engagement, regular high-level interactions and long-standing people-to-people ties.

Thaw in India Canada Political Relations

Canada's support for Plebiscite in Kashmir – Canada supported a plebiscite in the Indian state of Kashmir in 1948.

Canada's opposition to India's nuclear tests – In the aftermath of the nuclear tests, India's relations with Canada deteriorated as Canada recalled its high commissioner to India following the nuclear tests. India's reluctance to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) further widened the gulf between New Delhi and Ottawa for many years.

Khalistan Issue – Relations between India and Canada have remained strained due to Canada's alleged leniency toward supporters of Khalistan.

However, during the tenure of Conservative Party's **Stephen Harper** as Canadian PM from 2006 to 2015, Canada and India enjoyed strong relations. This period was marked by 19 high-level visits from Canada to India and **the joint celebration of 2011 as the Year of India in Canada.**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Canada in 2015 was the first bilateral visit by an Indian PM since 1973. India Canada relation was **elevated from bilateral relation to a strategic partnership. The government** hailed the visit with the assumption that decades of mistrust over the Khalistan issue could be brushed aside.

However, India Canada diplomatic relations have **deteriorated further since 2015** due to the Khalistan protests that have increased in the recent times.

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The Khalistan Shadow over India Canada Relations over the years

During Militancy In Punjab

1982- Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau (Justin Trudeau's father) declined to extradite **Talwinder Singh Parmar** accused of killing two police officers in Punjab.

1984- In the aftermath of **Operation Bluestar** (launched by the Indian army to root out militants from the Golden Temple in June 1984) bolstered the Khalistan movement among the diaspora.

1985- Babbar Khalsa(Khalistan separatist organisation) orchestrated the **bombing of Air India Kanishka** in June 1985 which resulted in 331 civilian deaths.

Post 2015 Period

2015- Justin Trudeau's **proximity to individuals sympathetic to Khalistan's** cause strained bilateral relations.

2017- The then Punjab Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh refused to meet Canadian Defence Minister **Harjit Singh Sajjan**, accusing him of associating with separatists.

2018- India got aggravated when Jaspal Atwal convicted of attempting to assassinate an Indian Cabinet minister in 1986 was invited to dine with Trudeau during his Visit to India. Trudeau got a **cool reception** during his visit to India when he was received at the airport by Minister of State for Agriculture Gajendra Singh Shekhawat instead of PM Modi.

2019- The annual **'Public Report on the Terrorist Threat to Canada'** released in December 2018, mentioned 'Sikh extremism' and Khalistan for the first time. However, in 2019 Canada revised the report just a day before Vaisakhi, **removing all mentions of Khalistan and Sikh extremism.**

2020- India accused **Trudeau of inciting extremists** when he expressed concerns about New Delhi's response to the farmers' protest and pledging support for their rights.

2022- In March 2022, Trudeau's Liberal Party formed an alliance with the New Democratic Party (NDP), led by **Jagmeet Singh**, who openly endorsed the Khalistan Referendum on Canadian soil.

2023- During the recent G20 summit in New Delhi, PM Modi conveyed "**strong concerns**" about "**continuing anti-India activities of extremist elements**" in Canada.

What is the Significance of India-Canada Relations?

Cooperation in Indo-Pacific- Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy has listed India an important partner in the Indo-Pacific region. It has marked out China as an "increasingly disruptive global power", while referring to India as a "critical partner" with shared traditions of democracy and pluralism.

Trade and commerce – India is Canada's tenth-largest trading partner. Bilateral trade between India and Canada stands at **USD 5 billion**. More than 400 Canadian companies have a presence in India and more than 1,000 companies are actively pursuing business in the Indian market.

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Canadian pension funds have pledged over USD 55 billion in investments between 2014 and 2020. Canada and India are working toward a **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement and a Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (FIPA).**

[Figures in billion US Dollars]

Details	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
India's Exports	1.692	1.841	2.065	1.754	2.064	2.581
India's Imports	1.477	1.667	2.268	1.881	2.024	2.635
Total	3.169	3.508	4.333	3.635	4.088	5.216

[Source: Statistics Canada]

Source-Statistics Canada

Development Cooperation- Canada has invested nearly **$24 million in 2018-2019** to support 75 projects in India through its Non profit organisations like Grand Challenges Canada.

Energy sector – India and Canada signed a **Nuclear Cooperation Agreement (NCA)** in 2010 for which a Joint Committee on Civil Nuclear Cooperation was constituted by both the countries. Uranium supply deal has been signed during PM Modi's visit in 2015.

S&T and Space- **ISRO and CSA (Canadian Space Agency)** have signed MOUs for cooperation in the field of exploration and utilisation of outer space. **ANTRIX**, the Commercial arm of ISRO, has launched many Canadian Satellites.

Education Sector – Since 2018, India has been the largest source country for international students in Canada. This has helped Canadian universities and colleges to provide **subsidised education to domestic students.**

Indian Diaspora- Canada hosts one of the largest Indian diasporas in the world numbering **1.6 million (PIOs and NRIs)** which account for more than 3% of its total population. The diaspora has done commendably well in every sector in Canada. In the field of politics, the present House of Common (total strength of 338) has 22 Members of Parliament of Indian-origin.

Read More- **Forum IAS**

What are the Challenges in the Relations between the two countries?

Khalistani separatist factor- It is the single most important challenge between India and Canada. The **Canadian government's Policy of balancing the Sikh assertions and its relations with India**, has jeopardised the India Canada Relations.

Attacks on Indian Consulates and Indian Diaspora- The attacks on **Non-Sikh Indian Diaspora, Indian Consulates and Temples** have further strained the India Canada Relations.

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Trade Challenges- Structural impediments such as complex labour laws, market protectionism, and bureaucratic regulations have been roadblocks for Indo-Canadian trade relations. Bilateral agreements, such as the **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)** and **Investment Promotion and Protection Agreements (BIPPA),** have been in negotiation for long time and no progress has been reached by both the countries. Before the G20 summit, the Canadian government **independently halted trade negotiations** with India. All these have contributed to low Indo-Canadian trade.

Close relationship of China and Canada – There is a close relationship between the current federal government of Canada and the Chinese Communist Party's government. This has also strained India-China relation.

What Should be the way forward?

In recent times, Government of India has effectively conveyed to Canada that they **cannot simultaneously have** good relations with India while allowing anti-India separatist movements on their soil.

Constructive and Sustained Engagement- India will have to build a **constructive and sustained engagement** with the Sikh diaspora, **dispel the misinformation** propagated by the Khalistani separatists and showcase the sense of contentment prevailing in Punjab.

New Framework of Cooperation- There is a need to develop a **new framework of cooperation** that is more pragmatic and that emphasises on mutually beneficial areas, such as **trade, energy, infrastructure and transport**, for better Indo-Canadian relations.

Dehypenation- India and Canada must **dehypenate** their political contestations over the Khalistan issue and their trade and investment relations. Both the countries must look to be back on the trade negotiations table back soon to **finalise the Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** between the two countries.

Civil Society and Track II Diplomacy- India and Canada must encourage civil society organizations and **Track II diplomacy** initiatives to foster people-to-people connections, dialogue and conflict resolution efforts.

Media and Public Diplomacy- Promotion of **responsible reporting** to ensure that media coverage and public discourse accurately reflect the complexities of the relationship and the efforts being made to strengthen it.

Read More- **Indian Express**, **The Hindu**

Delimitation Exercise- Explained Pointwise

Recently, **Delimitation exercise** which is carried out by the delimitation commission has been in news during the parliamentary debates over the passage of the Women reservation bill/Nari Shakti Vandana Adhiniyam. According to the bill, women reservation will come into effect only after **delimitation** is carried out based on the figures of the **first census** conducted after the passage of the bill.

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Who conducts the Delimitation Exercise?

Delimitation is the act or process of fixing limits or boundaries of territorial constituencies in a country to reflect the changes in population. In India the task of delimitation exercise is assigned to a **high power body**. Such a body is known as **Delimitation Commission or a Boundary Commission.**

Constitutional basis of Delimitation Commission

Article 82	Article 82 mandates the **Parliament** to enact a Delimitation Act and constitute Delimitation commission after every Census.
Article 170	Article 170 provides for the division of territorial constituencies of states by **the Delimitation Commission** after every Census.

Absolute powers to the Commission- Delimitation Act mandates that the **Delimitation Commission's orders are final and cannot be questioned before any court** as it would hold up an election indefinitely. When the orders of the Delimitation Commission are laid before the Lok Sabha or State Legislative Assembly, they cannot effect any modification in the orders. The Delimitation Commission is to work without any executive influence.

Composition of Delimitation Commission

Appointment	The Delimitation Commission is appointed by the **President of India** and works in collaboration with the **Election Commission of India.**
Members	Retired Supreme Court judge (**Chairperson**) Chief Election Commissioner Respective State Election Commissioners

Historical Timeline of Delimitation Exercises

The Union government creates the Commission once the Delimitation Act is in effect. Under the Delimitation Acts of 1952, 1962, 1972, and 2002, **Delimitation Commissions were established four times- in 1952, 1963, 1973 and 2002**. The commission was not created after the **1981 and 1991 Censuses.**

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Historical Timeline- Delimitation Commissions

1. **First delimitation commission** based on census 1951 data headed by **Justice N Chandrasekhara Aiyar.**
2. Fixed the Lok Sabha Seats at **494.**

1. **Third Delimitation** commission based on 1971 census headed by **Justice J L Kapur**
2. Increased the seats of the Lok Sabha from **522 to 543** and assembly seats from **3771 to 3997**.
3. **42nd amendment Act 1976** froze any further delimitation of constituencies for elections to Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies until the 2001 Census of India.This was to encourage population control measures of states.

| 1953 | 1963 | 1973 | 2002 |

1. **Second Delimitation commission** based on 1961 census.
2. Increased the Lok Sabha seats from **494 to 522**

1. There were **no delimitation exercises** after 1981 and 1991 census.
2. **Fourth Delimitation commission** was based on the 2001 census data headed by Justice Kuldeep Singh.
3. There was **only readjustment of boundaries and no increase in seats** of Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies.
4. **84th amendment 2002 froze** any increase in seats till 2026.

What is the Significance of Delimitation Exercise?

Ensuring Proportional Representation- Delimitation Exercise provides **equal representation to equal segments of population**. The Delimitation Commission chooses the number and boundaries of the constituencies in such a way that the population of each seat is the same, as far as possible.

