



**9 PM**

# **Compilation**

**16<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> October, 2023**

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

### General Studies - 1

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1. **Closing the gender pay gap in the workforce**
2. **Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's 125th birth anniversary: His record on women's rights**
3. **On gay rights, Indian society has outpaced judiciary and legislature**
4. **Why are earthquakes frequent in Afghanistan?**

### General Studies - 2

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1. **From Gaza to Bihar — faultlines Ambedkar and Patel warned us against**
2. **We Should And Can Improve Aadhaar**
3. **Olympian heights – India must be wary of the complexities of hosting the Olympiad**
4. **On Middle East, Delhi must stay with abiding principles, find points of convergence**
5. **India needs more doctors — and how it can happen**
6. **Palliative care, a way to reduce financial distress for people with life limiting diseases**
7. **Delay as tactic – The Centre should stick to timelines to avoid friction with the Collegium**
8. **India-Sri Lanka ferry service restarted after 40 yrs: Opportunities, challenges**
9. **How synergistic barriers are affecting progress on SDGs**
10. **Demolishing the frame from outside the Constitution**
11. **Centralised procurement as a powerful health idea**
12. **A renewed Sri Lankan engagement**
13. **Sea service — Ferry between Tamil Nadu, Northern Sri Lanka holds much potential.**
14. **The measure of the working woman**
15. **Denied abortion of 27-week-foetus: In India, reproductive autonomy remains a pipedream**
16. **Why SLLs also need to be reformed**
17. **An opportunity to recast India's food system**
18. **We must break the silence on suicide prevention in India**
19. **Not just a case about improving investigation**
20. **C Raja Mohan writes: If the Gaza crisis explodes, India too will lose**
21. **Unseating Futures-Cancelled MBBS admissions hide a bigger problem**
22. **Making films accessible to the disabled can serve everyone**

### General Studies - 3

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1. **The puzzles of defence economics**
2. **Ashok Gulati writes: How India can minimise climate risk in agriculture**
3. **The world needs to stop taking water for granted**
4. **The materiality and morality of Net Zero should go hand in hand**
5. **The Indian Himalayan Region needs its own EIA**
6. **Confronting the long-term risks of Artificial Intelligence**
7. **House Asks What's Up- Govt overriding of the right to privacy in special circumstances needs parliamentary oversight**
8. **A new beginning- Freight corridors should improve logistics position**
9. **Carbon pricing challenges- India's piecemeal approach to carbon pricing**

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

10. **When tigers and jackals get the same protection**
11. **A glimmer of hope for radio**
12. **The world economy is slowing even as India's provides hope**
13. **The e-rupee is like wine: It'll take time to mature**
14. **Stay Grounded, ISRO – The space agency's Indian-on-the-Moon target looks within reach**
15. **The explosion of digital uncertainty**
16. **Tackling urban poverty**
17. **Severe drought grips the Amazon rainforest: The impact, cause and grim future**
18. **India's war on informal labour is turning out bad for workers**
19. **Our labour survey data is far from satisfactory**
20. **The shape of climate justice in a warming India**
21. **Farmer Producers' Organisations: Engines of agri-innovation in UP**
22. **Why we need norms on government spending**
23. **Tax uncertainty- SC ruling will increase uncertainty in telecom**
24. **Citius, Altius, Fortius': Save it for the economy**
25. **Mind The Gap, It's Quickly Narrowing**
26. **Climate finance needs private funding too. This is how it can be done**
27. **Water bodies are often seen as real estate which must be built on — that causes a cycle of floods and droughts**
28. **Water bodies are often seen as real estate which must be built on — that causes a cycle of floods and droughts**

# General Studies Paper – 1

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

### General Studies - 1

#### 1. Closing the gender pay gap in the workforce

**Source:** The post is based on the article “Closing the gender pay gap in the workforce” published in “The Hindu” on 16th October 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS1- Society- Woman empowerment & GS3- Economy- Employment

**News:** The article discusses the work of Claudia Goldin on gender inequality in the job market. Goldin argues that women’s lower pay is due to demanding job hours that clash with parental duties. She suggests work environments need changes for better work-life balance. The goal is equal labor market outcomes for all genders.

#### Who is Claudia Goldin?

Claudia Goldin is the 2023 Nobel Prize winner in Economics. She has spent over half a century researching and voicing the issues faced by women in the American job market. Standing as the President of the American Economic Association in 2013-14, she challenged prevailing beliefs about women’s roles in the economy.

#### What did Claudia Goldin discover about women in the workplace?

**Economic Shifts and Women’s Jobs:** As the U.S. economy moved from agriculture to services, women began finding jobs in offices, schools, and hospitals.

**Education vs. Earnings:** Even when women surpassed men in education and didn’t settle for typical “female jobs”, they consistently earned less.

**Job Structures:** The predominant job market favored roles that required long, unpredictable hours, making it difficult for women balancing work and parental duties.

**The “Greedy Work” Concept:** Goldin introduced the term to describe jobs demanding extreme efforts in return for high salaries and promotions. Such roles were often incompatible with the responsibilities women commonly undertook at home.

**Gender and Household Roles:** Traditional gender roles often meant women took on more family responsibilities, limiting their ability to pursue high-profile careers.

#### What challenges do women face in jobs?

**The “Mommy Track”:** Women sometimes have to choose the slower career path, known as the “mommy track”, which prioritizes family over high-profile careers, resulting in missed opportunities.

**Gendered Expectations:** Traditional gender roles often assign more family responsibilities to women, making it tough for them to fully concentrate on their careers.

**Income Inequality:** Rising income disparity can lead families to prioritize overall family income over gender balance, pushing women into roles with fewer demands and consequently lesser pay.

#### How can India benefit from reshaping the job environment?

**Shared Household Duties:** Encouraging both genders to participate equally in household and childcare can free up women to contribute more to the workforce.

**Improved Work Structures:** By ensuring workplaces respect workers’ time and don’t push for unnecessarily long hours, both men and women can achieve a better work-life balance.

**Increased Productivity:** Research, like that from Stanford economist John Pencavel, indicates that longer hours don’t always mean more productivity. Better work schedules can lead to enhanced efficiency and fewer errors.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

**Closer Work-Life Integration:** Reducing distances between homes and workplaces, and adjusting school demands, can save commuting time and improve overall well-being.

**Gender Equal Outcomes:** Such changes can help India move closer to the gender convergence in labor market outcomes that Claudia Goldin advocates.

### What should be done?

**Redefine Work Structures:** Workplaces should be restructured to respect workers' time, emphasizing moderate and predictable hours rather than long, erratic schedules.

**Encourage Shared Responsibilities:** Men should be encouraged to participate equally in household chores and childcare, balancing the load often borne by women.

**Limit "Greedy Work" Culture:** Reduce the prevalence of jobs demanding extreme hours and efforts. This can help balance gender roles in the workforce.

**Rethink Educational Demands:** Schools should limit reliance on parents for homework supervision, allowing parents more flexibility in managing work and family life.

**Urban Planning:** Develop urban areas to reduce the distance between homes and workplaces, cutting down commuting time.

**Promote Supportive Institutions:** Establish institutions that foster a balanced work-life environment, paving the way for equal gender representation in the job market.

## 2. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's 125th birth anniversary: His record on women's rights

**Source:** The post is based on the article "Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's 125th birth anniversary: His record on women's rights" published in "Indian Express" on 17th October 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS1- History- Modern Indian history from about the middle of the eighteenth century until the present- significant events, personalities.

**News:** The article discusses Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's views on women's education. While he promoted modern education for Muslims and opposed some harmful social practices, he had conservative beliefs about educating women. His experiences in Europe slightly changed his perspective, but he still favored home-tutoring for women.

### What were the contributions of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan to women's upliftment?

**Promotion of Education:** While Sir Syed had conservative views about women's formal education, he did believe in their learning, albeit through home-tutoring.

**Campaign Against Harmful Practices:** Through the Aligarh Institute Gazette, Sir Syed campaigned against female infanticide, polygamy, child marriage, sati, the segregation of widows, and the forced marriages of young girls to older men.

**Support for Women Activists:** He appreciated the work of Mary Carpenter, a British proponent of female education, highlighting her dedication to bringing Indian women into public life.

**Recognition of Women's Role:** After visiting Europe, Sir Syed acknowledged the importance of women in the societal fabric of a country, noting the significant roles European women played.

In essence, Sir Syed's efforts for women's upliftment combined both traditional and evolving perspectives.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

### 3. On gay rights, Indian society has outpaced judiciary and legislature

**Source:** The post is based on the article “On gay rights, Indian society has outpaced judiciary and legislature” published in **Indian express** on 19th October 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS1- Society

**News:** The article discusses societal acceptance of queer relationships in India. Manisha and Dimple’s wedding shows changing views. Movies and shows support LGBTQI+ stories.

#### How has society’s view on queer relationships changed in India?

**Wedding Example:** Manisha and Dimple, two women, celebrated their wedding in Bathinda with the support of family and friends.

**Parental Viewpoint:** Manisha’s mother voiced that people should respect individual choices, reflecting a broader sentiment.

**Spread of Acceptance:** This positive sentiment is not limited to cities but is echoed in towns, villages, and small neighborhoods across India.

**Next Generation’s View:** Aditi Anand and Susan Dias, who petitioned for marriage equality, shared that their son and his peers are growing up devoid of homophobia.

**Media Influence:** Movies and TV shows like “Made in Heaven” and “Badhaai Do” highlight LGBTQI+ stories, influencing societal perspectives.

**Supportive Data:** A Pew Research Centre survey found that 53% of Indians now favor marriage equality.

#### What does the Supreme Court say about marriage equality?

**Discussion on Marriage Equality:** The Supreme Court deliberated on the topic of marriage equality on October 17.

**Decision Deferred:** Instead of making a definitive ruling, the Supreme Court passed the responsibility of deciding on marriage equality to Parliament.

**Reflecting Society’s Stance:** The court’s discussion on marriage equality comes at a time when societal views are evolving. For instance, Manisha and Dimple’s wedding, supported by family and friends, showcases this shift.

#### How have big social changes historically happened?

**Two-Way Flow:** Big social changes can stem from both institutions to society and vice versa.

**Institutional Influence:** Laws, judicial interventions, and decisions from bodies like the Supreme Court have historically guided societal norms, such as temple entry rights and the abolition of untouchability.

**Societal Influence:** Society’s evolving customs and traditions can lead institutions to change or create new laws.

**Example:** The decriminalization of non-heterosexual relationships in India was influenced by changing societal views.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

### 4. Why are earthquakes frequent in Afghanistan?

**Source:** This post has been created based on the article “Why are earthquakes frequent in Afghanistan?” published in **The Hindu** on **20<sup>th</sup> October 2023**.

**UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 1 Geography — Important Geophysical phenomena such as earthquakes, tsunami, volcanic activity, cyclones etc.**

**News:** This article discusses the reasons behind the phenomenon of frequent earthquakes in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan has had a history of frequent destructive earthquakes. An earthquake of magnitude 6.3 struck western Afghanistan recently, barely a few days after multiple earthquakes killed at least a 1,000 people in the Herat province.

#### How do earthquakes occur?

**Stage I: Movement of tectonic plates:** The earth is made up of chunks of solid rocks called tectonic plates. Tectonic plates are slow moving but are always in motion, mostly due to the heat energy generated inside the earth.

**Stage II: Creation of Faults:** Discontinuities in these plate rock masses, along which they have moved, are called fault lines. This is where most earthquakes occur.

**Stage III: Release of Energy:** The tectonic forces and stress that builds up in the earth's lithosphere causes the rocks to break and slip. This releases energy and sends seismic waves through the ground.

#### Why do frequent earthquakes occur in Afghanistan?

1) Afghanistan is located over multiple fault lines in the region where the **Indian, Arabian and the Eurasian tectonic plates** meet. These plates collide often, leading to significant tectonic activity.

1. a) Towards **western Afghanistan**, the **Arabian plate subducts northward under Eurasia**.
2. b) Towards **eastern Afghanistan**, the **Indian plate subducts northward under Eurasia**.
3. c) In **southern Afghanistan**, the Arabian and Indian plates adjoin and both subduct northward under the Eurasian plate.

2) **Geological complexity:** The **Hindu Kush Mountain range and the Pamir Knot** are geologically complex regions where tectonic plates meet.

3) **Forces of Compression:** The ongoing northward movement of the Indian Plate towards the Eurasian Plate also **results in compression**, leading to the transmission of tectonic stress across the entire region. The compression creates faults and fractures that can slip and generate earthquakes.

4) **Presence of Faults:** like the Chaman Fault and the Main Pamir Thrust.



# General Studies Paper –2

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

### General Studies - 2

#### 1. From Gaza to Bihar — faultlines Ambedkar and Patel warned us against

**Source:** This post is created based on the article ‘From Gaza to Bihar — faultlines Ambedkar and Patel warned us against’, published in **Indian Express** on **16<sup>th</sup> October 2023**.

**UPSC syllabus Topic:** GS Paper 2, Effect of policies of developed and developing countries on India’s interest.

**News:** Bihar caste survey and killing of innocent civilians in Israel although are unrelated events, but B R Ambedkar and Sardar Patel’s words in Constituent assembly addresses the root-cause.

Ambedkar emphasised warned against the volatile consequences of political inequality and social-economic disparity in India. He stressed the need to make our political democracy a social democracy as well. Because without social democracy, political democracy cannot survive.