Reservation of seats for SCs and STs- Delimitation exercise conducted by the delimitation commission **specifies seats in areas with sizable scheduled castes and scheduled tribes** population which are to be reserved for those communities.

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Impartial Exercise- The Delimitation Commission is a panel with legislative backing but it **operates independently of the government and political parties.** Rulings of the commission cannot be challenged in the parliament or any courts. This ensures its impartial functioning in the delimitation exercise.

One Vote one Value- The delimitation exercise by the Commission ensures that the **sacred principle of "One Vote One Value" is followed.**

What are the criticisms of the Delimitation Exercise in India?

No change in the number of seats despite increasing population- 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act 1976 freezed the number of seats of the Lok Sabha and the state legislative assemblies based on the census 1971 figures. Further the **84th Constitutional Amendment Act** also froze the number of seats based on 1971 census till 2026. Thus the delimitation exercises by the delimitation commission are **only cosmetic changes with the alteration of boundaries only.**

Skipping of the delimitation exercise- Even though the constitution mandates the conduction of delimitation exercise after each census, governements have skipped the creation of delimitation commissions after the **1981, 1991 and 2011 census.** Growing population is not reflected by these delimitation exercises.

Read More- **Delimitation in J&K**

What are the Challenges with Conducting Delimitation Exercise in India?

Disadvantageous for States that have controlled their population- Delimitation exercise is **disadvantageous to states that have controlled their population(Southern States)**. Delimitation will benefit states that have not controlled their population as they will end up with higher number of seats in the Lok Sabha **(Like Bihar and UP)**.

Disavantageous for regional parties- Southern regional parties like **DMK, TDP, YSRCP** that have presence in their states only will be in a disadvantageous position. **Their share of seats and bargaining power will decrease** in the Lok Sabha.

Can fuel separatist movement- The delimitation exercise based on the recent census data can fuel separatist regional movements like **Dravida Nadu** and it will hamper the federal political structure of the Country.

Delay in Delimitation can delay the implementation of Women's reservation- The Women reservation bill/Nari Shakti Vandana Adhiniyam has been linked with the delimitation process. Since delimitation is itself a contentious issue this **can delay the implementation of women Quota.**

What Should be the Way Forward for the delimitation exercise?

Development of National Consensus- Any step towards delimitation exercise must be based on National Consensus and the fears of the regional Political parties must be addressed.

Incentivising the population controlling states through Finance Commission- The Finance commission must evolve formula to reward the states which have controlled their Population financially.

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Read More- **Election Commission of India**

Inflation Management in India-Present Challenges- Explained Pointwise

Inflation management in India has been in the news due to rising prices of essential goods and commodities. With the failure of RBI and govt to control the spiralling inflation in the economy, economists have pointed to **explore alternative ways of Inflation Management** in the country.

What is the present level of Inflation in the Economy?

Current Inflation in the economy Consumer Price Index (CPI) estimates show that CPI Inflation moderated to **6.8% in August from 7.4% in July**. Food inflation is still high even though it has come down from a high of 11.5% in July to 9.94% in August. The dip is primarily a result of moderation in vegetable price inflation. However,two major food categories, cereals and pulses, continue to show double-digit inflation.

This present level of inflation is higher than the **upper limit of the Inflation(6%)** which has been set by the Govt.

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Source-Money Control

Read More- **Inflation in wheat and rice**

What is Inflation?

Inflation- Inflation refers to the rise in the prices of most goods and services of daily or common use such as food, clothing, housing, recreation, transport, consumer goods. Inflation measures the average price change in a basket of commodities and services over a period of time.

Types of Inflation

Demand Side inflation	Demand Side Inflation is caused by high demand and low production which creates a demand-supply gap and it leads to a hike in prices due to increase in consumption.
Cost Pull inflation	Cost Pull Inflation is caused by shortage of factors of production like labour, land, capital etc. and also due to artificial scarcity created due to hoarding.

Inflation Target in India

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The Reserve Bank of India is the authority to control inflation under **RBI Act 1934.**

Inflation Targeting Regime of RBI	
Began in 2016. Central govt fixes the target for RBI's Monetary Policy Committee for 5 years.	RBI has to retain the inflation target of **4%, with a tolerance band of +/- 2 percentage till March 2026.**

Read More- **RBI Monetary Policy Committee**

How is Inflation Management done in India?

Inflation management is a complex task as inflation is caused by several factors such as demand-pull factors, cost push factors and structural factors. Therefore a mix of macro-economic policies are needed to manage the inflation in the economy.

Main Tools For Inflation Management	
Monetary Policy	Monetary Policy tool is **employed by the RBI** to control the supply of money in the economy. RBI applies the repo rate to control the supply of money in the economy. By **increasing the repo rate RBI tries to bring down the rate of inflation** in the economy.
Fiscal Policy	Monetary Policy tool is **employed by the Govt** manage inflation through public expenditure and taxation. Government tries to reduce inflation by **raising the tax rates and reducing public expenditure**.
Other tools for Inflation Management	
Export policy	The government can temporarily **ban the export** and **imposes Minimum Export Price (MIP)** to discourage exports of certain commodities to ensure their availability in the domestic markets.**Ex-Recent rice export and onion export ban.**
Price control Policy	Under the **Essential Commodity Act 1955**, the government can declare a commodity as an essential commodity to ensure supplies to people at fair prices.
Anti-Hoarding and Anti-speculation Policy	**The Prevention of Black Marketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1980** allows for detention of persons engaged in activities like hoarding, creating artificial scarcities of essential commodities in the market and rigging up of the prices.

What are the present challenges with Inflation Management in India?

Rising Food Inflation- India's **food and oil components** of the consumer price index CPI are **about 50%.** The RBI has no control over the prices of food and oil. Therefore, it is left to squeeze less than 50% of the domestic economy to lower inflation.This is the biggest challenge for inflation management in India. **For Example**- Current CPI in India has been fuelled by the rising food and vegetable prices over which RBI's monetary policy is ineffective.

Failure in addressing supply shocks- Government has adopted a myopic vision in inflation management by focussing on **export ban of agricultural products(like wheat,rice,onions).**

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Export bans induced fear and panic in the domestic market, led to rise in stock holdings which ultimately resulted in price rise. Instead government should have focused on addressing the supply shocks of agricultural products like **raising minimum procurement prices for cereals, onions** and supply of these items through PDS system.

Monetary Policy singular focus on demand side- RBI's monetary policy **targets only demand constraints.** It faces the problem of tackling Supply shocks originating from food and oil. If output is stabilised using macroeconomic policies, it can further lead to prices rise.

Flawed Model of Inflation targeting- Monetary Policy model used for Inflation management in India is **not statistically validated for Indian data**. The current model of Inflation targeting is based on the assumption that inflation means **overheating the economy-that is increased output greater than natural level output.** However, In India it is impossible to observe the actual level of output in an economy. Hence, setting policy rates based on the assumption that the economy has overheated is unscientific.

Exclusive Focus on Inflation slows down growth- RBI's current mandate of inflation management is too singularly focused on controlling inflation. **Inflation management has negatively impacted GDP growth.** High policy rates (repo) maintained to control inflation affected the cost of domestic capital. It led to a decline in investment rate thereby resulted in less GDP. **For example**, since 2016, (after inflation rate targeting was institutionalised), there has been a steady increase in repo rates, and a steady decline in GDP growth.

Adverse impact on other sectors- The cases of IL&FS, PMC Bank, PNB and YES Bank suggest that **poor management and maladministration in the financial sector can escape RBI** scrutiny as they tend to focus more on inflation management.

Global Nature of inflation- Inflation is global in nature as the price level of a good is determined by millions of producers across the world. Hence solely targeting inflation management is not good for the health of the economy as certain prices of goods are beyond our control.

What should be the way forward for inflation management in India?

Inflation management to shift from headline to core-inflation– RBI's mandate should be on managing the **core inflation (exclusion of fuel and food) rather than headline inflation.**There must be incorporation of other growth indicators such as **nominal GDP** explicitly into the framework.

Updation of the CPI Basket Weights- The weight of food and beverages in the CPI basket should be adjusted to **reflect current realities** as the weights are based on the **2011 consumption survey.**

Aligning the shut down period with global practices- **Shut down period** is the period, in which MPC members **maintain complete silence, i.e. no media coverage**. It is observed before a few days of a policy decision and till few days after the decision. It ensures no sudden volatility in the market and effective market transmission. **At present the shut period is seven-day** after the release of the monetary policy committee (MPC) resolution. The **RBI wants to reduce this to 3 days** after the resolution in line with the global practices. The RBI predicts that this will provide better monetary policy transmission(in RBI's Currency and Finance report)

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Expansion in the ambit of Monetary Policy Committee(MPC)- The **inclusion of liquidity issues** like liquidity adjustment facility, changes in reverse repo, and OMOs in the MPC discussion may result in greater transparency and effective procedures.

Greater Tolerance of Higher levels of Inflation- Since Inflation is a global issue there must be greater tolerance for higher levels of inflation either by adjusting the acceptable range of inflation upwards, or by extending the period over which the MPC has to meet its inflation target.

Release Excess Buffer Stocks- The government holds more than 40 million tonnes of rice, much above the **buffer stock norms** of 13.5 MT. This excess stock should be unloaded by Food Corporation of India in the open market at reasonable prices. This will cool down the food inflation.

Enhancement of Processing Capacity- About **10-15 percent of perishable items** like tomatoes and onions should be processed. The availability of alternatives like tomato paste and onion powder will help to stabilize prices.

Adjustment of Import Duties- Import duties on items like wheat should be reduced as **cheaper imports** can help control domestic prices.

Read More- **Inflation Management Livemint**

Mediation Act 2023-Explained Pointwise

The **Mediation Act 2023** has been notified in the gazette of India after receiving the assent of the President of India on September 15 2023. The act **aims to promote** and facilitate **institutional mediation** for resolution of commercial and other disputes. It also seeks to encourage community mediation and to make online mediation as acceptable and cost effective process.