Social democracy is a way of life that recognises liberty, equality and fraternity.

#### What are the issues in Indian democracy?

Indian society fall short on the following **2 parameters of democracy**:

1) **Equality:** India is a society based on the principle of graded inequality.

2) **Economic inequality**

Social inequalities are deeply rooted in our society and institutions, necessitating a national caste census for acknowledgment and remedial action.

**Ambedkar’s citation of Edmund Burke** regarding the impermanence of subjugation through force, reflects the **current reality of Israel-Palestine conflict**. It symbolizes the global repercussion of ignoring minority rights and the futility of force as a conflict resolution mechanism.

Ambedkar time and again warned against the explosive nature of suppressed minorities.

Both Ambedkar and Patel emphasized **the dangers of neglecting minority protection** and social democracy.

**Sardar Patel also stated the following statement**, ‘it is for us who happen to be in a majority to think about what the minorities feel, and how we in their position would feel if we were treated in the manner in which they are treated.’

It serves as a reminder of the and the responsibility of the majority to foster an inclusive, empathetic society.

#### 2. We Should And Can Improve Aadhaar

**Source:** This post is created based on the article ‘We Should And Can Improve Aadhaar’, published in **Business Standard** on **16<sup>th</sup> October 2023**.

**UPSC syllabus Topic:** GS Paper 2, Government policies for various sectors

**News:** The article discusses the critical analysis provided by Moody’s report on Aadhaar. Government has issued many objections against the report.

The report stated that 17% failure rate in Aadhaar Enabled Payment System (AEPS) transactions from 2014-2018 was due to biometric issues, with a total transaction failure rate of 34%.

It also highlights cultural and logistical challenges, such as the reluctance to use iris scanners and the higher cost of these devices.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

### What are the issues associated with Aadhaar Project?

**Biometric authentication**, especially fingerprint recognition, is often unreliable for manual laborers whose fingerprints may be unclear due to their work.

**This unreliability** leads to transaction failures, impacting financial inclusion efforts and the efficient delivery of direct benefit transfers (DBT).

**Centralized ID systems like Aadhaar are vulnerable to security breaches**, raising privacy concerns. There is a need for continuous improvements in cybersecurity measures, because absence of past breaches doesn't guarantee future safety.

### What are the initiatives launched by government to tackle the issues with aadhaar project?

UIDAI launched the Innovative solutions like face-based authentication, and the use of blockchain technology for secure, privacy-focused authentication in systems like DigiYatra.

These innovations aim to reduce dependency on fingerprint or iris recognition, offering more accessible and culturally acceptable alternatives.

### What is the solution?

There is a need for promoting a balanced view of digital identity systems. Challenges should be acknowledged but emphasize should be given to the potential and achievements of Digital India initiative.

Considering India's vast population and diverse needs, country's approach to digital identity and security is a work in progress, which requires adaptive strategies and innovations.

### 3. Olympian heights – India must be wary of the complexities of hosting the Olympiad

**Source:** The post is based on the article "Olympian heights – India must be wary of the complexities of hosting the Olympiad" published in **The Hindu** on **16<sup>th</sup> October 2023**.

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

**Relevance:** challenges associated with India in hosting the 2036 Olympics

**News:** The Prime Minister of India has declared an interest in hosting the 2036 Olympics and has also shown enthusiasm for hosting the Youth Olympics.

### What is the significance of this decision?

**Enhancing Global Image and Soft Power: The Olympics serve as a global soft power tool**, capable of enhancing a nation's sporting, economic, socio-cultural status, and political credibility.

Therefore, **the Prime Minister's recent announcement reflects India's ambition to harness these benefits.**

India's decision to host the 2036 Olympic Games will help it to boost its global image and influence. **It is a move that is in line with India's aspirations for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council** and its role in the G-20.

**Recent Success:** India's recent success at the Asian Games has given it a strong boost in sports.

The country is confident that it can continue to improve its performance at multi-disciplinary events, and even has hopes of winning double-digit medals at the Paris Olympics in 2024.

Hence, the recent success also aligns with the ambition to hold 2036 Olympics. However, hosting a mega event like the Olympics is a huge challenge.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

### What are the challenges associated with hosting Olympics?

**Costs have been a significant concern**, as seen in the cases of Rio 2016 and Tokyo 2020. **In the case of Tokyo**, the expenses increased to more than the initial estimate

**Recently**, Australia and Canada have also withdrawn from hosting the Commonwealth Games due to cost issues.

### What can be done to address the challenges?

In order to address the issues, **the International Olympic Committee (IOC)** has now moved away from the one-size-fits-all approach to hosting the Olympics.

It is asking potential organizers to present projects that best fit their economic, social, and environmental realities.

Hence, **India's success in hosting the Olympics will depend on its ability** to navigate the challenges and trade-offs involved.

#### 4. On Middle East, Delhi must stay with abiding principles, find points of convergence

**Source:** The post is based on the article "On Middle East, Delhi must stay with abiding principles, find points of convergence" published in The Indian Express on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – International Relations – Effect of Policies and Politics of Developed and Developing Countries on India's interests

**Relevance:** concerns associated with Israel-Palestine conflict

**News:** The Israel-Palestine conflict is being exploited for political advantage by both ruling and opposition parties in India, who are trying to appear balanced to gain voter support.

However, India's challenge isn't about appearing balanced but about sticking to principles and interests when it comes to countering terrorism.

### What has been India's principle against terrorism?

India has consistently believed that violence against innocent people is terrorism and cannot be justified by political claims. It has rejected the idea that resolving root causes is necessary to end terrorism.

Hence, the opposition must avoid aligning with terrorism, contrary to India's principles, and the ruling party should avoid exploiting solidarity with Israel and condemnation of Hamas for political gain.

Moreover, India's key interest should be to keep its domestic politics separate from the turmoil in the Middle East, as exploiting the Middle East for political gains at home could be detrimental.

### What measures can be taken by India to address the Israel-Palestine conflict?

**Globally:** India needs to urge Israel to treat Hamas in accordance with the humanitarian principles of war and proportionality.

**India must work with its Arab partners** to secure the release of Israeli hostages held by Hamas.

**India must actively participate in international efforts to prevent the upcoming disaster in the Middle East** due to its expanding economic and security interests in the area.

Moreover, India's bilateral relationship with Israel and its ties with key regional players, including Iran, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt, position it well to navigate this complex situation.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

**Domestically:** The government should establish regular consultations with opposition parties, brief them on the evolving crisis, and seek consensus on how to address its consequences.

### 5. India needs more doctors — and how it can happen

**Source:** The post is based on the article “India needs more doctors — and how it can happen” published in “Indian express” on 16th October 2023.

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

**News:** India has a shortage of doctors and medical education seats. Even with increased medical colleges and seats, the number of doctors per population is still low. Small college sizes and regulations make expansion tough. Private colleges face financial risks in scaling up. The government aims for equal distribution of colleges, but this can cause inefficiencies. Policies should address these growth barriers.

#### What are the current conditions for doctor availability in India?

**Shortage in Medical Education:** Despite increasing the number of UG and PG seats over the past decade, the demand for medical education still exceeds the supply of seats.

**Growth in Medical Seats:** Between 2010-11 and now, UG seats have nearly tripled, PG seats have almost quadrupled, and the number of medical colleges has doubled.

**International Comparisons:** In 2021, India recorded 4.1 medical graduates per lakh population, lagging behind countries like China (6.2 in 2018), the US (8.5 in 2021), and the UK (13.1 in 2021).

**College Size Limitations:** The average number of UG seats per college in India is 153. This is less compared to 220 in Eastern Europe and 930 in China.

**Regulatory Barriers:** Expanding seats in a public medical college involves increasing library books, daily OPD footfalls, and nursing staff, as per 2015 draft guidelines.

**Challenges for Private Colleges:** Private colleges face financial risks in scaling up, especially when seats remain vacant, leading to potential fee hikes.

### 6. Palliative care, a way to reduce financial distress for people with life limiting diseases

**Source:** This post has been created based on the article “Palliative care, a way to reduce financial distress for people with life limiting diseases” published in **The Hindu** on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper 2 Social Justice — Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health.

**News:** This article discusses the positives of incorporating palliative care in India’s healthcare ecosystem. It also highlights the challenges in the palliative care sector in India.

#### What are the implications of the rising cost of healthcare in India?

With **only 1.35%** of GDP being spent on government health services, patients bear most of the health expenses. Many Indians are either a hospital bill away from poverty or too poor to access healthcare.

It is estimated that **nearly 5.5 crore people fall below the poverty line every year** due to **out-of-pocket healthcare expenditure**.

India’s **non-communicable disease burden** is on the rise. This will push more and more people into poverty as they require lifelong treatment and periodic health check-ups.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

This rising cost often leads to bankruptcy, decreased treatment satisfaction, foregoing or delays in seeking further medical care, poor quality of life, and poor survival.

Even if treatment is free in govt hospitals, the **cost of travel, purchasing medicines** that are out of stock in govt pharmacies, and **loss of wages** due to the absence from work contribute to the financial burden.

Often assets have to be sold-off and education of children in the family stopped to cope with the financial burden.

### What is palliative care?

**Palliative care** is a branch of medicine that looks at improving the quality of life of those having life-limiting illnesses like cancers, end-stage kidney disease, debilitating brain disorders, complications of diabetes, and heart disease among others.

It focuses on **alleviating uncontrolled symptoms** of the incurable illnesses mentioned above.

It takes into consideration not just the physical dimension of health but also looks at the **social and economic realities** of the patient and the family.

**Vocational rehabilitation** and **social reintegration** are crucial elements of palliative care.

### What are the issues with palliative care in India?

These factors have resulted in poor demand and poor access to palliative care in India:

- 1) **Low awareness levels:** regarding palliative care in India, both among healthcare workers and the general public.
- 2) Currently, palliative care is **not covered under most insurance schemes** in India.
- 3) **Unplanned and low funding levels** has also been a barrier to palliative care services. This prevents long-term planning.
- 4) Palliative care from **primary and secondary health centres** is far from being achieved.
- 5) The **private healthcare sector has neglected** it.

### What should be the way forward?

- 1) Early initiation of palliative care in patients has been shown to reduce health expenditure by up to **25%**. For instance, **home-based palliative care** can reduce the travelling costs of patients. Hence, palliative care should be incorporated into the Indian healthcare system.
- 2) Instead of its current mode of occasional annual budgeting, the **National Program for Palliative Care must be consistently funded**.
- 3) Palliative care provisions will help in **generating goodwill** for corporate hospitals, and will also **improve the utilisation of beds**, and ultimately help corporate hospitals in generating wealth. Private healthcare providers should prioritise it.

India is becoming the **“Epicentre for non-communicable diseases”**. It is the **moral obligation** of the health system to take care of people, especially when they are suffering from life-long illnesses.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

### 7. Delay as tactic – The Centre should stick to timelines to avoid friction with the Collegium

**Source:** The post is based on the article “Delay as tactic – The Centre should stick to timelines to avoid friction with the Collegium” published in The Hindu on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – Indian Polity – Structure, Organization and Functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary

**Relevance:** concerns associated with the collegium system

**News:** The Indian government’s appointment of Justice Siddharth Mridul as Chief Justice of the Manipur High Court is a positive development, showing greater willingness by the government to respect the Supreme Court Collegium’s recommendations.

#### What are the issues between the Center and the Supreme Court regarding collegium?

The Supreme Court has expressed concerns that the Indian government has been selectively approving the recommendations of the Collegium.

The government has sometimes delayed or ignored the Collegium’s decisions, creating conflicts between the two.

**For example,** the government ignored the Collegium’s recommendation to appoint Justice S. Muralidhar as Chief Justice of the Madras High Court for so long that the Collegium eventually canceled its recommendation.

**Must Read:** Collegium System and the NJAC: The Issue of Judicial Appointments – Explained

#### What can be done to address the issues?

**First,** it is crucial to streamline the appointment process in line with the Supreme Court’s April 2021 order, which established timelines for the government to process Collegium recommendations and express any reservations.

**Second,** once a recommendation is reiterated by the Collegium, it should be implemented within three to four weeks.

Moreover, **it is important to respect the legal principle that a reiterated decision by the Collegium is binding on the government.** If this principle is undermined, it will weaken the judiciary as an institution.

### 8. India-Sri Lanka ferry service restarted after 40 yrs: Opportunities, challenges

**Source:** The post is based on the article “India-Sri Lanka ferry service restarted after 40 yrs: Opportunities, challenges” published in The Indian Express on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

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

**Relevance:** About the launch of ferry service between India and Sri Lanka.

**News:** A historic sea route between India and Sri Lanka has been revived with the launch of a passenger ferry service between Nagapattinam, India, and Kankesanthurai, Sri Lanka.

It aims to strengthen bilateral relations, promote tourism, and enhance local trade. **The ferry service, operated by a High-Speed Craft is named ‘Cheriyapani,’**

#### What was the previous sea route between India and Sri Lanka?

Maritime linkage between India and Sri Lanka has existed since the early 1900s.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

**One of the most popular routes was from Dhanushkodi (India) to Talaimannar (Sri Lanka),** which was served by the Boat Mail Express train and a coal-powered steam ferry.

However, the civil war in Sri Lanka in 1982 resulted in the halting of these services.

### **What were the previous attempts made to restart the service?**

India and Sri Lanka have been working to bring back ferry services since the civil war ended in 2009. **They signed an agreement (MoU) in 2011** and started a service. However, it only lasted six months due to the poor demand.