Key Features of Mediation Act 2023	
Settlement of Disputes through Mediation	The act requires persons to try to settle civil or commercial disputes through mediation before approaching any court or tribunal.
Pre-Litigation Mediation	The Act permits parties to a dispute (regardless of whether they have executed a mediation agreement) to **voluntarily and mutually** refer their dispute to mediation prior to filing a suit or instituting proceedings before any court. **Pre-litigation mediation has been made voluntary(departure from earlier bill).**

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Time Period for completion of Mediation	Mediation proceedings under the Act must be completed within a period of **120 days** from the date of the first appearance before the mediator, which may be extended for a maximum period of **60 days.**
Setting up of Mediation Council of India	The act provides for the setting up of The Mediation Council of India. Its functions will include **registering mediators,**recognising **mediation service providers** and **mediation institutes.**
Forms of Mediation	The act aims to govern two forms of mediation- **voluntary and mandatory.**A **voluntary mediation** is where parties under a written mediation agreement seek mediation. Such an agreement may either be as part of a contract or exist independently.A **Mandatory mediation is**, where barring certain areas of disputes, there is a legal obligation on parties to mediate before approaching a court/tribunal.
Areas excluded from Mediation	The areas excluded from mediation include **serious allegations of fraud, criminal offenses, environmental matters reserved for the National Green Tribunal**, and matters relating to competition, telecom, securities and electricity law and land acquisition.
Court's Role during Mediation	The act will not prevent any court from referring any dispute to mediation **relating to compoundable or matrimonial offenses** connected with or arising out of civil proceedings between the parties.
Introduction of Concept of Community Mediation	Disputes likely to **affect peace, harmony and tranquility amongst the residents or families of any area or locality** can be mediated and settled by a panel of mediators appointed by the concerned Authority.

What is Mediation and what are other forms of alternate Dispute Mechanisms(ADR)?

Mediation- Mediation is a **voluntary process** in which parties try to settle disputes with the assistance of an independent third person (the mediator). It **does not impose a solution on the parties** but creates a conducive environment in which they can resolve their dispute. The mediation process depends on the choice of parties and **there are no strict or binding rules of procedure.**

In India, mediation was legitimized by **Section 89 of the Civil Procedure Code, 1908** before the enactment of **Mediation Act 2023.**

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Mediation is part of ADR **(Alternate Dispute Mechanism).**

Alternate Dispute Mechanism- ADR refers to means by which disputes are settled **outside the traditional court system.** In India, modes of ADR include arbitration, negotiation, mediation, and Lok Adalats.

ADR Methods	Arbitration	Mediation	Conciliation	Negotiation
Neutral Third Party	Adjudicator	Facilitator	Facilitator, Evaluator	Facilitator
Nature of p	Legally Bin	Not Legally	Not Legally	Not Legally

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...roceeding	...ding	Binding	Binding	Binding
Level of formality	Formal	Informal	Informal	Informal
Level of Confidentiali...	Confidentiality as determ	Confidentiality based on	Confidentiality as determ	Confidentiality based on

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What is the significance of Mediation Act 2023?

Reduction of huge pendency of court cases cases- The act obligates each party to take steps to settle their dispute through **pre-litigation mediation** before approaching an Indian court. It will **reduce the filing of claims before Indian courts**. Our courts are already overburdened with 70 thousand cases in pending in Supreme Court and 60 lakh cases are pending in High Courts.

Strengthening of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)- The bill would facilitate quick disposal of disputes outside of traditional court systems.Mediation results in the amicable resolution of disputes in civil, commercial, family, and matrimonial affairs. It helps develop a **collaborative approach and protects relationships between disputants.** The act would **mitigate the risk of deterioration of the parties' relationship** due to a publicly fought dispute.

Promotion of ease of doing business- The act has the potential to have a significant positive impact on the country's economy and business environment by **avoiding delays in the standard process through the courts.**

Emergence of India as a centre of Mediation in the world- The mediation act 2023 can put India on the global map as a **dispute friendly jurisdiction and attract foreign investments.** For Ex- Singapore's robust mediation ecosystem has attracted greater foreign investments.

Promotion of peace, law and security in the country- The Act provides for provision of **community mediation** to settle any dispute likely to affect peace, harmony and tranquillity amongst the residents or families of any area. This will promote peace, law and security in the society by building consensus amongst the communities.

Faster outcomes- The Act provides a maximum time period of **180 days** for mediation settlement. The judicial courts normally dispose of civil matters within **3 years on an average.**

Mediation is a cost effective method- Mediation is a **cost-effective** dispute resolution process. For Example- According to an article published in Harvard Business Review mediation through outside counsel has an estimated cost of $700,000 and going to courts has an estimated cost of $2.5 million over a period of three to five years.

Mediation provided similar position to commercial arbitration in India- As the recent amendments to the Arbitration and Conciliation Act (A&C Act) prioritised institutional arbitration of disputes, the Act also places emphasis on institutional mediation in India. It envisages

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"mediation service providers" to provide mediation services, secretarial assistance and infrastructure for the efficient conduct of mediation. This will help in **generating more avenues of employment and growth in the country.**

Fulfilment of India's commitment to Singapore Convention on Mediation- India is a signatory to the Singapore Convention on Mediation (United Nations Convention on International Settlement). This act is an important step towards fulfilment of Singapore convention.

Read More- **Singapore Convention**

What are concerns with the Mediation Act 2023?

Enforcement of settlement agreement- A **settlement agreement** is essentially a contract between the parties. Sometimes, grounds for challenging are detected at a later stage. However there are **limited grounds** listed in the act to challenge the enforcement of a settlement agreement. Further **only a period of 90 days** is given to raise any challenge to the settlement agreement. The settlement agreement clause needs to be re-looked.

"Exceptional circumstances" for seeking interim relief from courts not defined- The Act entitles a party to move the Court, before the commencement or during mediation, for interim relief, only in "exceptional circumstances".The phrase **"exceptional circumstances" is lacking in definition within the Bill.**

Challenges with the "online" and "community" mediation introduced by the Act- There are challenges to **online mediation in India**. As per recent Niti Aayog report only 55% of India have access to the internet and only 27% possess compatible devices for effective online mediation. Further the act makes it **mandatory to have a panel of three mediators** for **community mediation.**This would **impact the flexibility** that the act seeks to bring for mediation settlement.

Applicability to 'only commercial' govt disputes- Government is the **biggest litigant** in the country. The act limits the mediation to solely government's "commercial disputes". This will not bring down the pendency of cases.

Composition of the Mediation Council- The Mediation Council has three members-a retired senior judge, a person with experience of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) law and an academic who has taught ADR. However, it **doesn't include a single mediator** with actual practical knowledge of mediation.

Excludes the Chief Justice of India from making appointments- The mediation is a form of dispute resolution and in the **judiciary's domain**, but the bill has left the Chief Justice of India from the picture for making appointments.

Long list of disputes which cannot be mediated- The act provides for a long list of disputes which should not be mediated. For example, **Fraud, Disputes relating to claims against minors, Patents and copyright cases, proceedings before the TRAI** etc. This hampers the overall objective of alternate dispute mechanism.

Impacts cross-border mediation- The mediation act treats international mediation when conducted in India as a domestic mediation. Further, the settlement conducted in India is given the status of a judgment or decree of a court.

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But, the **Singapore Convention** does not apply to settlements that already have the status of a judgment or decree. Hence, **conducting cross-border mediation in India will leave out the tremendous benefits of worldwide enforceability.** This will impact India's growth as mediation centre of the world like Singapore.

What Should be the way forward for strengthening mediation in India?

Providing Institutional Support- Establishing **well-equipped and accessible mediation centres** at various levels, from local communities to national levels. Government should facilitate opening of mediation centres. For Example: Recently, **Uttar Pradesh got its first mediation & arbitration centre** in the form of 'Centre for Excellence in Mediation and Arbitration or CEMA.

Training and Certification for Mediation- Developing **comprehensive training programs** for mediators, lawyers, and judges to ensure that there is a **pool of skilled professionals** proficient in mediation techniques.

Integration of Mediation with Legal Curriculum- Incorporating **mediation education** within law school curricula can prepare future legal professionals to consider mediation as a primary or complementary method for dispute resolution.

Ensuring proper cross border mediation- To ensure worldwide enforceability, the settlement conducted in **India should not be given a status of a judgment or decree** of a court.

Need to remove ambiguities in the Act- The are certain elements in the Act like **"exceptional circumstances" for seeking interim relief**, which are open-ended and ambiguous, which must be addressed urgently.
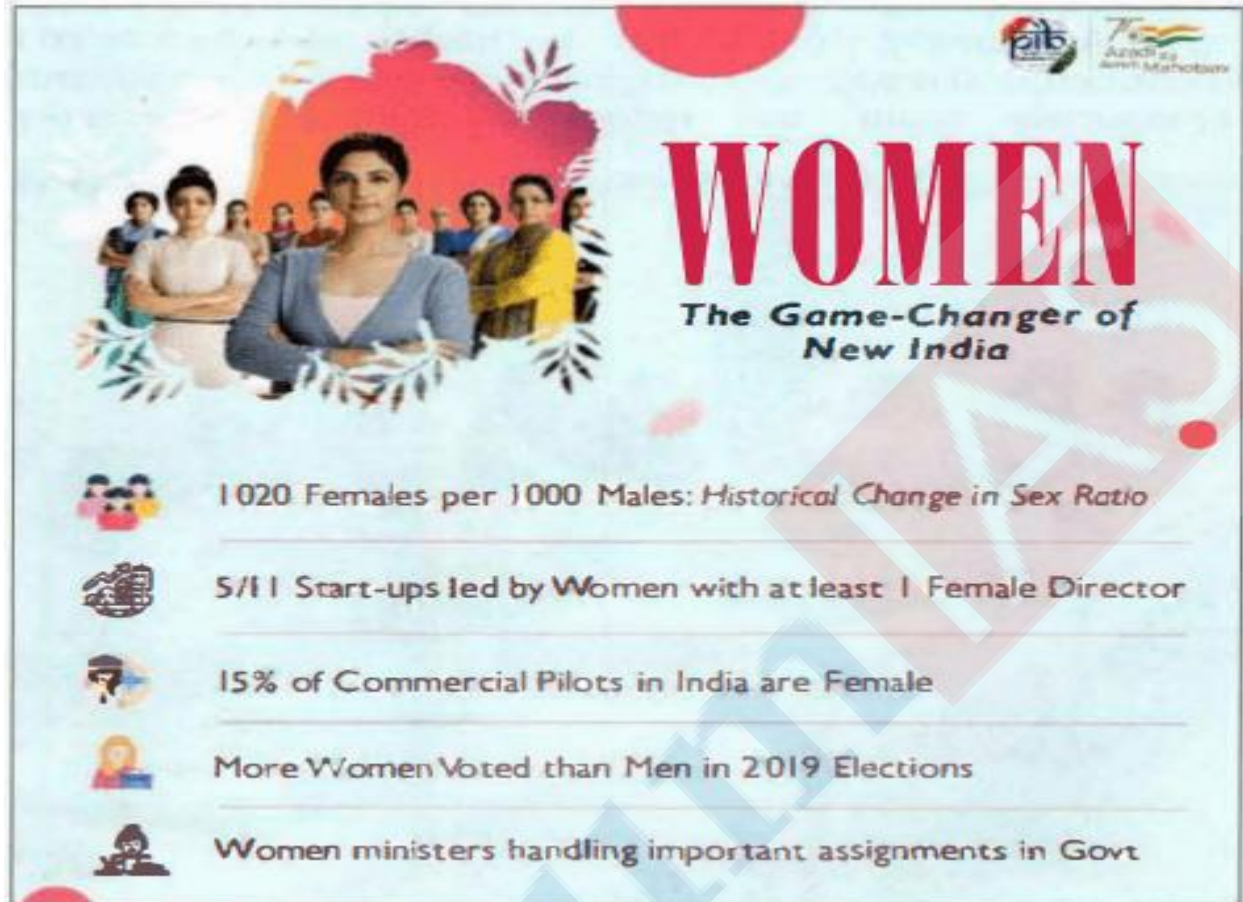
Enhancement of awareness about the Mediation Act- The National and State Legal Services Authorities should **disseminate more information regarding mediation** and ADRs, so that they become the first option explored by potential litigants.