Moreover, **they have also tried to start ferry services from Rameswaram to Talaimannar and Karaikal to Kankesanthurai,** but these plans have not worked out.

### **Must Read: India Sri Lanka relations: Explained**

### **What may be the potential impact of this new service?**

A ferry service between India and Sri Lanka **would boost religious tourism in both countries.**

Indian pilgrims could easily visit religious sites in Colombo and southern Sri Lanka, while Sri Lankan tourists could visit religious sites in Nagapattinam, Nagore, Velankanni, Thirunallar, and temple towns such as Thanjavur, Madurai, and Tiruchi.

Additionally, the ferry service would also **boost regional commerce and trade.**

The development would strengthen **cultural, economic, and civilisational ties.**

It can also improve cooperation in **disaster management and maritime security.**

It may also enable **voluntary repatriation of refugees** from Sri Lanka, living in Tamil Nadu.

### **What preparations and infrastructure improvements are being undertaken for the new service?**

The Tamil Nadu state government is coordinating with various Union government departments, including Customs, External Affairs, Shipping, and Immigration, to ensure a seamless experience for passengers.

**The Nagapattinam port has also received an upgrade** with an investment of Rs 8 crore from the Union Ministry of External Affairs.

### **What are the challenges associated?**

Factors such as **Sri Lanka's civil war, lack of patronage and cyclones** have led to lukewarm response to earlier connectivity initiatives.

The effectiveness of the new India-Sri Lanka ferry service **depends on its operational strategy.**

Initially, the Shipping Corporation of India (SCI) intended to operate daily for ten days but has since reduced it to three times a week. **This change is due to the start of the northeast monsoon, high fares, and ticketing system challenges.**

### **What steps should be undertaken in order to make it successful?**

Hence, the following should be done:

- 1) **Lowering of the fare** and increasing the baggage allowance.
- 2) The provision of **amenities** at Nagapattinam such as a dormitory and improving rail connectivity.
- 3) Sri Lanka should consider **promoting economic ties.**
- 4) **Sustained policy attention** will be critical to making this service a success.



5) **Bookings must be made accessible on well-known travel websites.**

### 9. **How synergistic barriers are affecting progress on SDGs**

**Source:** This post has been created based on the article “How synergistic barriers are affecting progress on SDGs” published in **The Hindu** on **18<sup>th</sup> October 2023**.

**UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 2 Governance — Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.**

**News:** This article discusses the issue of the lack of synergy in SDG-related policies and the barriers to small-scale applications which has slowed the progress in attaining Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

#### **What is the current status of accomplishing SDGs?**

The recent **SDG Summit** recognized that the world could meet **only 15% of its 169 targets** that make up the 17 goals.

A 2023 report by **UNCTAD** estimated a **\$4 trillion investment gap in SDGs** in developing countries. This large amount seems unachievable.

Considering this, world leaders have committed to an **SDG stimulus of \$500 billion annually**.

#### **What is the issue with SDG-related policies?**

##### 1) **Lack of synergy:**

5 types of synergies in an SDG-related policy includes — synergy arising from resource allocations; creation of enabling environments; co-benefits; cost-effectiveness; and saturation limits.

Concerns have been raised over the lack of synergistic action in the face of the **indivisible and integrated nature** of the 17 SDGs.

For example, in India, the push for renewable energy started with energy security, air pollution and climate commitments in focus. However, it hasn't been able to leverage the health benefits arising from lower air pollution as an argument for investment in renewables.

##### 2) **Barrier for small-scale applications:**

At the same time, the ambitious renewable energy targets themselves became a **barrier for small-scale applications** due to lack of coordination with respect to the goals.

For instance, primary health centres were neglected by the energy departments in terms of renewable energy generation, due to the small magnitude of their contribution.

Therefore, only recognising interlinks without a robust analysis and understanding of institutional barriers won't yield the outcomes India desires.

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

Both assessing as well as addressing barriers identified should be done.

The country should strengthen the environment for synergistic action and make transparent both the opportunities and limits to synergies arising from SDG interventions.

**A full cost estimation of alternative pathways** with their synergistic opportunities and **estimating India's own vulnerability to climate-change** impacts will be important.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

### 10. Demolishing the frame from outside the Constitution

**Source:** This post has been created based on the article “**Demolishing the frame from outside the Constitution**” published in **The Hindu** on **18<sup>th</sup> October 2023**.

**UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 2 Indian Polity** — Structure, organization, and **functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary**.

**News:** This article discusses the recent developments pointing to the undermining of constitutional democracy in India. It also highlights the important role of the judiciary in ensuring a thriving democracy.

Recent Delhi Police raids on the **news portal NewsClick** and invoking of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act to arrest people have brought the issue of undermining democracy to the fore.

The increasingly vulnerable state of **religious minorities** due to **violence and demonization**, and the changes to **political financing** in the form of opaque **electoral bonds**, also point to this trend.

#### **What are the essential conditions of a democracy?**

- 1) **Decision-making under democratic conditions:** Democracy is not just in the principle of **majority** decision-making. Decisions should also be made under democratic conditions treating all members with equal respect and concern”.
- 2) **Basic values have to be guaranteed:** Values such as freedom of speech and expression, freedom of association, etc. contribute to a robust democracy.

The Indian Constitution has created these conditions as part of the basic structure as articulated by the Supreme Court.

#### **How is democracy undermined without a rewriting of the Constitution?**

- 1) Terrorism laws being invoked against journalists: the fundamental right to speech and expression is textually intact but not in practice.
- 2) Hate speeches against minorities left unchecked: secularism remains intact in words but not in experiences.
- 3) Opaque electoral funding: democracy is confined to paper.

#### **Why is the judiciary important in preventing this decline in democracy?**

What rules and values should govern a society are perhaps decisions best left to the representative body i.e., Parliament, since it is seen as the representative of the people’s will.

But the courts have an obligation to ensure that the **integrity of the process of democracy** is protected.

This is so because if the democratic process itself is faulty, then questions over the legitimacy of the representative body itself can be raised.

A court, being **unelected and outside of this process of popular representation**, can ensure the integrity of the democratic process.

#### **What is the power of the courts in India in this context?**

The powers of the Supreme Court of India include those to **strike down laws and constitutional amendments**.

It has even imposed a restriction on the Parliament in amending the Constitution through the **basic structure doctrine**.

Therefore, it would not be wrong to argue that protecting the democratic process is still at the very core of the Court’s duties.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

### What should be the way forward?

Turning a blind eye to such profound violations of democratic conditions outside the text of the Constitution and laws would render both the Constitution and the Court without their identities.

The Court's response to this challenge will determine not only the fate of the people but also that of the Court.

### 11. Centralised procurement as a powerful health idea

**Source:** This post has been created based on the article “Centralised procurement as a powerful health idea” published in **The Hindu** on **18<sup>th</sup> October 2023**.

**UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 2 Social Justice — Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health.**

**News:** This article discusses the advantages of centralized or pooled procurement of drugs by the central government and how it can revolutionize healthcare in India.

### What are the advantages of centralized procurement?

- 1) **Price efficiency:** Corporate hospital chains, for years, have conducted direct negotiations with pharmaceutical companies, and **availed significant discounts**.
- 2) **Quality concerns:** In addition to cost savings, buyers can ensure better quality by having the supplies tested independently rather than having to rely on the drug regulator to ensure quality.
- 3) **Prevent stockouts (medicines ‘out-of-stock’).**
- 4) **Cost-savings for patients:** Hospitals can benefit from better **bargaining power** if they buy in bulk and can then pass on these **cost savings to patients**.

However, the central government chooses to ignore these merits of pooled procurement despite being aware of them.

Centralized procurement for beneficiaries under the CGHS (Central Government Health Scheme), ESI (Employees' State Insurance Scheme) and PMJAY is not yet a reality.

### What should the government do in this regard?

The government can follow the centralized procurement model for most of the drugs, like it follows for **procuring male contraceptives**.

Pharma PSUs can provide **benchmark prices** and also ensure that the government is not forced to buy from private manufacturers, given that there is competition from PSUs which can supply at a competitive price.

### What should be the way forward?

Centralized procurement has the power and the potential to **reduce costs**, ensure **better deployment of funds** in other areas related to health care, and ensure availability of **life-saving drugs** in this country.

It is an idea that India should implement at scale, and as soon as possible.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

### 12. A renewed Sri Lankan engagement

**Source:** The post is based on the article “A renewed Sri Lankan engagement” published in “Business standard” on 18th October 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- International relation- India and its neighbourhood- relations.

**News:** Sri Lanka faced a big economic crisis. India helped a lot, giving money and resources. Many Sri Lankans now feel positive towards India. Tourism in Sri Lanka is improving, with many tourists from India. Colombo port is growing, handling lots of India-related cargo. India's influence is rising while China's is decreasing.

#### How severe is Sri Lanka's economic crisis?

**Economic Decline:** Sri Lanka's economy reduced by 8% in 2022 and is forecasted to shrink further by 3.5-4% this year.

**IMF Support:** The IMF has extended a package, with a \$330 million tranche already disbursed.

**Affordability Issue:** Essential supplies like food and fuel are available in Colombo, but their high prices make them unaffordable for the poorer sections, exacerbated by decreased incomes.

**Rising Unemployment:** The nation has witnessed a loss of half a million jobs in the past three years due to the economic downturn.

**Increase in Poverty:** Over 4 million people have been pushed below the poverty line since the crisis began, a considerable number out of a population of 21 million.

#### How has India helped?

**Financial Aid:** In 2022, India provided Sri Lanka with total assistance of about \$4 billion.

**Petroleum Support:** A crucial \$500 million line of credit was extended by India to supply petroleum products, mitigating a severe fuel shortage in Sri Lanka.

**Currency Swap:** The Reserve Bank of India facilitated a currency swap of \$400 million with the Central Bank of Sri Lanka.

**Essential Supplies:** India offered another \$1 billion credit facility, assisting Sri Lanka in procuring urgent necessities such as food, medicines, fuel, and industrial raw materials.

**Debt Relief:** Payments amounting to around \$2 billion that Sri Lanka owed to India under the Asian Clearing Union were deferred.

**Agricultural Boost:** To revive agricultural production, India provided a \$50 million line of credit for Sri Lanka to procure fertilizers.

#### How has trade between India and Sri Lanka evolved?

**Historical Milestone:** In 2000, Sri Lanka became the first South Asian country to sign a free trade agreement with India.

**Trade Expansion:** As a result, bilateral trade jumped from around \$600 million at that time to a significant \$6.2 billion today.

**Further Collaboration:** This trade success opened doors to more ambitious plans, leading to discussions about an Economic and Technology Cooperation agreement.

**Barriers to Progress:** Despite the potential benefits of this agreement, it has not been finalized. Opposition stems from certain political and business groups in Sri Lanka who express concerns over potential Indian economic dominance.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

**Renewed Negotiations:** The talks about the proposed agreement, which were halted for five years, resumed last month, suggesting a renewed optimism in finalizing it in the improved atmosphere of bilateral ties.

### What's the future outlook?

**Tourism's Revival:** Tourism is on a recovery path, with Indian tourists at the forefront. There were 1,23,000 arrivals from India in 2022, and over 200,000 by September this year.

**Enhanced Connectivity:** A ferry service was recently inaugurated between Sri Lanka's Kankesanthurai and Tamil Nadu's Nagapattinam, likely boosting tourist numbers further.

**Trade Prospects:** Talks have resumed on the proposed Economic and Technology Cooperation agreement, indicating a brighter future for trade relations between India and Sri Lanka.

**Colombo's Port Potential:** The port facilities in Colombo, significant for India-related cargo, are expanding, promising a modern and efficient future for the port.

**Indian Investments:** Indian entities, like ITC and Indian Oil, are undertaking major projects in Sri Lanka, reflecting confidence in its economic resurgence.

### 13. Sea service — Ferry between Tamil Nadu, Northern Sri Lanka holds much potential.

**Source:** This post has been created based on the article "Sea service" published in **The Hindu** on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper 2 International Relations — India and its neighborhood-relations.

**News:** This article discusses the potential of the recent opening of passenger ferry service between Sri Lanka and India. It also proposes suggestions to ensure its success.

**Rest of the aspects of this news have been already covered in the following article:**  
<https://forumias.com/blog/india-sri-lanka-ferry-service-restarted-after-40-yrs-opportunities-challenges/>

### What may be the potential impact of this new service?

The development would strengthen **cultural, economic, and civilisational ties**.

It can also improve cooperation in **disaster management and maritime security**.

It may also enable **voluntary repatriation of refugees** from Sri Lanka, living in Tamil Nadu.

### What steps should be undertaken in order to make it successful?

Factors such as **Sri Lanka's civil war, lack of patronage and cyclones** have led to lukewarm response to earlier connectivity initiatives. Hence, the following should be done:

- 1) **Lowering of the fare** and increasing the baggage allowance.
- 2) The provision of **amenities** at Nagapattinam such as a dormitory and improving rail connectivity.
- 3) Sri Lanka should consider **promoting economic ties**.
- 4) **Sustained policy attention** will be critical to making this service a success.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

### 14. The measure of the working woman

**Source:** The post is based on the article “The measure of the working woman” published in **The Hindu** on **19<sup>th</sup> October 2023**.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – Social Issues – Problems associated with Women

**Relevance:** challenges women face while working outside home

**News:** Traditional Indian family roles limit women to caregiving at home while men work outside. This model hampers women’s full workforce participation, which is unsustainable for India’s growing economy.