Alternate Dispute Resolutions has proven successful in clearing the backlog of cases in various levels of the judiciary.For Ex- Lok Adalats alone has disposed more than 50 lakh cases every year on average in the last three years. A similar impact can be observed with Mediation also. Hence, the government **should address the concerns in the Mediation Act 2023** and ensure proper implementation of the same.

Read More- **The Hindu**

[Yojana September 2023 Summary]Women Empowerment-Explained Pointwise

Women empowerment is the promotion of women's sense of self-worth, their ability to determine their own choices and their right to influence social change for themselves and others. It is rightly said that **empowering a man leads to empowering an individual but empowering a woman empowers an entire generation.** The current government has taken significant strides in the direction of women empowerment. It has fostered a culture where everyone has an equal, free, and fair opportunity to engage in social, political, and economic activities.

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Source- Yojana

What are the different aspects of women empowerment?

Women empowerment is an all encompassing term. However it has different aspects to it namely-Political empowerment, economic empowerment and social empowerment.

Political Empowerment	Despite progress in several fields, women representation in the political institutions have remained low. However government has tried to address the issue of low representation at various levels.
	1. **Nari Shakti Vandana Adhiniyam(Women reservation Act)-** Passed to provide 33% reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies.
	2. **73rd and 74th amendment Act-** Provided 33% reservation to women in local bodies. Some states like Bihar have increased the women reservation in the local bodies to 50%.

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	3. Govt has been encouraging political parties to nominate more women candidates and has been providing leadership training.
Economic Empowerment	1. Governments has been promoting equal pay for equal work through the **four new labour codes.** 2. Government has established maternity leave and **childcare** policies through the **Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act 2017.** 3. It has also provide access to finance and entrepreneurship training for women like the **Mudra Yojana** and the **Mahila Udyam Nidhi Yojana.**
Social Empowerment	1.Government has focused on ending child marriage and safeguarded sexual and reproductive health rights through **The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006** and **Medical Termination of Pregnancy Amendment Act of 2021.** 2. Government has been protecting women's land rights through **Digital India Land Records Modernisation Programme (DILRMP)** and implementing gender-responsive budgeting which are crucial steps towards achieving gender equality.

Read More- **Women Empowerment NHFS data**

What are some recent flagship programs of Government for Women Empowerment?

Women Empowerment has been a top priority for the current Government. That is why govt has introduced many flagship programs for women development.

S.No.	Government Schemes	Launch Year	Features/objectives
1	**Beti Bachao Beti Padhao**	2015	Launched in 2015, this initiative aims to address the declining child sex ratio and promote the education and welfare of girls.
2	**Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)**	2017	Introduced in 2017, this maternity benefit scheme provides financial assistance to pregnant and lactating women for improved health and nutrition during pregnancy and childbirth.
3	**Mahila e-Haat**	2016	This online platform was launched in 2016 to facilitate women entrepreneurs and artisans in showcasing and selling their products. It also provides

			a digital marketplace for women to reach a wider customer base and promote their businesses.
4	**Ujjwala Yojana**	**2016**	Launched in 2016, this scheme provides free LPG connections to women from below-poverty-line households. It aims to improve their health, reduce indoor air pollution, and empower them by enabling clean cooking fuel access.
5	**Stand Up India**	**2016**	Introduced in 2016, this scheme encourages entrepreneurship among women and Scheduled caste or scheduled tribe individuals. It offers bank loans between Rs 10 lakh and Rs 1 crore to set up greenfield enterprises, promoting women's economic empowerment and self-employment opportunities.
6	**Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)**	**2015**	Introduced in 2015, it aims to provide industry relevant training to enhance employability. It has benefited many women by offering skill development courses in various sectors.

These are just a few examples of government schemes implemented in the last decade to promote women's empowerment, healthcare, entrepreneurship, and skill development. There are several other schemes at the central and state levels that focus on women's welfare, education, and financial inclusion.

What are some recent reforms undertaken by the Govt?

Efforts have been made across various areas, including legislation, social programs, and awareness campaigns, to promote gender equality protect women rights and for women empowerment in last 10 years.

S.No.	Government Reforms	Features/objectives
1	**Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013 (Nirbhaya Act)**	This amendment was passed in 2013, making significant changes to laws concerning sexual offences. The Government established the Nirbhaya Fund to support initiatives addressing women's safety and empowerment. The fund has been utilised to set up one-stop centres, women's helplines, and improve infrastructure for women's safety.

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2	**Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017**	This amendment was enacted in 2017, extending the maternity leave period for women working in the organised sector in India from 12 weeks to 26 weeks. This reform recognises the importance of providing adequate time for maternal health and bonding with the child.
3	**The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act, 2019**	This amendment was passed in 2019, strengthening the protection of children from sexual offenses.
4	**The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act, 2019**	Although not specific to women as a whole, was also an important amendment passed within the last 10 years to provide legal protection to Muslim women against instant triple talaq (divorce). It criminalised the practice of instant triple talaq (divorce) among Muslim men in India. This reform aimed to protect the rights of Muslim women and ensure gender equality within personal laws.
5	**Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013**	This Act mandates the establishment of internal committees in workplaces to address complaints of sexual harassment and ensure a safe working environment for women.

These reforms have played a crucial role in advancing women's rights and empowerment in India, fostering gender equality, and challenging systemic inequalities. However, it is important to continue working towards creating a society that fully upholds and respects women's rights in all aspects of life.

What should be the way forward ?

We must move away from Women Development to Women Led Development. Women should be re-imagined as architects of India's progress and development, rather than being passive recipients of the fruits of development. The ripple effects of Women Led Development are undeniable as an educated and empowered woman will ensure education and empowerment for future generations.

It is only through collective efforts, involving governments, civil society and individuals, that we can create a more equitable and inclusive world for women. **The Supreme Court of India's recently released Handbook on Combating Gender Stereotypes** will give a fresh impetus to the quest towards a gender-just legal order.

Read More- **The Hindu**

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Cauvery Water Dispute and Interstate River Disputes in India- Explained Pointwise

Cauvery Water Dispute is in news again and has strained the relations between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu government. The Supreme Court declined to interfere with the order of the **Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA)** which directed Karnataka to release 5,000 cubic feet of water per second (cusecs) to Tamil Nadu until September 27, 2023. This sparked off massive protests in Karnataka. Karnataka is protesting that it will experience water scarcity as it has been a monsoon deficient season.

Read More- Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA)

What is Cauvery Water Dispute and its reasons?

The Cauvery water dispute is an inter-state water dispute between Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala and Puducherry.

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End Of A Century-Old Wrangle....

Cauvery stretches over 802km with origin at Tala-cauvery of Karnataka's Kodagu district

In 2007, after 16 years, the Cauvery tribunal gave its final award

The tribunal held valid the agreements of 1892 and 1924 executed between the government of Madras and Mysore. Both Karnataka and Tamil Nadu were unhappy with the verdict

THE SPLIT: 2018
(in thousand million cubic feet)

Tamil Nadu	Karnataka	Kerala	Puducherry
404	285	30	7

Awarded in 2007
419   270   30   7

Cauvery Basin (in sqkm)
Tamil Nadu — 44,000
Karnataka — 32,000

An agreement was signed between princely state of Mysuru and Madras Presidency in 1892 and 1924 over sharing water entitling lion's share to TN

K A R N A T A K A
Madikeri
Mandya
Mysore
Salem
Erode
Coimbatore
Tiruvapur
K E R A L A
T A M I L N A D U

"Waters of an inter-state river... national asset... No state can claim exclusive ownership of such waters or assert... right so as to deprive other states...
SC, Feb16, 2018

Other major inter-state river disputes

Ravi & Beas State concern Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan

Narmada MP, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan

Krishna Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka

Godavari Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, MP

Periyar TN, Kerala

Ravi Beas Yamuna Ganga Brahmaputra Narmada Godavari Krishna Cauvery

Source- Indpaedia

Historical Timeline of Cauvery River Water Dispute	
1892	This dispute originated for the first time way back in 1892 at the time of Britishers between the **Presidency of Madras and Princely state of Mysore.**
1924	In **1924** Mysore and Madras reached into an agreement which will be valid for 50 years. Hence, it ceased to be enforced in 1974.
1974	Since **1974,** Karnataka started diverting water into its four newly made reservoirs, without the consent of Tamil Nadu.This resulted in dispute in post independent India.
1990	After several years, the **Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal (CWDT)** was established in 1990 to resolve the issue. It took 17 years for the CWDT to reach a final order in 2007.

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2007	CWDT issued its final award in February 2007 and specified water allocations among the four states in the Cauvery basin, considering the total availability of 740 TMC in a normal year.The allocation of water among the four states is as follows: **Tamil Nadu – 419 TMC(which had demanded 512 TMC), Karnataka – 270 TMC(which had demanded 465 TMC), Kerala – 30 TMC and Puducherry – 7 TMC.**
2018	In 2018, the Supreme Court declared the **Cauvery a** national asset and largely upheld the water-sharing arrangements determined by the CWDT. It made minor readjustments in the CWDT order. **As per the judgement, Tamil Nadu – 404.25 TMC, Karnataka- 284.75 TMC, Kerala 30 TMC and Puducherry 7 TMC.** **It also directed the Centre to notify the Cauvery Management Scheme. Central government notified the 'Cauvery Water Management Scheme' in June 2018**, constituting the **'Cauvery Water Management Authority'** and the **'Cauvery Water Regulation Committee'.**

Even though the Water Sharing mechanism has been put in place by the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal (CWDT) and the subsequent SC judgement in 2018, there has been regular disputes in the water sharing arrangement.