#### What are some of the findings of the women workforce?

**Economist Claudia Goldin’s Findings:** Economist **Claudia Goldin’s** 2023 Nobel Prize-winning work reveals that while all women work, not all are paid for their labor.

**National Statistical Office Report:** According to the National Statistical Office, 81.2% of women are engaged in unpaid domestic services, compared to 26.1% of men.

It also found that men focus more on traditional economic activities, whereas women dedicate more time to household maintenance and caregiving.

**As a result,** women face a double burden as their outside work doesn’t reduce household responsibilities, and their caregiving work isn’t considered into economic estimates, leaving them with less leisure time than men.

**SBI Report:** According to an SBI report, women’s unpaid work contributes 7.5% to the GDP, reflecting their dual role in managing domestic responsibilities and boosting the economy. However, these contributions often go unacknowledged in official records.

#### What challenges do women encounter when they work outside of their homes?

**Lack of Support in Low-Income Families:** In low-income families in India, women are working hard to support their families, but they are not getting the support they need. Their work is often invisible, not reflected in the data and undervalued.

**A study found that** 44% of women participate in the labor force over a four-month period, but only 2% are counted when looking at a longer four-year duration.

**Childcare Issues:** Domestic responsibilities limit women’s employment, and when they do work, their children are often exposed to dangerous conditions such as at construction sites.

This can harm their children’s health and development, and undermine subsequent investments in education, health, and skill development.

#### What are the possible solutions to enhance women’s involvement in the workforce?

**Improving Anganwadi System:** The Indian government’s Anganwadi system is the largest public child services network worldwide, most successful with community participation in rural areas.

However, their operating hours (9 a.m. to 1 p.m.) still leave women in need of additional childcare options to accommodate full eight-hour work.

**Structural Changes:** The Indian government should include women’s unpaid work in economic indicators to value their contributions and provide them with the same labor protections as other workers along.

Additionally, they should receive better support to participate in economic activities outside the home.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

**Enhancing Public Creches:** The [National Creche Scheme](#), with around 6,500 creches as of 2020, supports mothers in building stable careers while ensuring a safe environment for children.

While the private sectors' creches caters to high-income families, the public sector needs to increase its efforts to address income inequality and offer quality child services through creches for everyone.

### 15. Denied abortion of 27-week-foetus: In India, reproductive autonomy remains a pipedream

**Source:** This post has been created based on the article “[Denied abortion of 27-week-foetus: In India, reproductive autonomy remains a pipedream](#)” published in [The Indian Express](#) on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper 2 Social Justice — Mechanisms, laws, institutions and bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of the vulnerable sections.

**News:** This article discusses the recent Supreme Court case on abortion of a 26-weeks old foetus.

**Rest of the aspects of this news have been already covered in the following article:** <https://forumias.com/blog/in-sc-questions-of-foetal-viability-and-rights-of-unborn-child/>

The contentious issue in this case was that it is a 26-weeks pregnancy, beyond the permissible gestational limit prescribed in the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act, 2021.

#### What are the arguments in favour of allowing abortion in this particular case?

Her request was a matter of right over individual bodily autonomy, to exercise a reproductive choice, and seeking support from the State for safe abortion services. These demands have been endorsed by India in the **1994 Cairo Declaration on Population and Development**.

Justice D Y Chandrachud's observation in the **2022 Ms X case** that “every pregnant woman has the intrinsic right to choose to undergo or not to undergo abortion without any consent or authorisation from a third party”, underscoring **reproductive autonomy**.

### 16. Why SLLs also need to be reformed

**Source:** This post has been created based on the article “[Why SLLs also need to be reformed](#)” published in [The Hindu](#) on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper 2 Indian Polity — Structure, organization, and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary.

**News:** This article discusses the significance of **Special and Local Laws (SLLs)** in the wake of recent criminal law reforms. It also highlights the reasons behind the need for reform in SLLs.

**Special and Local Laws (SLLs)** include “Special laws” enacted by the Parliament to deal with a specific subject. “Local laws” are laws local to a particular region or a state.

SLLs have been kept away from the ongoing reform process, with respect to the Indian Penal Code (IPC), Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) and Indian Evidence Act (IEA).

#### What is the significance of SLLs?

SLLs have immense relevance in the Indian criminal justice system.

1) **In quantitative terms:** Nearly 40% of all cognisable offences registered in 2021 were under SLLs, as per the Crime in India Statistics of 2021.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

2) **In qualitative terms:** SLLs have given rise to several important debates regarding the limits on the state's power of criminalisation especially in the context of violation of individual rights and liberties.

### Why is there a need for reform in SLLs?

- 1) **Ambiguous and vague definitions of offences:** For e.g. terms such as 'terrorist act', 'unlawful activity' etc. in Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (UAPA).
- 2) **Issues with application of laws:** For e.g., POCSO Act, 2012 being applied to consensual sexual activities between minors.
- 3) **Excessive criminalisation of mere civil or regulatory wrongs**
- 4) **Dilution of due process of law:** For e.g. The stringent provisions provided for under Section 43 of the UAPA make it impossible to get bail.

### What should be done?

SLLs should find a place as separate chapters **within the larger structure** of the IPC or the CrPC.

Reforms should be brought in to **address the non-inclusion** of the substantive and procedural aspects of the SLLs in the ongoing reform project.

### 17. An opportunity to recast India's food system

**Source:** This post has been created based on the article "An opportunity to recast India's food system" published in **The Hindu** on **20<sup>th</sup> October 2023**.

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper 2 Social Justice — Issues relating to poverty and hunger.

**News:** This article discusses the importance of reasonable economic returns and resilient environmental system in ensuring food security in India. It also suggests solutions to reform India's food systems.

### What is the interconnectedness of nutrition, livelihoods and environment?

**Nutrition security** can only be achieved sustainably if the producers producing the food make **reasonable economic returns** that are resilient over time.

This resilience is intricately linked with the **resilience of our natural ecosystem** because the largest inputs to agriculture — soil, water and climatic conditions — are all natural resources.

Acknowledging this interconnectedness of nutrition security with livelihood and environmental security is essential to making our **food system truly sustainable**.

### What is the status of nutrition security in India?

India faces a double burden of malnutrition:

- 1) At one end, a sizable proportion of Indians exhibit **nutrient deficiencies**. As in the **National Family Health Survey, 2019-21**, **35%** of children are **stunted**, and **57%** of women and **25%** of men are **anaemic**.
- 2) At the other end, due to **imbalanced diets and sedentary lifestyles**, **24%** of adult women and **23%** of adult men are now **obese**.

### What are the challenges of food production in India?

1) **Non-remunerative agriculture:** On the production side, **farm incomes are insufficient** to meet the ends of marginal and small farmers. According to a report, more than 68% of marginal farmers supplement their incomes with non-farm activities.



## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

2) **Depletion of natural resources and changing climate** are making India's food production highly vulnerable. As in the 2023 soil health survey, almost half the cultivable land in India has become deficient in organic carbon. In States such as Punjab, more than 75% blocks are over-exploited.

### What should be done?

We need an approach that engages all 3 sides of the food system: **consumers, producers, and middlemen.**

**First**, consumer demand needs to be shifted towards healthy and sustainable diets. For e.g., **Locally-grown millets.**

- 1) Civil society and the health community could partner with social media influencers who can shape healthier and sustainable consumption for millions.
- 2) The public sector, through the Public Distribution System, mid-day meals, railways catering, etc., can help improve what Indians are consuming.

**Second**, to ensure resilient incomes, farmers' transition towards remunerative and regenerative agricultural practices should be supported. For e.g., **National Mission on Natural Farming.**

- 1) We need to broaden and scale up such initiatives to various agro-ecological practices such as **agroforestry, conservation agriculture, and precision farming.**
- 2) Agriculture support should **move from input subsidies to direct cash support** to farmers per hectare of cultivation to promote efficient use of inputs.
- 3) **Agricultural research** should earmark budgets to focus on sustainable agricultural practices.

**Third**, shifting of farm-to-fork value chains towards more sustainable and inclusive ones.

- 1) **Enabling more value addition** of agricultural produce in rural areas to enhance rural (farm) incomes.
- 2) Corporations supplying raw and processed food to consumers should prioritise **direct procurement** and incentivise sustainably harvested produce.
- 3) Enabling **trading of produce between FPOs** is another way, as shown by **FPOs in Odisha.**

### 18. We must break the silence on suicide prevention in India

**Source:** The post is based on the article "**We must break the silence on suicide prevention in India**" published in Live Mint on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – Social Issues – Problems associated with Health

**Relevance:** Measures needed to prevent suicides in India and address mental health issues

**News:** The author, associated with Mariwala Health Initiative (MHI), emphasizes the importance of suicide prevention and improving mental healthcare access in India, especially for marginalized communities.

### What are some of the findings related to suicide in India?

**According to the National Crime Records Bureau**, in 2021, more than 160,000 people in India died by suicide. This number has been increasing in the past decade.

Moreover, these numbers are likely lower than the actual problem due to underreporting and social stigma.

Hence, a rise in the suicide rates show that there is an urgent need to prioritize suicide prevention in India.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

### What are the issues with suicide prevention in India?

**Suicide in India is often viewed as an individual problem rather than a social issue, especially in the media.**

Hence, it becomes important to present suicide as a societal issue that requires collaboration from government, healthcare, non-profits, workplaces, mental health experts, and communities.

Additionally, there is also a need to recognize that marginalized communities face extra challenges in preventing suicides.

**Must Read: [The suicide cluster in Kota is a public health emergency](#)**

### What efforts have been taken to prevent suicides?

**National Suicide Prevention Strategy (NSPS):** India launched its first National Suicide Prevention Strategy (NSPS) in November 2022, in cooperation with MHI experts. The NSPS emphasizes valuing lives and providing support, recognizing the complexity of suicide and the importance of inter-sectoral collaboration among different government departments.

**Inclusion in the G20 Agenda:** MHI collaborated with Civil20 India to include suicide prevention and mental health in C20 recommendations. As a result, both topics made their way into the G20 agenda for the first time and were also addressed in the G20 health declaration.

### What more can be done to prevent suicides?

**First,** there is a need for a holistic approach to suicide prevention that includes both psychological support through counseling and enhanced access to social resources such as employment, healthcare, and education.

**Second,** there is a need to end the stigma around mental illness and make sure that everyone in India has access to mental healthcare as a basic right.

### 19. Not just a case about improving investigation

**Source:** This post has been created based on the article “**Not just a case about improving investigation**” published in **The Hindu** on **21st October 2023**.

**UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 2 Governance — Role of civil services in a democracy.**

**News:** This article discusses the issue of poor quality of investigation in India. It also highlights the status of implementation of reforms such as the separation of investigative functions.

The Supreme Court of India, recently, in **Rajesh & Anr. vs The State of Madhya Pradesh**, emphasised the need to devise ‘a consistent and dependable code of investigation’ so that the guilty do not walk free on technicalities.

The Court also mentioned the **poor standard of police investigation** and the principal causes of a low rate of conviction due to **inept and unscientific investigation** by the police.

### What are the various official observations regarding the quality of police investigation?

1) **Malimath Committee:** It recommended that the investigation wing should be separate from that of the law-and-order wing.

2) **Law Commission’s Report number 239:** observed that ‘the police stations are understaffed’, ‘sufficient priority is not given for investigation of crime’ and that ‘there is no periodic exercise to upgrade the skills of investigation’.

3) **Prakash Singh Case (2006):** Out of the 7 directives by the Supreme Court, one pertained to a separation of investigation from law and order to ensure quicker investigation, better expertise and improved rapport with the people.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

### What has been the response of the States in implementing these recommendations?

According to **Prakash Singh (Retd IPS)**, **only 17 states** have taken measures to separate the investigative and law and order functions of the police.

When it came to the overall 7 directives, **only 9 States** fell under the 'good and satisfactory' category.

### What should be done?

- 1) **Sanctioning of additional manpower:** Investigating officers are not only inadequate in number but are also unable to upgrade their skills because there is a shortage of officers.
- 2) **Ensuring compliance:** The Supreme Court needs to step forward and ask every State and Union Territory to report compliance of its directives on investigation.
- 3) **Consistency in rulings:** There must be consistency in court rulings regarding Indian Evidence Act.

### 20. C Raja Mohan writes: If the Gaza crisis explodes, India too will lose

**Source:** This post has been created based on the article "If the Gaza crisis explodes, India too will lose" published in **The Indian Express** on **21st October 2023**.

**UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 2 International Relations — Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests.**

**News:** This article discusses the implications of the recent Israel-Palestine crisis on India and its foreign policy imperatives in the wake of the Gaza war.

In wake of the recent Israel-Hamas conflict, the triumph of violent religious extremism and the weakening of moderate regimes will have security and political consequences for India.

### What have been the underpinnings of India's foreign policy in the Middle East?

- 1) India's early stance on the Middle East involved the preference for **modern secular nationalists**. India was **uncomfortable with traditionalist and religious forces** in the region.
- 2) Several developments since the late 1970s led to the rise of **violent religious extremism** and **Islamic republicanism** that today threaten both secular and conservative regimes.
- 3) In the last few years, **India has become closer to Arab moderates and Israel**. This has been facilitated by the "**converging interests**" and "**expanding engagement**" between Arab moderates and Israel.