Reasons for Cauvery Water Dispute

1. Deficit monsoon and unavailability of water – Poor inflow due to reduced rainfall in Cauvery catchment, including origin point, Kodagu. Karnataka highlights a 44% rainfall deficit in Kodagu from June to August.

2. Water Scarcity In Tamil Nadu- Tamil Nadu's Mettur reservoir holds only 20 TMC, which will last ten days.

3. Disagreement over the water sharing agreement as per CWMA- Both Karnataka and Tamil Nadu disagree with the water sharing agreement of Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA).

4. Hydropolitics and Delays – Political parties capitalise on water disputes for mobilisation. Prolonged tribunal adjudications have also contributed to delays.

What are the other Interstate river disputes apart from the Cauvery water Dispute?

The following map and the corresponding table shows the various Interstate river disputes that have been prevailing in India.

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Basin Code (CWC)	Basin Name (CWC)	Interstate or Intrastate	Total Live Storage Capacity (MCM)
1	Indus (Up to border)	Interstate	16,568.4
2 a	Ganga	Interstate	60,660.4
2 b	Brahmaputra	Interstate	11,680.6
2 c	Barak and others	Interstate	
3	Godavari	Interstate	31,330.4
4	Krishna	Interstate	49,547.5
5	Cauvery	Interstate	8,867.0
6	Subernarekha	Interstate	2,322.2
7	Brahmani and Baitami	Interstate	5,523.7
8	Mahanadi	Interstate	14,207.8
9	Pennar	Interstate	4,820.1
10	Mahi	Interstate	4,984.0
11	Sabarmati	Interstate	1,367.5
12	Narmada	Interstate	23,604.6
13	Tapi	Interstate	10,255.8
14	West flowing rivers from Tapi to Tadri	Mostly Intrastate	14,732.4
15	West flowing rivers from Tadri to Kanyakumari	Mostly Intrastate	11,553.7
16	East flowing rivers between Mahanadi and Pennar	Interstate	3,026.4
17	East flowing rivers between Pennar and Kanyakumari	Interstate	1,906.9
18	West flowing rivers of Kutch and Saurashtra including Luni	Interstate	5,524.2
19	Area of inland drainage in Rajasthan	Intrastate	–
20	Minor rivers draining into Myanmar (Burma and Bangladesh)	Interstate	312.0

Source- ORF

Constitutional Arrangements to solve Interstate Water Disputes

Schedule 7 of the Constitution	It distinguishes between the use of water within a State and the purpose of regulating interstate waters. **Union List- Entry 56** gives the Union Parliament the power to formulate laws and mechanisms for regulating Interstate rivers. **State List – Entry 17** gives States retain autonomy regarding water utilisation for purposes such as water supply, irrigation and canals, drainage and embankments, water storage and water power subject to provisions of Entry 56 of List 1 (Union List).
Article 262	In case of disputes relating to waters, Parliament may by law provide for the adjudication of any dispute or complaint with respect to the use, distribution or control of the waters of, or in, any inter-State rivers. **Parliament may, by law also provide that neither the Supreme Court nor any other court shall exercise jurisdiction** in respect of any such dispute or complaint as mentioned

Statutory Arrangements to solve Interstate Water Disputes

River Board Act 1956	The river Boards are supposed to advise on the Inter-state basin to prepare development scheme and to prevent the emergence of conflicts.
Inter-State Water Dispute Act 1956	If a particular State or States approach the Union Government for the constitution of the tribunal: (a)

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	Central Government should try to resolve the matter by consultation among the aggrieved States; (b) In case, consultation does not work, then the Union Government may constitute the tribunal.

What are the reasons for persistence of Inter-State Water Disputes ?

In India, Inter-state river disputes like Cauvery water disputes have persisted due to the following reasons, which are enumerated below-

Unbalanced distribution of powers between Union and state governments- The legislative powers concerning water have been distributed between the Union and the State Governments. However, this approach of **imprecise distribution of power** between the Union and the States, has created a **Federal-Jurisdictional ambiguity.**

Limited powers of River Tribunals – The Tribunal can only make an award and cannot make it binding. The Tribunals also **lack the ability to punish for 'contempt'.**

Institutional ambiguity in adjudication of river water disputes – Article 262 provides that the Parliament may by law prevent the Supreme Court or any other Court from exercising jurisdiction in inter-State water disputes. However, under Article 136, the Supreme Court can hear appeals against the orders of Tribunals. Thus, the Supreme Court remains the adjudicatory body along with the tribunals, creating an **institutional ambiguity regarding which body is the ultimate adjudicatory power** on inter-State water disputes in India.

Lack of technical expertise in the tribunals members – The **members** of tribunals created for adjudicating the inter-State water disputes have been **predominantly from the Judiciary.** This has lead to lack of a **multi-disciplinary approach to dispute settlement**.

Excessive delays in establishing tribunals and making awards- The right to have a dispute referred to a tribunal under the IWSDA (Inter-State Water Dispute Act) is contingent on the Union Government's determination that the matter cannot be resolved through negotiations. The **provision of negotiations inevitably delays** the constitution of a tribunal.

Political Mobilisation and electoral benefits- Inter-State disputes are exploited for political mobilization and electoral benefits. State Governments have rejected the awards of Tribunals for political gains.

Unscientific water data management – There is a **lack of data regarding water flows, seasonal variations etc.** which results in ambiguities regarding availability of water, surplus water for sharing etc. In addition, seasonal variations in monsoonal rainfall sometimes create shortage of water.

What Should be the way forward in resolving these Disputes?

These interstate river disputes and the cauvery water disputes must be resolved in the following ways to reach amicable solutions at the earliest.

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Provide mutually accepted water sharing/ deficit formula- Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) should find a mutually accepted water sharing/ deficit formula. Water Allocation **should be based on the basis of monsoon** and availability of water

Transparency in the proceedings of CWRC- The CWMA and Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC) should **publish their meeting proceedings** online.

Rejuvenation of Inter state Councils – Article 263 of the Indian Constitution provides for the establishment of Interstate council to resolve interstate differences. Inter-State Council should be rejuvenated to enable it to play a more active role in settlement of interstate river disputes. To solve interstate water disputes, economic survey has suggested for **cooperative federalism just like GST.**

Fixed time frame for adjudication- There is a need to establish a time frame for constituting the Tribunal by the Union Government. Tribunals should also try to avoid unnecessary delays in giving the award.

Simplification of Judicial process of dispute resolution – The Government's inability to properly handle water-related disputes is reflected in the high number of appeals to the Supreme Court. Some experts suggest that the **appeal to the Supreme Court should only on procedural aspects.** The awards based on expert opinions shouldn't be questioned in the Court. The **Sarkaria Commission** has suggested that the **awards of the tribunals be given the same weight as a Supreme Court Judgement**.

Exploration of Mediation route to solve the inter state river disputes – Mediation can also be explored as a possible option for successful resolution of disputes. The example of the role of the **World Bank as a mediator** in the Indus Water Treaty between India and Pakistan is quoted as a success of this model.

Better water data management- Infrastructure should be created for **better collection of the data related to inter-State river basins.** Better data will provide clear picture regarding availability of waters, seasonal variations and help in the equitable distribution of water among the States.

Read More- **Cauvery water Dispute The Hindu**

Aadhaar Project- Are Moody's Concerns Valid?- Explained Pointwise

Recently, released report of global rating agency Moody' has highlighted Moody's concerns regarding the Aadhaar project of India. In its recently released report **"Decentralized Finance and Digital Assets"**, Moody's has highlighted some grave concerns regarding India's ambitious digital identification (ID) programme for residents- the **Aadhaar Project.** The Comptroller and Auditor General **(CAG)** of India has also previously raised concerns about the Aadhaar Project.

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Key Highlights of Moody's concerns on Aadhaar Project

1. Biometric issues- According to the report, Aadhaar has been resulting in denial of services. The report has questioned the reliability of biometric technologies especially for manual labourers in hot, humid climates, as there are risks of change in their fingerprint patterns.

2. Risk of data breaches due to the Centralized Identification system – Aadhaar is a centralized identification system. This leads to the concentration of sensitive information with specific entities, which increases the risks of data breaches.

Source- The Hindu

Read More- **Moody's concerns on Aadhar-Forum IAS**

What is Aadhaar Project?

Aadhaar Project – Under Aadhaar Project, a Unique **Identification Number** is issued by the Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), to every resident of India. It is a **twelve-digit number** which is linked to the **resident's demographic and biometric information.**

Aadhaar collection authority – The data is collected by the **Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI),** a statutory authority established in January 2009 by the Government of India, under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, under the provisions of the **Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and other Subsidies, benefits and services) Act, 2016.**

What are the advantages of the Aadhaar Project?

Identification of the beneficiaries of the government's welfare schemes – Aadhaar has helped to remove fake and duplicate identities of beneficiaries. It **has been used to filter the list of beneficiaries and stop the leakage** of public money.

Targeted delivery of subsidies directly to the bank account – JAM trinity (Jan Dhan Yojana, Aadhaar and Mobile numbers) has been employed for targeted delivery of subsidies. Use of Aadhaar Card for distributing social welfare schemes has led to better targeting of poor which were suffering by leakages. It has led to savings of Rs 50,000 crore per year by plugging the leakages in most schemes. . In the form of DBT scheme for LPG, government has saved Rs 10,000 crore in two years.

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Aadhaar has helped in mapping development parameters – In critical sectors of the country like **healthcare and education, Aadhaar has been used to map the development processes** and parameters. It has also been used to map skilled manpower, based on the vocational training acquired by the individual with the suitable job vacancies/ skill requirements.

Ease in filing of Income tax return and opening of bank accounts – Use of Aadhaar in income tax filing has reduced the number of documents needed for filing income tax. It has made the process more **efficient and cost-effective.**

Helped to tackle the black money issue – The use of Aadhaar in financial transactions has **reduced the menace of black money** in the country.

Has been helpful for the geriatric population in accessing benefits- Aadhaar project has been used to transfer **pension money** on time, issuance of **digital Life certificate** and easy **Provident Fund disbursement.**

What has been other issues with the Aadhaar project apart from Moody's concerns ?

CAG in its report has highlighted several concerns with the functioning of UIDAI and the Aadhaar project.

1. Deficient data management system of UIDAI- UIDAI manages the Aadhaar project in the country. There are issues in the functioning of UIDAI like issues of **data-matching, errors in authentication, and shortfall in archiving.**

2. Privacy at risk- UIDAI has not ensured that the applications or devices used by agencies or companies for authentication "were not capable of storing the personal information of the residents, which **put the privacy of residents at risk**".

3. Lack of data archiving Policy- UIDAI has lack of data archiving policy and there have been **widespread cases of duplication of Aadhaar**.

4. UIDAI Charging Fees for Voluntary Update – Initially, poor quality data was fed in during enrolment. However, now, for rectification of that data, UIDAI appeared to have **charged people for biometric updates**.

5. Authentication failures – Aadhaar project has **experienced high rates of failures in authentication,** leading to delays in the disbursal of benefits in remote areas with poor internet connectivity. Many Aadhaar cardholders are facing authentication issue while accessing the Public Distribution System.

6. Identity Theft and KYC fraud – Aadhaar data have been used by fraudsters for criminal purposes such as identity theft, Know Your Customer (KYC)-related fraud etc. **Ex- Loan scams.**

7. Last-mile delivery in rural areas faces issues of lesser Bank penetration- The last-mile delivery is a significant challenge with the problem of lesser banking infrastructure in rural areas and the failure of the banking correspondent model to take off.

8. Concerns about the effectiveness of Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) application to all schemes – Blanket application of DBT to all government schemes has caused troubles. For example: Application of DBT for fertiliser scheme is being criticised by the farmers as they are

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finding it difficult to pay high upfront costs for fertiliser and then wait for payments through banks.

9. Issuance of Aadhaar to Minor Children – Issue of Aadhaar numbers to minor children below the age of five, based on the biometrics of their parents without confirming the uniqueness of biometric identity, goes against the basic tenet of the Aadhaar Act.

Read More- **CAG concerns on Aadhaar-Forum IAS**

What should be the way forward?

Decentralisation of Aadhaar data – In **decentralized ID (DID) systems**, personal data is saved in a user's digital wallet and identity verification takes place not via a single, centralized institution but on a decentralized digital ledger such as a blockchain. This **increases privacy and reduces the amount of personal information** held by intermediaries. **For example, Estonia**, known for its fully digitalized public services has **embraced SSI [Self-Sovereign Identity] to grant citizens complete control over their digital identities.**

Increase in banking penetration- There should be an increase in penetration of banks and financial institutions in rural areas. Further, Banking Corresponding agents can be used to educate farmers not to fall into traps of moneylenders.

Better Internet infrastructure to support Aaadhar Project- There is need for infrastructure like cellular towers, cheap mobile plans because without mobile connectivity JAM trinity and aadhaar are meaningless.

Aadhaar has now evolved as one of the primary identity documents and a vital instrument for the targeted delivery of various government scheme benefits. However, Aadhaar number can be misused by some malicious actors. In this light, UIDAI to offer the **Masked Aadhaar Card Service** which is a significant step.

Read More- **Moody's report on Aadhaar**

Present Status of Unemployment In India – Explained Pointwise

Recently released report **"State of Working India 2023"** has higlighted the present status of unemployment in India. The report has been prepared by Azim Premji University's Centre for Sustainable Employment. The report highlights the trends of Unemployment in India over the decade.

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Present Status of Unemployment in India according to "State of Working India 2023" report

Rate of Unemployment- The overall unemployment rate has reduced to **6.6 per cent in 2021-22 from 8.7 per cent in 2017-18.**

Unemployment based on education and age group – Over **42 per cent** of India's **graduates under 25** were unemployed in 2021-22. Unemployment figure stands at **21.4 per cent** for those who have completed higher secondary education under the age of 25. Notably, with lower educational qualifications, the rate of unemployment also decreased.

Women Employment scenario – After the coronavirus pandemic, **60 percent** of women are **self-employed,** as compared to **50 percent** before the pandemic. However, there has been **decrease in the earnings** of Women, as their earnings in 2022 was only 85% of what they were earning before the pandemic.

Inter generational mobility in employment – There has been **inter-generational mobility of employment** in the casual labour generation. But more number of general castes have moved out of casual labour as compared to SCs/STs. In 2021, **40 percent of SC workers** were involved in casual employment, as compared to **13 percent of general caste workers**. Furthermore, around **22 per cent of SC workers** were regular wage workers as opposed to **32% of general caste workers.**

Nature of economic growth in India – Economic growth has not guaranteed employment in India. **With every percentage increase in GDP, the capacity to generate formal sector jobs has systematically declined**. Even though the workers have moved out of the agricultural sector, they have been absorbed in the informal and contractual employment as opposed to formal employment.

What is Unemployment, and what are the different types of Unemployment?

Definition- Unemployment refers to a situation where a person **who is able and willing to work is not able to find a job.** It is often used as a measure of the health of an economy, as high levels of unemployment can indicate a lack of available jobs, which in turn can lead to reduced economic growth and increased social and economic inequality.

Types of Unemployment

Frictional unemployment	This type of unemployment occurs when workers are in **between jobs or are searching for a job.** It is a temporary and natural part of the labour market.

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Structural unemployment	This occurs when there is a **mismatch between the skills** that workers have and the skills required for available jobs. Structural unemployment can be caused by changes in the economy, such as the decline of certain industries or technological advancements.
Cyclical unemployment	This type of unemployment is caused by **changes in the business cycle**, such as recessions or economic downturns. When the economy slows down, companies may cut jobs to reduce costs, leading to increased unemployment.
Seasonal unemployment	Seasonal unemployment occurs when workers are employed only during certain times of the year, such as **during the holiday season or during harvest** time in agricultural sectors.
Technological unemployment	This occurs when **technological advancements make certain jobs obsolete**, leading to job losses in those sectors.
Underemployment	This refers to a situation where workers are employed but are not able to work as much as they would like, or are working in jobs that are **below their skill levels.**

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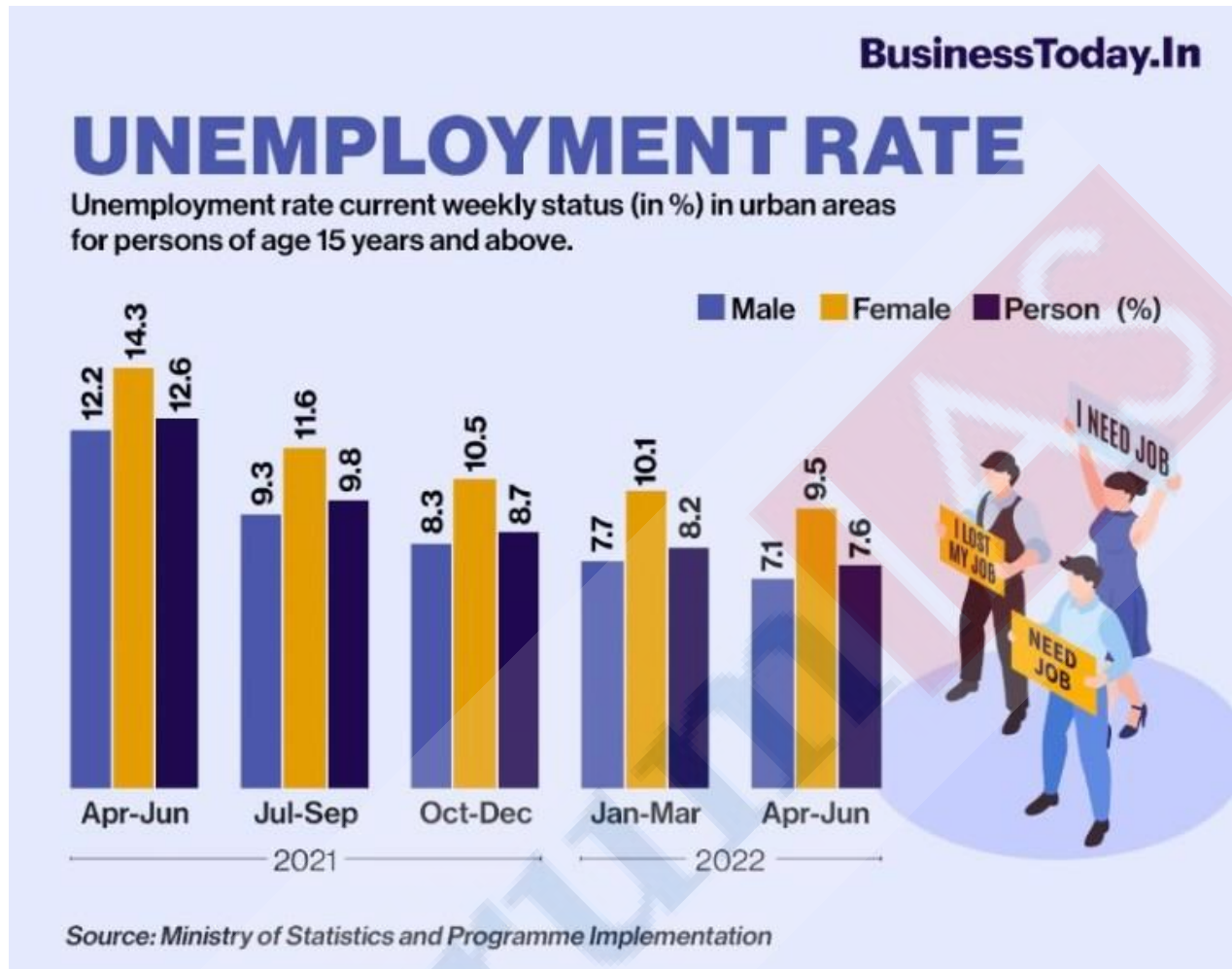
Source- MoSPI and Business Today

What are the reasons for present high unemployment in India?

The reasons behind the present status of unemployment in India are the following-

Education and Skills Reasons

Failure of Indian Education system – Although literacy rates have risen in the last few decades, there still remains a fundamental flaw in the education system in India. **The degree-oriented system** fails when it comes to producing skilled human resources for specific job profiles in the economy.

Higher educational level among youth – Youth unemployment has increased significantly from 2011-12 to 2021-22, nearly doubling during this period. **As educational attainment improves**, more educated individuals are **less inclined to accept unskilled and informal jobs.** This is the reason behind high unemployment among graduate youth.