### What are the implications of the recent crisis for India?

This crisis has cast a shadow over India's recent gains in the Middle East.

The challenge for Indian policy is the possible breaking up of the **emerging coalition of Arab moderates and Israel** and limiting the rise of forces seeking regional chaos.

The **triumph of violent religious extremism** will also impact India politically and in terms of security.

The Gaza war has **compelled Saudi Arabia to suspend dialogue** with Israel. Muslim countries that were looking at engaging Israel are walking away from that idea.

### How should India deal with these challenges?

**3 essential areas need to be given attention by Indian foreign policy:**

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

1) **Encouraging moderation in Israel:** India must caution Israel against its quest for revenge. It is unlikely that Hamas's ideology can be defeated through military means. In fact, the massive costs of Israel's invasion will lend greater legitimacy to Hamas and weaken that of Israel.

2) **Strengthening the moderate Palestinian Authority against Hamas.**

3) **Recognition of the regional ambitions of Iran and Turkey** which may have implications for India (E.g., in J&K).

Strengthening moderates in Israel and Palestine, supporting reconciliation between them, and promoting a wider coalition of moderate states is critical for India's long-term prospects in the Middle East.

### 21. Unseating Futures-Cancelled MBBS admissions hide a bigger problem

**Source:** The post is based on the article "Unseating Futures – Cancelled MBBS admissions hide a bigger problem" published in **The Times of India** on **21st October 2023**.

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

**News:** The National Medical Council (NMC) cancelled MBBS admissions in private medical colleges in Maharashtra. Some colleges violated NMC's rules. NMC has been accused of being too strict. Aspiring doctors are negatively affected.

#### Why did the NMC cancel MBBS admissions in private colleges in Maharashtra?

**Violation of Deadlines:** Admissions in some colleges went beyond the NMC's allowed deadline of September 30.

**Stray Vacancy Round:** Maharashtra's medical education department allowed students to apply directly to individual private medical colleges for Round 4, termed the "stray vacancy" round.

**Breach of Centralized Admission Rule:** NMC specified that all four rounds of MBBS admissions must be done centrally and online. Maharashtra's approach was contrary to this.

#### What are the impacts of the admissions being cancelled?

**Uncertainty for Students:** Aspiring doctors are left in a lurch, with their futures becoming uncertain due to the abrupt cancellation of admissions.

**Reputation of Colleges:** Private medical colleges, notorious for questionable practices, face scrutiny and reputational damage with such cancellations.

**Conflicts Among Stakeholders:** Disagreements arise between the regulator (NMC), state governments, and colleges, causing further chaos in the admissions process.

**Questionable Decisions by NMC:** NMC's decision to derecognize colleges, even well-regarded government ones, for minor breaches, has raised eyebrows.

**Transparency Concerns:** NMC's lack of transparency, especially by not making its inspection reports public, is concerning for all stakeholders involved.

### 22. Making films accessible to the disabled can serve everyone

**Source:** The post is based on the article "Making films accessible to the disabled can serve everyone" published in "**Indian express**" on 21st October 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- Governance- protection and betterment of vulnerable sections.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

**News:** The article discusses the need for media accessibility in India for people with disabilities, especially the deaf and blind. It highlights the benefits of features like subtitles for everyone, not just the disabled. The article suggests including accessibility features in digital film packages, making it easier and cost-effective for the entertainment industry. The government's role is emphasized in setting guidelines for this change.

### Why is media accessibility important for people with disabilities?

**Representation in Court:** Sarah Sunny was the first to use Indian Sign Language in the Supreme Court, highlighting the necessity for accessible communication tools.

**Media Access for All:** Rahul Bajaj's case in the Delhi High Court emphasized the need for accessible cinema halls. With interpreters, deaf and hard of hearing persons can follow court proceedings.

**Universal Benefit:** The article debunks the myth that only the deaf and blind benefit from media accessibility. The BIRD initiative has shown that features like Same Language Subtitles help improve literacy and language skills for everyone, even in noisy environments.

**Rural Demand:** BIRD's surveys in rural schools revealed a strong preference for content with subtitles, showing its wide-reaching impact.

### How can the government help?

**Setting Standards:** The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) can establish Accessibility Standards. With their oversight over all entertainment content, MIB can set necessary guidelines to ensure content is accessible.

**Certification Inclusion:** The Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) can require films to provide Same Language Subtitles or Captions (SLS/SLC) and Audio-Description (AD) files after they've been certified. This would make these features an integral part of the film certification process.

**Leading by Example:** The Delhi High Court has already directed Yash Raj Films to deposit SLS/SLC and AD files for their film "Pathaan." This can become a standard practice for all films.

### What should be done for media accessibility in India for people with disabilities?

**Integrate Accessibility Features:** Accessibility features should be an integral part of all content. This includes video and audio, making it easier for everyone to access.

**Digital Content Package:** Incorporate accessibility features as separate files in the Digital Content Package (DCP). This approach is cost-effective and can be implemented across various platforms and devices.

**Flexibility in Use:** Once integrated, stakeholders should have the freedom to turn accessibility features on or off at almost no additional cost.

**Standardize Accessibility:** Disability rights groups recommend four key features: SLC, AD, English translations, and ISL video interpretation. Adopting these ensures inclusive content distribution and consumption.

# General Studies Paper – 3

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

### General Studies - 3

#### 1. The puzzles of defence economics

**Source:** This post is created based on the article ‘The puzzles of defence economics’, published in **Business Standard** on **16<sup>th</sup> October 2023**.

**UPSC syllabus Topic:** GS Paper 3, Issues associated with Industrial policies

**News:** The article discusses the impact of recent conflicts, such as the Israeli action in Gaza and the war in Ukraine, on global military production. It contrasts high-intensity wars with insurgencies and explores the implications for defence economics.

#### **What is the difference between high-intensity wars and insurgencies?**

**High-intensity wars**, like the one in Ukraine, involve peer states and have a significant impact on military production. The military death rates are roughly 50,000 per year for Ukraine and 80,000 per year for Russia.

**High-intensity wars** require a large number of artillery shells, drones, and other equipment, putting stress on production capacity.

**Insurgencies**, like those in Afghanistan and Iraq, involve irregular forces and have different costs. In this type of conflict competent military faces irregulars or a much weaker opponent. For example, In Afghanistan, the Soviets lost an average of 1,500 people per year. The US lost 240 per year in Afghanistan and 220 per year in Iraq.

**High intensity wars** boost defence manufacturing globally. But, increased military production will negatively affect civilian production.

#### **How military production changes as per the type of conflict?**

Ukraine requires about 1.5 million artillery shells and 100,000 drones per year. Ukraine is backed by advanced economies, making up 65% of world GDP.

Russia is producing around two million shells a year but consuming about four million. Russia has lower support, mainly from North Korea and Iran.

**The increased demand for military supplies is influencing global defense economics**, potentially boosting industries related to defense production. However, there's a trade-off, as resources diverted toward military production detract from civilian sectors.

This shift has historical precedence, such as after USSR collapse post-1989. At that time, reduced military spending due to peaceful time allowed greater civilian production.

However, now, large-scale military production will result into high spending on military production and negative effects on civilian production.

#### **What are the opportunities ahead of India?**

Now as the Russia is busy in fulfilling their own demand arising due to war, the demand of countries, depending upon the Russia's military hardware is not being fulfilled.

India is sourcing less military hardware from Russia.

India can fill the gap in markets that relied on low-cost Russian equipment.

India can first provide spares compatible with Russian standards, then offer upgrades, and finally transition into NATO standards.

The strategy involves initially supplying compatible spares, then offering upgrades, and eventually transitioning these nations to NATO standards, all at competitive pricing.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

### 2. Ashok Gulati writes: How India can minimise climate risk in agriculture

**Source:** The post is based on the article “Ashok Gulati writes: How India can minimise climate risk in agriculture” published in “Indian express” on 16th October 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Agriculture- different types of irrigation and irrigation systems storage; food security.

**News:** The article discusses India’s progress in food security and its water usage in agriculture. India has increased food production and exports but still faces malnutrition issues. Despite limited freshwater, India uses a lot for farming. The country needs to efficiently manage water, focus on water productivity, and encourage farmers to grow less water-intensive crops.

#### How has India’s food production improved?

**Exports Surge:** Between 2020-23, India exported a significant 85 million tonnes of cereals. This includes major staples like rice, wheat, and corn.

**Domestic Support:** The PM Garib Kalyan Yojana initiative has provided free food, either rice or wheat, to over 800 million people, highlighting the country’s ability to support its population while also being a major exporter.

**Milk Production Growth:** From a mere 17 MT in 1951, milk production has seen a steep rise to 222 MT in 2022-23, making India the world’s largest milk producer.

**Diversified Production:** Since the 2000s, India has seen rapid growth in poultry and fishery sectors, indicating a move beyond traditional staples, into what’s termed as pink (poultry) and blue (fishery) revolutions.

#### How is India using its water for agriculture?

**Global Freshwater Share:** India is home to nearly 18% of the world’s population but has only 4% of its freshwater resources.

**Agricultural Dependency:** India’s high dependency on water for agriculture is highlighted by two different sources: FAO estimates 90% of the water is used in farming, while India’s Central Water Commission suggests it’s 78%.

**Irrigation Status:** Almost half of India’s gross cropped area is currently irrigated. The aim is to increase this to 75% to handle weather uncertainties due to climate change.

**Economic Constraints:** Investments in water management are challenging because of extensive subsidies; the government already spends over Rs 4 lakh crore on food and fertilisers.

**Water Management Strategy:** The emphasis is on both water storage during monsoons and efficient use across crops. There’s a need for reforms in water and power pricing for irrigation.

#### What should India’s water strategy be?

**Buffer Stocking:** Augment buffer stocking of water during the monsoon season in reservoirs.

**Groundwater Recharge:** Focus on recharging groundwater through structures like check dams and watersheds.

**Demand Management:** Work on rational allocation and efficient water use across various crops.

**Institutional Reforms:** Implement reforms in the irrigation sector, especially concerning the pricing of water and power for irrigation.

**Increase Irrigated Land:** Aim to irrigate at least 75% of the gross cropped area to manage the uncertainties of climate change.

**Private Investment:** Address the challenge of attracting private investments in reservoirs and canal networks by considering the pricing of water.



## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

**Shift Focus:** Prioritize water productivity, as seen in the Punjab example where land productivity is high for rice but water productivity is low.

### 3. The world needs to stop taking water for granted

**Source:** The post is based on the article “The world needs to stop taking water for granted” published in “The Hindu” on 16th October 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Agriculture- different types of irrigation and irrigation systems storage; food security.

**News:** The article discusses the importance of water for food production, especially with climate change causing extreme weather. Many farmers, especially in India, are affected. The UN and other organizations are helping with solutions like new farming methods and technology. Proper water management is crucial for future food security.

#### About World Food Day (October 16) 2023 Year:

**Theme:** The theme is ‘Water is Life, Water is Food.’

**Climate Challenges:** Water availability has become critical due to increasing climate extremes like droughts and floods.

**UN’s Focus:** The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) — the UN’s food agencies – emphasize the need for innovative and collaborative approaches to manage and conserve scarce water resources.

**SDG Deadline:** There’s less than seven years left to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

**Water’s Role:** Water directly impacts food and nutrition security, especially in countries facing climate challenges.

#### How does water affect India’s agriculture?

**Dependence on Rain:** 60% of India’s agriculture relies on rain. This means a majority of the farming area needs consistent rainfall for crops.

**Food Production:** Rainfed areas contribute to 40% of India’s total food production. So, any variations in rain and soil moisture can severely impact the nation’s food supply.

**Climate Change Impact:** Changes in weather patterns, like unseasonal rains or droughts, are becoming more common, which can hurt crop yields.

**Projected Yield Reductions:** By 2050, rainfed rice yields might drop by 20%. By 2080, this could be as much as 47%. Other crops, like wheat and maize, also face potential reductions.

**Irrigation’s Role:** Although helpful, irrigation consumes 72% of global freshwater. In some cases, it can harm ecosystems, affecting future agriculture.

#### What solutions exist?

**Irrigation:** Diversifying crops through effective irrigation can help farmers. In 2021, 8.7 million people in 49 countries benefited from such initiatives.

**Climate-Smart Agriculture:** The FAO promotes this approach, emphasizing water-use efficiency. Projects like the farmer water school programme in Uttar Pradesh are examples.

**Groundwater Management:** The Andhra Pradesh Farmer Managed Groundwater Systems project included a hydrological monitoring program for better water management.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

**Combining Knowledge:** Merging modern technologies with indigenous systems builds resilient production. IFAD-supported projects in several Indian states focus on climate-resilient seed varieties and sustainable practices.

### How is the UN helping India?

**Crop Forecasting:** The FAO is piloting a crop forecasting framework in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh, and Maharashtra to help rainfed farmers make informed decisions regarding food security.

**Irrigation Initiatives:** IFAD is leveraging the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act scheme to ensure that micro-irrigation infrastructure is both environmentally sustainable and financially viable.

**Water Efficiency Projects:** The FAO supported the farmer water school programme in Uttar Pradesh and the Andhra Pradesh Farmer Managed Groundwater Systems project which reached 638 habitations in seven drought-prone districts.

**Climate Change Adaptation:** IFAD focuses on merging modern technologies with indigenous knowledge systems. They back projects in Maharashtra, Odisha, and other states, emphasizing climate-resilient seed varieties and crops.