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Social Reasons

Joint Family System – It has **encouraged disguised unemployment.** In big families having large business establishments, many persons don't do any work and are dependent on the joint income of the family. The joint family system is more prevalent in rural areas, with families employed in the agricultural sector.

Rush for government jobs for social prestige and security – Many educated youth are running behind government jobs due to **social pressure, socially respected job profile and social security.** This has to a situation where many students choose to remain unemployed during preparation for government jobs.

Low mobility of Labour due to social reasons – People generally avoid migrating to far-off areas of work due to factors like **diversity of language, religion, customs and family loyalty.** This low labour mobility has contributed to the high unemployment in India.

Expansion of social security measures – The government has increased the distribution of food under the National Food Security Act. This has reduced the pressure on individuals to immediately seek employment. **It allows them more time to "search for work,"** which has also contributed to the increase in the unemployment rate.

Economic Structure reasons

Economic growth model promoting informal job creation like Gig Economy – Economic growth model of India has been **tilted towards gig economy which is based on informal and contractual jobs.** Thus, even though the workers have moved out of the agricultural sector, they have been absorbed in the informal and contractual employment as opposed to formal employment. **Ex- Delivery boys, service providers.**

The decline of Small Scale and Cottage Industries- Independent India's **preference to large scale industry and new industrial policy of the 1990s** has resulted in the decline of small scale industries. This has resulted in high unemployment in rural areas.

Huge dependence on agricultural sector- Agriculture remains the biggest employer in the country. The seasonal nature of employment in the agricultural sector has led to **recurring cycles of unemployment** for the rural population.

Why addressing the present status of unemployment is crucial for India's development?

Reaping the demographic dividend – India could get old before it becomes rich if the present status of unemployment is not addressed. The high unemployment in India will prevent us from reaping the benefits that our demographic dividend may provide.

Women's Empowerment- Increasing the female formal job opportunities will lead to **socio-economic upliftment of women** in different fields.

Poverty alleviation- Increasing formal employment and addressing the flaws in the informal sector jobs will help India alleviate poverty. This will **improve the socio-economic position of the vulnerable sections** of the society.

Lead India into the league of developed nations – Addressing the present status of unemployment is indispensable for leveraging the contribution of women and the youth. Both

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are crucial population segments which will propel India towards becoming a **developed economy.**

What should be the way forward for addressing the present status of unemployment in India?

Need for National Employment Policy (NEP)- There is a need for formulation of **National Employment Policy (NEP)** that would encompass a set of multidimensional interventions ranging from social to economic issues.

Special packages for Labour Intensive Industries – Government must provide **special packages for labour intensive industries like leather and footwear**, food processing, furniture and home decor, textiles and apparel. These industries have high potential for generating more jobs per capital spent.

Focus on resource based development- Decentralisation of Industrial activities based on resources will address the problem of labour mobility and provide employment opportunities in backward regions of the country like Jharkhand, Odisha.

Proper Implementation of New Education Policy – The proper implementation of New Education Policy will **reduce the distance between Industry and academia.** Incubation centers need to be promoted to cultivate original business ideas that will be financially viable for employment generation.

Removal of social barriers for more women participation- SHGs led women employment schemes like Kudumbashree must be promoted to break the social barriers for entry of women in job market.
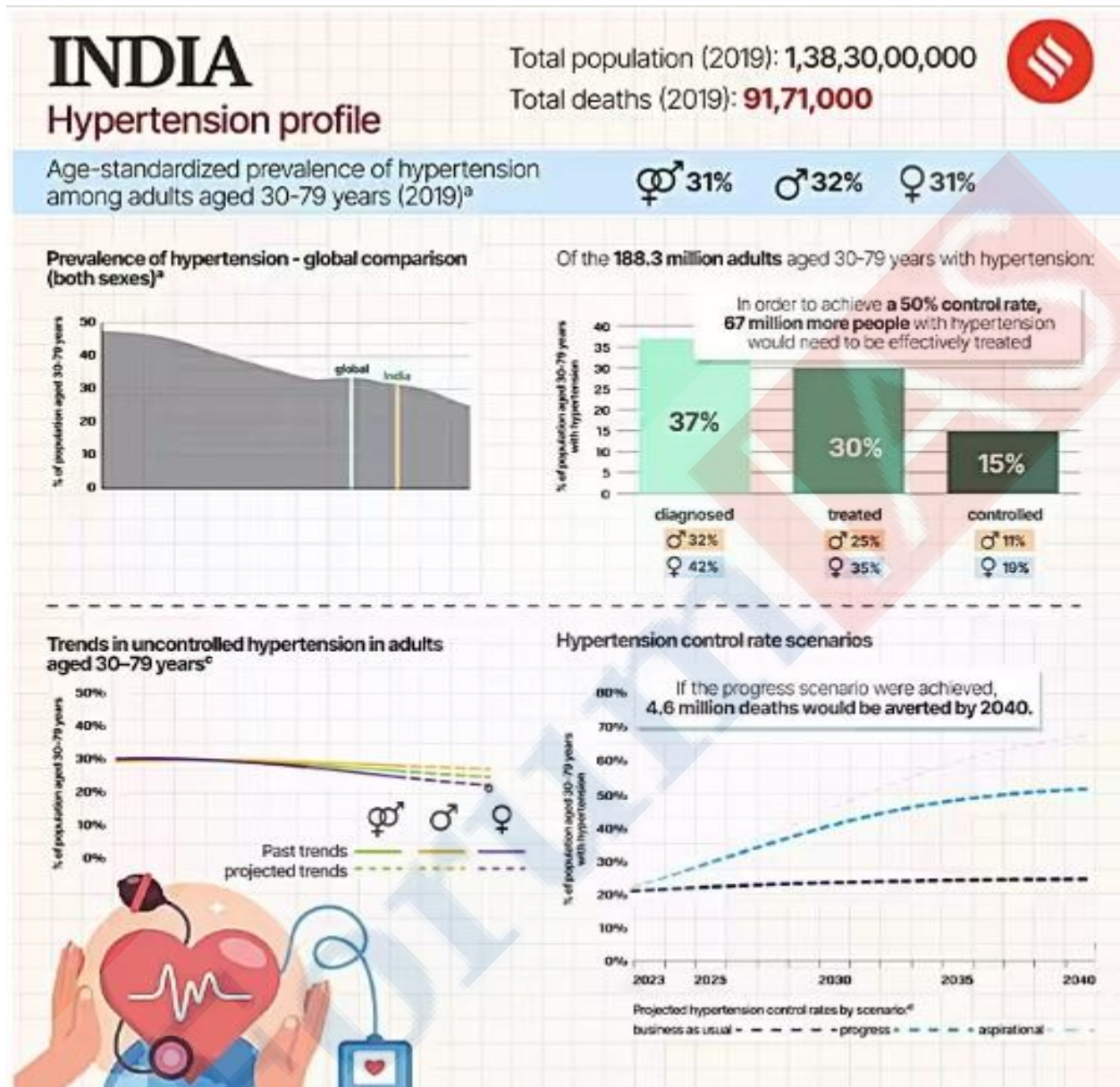
Greater public investment – The government must make greater public investment in **sectors like health, education, police and judiciary** to create many government jobs and associated employment opportunities.

Proper Implementation of the government employment schemes – Government schemes like **Atma Nirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana (ABRY), Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana (PMRPY), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)** etc. must be properly implemented for reducing the present levels of unemployment in India.

Source- **Indian Express**

WHO Report on Hypertension-Explained Pointwise

Recently, the World Health Organisation **(WHO) has released its first report on hypertension.** According to the first-ever report released by WHO on the global impact of hypertension, at least **4.6 million deaths in India can be prevented by 2040** if half its hypertensive population controls its blood pressure.

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Source- The Indian Express

What is hypertension?

Blood pressure is the **force exerted by circulating blood** against the walls of the body's arteries, the major blood vessels in the body. Hypertension occurs when blood pressure is too high.

Definition- It is defined as having systolic blood pressure level **greater than or equal to 140 mmHg or diastolic blood pressure level greater than or equal to 90 mmHg** or/and taking anti-hypertensive medication to lower his/her blood pressure.

Read More- **Hypertension Forum IAS**

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What are the causes and consequences of hypertension according to the report?

Causes of Hypertension – **High-salt diets, lack of physical activity, and excessive alcohol consumption** are significant contributors to hypertension. **Genetics** is believed to play a role in high blood pressure as well.

Symptoms of Hypertension – Most people with hypertension don't feel any symptoms. Very high blood pressure can cause **headaches, blurred vision, chest pain** and other symptoms.

Treatment of Hypertension – Lifestyle changes like adopting a **low-salt diet, weight loss, physical activity, and quitting tobacco** etc. and medications.

Consequences of Uncontrolled Hypertension –

1. Severe **heart issues, including chest pain, heart attacks, heart failure, and irregular heartbeats, as well as increase the risk of stroke** by affecting blood flow to the brain.

2. Hypertension can lead to **disability, reduced quality of life, and premature death.**

3.The **socioeconomic costs** associated with hypertension are substantial which include both **direct costs** related to healthcare, as well as **indirect costs** related to lost productivity and reduced economic growth.

4. Hypertension cuts down people's most **economically productive years.**

What are the observations of the WHO report on hypertension?

WHO report on hypertension has made the following observations regarding hypertension globally and with respect to India.

Global Hypertension burden

Global Impact- **One in three adults** across the world suffers from hypertension.
Growing problem-The number of hypertension cases has **doubled from 650 million to 1.3 billion** between 1990 and 2019.
Impact on young generation- Hypertension affects approximately 33% of adults aged 30-79 worldwide.
Under treatment- **Approximately four out of every five people** with hypertension are not adequately treated. If countries can scale up coverage, 76 million deaths could be averted between 2023 and 2050.
Disparities in Treatment Coverage- Treatment coverage for hypertension exhibits significant disparities among countries, with **high-income nations having a more favourable coverage rate. More than three-quarters of adults with hypertension** live in low- and middle-income countries.

Indian Hypertension Burden

Hypertension is the **most important non communicable disease** risk factor in India.
India has an estimated **188.3 million adults aged 30–79 years** grappling with hypertension.
Southern States have a **higher prevalence of hypertension** than the national average. **Kerala (32.8% men and 30.9% women)** has the highest number followed by Telangana.

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> To reach a 50% control rate, India needs to ensure that an **additional 67 million people with hypertension receive effective treatment. If the progress scenario were achieved, 4.6 million deaths due to high blood pressure would be averted by 2040.**

What are the initiatives undertaken for controlling Hypertension?