**Support for Smallholders:** The WFP collaborates with the Government of Odisha to develop solutions that boost resilience, like using solar technologies and promoting a millet-value chain.

**Innovative Collaborations:** The UN's food agencies work with the Indian government on innovations such as Solar 4 Resilience, Secure Fishing, and the revival of millets for renewable energy, food security, and nutrition.

#### 4. The materiality and morality of Net Zero should go hand in hand

**Source:** This post has been created based on the article “The materiality and morality of Net Zero should go hand in hand” published in LiveMint on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper 3 Indian Economy — Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment.

GS Paper 3 Environment — Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation

**News:** This article discusses the issues with the current climate-change mitigation policies which focus only on the moral aspects, while ignoring the material challenges of those policies.

#### What are the issues with current climate-change mitigation policies?

**First**, people put the **cost of living** over Net Zero as a priority. For e.g., public support for such policies decreased rapidly in Britain when it involved an increase in household bills.

**Second**, the **environmental costs of renewable energy generation** are not accounted for. For instance, the issues of disposal of wind turbine blades and solar panels or the damage caused to the **Amazon Basin** because of mining of metals to manufacture electric vehicles.

**Third**, it is assumed that **private capital** would supply the money required for energy transition due to its goodness and public spirit. However, private interests trump other public considerations.

**Fourth**, dominance of one country in the supply chain (for e.g., in copper production) leads to a higher probability of weaponisation. These “**Geopolitical risks**” are not accounted for.

**Fifthly**, previous energy transitions took centuries to happen. Hence, Net Zero by ‘2050’ might be an unrealistic target.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

**Sixthly**, mass production of wind turbines or solar panels cannot be undertaken without the use of fossil fuels.

Lastly, **trade-offs are not recognised**. Overarching climate-change solutions are passed on to voiceless people around the world.

### What should be the way forward?

It is immoral to tell people that they cannot aspire to a life of minimum dignity because others have to maintain their way of life.

We should think of climate change and global warming **more in economic terms than in moral terms**.

These issues should be dealt with optimally, keeping in mind other equally important priorities of the billions.

### 5. The Indian Himalayan Region needs its own EIA

**Source:** This post has been created based on the article “**The Indian Himalayan Region needs its own EIA**” published in **The Hindu** on **17<sup>th</sup> October 2023**.

**UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 3 Environment** — Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, **environmental impact assessment**.

**News:** This article discusses the importance of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) with respect to the fragile Himalayan ecosystem. It also points to the various problems in its implementation and suggests reforms to solve those issues.

The recent Teesta dam breach in **Sikkim** and the recent floods and landslides in **Himachal Pradesh** have brought to attention the problems of the current development model in Himalayan ecosystems.

Despite the fragility of the Indian Himalayan Region (IHR), there is a lack of acknowledgement of the need for a special set of environmental standards and clearances for the region.

### Why is EIA required?

- 1) It is a tool to identify the **environmental, social, and economic impacts** of a project before it is implemented.
- 2) It **compares various alternatives** for the proposed project, **predicts and analyses all possible environmental repercussions** in various scenarios.
- 3) EIA also helps **decide appropriate mitigation strategies**.

EIA is the **most potent regulatory tool** in the arsenal of environmental governance to further the vision of sustainable development in the country.

### How did the provision of EIA evolve in India?

In 1994, the MoEFCC under the **Environment (Protection) Act 1986 (EPA)**, promulgated the first EIA notification with the provision of **Environmental Clearance (EC)**.

This was replaced by the **EIA 2006** notification which included the provision for decentralisation wherein State governments were also given powers to issue EC in certain cases.

A **draft EIA in 2020** was floated for public comments. It was perceived to be **pro-industry** and compromising ecological concerns.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

### What are the issues plaguing EIA?

- 1) **Lack of a national regulator:** There is no regulator at the national level to carry out an independent, objective and transparent appraisal and approval of the projects for ECs.
- 2) **Reactive rather than proactive:** The EIA process now reacts to development proposals rather than anticipating them.
- 3) **Lack of objectivity:** Because the EIA is financed by the project proponent, there is a bias in favour of the project.
- 4) **Lack of consideration of cumulative impacts:** Cumulative impacts caused by several projects in an area are not taken into account.
- 5) **Treated as just another formality:** In many cases, the EIA is done as a mere formality that needs to be done for EC before a project can be started.
- 6) **Not applicable to all projects:** An EIA is not required for many projects as they do not fall within the ambit of the EIA 2006 notification.
- 7) **Special needs of certain fragile ecosystems not considered:** For instance, the EIA process is not cognizant of the special needs of the IHR.

### What are the issues with EIA with respect to IHR?

- 1) Despite its **special needs** and as an area of **immense ecological importance**, this region is treated like any other part of the country.
- 2) The Himalayas are inherently vulnerable to **extreme weather conditions** such as heavy rains, flash floods, and landslides and are **seismically active**.
- 3) **Climate change** has added another layer of vulnerability to this ecosystem. This is also not taken into account.

### What should be done?

Policymakers should explore tools such as the **strategic environmental assessment** which takes into account the **cumulative impact** of development in an area.

General conditions mandated for all projects could also have a clause about the IHR or mountains above a certain altitude.

## 6. Confronting the long-term risks of Artificial Intelligence

**Source:** This post has been created based on the article “Confronting the long-term risks of Artificial Intelligence” published in **The Hindu** on **17<sup>th</sup> October 2023**.

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** **GS Paper 3 Science and Technology — Developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.**

**News:** This article discusses the long-term risks associated with the use of Artificial Intelligence. It also highlights the challenges in tackling those risks and suggests solutions to the same.

### What are the kinds of risks associated with AI?

- 1) **Short-term risks:** These might be more tangible, such as ensuring that an AI system does not malfunction in its day-to-day tasks.
- 2) **Long-term risks:** These are related to the broader existential questions about AI's role in society and its implications for humanity.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

### What are the various long-term risks?

- 1) **Mixing of AI and Biotechnology:** This could fundamentally alter humanity by the **manipulation of human emotions, thoughts, and desires.**
- 2) **Disruption of crucial services:** If essential infrastructure such as **water supply and electricity** rely on AI, any malfunction or manipulation could disrupt these services.
- 3) Risks of **'Runaway AI'** (AI systems breaking free of human control): These could engage in manipulations such as the alteration of chemical balances in water supplies, which may lead to disaster.
- 4) **Outpacing of human intellect:** AI may eventually lead to **super-intelligence** that is superior to human intellect. The misuse of this super-intelligence may have dire consequences.
- 5) **Lack of human values in how AI functions:** Aligning AI with universally accepted human values will be a challenge.
- 6) **Rapid pace of change:** This leads to undermining of **safety considerations**, and may lead to unchecked AI development. This **unregulated progress** can lead to AI that is **misaligned with global ethical standards**, creating a risk of conflict and undermining peace and security.
- 7) **Military AI:** The confluence of AI technology with warfare multiplies these long-term risks.

### What are the various challenges in tackling these risks?

- 1) **Lack of a unified approach:** This will hamper long-term safety and ethical deployment of AI technologies.
- 2) **Lack of a holistic approach:** Looking at risks only in the deployment area is an oversimplified strategy which might overlook certain other risks.
- 3) **Lack of a level-playing field due to absence of collaboration and cohesive action:** For e.g. If a country does not enact regulations on AI while others do, it would likely gain a competitive edge in terms of AI advancements and deployments. This uneven playing field can encourage other nations to **loosen their regulatory frameworks** to maintain competitiveness, which will further compromise AI safety.

### What should be done?

Addressing these risks requires a **multifaceted approach and** considering current challenges against potential future ramifications.

A more **holistic view of AI risks** is necessary to ensure comprehensive and effective regulation and oversight.

Nations must specify where AI deployment is unacceptable and **enforce clear norms for its role in warfare.**

### 7. House Asks What's Up- Govt overriding of the right to privacy in special circumstances needs parliamentary oversight

**Source:** The post is based on the article **"House Asks What's Up- Govt overriding of the right to privacy in special circumstances needs parliamentary oversight"** published in **"The Times of India"** on 17th October 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Security- basics of cyber security

**News:** The Indian government wants WhatsApp to identify creators of fake politician videos using the 2021 IT Rules. WhatsApp argues it's a privacy issue. There are technical and privacy

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

challenges. More oversight is needed. Parliament should check the government's actions, like in other countries.

### What is the Indian government's view on this issue?

The Indian government wants to identify creators of fake politician videos on WhatsApp.

They cite the IT Rules from 2021 as their legal basis.

The government believes these deepfakes can undermine the electoral process.

They argue that while the right to privacy is fundamental, reasonable restrictions can be placed, as noted by the Supreme Court in 2017.

The state of Tripura, for instance, has already invoked these IT Rules.

### What is WhatsApp's view on this issue?

WhatsApp is against sharing information about the creators of fake politician videos.

They challenge the constitutional validity of the IT Rules from 2021 that demand traceability of message originators.

WhatsApp believes that these demands run counter to the right to privacy.

The company argues that these provisions contradict established jurisprudence on privacy rights.

They face the technical challenge of modifying the app to allow for traceability of the originator.

### What are the main concerns?

#### Technical Challenges:

Apps like WhatsApp would need modifications to trace message originators.

#### Privacy Issues:

There's potential for government invasions of individual privacy.

Rules like the IT Rules 2021 could be misused for broad reasons, like "security of the state".

#### Oversight Concerns:

The IT Rules allow the executive branch to initiate traceability.

More robust checks are needed, similar to practices in mature democracies, to prevent misuse of power.

## 8. A new beginning- Freight corridors should improve logistics position

**Source:** The post is based on the article "A new beginning- Freight corridors should improve logistics position" published in "Business standard" on 17th October 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Economy- Infrastructure

**News:** The article discusses the Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor (EDFC) in India, which will speed up freight transport. Despite benefits, it faced delays, cost overruns, and changes in route and train speed. The project aims to boost railway freight by 2030.

### What is the EDFC?

EDFC Overview:

**Full Name:** Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor (EDFC).

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

**Length:** 1,337-km.

**Route:** Extends from Punjab to Bihar.

**Significance:** It aims to more than halve the transit time for freight, benefiting especially coal deliveries to northern power plants.

**Delays:** Originally set for completion in 2017-18, it faced a five-year delay.

**Cost:** The delay led to a 54% increase in costs, with the EDFC's portion costing 251,000 crore.

**Route Alteration:** Initially planned to reach Dankuni, West Bengal, but now terminates at Son Nagar, Bihar.

**Future Plans:** Parts of the EDFC have been operational since 2020, with most of it expected to be functional by March 2024.

### What is the significance of the EDFC?

**Efficiency Boost:** The EDFC promises to more than halve the transit time for moving freight across connected states.

**Power Sector Aid:** Ensures quicker coal deliveries to power plants in north-western states, addressing a persistent problem during summer when power demand soars.

**Logistics Revolution:** Designed to significantly reduce the challenges and delays industries typically face in freight transportation in India.

**Rail Freight Enhancement:** At present, only 27% of freight in India is transported by rail. With the EDFC, the goal is to elevate this to 45% by 2030, challenging the dominance of road transport.

**Landmark Infrastructure Project:** Initially envisioned in 2005 as a premier infrastructure project, it underscores India's commitment to bolstering its logistics and infrastructure.

**Economic Catalyst:** The operational efficiency brought by EDFC can spur economic growth by ensuring timely movement of goods and resources.

### 9. Carbon pricing challenges- India's piecemeal approach to carbon pricing

**Source:** The post is based on the article "Carbon pricing challenges- India's piecemeal approach to carbon pricing", driven by emerging trade barriers, is not a long-term strategy" published in "Business standard" on 17th October 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Environment- carbon emission

**News:** The article discusses market-based solutions for reducing carbon emissions, like carbon pricing and cap-and-trade systems. It highlights examples from Europe, China, and the US. It argues against solely using the "social cost of carbon" for decisions. It then examines India's implicit carbon taxes from coal and petroleum and suggests India adopt a national carbon pricing system due to international trade pressures and to promote cleaner technology.

#### What are market-based solutions to carbon mitigation?

**Definition:** Strategies using market forces to incentivize the reduction of carbon emissions.

**Global Spread:** Implemented or planned in 73 jurisdictions, they cover 23% of global greenhouse gas emissions.

**Forms:**

**Carbon Pricing:**

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

Charges levied on carbon emissions without a set target.

Sweden's model: Launched a carbon price in 1991 for designated emitters (40% of emissions). The carbon price is now about \$100 per tonne, which led to a 25% emission reduction since its inception.

### **Cap-and-Trade (CaT):**

An approach where a target emission level is specified.

China's approach: Introduced CaT in eight regions in 2021. The emerging carbon price from emissions trade in China is \$8 per tonne of CO<sub>2</sub>e.

### **Social Cost of Carbon (SCC):**

The US Environmental Protection Agency's method to estimate the societal impact of carbon.

US's evolution: \$43/tonne (Obama era), dropped to \$3-5/tonne (Trump era considering only US impacts), and a recent suggestion of \$190/tonne.

### **Implicit Carbon Pricing:**

India's indirect method by taxing fuels.

Coal taxation in 2019-20 translates to an implicit carbon tax of \$5 per tonne of CO<sub>2</sub>e. Taxes on petroleum products and natural gas result in a higher rate of \$87 per tonne of CO<sub>2</sub>e, driven primarily for revenue rather than emission reduction.