National Initiatives

India Hypertension Control Initiative (IHCI)- India Hypertension Control Initiative(IHCI) focuses on controlling hypertension by screening people, ensuring protocol-based treatment, and providing medicines. Through India Hypertension Control Initiative(IHCI) and the government's push towards non-communicable disease screening and treatment at the primary healthcare level, India aims to **put 75 million patients with hypertension or diabetes on standard care by 2025.**

National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke (NPCDCS) which is being implemented under the **National Health Mission.**

Ayushman Bharat Health Wellness Centre scheme- **Preventive aspect of hypertension** and NCDs is being strengthened under Comprehensive Primary Health Care by promotion of wellness activities and targeted communication at the community level.

Affordable Medicines and Reliable Implants for Treatment (AMRIT) Deendayal outlets- These have been opened at 159 Institutions/Hospitals with an objective to make Cardiovascular Diseases drugs and implants at discounted prices to the patients.

Global Initiatives

Global Hearts Initiative – WHO and the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention launched the **Global Hearts Initiative in 2016** to achieve the global target to reduce the prevalence of hypertension by 25% by 2025.

WHO Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of NCDs 2013–2020- This action plan aims to **reduce premature mortality from Non Communicable disease(NCDs)** by 25% by 2025 and includes a set of nine global targets.

The NCD Alliance- This is a global network of civil society organizations working to prevent and control NCDs. It advocates for **policy change and increased investment in NCD** prevention and management.

WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control- This international treaty aims to **reduce tobacco consumption** and the related harm to health.

United Nations High-Level Meeting on NCDs- This meeting, held in 2018, focused on accelerating progress on the prevention and control of NCDs and called for increased political commitment and action to combat NCDs.

SDG-3 – The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 3 (SDG 3) aims **to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all.** This goal has reduction of hypertension as one of its main targets.

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What are the recommendations of the WHO report on Hypertension?

Following recommendations of the WHO report on Hypertension must be followed so as to reduce mortality due to hypertension.

Scaling Up Coverage of Hypertension treatment- Countries are urged to scale up coverage of hypertension treatment to reach more individuals with high blood pressure.

Integration with Primary Healthcare systems- Effective hypertension management should be integrated into primary healthcare systems, making it accessible to a broad population.

Using WHO's HEARTS Package- WHO's HEARTS technical package for cardiovascular disease management in primary healthcare and guidelines for the pharmacological treatment of hypertension in adults should be implemented for proven and practical steps for hypertension care.

Affordable Medication- Simple, low-cost medication should be made available and affordable to those with hypertension.

Team-Based Care- Collaboration among healthcare teams is encouraged to adjust and intensify blood pressure medication regimens per doctor orders and protocols.

Patient-Centered Service- Reduction of barriers to care through easy-to-take medication regimens, free medications, close-to-home follow-up visits, and accessible blood pressure monitoring can improve patient outcomes.

Development of Information Systems- Simple information systems should be developed to facilitate rapid recording of essential patient-level data and reducing healthcare worker data entry burden.

Read More- **WHO report on Hypertension Indian Express**

[Kurukshetra 2023 September] Make In India-Challenges Opportunities and Outcomes- Explained Pointwise

'Make in India' launched on 25 September 2014 is one of the game-changing economic initiatives of the Government of India. This timely and appropriate international marketing slogan is aimed at **encouraging companies and individuals across the globe** to facilitate, foster innovation, build world-class infrastructure and build a hub for manufacturing, design, and innovation in India.

What is the scope and Sectoral Coverage of Make In India?

Make in India is an initiative by the Government of India to **create and encourage companies to develop, manufacture and assemble products made in India** and incentivize dedicated investments into manufacturing.

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Scope and Objectives

Why Make in India?

The initiative Make in India envisaged the following to:

- lay focus on employment creation and skill upgrading in 27 sectors of the economy.

- increase contribution of the manufacturing sector to overall GDP growth.

- enhance tax revenues of the nation by positively enhancing business activity through the manufacturing revolution.

- eliminate unnecessary laws, controls, and bureaucratic procedural hurdles.

- ensure and adopt higher quality standards for manufacturing products with reduced impact on the environment.

- attract FDI for capital financing and technological investment in the different economic schemes of the country.

- identify and promote the growing services and industrial sectors in the Indian economy.

Source-Kurukshetra

Sectoral Coverage

A total of **27 economic sectors** were identified to give a big push during the entire life cycle of business activities within the respective sector.

Manufacturing Sector(15 sectors)	Aerospace and Defence, Automotive and Auto Components, Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices, Bio-Technology, Capital Goods, Textile and Apparels, Chemicals and Petrochemicals, Electronics System Design and Manufacturing (ESDM), Leather & Footwear,Food Processing, Gems and Jewellery, Shipping, Railways, Construction, New and Renewable Energy.
Service Sector(12 sectors)	Information Technology & Information Technology enabled Services (IT & ITeS), Tourism and Hospitality Services, Medical

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	Value Travel, Transport and Logistics Services, Accounting and Finance Services, Audio Visual Services, Legal Services, Communication Services, Construction and Related Engineering Services, Environmental Services, Financial Services, Education Services.

Pillars

New Processes	The Government of India introduced several reform measures aligned with positive parameters of the **World Bank's 'Ease of Doing Business (EoDB)' with a view to enhance India's ranking on business facilitation through process reforms.**
New Infrastructure	Make in India intends to develop **well-equipped industrial corridors, smart cities**, **world class infrastructure** with state-of-the-art technology, and high-speed communication network amenities.
New Sectors	Make in India identified **25 sectors. Investment gaps were removed in certain sectors, restrictions for expansion were either removed or relaxed for some other sectors,** considering their growth potential and their share in national economic development.
New Mindset	Attempts were made to transform the Government's outlook towards **the industrial growth by making it a partner** in the economic development of the country along with the development of the corporate sector.

Reforms

- Guaranteeing basic production inputs – power, minerals and water at competitive prices.
- Making modern transport, logistic, and communication infrastructure accessible.
- Ensuring accessibility to domestic and international markets.
- Developing entrepreneurship and improving the capacity of entrepreneurs.
- Extending support for bringing in EoDB through access to venture capital, strong industrial delicensing and deregulating environment, etc.

What are the advantages of Make in India?

Make in India has the following advantages-

Promotes export oriented Growth- The export oriented growth model of the program will positively impact the balance of payments position and support in accumulating foreign exchange reserves. A positive balance of payments will **address volatility in the global economy**, especially in the post-COVID economic scenario.

India's growth as global manufacturing hub- The holistic developmental approach under this initiative will help in **achieving higher credit ratings for the country,** and making India a global manufacturing hub so as to attract more and more investors to invest in India.

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Increase in employment opportunities- A massive increase in employment will enhance the purchasing power of the citizen, will expand the consumer base for companies and **address the problem of poverty.**

Address the problem of Brain Drain- Emphasis on improved education and training infrastructure as part of **'Make in India' program will ensure a skilled workforce** for each of the focused sectors will help reduce brain drain.

What has been the impact of 'make in India'?

The 'Make in India' initiative has had a positive impact on the economy. The following are some of the major achievements of the last 8 years:

Increase in Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) rankings- EoDB parameters have gone in favour of India during the last eight years. The industrial environment has become positive and progressive. The country's rank in the World Bank's **EoDB ranking was 142 in 2014**. As per the latest report, the World Bank has accorded **India a rank 63 in 2022,** indicating a rank improvement of 79 positions.

Increased FDI flows in India- FDI inflows in India which stood at **US $ 45.15 billion** in 2014-15 have increased continuously since then. The highest ever annual FDI inflow of **84.84 billion US$** was recorded in the financial year 2022.

Growth of Indian Agricultural Sector- Indian agriculture sector has been growing at an average annual growth rate of 4.6 per cent during 2014-15 and 2021-22. **India has emerged as the net exporter of agri-products.** In 2020-21, exports of agriculture and allied products from India grew by 18% over 2019-20, and agricultural exports reached a high of US $ 50.2 bn in 2021-22.

Increase in employment and GVA in manufacturing sector- As per the **Eco survey 2021-22 there has been positive GVA in the manufacturing sector**. The total employment in this sector has increased from 57 million in the year 2017-18 to 62.4 million in the year 2019-20, inspite of the disruptions caused by COVID-19.

Resilience of service sector- There is a resilient performance of service trade, where the total services exports grew by **48.4 billion US $ in 2021-22** over 2020-21 from **206.1 US$ billion to 254.5 US $ billion.**

What are the Challenges in 'Make in India'?

Complex Labour Laws- The biggest challenge is the labour laws and reforms in the country. The **Global Rights Index (2016),** published annually by the **International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)**, ranked India as one of the 10 worst countries for working people. Large-scale exclusions of workers from labour law, violence and arrests are the reasons for India's poor performance.

Complex Taxation System- The **complex taxation system**, a huge amount of paperwork and corruption have posed challenges to Make in India.

Stringent land acquisition laws- Stringent land acquisition laws and inflexible labour regulations have made it difficult for India to attract investors in the manufacturing sector. India's **benchmark land acquisition law must be amended** to make it easier to buy land for

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defence and development projects in the fast-growing economy, while also ensuring the rights of farmers.

Availability of Power for Industry- India is running short of power with a **deficit of 5.1%. The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has also recently claimed a loss of $37 billion** due to lack of transparency in the allocation of the coal blocks. Greater availability of power is needed to realise the dream of the scheme.

Low Productivity- The productivity of Indian factories is low and workers have insufficient skills. **McKinsey report** states that Indian workers in the manufacturing sector are, on average, almost **four and five times less productive** than their counterparts in Thailand and China.

Read More- **Make in India 2.0**

What Should be the way forward?

More Labour reforms- India must introduce labour reforms at earliest like raising minimum wages, providing better social security for the labour.

Simplification of Tax system- The complex taxation system, a huge amount of paperwork and corruption is a main cause of worries among the investors. An overly complex GST, which has dampened investor sentiment and created compliance burdens on SMEs need to be simplified.

Land reforms- India's benchmark land acquisition law can be amended to make it easier to buy land for defence and development projects in the fast-growing economy, while also ensuring the rights of farmers.

Skill training- Encouraging youth to join government missions **like Skill India initiative, Yuva Kaushal Kendra mission** to make them available for industrial needs.

Co-operative federalism- To make the a success, a common consensus among the states is needed. There is a need to bring the less performing states at par with the better performing ones through **collaborative efforts.**

Read More- **Make in India The Hindu**

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