### **What is India's approach to carbon emissions?**

India's Approach to Carbon Emissions:

#### **Coal Cess and GST:**

India has a cess and Goods and Services Tax (GST) on coal.

In 2019-20, it collected around 2600 billion from this. Considering the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from coal consumption in that year (1,678 million tonnes), this translates to an implicit carbon tax of \$5 per tonne of CO<sub>2</sub>e.

#### **Taxation of Petroleum Products and Natural Gas:**

In 2019, these products resulted in about 800 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and yielded tax revenue of €4.9 trillion. This implies an implicit carbon price of \$87 per tonne of CO<sub>2</sub>e.

This high taxation on petroleum products is mainly for revenue purposes and not explicitly for reducing emissions.

#### **Facing Global Pressure:**

India may soon have to consider carbon pricing options due to increasing global pressure, especially as Europe implements a Carbon Adjustment Border Mechanism (CABM) which would levy duties on imports from countries not accounting for carbon emissions.

#### **Potential Carbon Pricing Approaches:**

India is contemplating introducing carbon pricing either directly or through a CaT system, focusing on sectors like electricity generation, steel, and cement production. The primary challenge is the political complexity due to taxation by both Union and state governments.

#### **What should India do next?**

**Consider Carbon Pricing:** Due to global pressure and potential carbon emission-linked trade barriers from Europe, India needs to think about carbon pricing solutions.



## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

**Address Trade Barriers:** With Europe implementing a Carbon Adjustment Border Mechanism (CABM), India is contemplating a directed export tax to counterbalance the CABM.

**Sectoral Carbon-Oriented CaT Mechanism:** India should think about starting a sectoral carbon-oriented CaT mechanism, focusing on sectors like electricity generation, steel, and cement production, instead of geographical areas.

**Develop a National System:** It's essential to create a national system that not only reduces carbon emissions but also boosts R&D in relevant technology areas.

**Reconsider Taxation Sources:** Introducing carbon pricing might need a partial shift in sources of budgetary finance from coal cess and GST to carbon pricing.

### 10. When tigers and jackals get the same protection

**Source:** This post has been created based on the article “When tigers and jackals get the same protection” published in **The Hindu** on **18<sup>th</sup> October 2023**.

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** **GS Paper 3 Environment — Conservation.**

**News:** This article discusses the various issues with the recent amendments in the Wildlife Protection (Amendment) Act, 2022.

An excessive number of species have been included in the new schedules of the Wildlife Protection (Amendment) Act, 2022, with little consultation, or logic.

The new Act also goes one step further by aligning itself with CITES, and includes the CITES appendices as well.

#### What are the issues raised regarding conservation of species?

1) **Lack of prioritisation of species for conservation:** Listing an excess number of species means that it is **unclear where resources should be allocated**. For instance, the same level of protection is offered to tigers and jackals, and to the great Indian bustard and barn owls.

2) **Indirect consequences of legislation not taken into account:** **For example, the Tree Preservation Acts of Kerala and Karnataka prevent the felling of native trees. These disincentivize plantation owners from planting native trees and promote exotic species.**

3) **The case of chital:** The spotted deer (chital) are invasive species in the Andaman Islands. But they cannot be legally culled or removed because they are listed in Schedule 1.

#### What are the various impacts on the people?

1) Various Schedule 1 species pose enormous **physical, mental and economic harm** to people, especially farmers and marginal cultivators. For instance, the new Act elevates wild pigs and nilgai to Schedule 1.

2) **Blanket ban on use:** Regulated use should be considered when animals are abundant, at least to support the livelihoods of local communities. But this is seen as unacceptable.

3) **Red-tapism:** The paperwork involved in getting research permits is tedious and time-consuming. This could have a negative effect on research. Environmental NGOs will have a harder time getting permits for research and conservation.

#### What should be the way forward?

**Firstly**, those whose lives are at stake need to be safeguarded first. Animal rights arguments that result in the loss of human lives and livelihoods need to be disregarded.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

**Secondly**, biodiversity management actions need to be tailored to ecology, species biology, and context. This calls for research, which is hampered by the scheduling of species.

**Finally**, both citizens and ecologists have a right to observe nature and collect data if they so desire, as long as it does not cause harm and follows ethical considerations.

### 11. A glimmer of hope for radio

**Source:** The post is based on the article “A glimmer of hope for radio” published in “Business standard” on 18th October 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Economy- infrastructure (Communication network)

**News:** The article discusses the decline of radio in India due to heavy licensing fees and digital competition. However, recent recommendations from Trai, including allowing news on FM channels and making FM receivers mandatory on mobile phones, may revive the medium. These changes could increase listenership, reduce costs, and attract more advertisers, giving radio a brighter future.

#### Why did radio's popularity decrease?

**Revenue Drop:** Radio's earnings fell from ₹3,360 crore in 2018 to ₹2100 crore in 2022.

**Branding Changes:** Leading brands like Radio Mirchi pivoted. In 2020, it transitioned to Mirchi Unlimited.

**Heavy Licensing Fees:** Radio operators faced financial challenges. In 2015, they paid ₹3,100 crore in fees, almost double their 2014 earnings.

**Unfavorable Guidelines:** License fees were set at 4% of gross revenues or 2.5% of the one-time city entry fee, a burden for many stations.

**Digital Advancements:** The rise of services like Jio, falling data prices, and the surge of online media consumption reduced radio's dominance.

**Late Adaptations:** While other media sectors grew, radio faced restrictions that limited programming innovation and revenue generation.

**Economic Challenges:** The economic slowdown in 2019 and the pandemic further affected radio's popularity.

#### What are Trai's recommendations?

##### Introduction of News on FM:

Trai suggests allowing news broadcasts on FM channels.

##### FM Receivers on Mobile Phones:

Recommends making FM receivers mandatory on mobile phones.

Aims to counteract manufacturers who disable radio features to promote their own services.

##### Licensing Fee Reforms:

Proposes delinking the license fee from the nonrefundable one-time entry fee.

Suggests calculating the license fee as 4% of gross revenue, excluding GST. This could reduce costs for stations by 10% to 40%.

##### Boost in Reach:

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

By ensuring FM features in mobiles are enabled, radio could potentially reach the billion-plus mobile population, potentially doubling listenership to over 520 million.

### News Content:

Allowing 10 minutes of news every hour can diversify programming and attract a new category of advertisers.

### 12. The world economy is slowing even as India's provides hope

**Source:** The post is based on the article "The world economy is slowing even as India's provides hope" published in "Live mint" on 18th October 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Economy- economic growth

**News:** The IMF reports a global economic slowdown, but India is growing fast. India aims to be a developed nation by 2047, needing a 7.6% growth rate. Global slowdowns may challenge India's growth. However, with strategies like higher savings and increased exports, India can continue its growth momentum.

### What is current global economic trend?

**Global Momentum Loss:** The IMF has assessed that there's a loss of global economic momentum.

**Historic Low for 2028:** The growth forecast by the IMF for 2028 is its lowest since 1990.

**Overly Optimistic Forecasts:** Historically, the IMF's forecasting models have tended to be overly optimistic. The real global growth has been lower than IMF's predictions made five years prior.

**Private Sector Consensus:** Private sector economists have also generally forecasted optimistically, mirroring the IMF's trend.

**Decade's Trend:** The global economy has been gradually slowing down since the financial crisis, and this trend is not expected to reverse in this decade.

### How is India defying the economic growth trend?

**Standout Growth:** While most countries are experiencing a slowdown, India is a rare exception, showing strong economic momentum.

**Fastest-growing Large Economy:** If IMF forecasts are accurate, India could be the fastest-growing large economy for 15 years, starting from 2014.

**Significant Global Contribution:** The global economy will add \$29 trillion between 2023 and 2028. India will contribute \$2.2 trillion, making it the third-largest contributor after the US and China, each adding \$5.9 trillion.

**Future Acceleration:** Barclays economists believe India can accelerate its growth after the 2024 elections without jeopardizing macroeconomic stability.

**Foreign Policy Tool:** An 8% growth rate for India is viewed as a powerful foreign policy tool, strengthening its position on the global stage.

### What does India need to become developed by 2047?

**Required Growth Rate:** India needs to grow at a compounded rate of 7.6% annually to reach developed country status by 2047.

**Challenges from the Global Slowdown:** With the IMF forecasting a broad global slowdown in the next five years, India will face headwinds that could impact its economic acceleration.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

**Other Hurdles:** Besides the global economic challenges, India needs to tackle growing protectionism tied to geopolitical situations and address potential shocks from climate change.

**RBI's Estimation:** The Reserve Bank of India suggests that India's current growth might cause inflation or stress in the balance of payments.

### 13. The e-rupee is like wine: It'll take time to mature

**Source:** The post is based on the article "The e-rupee is like wine: It'll take time to mature" published in "Live mint" on 18th October 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Economy- currency

**News:** The article discusses the slow adoption of India's Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) compared to the popular Unified Payments Interface (UPI). UPI's ease of use and first-mover advantage make it dominant. However, CBDCs might be better for international transfers. The e-rupee's full potential isn't clear yet.

#### What is CBDC?

CBDC stands for Central Bank Digital Currency.

It's a digital form of fiat money introduced by RBI.

Despite RBI's pilot project involving 3.5 million merchants and 1 million customers, its adoption is slow with 10,000-12,000 daily transactions.

Unlike UPI, CBDC offers a direct promise-to-pay by RBI, similar to cash.

#### What are the issues with RBI's CBDC?

**Slow Adoption at Retail Level:** Despite involvement of 13 participating banks and selection of 3.5 million merchants and 1 million customers, CBDC daily transactions are only 10,000-12,000.

**UPI's Dominance:** The Unified Payments Interface (UPI) already offers ease of transacting, safety, low cost, and functionality on feature phones, making it a popular choice over CBDC for domestic transactions.

**Awareness Issue:** One factor contributing to the slow uptake might be the lack of awareness among potential users.

**International Appeal:** CBDCs have potential in cross-border financial transfers which are currently costly and can be slow.

**Global Interoperability:** For CBDC to be effective internationally, it needs compatibility with other countries' systems.

**Potential Tracking Concerns:** Unlike cash, CBDCs could allow transactions to be centrally tracked, which might raise privacy concerns.

#### What is the future potential of CBDC?

**International Advantage:** CBDCs could have a distinct edge in cross-border financial transfers, offering potential benefits over the current costly methods.

**Reduced Dependence:** Following the Western sanctions on Russia and its removal from Swift, CBDCs highlight an opportunity to reduce dependence on a Western-dominated system.

**Global Interoperability:** For CBDCs to be efficient in international settlements, global compatibility is crucial, though achieving it might take time.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

**RBI's Role in Banking:** The domestic use case for CBDC highlights its potential as a full-safe RBI promise-to-pay. It could change the banking landscape, with RBI possibly becoming the chief deposit holder.

**Maturation Before Adoption:** The advice is to allow the CBDC to mature, using it mainly for foreign payments initially before widening its domestic use.

### 14. Stay Grounded, ISRO – The space agency's Indian-on-the-Moon target looks within reach

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Stay Grounded, Isro – The space agency's Indian-on-the-Moon target looks within reach. But its key role is domestic tech transfer**” published in **The Times of India** on **19<sup>th</sup> October 2023**.

**Syllabus:** **GS 3 – Science & Technology – Achievements of Indians in Science & Technology**

**Relevance:** **Achievement of ISRO** and its original vision

**News:** ISRO is scheduled to **test a flight vehicle** abort mission for Gaganyaan on Saturday.

This is a crucial step towards the country's goal of establishing an Indian space station by 2035 and sending an astronaut to the Moon by 2040. However, it is also necessary for ISRO to focus on its original vision.

#### What is the original vision of ISRO?

**ISRO's original vision is to act as a technological innovator in expediting India's industrial progress.**

India stands as one of only five countries globally with comprehensive space capabilities, and its satellites have made a substantial positive impact on the lives of its citizens.

**For instance,** ISRO's communication satellite projects have had a number of positive impacts, including monitoring Himalayan glaciers and helping the Archaeological Survey of India with satellite maps of protected monuments.

Additionally, **ISRO's patents have made substantial contributions** in areas such as chemical and polymer technology, electronics, electromechanical inventions, and materials science.

Further, ISRO has been transferring technology to Indian firms since the 1980s. This technology has been used to develop a wide range of products and services.

#### What lies ahead?

Although ISRO's objectives include setting up an Indian space station and sending an astronaut to the Moon, it's also important to understand that the agency's core mission is to create innovative technologies that can enhance the quality of life for people in India.

In this regard, the creation of **IN-SPACe** is a positive step, and it should help to increase ISRO's impact on the Indian economy.

### 15. The explosion of digital uncertainty

**Source:** This post has been created based on the article “**The explosion of digital uncertainty**” published in **The Hindu** on **19<sup>th</sup> October 2023**.

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** **GS Paper 3 Science and Technology — Developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.**

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

**News:** This article discusses the future developments in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its possible negative implications for humanity.

Recent advances in Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) have brought to attention the various underlying threats and dangers.

### What are the possible uncertainties arising with developments in AI?

- 1) **Narrow understanding of complex digital processes:** Digital infrastructure is built on layers upon layers of interconnected and complex protocols not properly understood by a vast number of people.
- 2) **Cognitive warfare:** It entails using technological tools to alter the cognition of human targets that are aimed at destabilizing governments, and manipulation of the media.
- 3) **Loss of trust: Breaches of confidentiality and loss of governance capabilities** may lead to a loss of trust.
- 4) **Rising risks:** As firms migrate to the Cloud, and more and more sensitive information is constantly transmitted, the **risks go up**.
- 5) **Misinformation and disinformation.**
- 6) **Overdependence:** As people become dependent – cognitively and psychologically – on digital networks, AI can influence their thinking and functioning.

### Case Study:

**Implications of AI-usage in the recent Hamas-Israel conflict:** Israel's massive intelligence failure is attributed by some experts to an overindulgence of AI by it. Hamas appears to have used deceit to conceal its real intentions by distorting the flow of information flowing into Israeli AI systems.

### What is AGI?

Soon we will witness the emergence of Artificial General Intelligence (AGI) — Artificial Intelligence that is **equal and or superior to human intelligence**.

It will penetrate various sectors and could replace human judgement, intuition and creativity. AGI is predicted to be far more disruptive and dangerous.

### What are the risks associated with AGI?

- 1) It could **alter the fabric of nation-states**.
- 2) It would **enhance inequalities** and **social and economic disparities**.
- 3) It has the capacity to flood a country with **fake content**. This could lead to a breakdown of the concept of trust.
- 4) AGI will be able to **outperform humans** in many areas.
- 5) It will have the potential to make decisions that are unpredictable and uncontrollable which could have unintended harmful consequences.
- 6) Digital data could be converted into **digital intelligence**.
- 7) AGI-driven disruption could lead to the age of “**Digital colonialism**”. This would lead to a new form of exploitation, *viz.*, **data exploitation**.
- 8) It will lead to material **shifts in the geo-political balance of power**.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

### What should be done?

An over-dependence on AI and a belief in its invincibility could prove to be catastrophic. It calls for more **intimate collaboration** between **states and the technology sector**.

### 16. Tackling urban poverty

**Source:** This post has been created based on the article “**Tackling urban poverty**” published in **Business Standard** on **19<sup>th</sup> October 2023**.

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** **GS Paper 3 Indian Economy — Indian Economy and issues relating to employment.**

**GS Paper 2 Social Justice — Issues relating to poverty and hunger.**

**News:** This article discusses the recent findings of the Periodic Labour Force Survey in the context of urban informal sector. It also discusses steps taken by the govt to increase formalization of labor force and suggests reforms to alleviate urban poverty.

### What is the current status of the labor market in India?

According to the **Periodic Labour Force Survey (2022-2023):**

**Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)** was estimated at **42.4%**: It was 60.8% in rural and 50.4% in urban areas.

**Worker Population Ratio or WPR** (defined as the number of employed per thousand people) in India was **56%**: It was 59.4% in rural and 47.7% in urban areas.

The **Unemployment Rate (UR)** was **3.2%** for the whole country and 5.4% for urban areas.

The **Self-Employed Workforce** (which provides us with information on the extent of **informality** within the labour market) was estimated at **39.6%**.

### What are the features of the urban informal sector in India?

The term “informal” describes a wide range of employment situations, which include; **Absence of social security benefits**, working in **small-scale enterprises**, and **job-insecurity**. It also encompasses economic activities that are **not officially registered**.

**The urban informal sector is linked to the persistence of urban poverty.**

At the same time, the urban informal sector is a **key player in job creation**, which can help in reducing the scope and intensity of poverty.

### What has the govt done to increase formalization in the labour market?

The government has made numerous efforts to drive formalisation in the labour market. These include:

- 1) **Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana (PMRPY) scheme:** Incentivised establishments registered with the Employees’ Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) to increase workers’ employment base.
- 2) **E-shram portal:** A **national database of unorganised workers** has been created to extend social security benefits to them and check their employability. It also includes migrant workers, construction workers and gig and platform workers.
- 3) **PM Street Vendor’s AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi):** Its core objective is to provide **specialised micro-credit to street vendors** through lending institutions to reignite their livelihoods.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

These schemes act as shields, protecting the vulnerable from the uncertainties that life and livelihoods can bring.

### What should be the way forward?

We must recognize the **transformative potential of the urban informal sector** and harness its energy to create positive change.

**Setting the groundwork** for a future where **cities are more fair and prosperous** should be the way forward.

A **comprehensive approach** incorporating a range of social welfare programs should be adopted.

**Inclusive policy-making** should be undertaken.

### 17. Severe drought grips the Amazon rainforest: The impact, cause and grim future

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Severe drought grips the Amazon rainforest: The impact, cause and grim future**” published in “**Indian express**” on 19th October 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS3- environment- climate change GS3- disaster management- Drought

**News:** The Amazon has a severe drought. Rivers are dry. Many animals and people suffer. The Rio Negro River is very low. Wildfires increase. El Nino and warm oceans cause this. Amazon’s future is at risk.

### About Amazon Drought

The Amazon is experiencing its worst drought in history, with the Rio Negro River reaching a record low of 13.59 metres. This has led to the death of many fish and river dolphins.

El Nino and high Atlantic Ocean temperatures are reducing rain, making matters worse.

This drought has also spiked wildfires in the Amazonas state to 2,700 in October, the highest in 25 years.

Communities, especially Indigenous ones, are suffering, lacking essentials like water and food.

### What are the reasons for Amazon drought?

#### El Nino Effect:

El Nino causes an abnormal warming of waters in the equatorial Pacific Ocean.

This warming can lead to extreme heat events around the world.

#### High Atlantic Ocean Temperatures:

The northern tropical Atlantic Ocean has unusually warm waters.

When this warm water heats the air, it moves to the Amazon.

This heated air stops clouds from forming and reduces rain.

#### Combined Impact of Both Phenomena:

The drought gets worse when El Nino and warm Atlantic waters happen at the same time.

Together, they affect a larger area of the Amazon.

### What are the impacts of Amazon drought?

#### Wildlife Suffering:

High numbers of fish and river dolphins, known as boto, are dying.



## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

Their decomposing bodies contaminate water supplies.

### **Human Communities Affected:**

Indigenous villages face shortages of water, food, and medicine.

Approximately 500,000 people could be impacted by the end of October.

Ruth Martins, a community leader, mentioned unprecedented drought conditions.

### **Increase in Wildfires:**

Dry conditions have led to 2,700 wildfires in the Amazonas state in October, a 25-year record.

Smoke from these fires has degraded air quality in Manaus, affecting residents' health.

### **Economic Impact:**

A major hydropower dam's operations have halted due to the drought, impacting power supply.

### **What do studies say about Amazon's future?**

#### **Frequency of Droughts:**

If fossil fuel burning continues at the current rate, the Amazon could face major droughts almost every year by 2060.

#### **Recovery from Droughts:**

Over the past 20 years, the Amazon has become slower at recovering from long drought periods.

#### **Tipping Point:**

The Amazon is nearing a critical tipping point.

If crossed, it could transform from a lush forest into a drier savanna.

#### **Release of Stored Carbon:**

Such a transformation would release large amounts of stored carbon.

This would further accelerate global warming.

#### **Deforestation Data:**

In the past five decades, between 17% and 20% of the Amazon has been destroyed.

Experts emphasize reducing deforestation to safeguard the Amazon's future.

### **18. India's war on informal labour is turning out bad for workers**

**Source:** The post is based on the article "India's war on informal labour is turning out bad for workers" published in "Live mint" on 19th October 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Economy- Employment

**News:** The article discusses India's struggle to move its workforce from informal to formal jobs. Despite economic growth, many remain in precarious, informal positions. The government's policies, like the GST, have complicated issues. Challenges also exist for women and Dalits. Efforts to solely link informality to tax evasion are not successful.

#### **What are the job challenges present in India?**

**Prevalence of Informality:** 74% of non-farm workers are in informal positions, mainly within proprietorships and partnerships.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

**Post-COVID Resilience:** The proportion of informal workers barely changed even after multiple COVID waves, indicating the entrenched nature of informality.

**Limited Social Security:** Only 54% of salaried workers have access to crucial social-security benefits, leaving a significant portion vulnerable.

**Complicated GST:** The 2017 Goods and Services Tax, though intended to help formalize the economy, became complex, disadvantaging smaller businesses and benefiting larger ones.

**Unfulfilled Government Initiatives:** A \$24 billion incentive aimed at promoting factory setups resulted in fewer than 200,000 jobs by the previous September.

**Job Aspirations vs. Reality:** Many jobs don't offer essentials like contracts or benefits, creating a gap between youth aspirations and actual job conditions.

**Challenges for Specific Groups:** Women face difficulties finding formal work near homes, and Dalits are predominantly stuck in daily-wage work.

### What's the future concern?

**Aging Population:** By 2050, India's elderly population will surge, exceeding 350 million. Without proper job opportunities, they won't be able to save for their old age or medical emergencies.

**Dependency on Future Workers:** If the elderly remain in low-productivity jobs without savings, they will heavily rely on a smaller group of future workers' tax resources.

**Comparison with Neighboring Economies:** While Japan faced aging issues when it was already wealthy, China's momentum slowed earlier. India needs to ensure quality jobs before its demographic advantage diminishes.

**Pension Concerns:** Political opponents are suggesting reintroducing a fiscally challenging defined-benefit pension. This could strain future taxpayers and hinder welfare funding targeting the economically vulnerable.

### 19. Our labour survey data is far from satisfactory

**Source:** The post is based on the article "Our labour survey data is far from satisfactory" published in "Live mint" on 19th October 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Economy- Employment

**News:** The article discusses India's recent labor report. While initial data shows low unemployment, deeper analysis reveals job distress, falling wages, and higher joblessness among educated people. The government needs proactive growth strategies, not just temporary solutions.

#### About India's recent labor report.

**Unemployment Rate:** Reduced to 3.2% in 2022-23 from 6% in 2017-18. However, this doesn't always indicate general well-being due to regional variations.

**Women in Workforce:** Participation surged to 31.6% in 2022-23, a notable increase from 2017-18 by 10.5 percentage points.

#### Employment Distress:

Regular-wage jobs decreased by 2% since 2017-18.

Rise in self-employment, particularly among women, by 13 percentage points.

Real earnings declined as inflation outpaced wage growth.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

**Educated Workers' Plight:** Higher unemployment observed; 12.1% for postgraduates and 13.4% for graduates.

### What should be done to overcome employment distress?

**Infrastructure Investment:** Stepped-up investment in public infrastructure is necessary to boost overall economic activity and job creation.

**R&D Promotion:** Engage in specific R&D programmes, like those in climate science, to push forward innovation and specialized job opportunities.

**Focus on Genuine Job Creation:** Make-work schemes, such as the rural employment guarantee, are temporary fixes. India needs actual, long-term employment solutions.

**Urban Development:** Construct new towns and cities to cater to the millions migrating for urban jobs, boosting demand for various materials and jobs.

**Broad-based Growth:** The government should foster growth that benefits both the less-skilled and better-qualified individuals.

**Avoid Complacency:** Instead of being content with superficially low unemployment statistics, there's a need for a significant increase in job generation.

### 20. The shape of climate justice in a warming India

**Source:** This post has been created based on the article "The shape of climate justice in a warming India" published in **The Hindu** on **20<sup>th</sup> October 2023**.

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** **GS Paper 3 Environment — Conservation, Environmental pollution and degradation.**

**GS Paper 3 Indian Economy — Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.**

**News:** This article discusses the importance of taking into account and mitigating the rise in inequalities as a consequence of energy-transition policies for combating climate change.

### What should be the ideals for a just energy-transition?

Any energy transition initiative must embrace two ideals:

**First**, those who emit greenhouse gases should pay the social and environmental costs.

**Second**, climate justice requires compensation for those who are harmed. The richer countries or richer classes within a country should pay for the energy transition.

### What are the issues with India's policy of energy transition?

India's stance has largely been framed through the lens of foreign policy and its approach to **common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR)** in international negotiations.

However, given the country's historically lower emissions, **focusing on economic growth has taken precedence** over climate concerns.

Such an approach leads to a lack of climate justice within India, particularly its effect on **inequality across class, caste and region**.

**Societal responses** which are necessary to address climate change (such as public action and state capacity) **are slowed down** in more unequal settings. Given its highly unequal economic structure, India is vulnerable to it.

Recognising and mitigating the barriers that this inequality poses to effective climate action is a critical step toward a more sustainable and just future.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

### What is the state of inequality with respect to climate change?

- 1) **Effect on the poor:** Climate change and energy transition disproportionately affect the poor.
- 2) **Effect on agrarian communities:** The climate-induced variations in rainfall, temperature and extreme climate events directly impact agricultural productivity, compounding farmers' income loss.
- 3) **Effect on fishing communities:** Rising temperature in the ocean ecosystem has already led to a decrease in fish stocks in parts of the country, hurting fishing communities.

### What is the status of India's energy consumption?

**Source-wise:** As of 2021, **coal** was the major contributor to the total energy supply in India (56.1%), followed by **crude oil** (33.4%).

**Sector-wise:** The **industrial sector** was the largest consumer of energy, using more than half, i.e., 51% of the total final energy consumption, followed by transport (11%), residential (10%), and agriculture (3.6%) sectors.

India's **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC)** aim to ensure that 40% of the total installed power generation capacity is clean energy.

India has pledged to achieve **net-zero emissions by 2070**.

### What are the various types of inequalities that may be intensified due to energy-transition policies?

#### 1) **Socio-economic inequalities:**

The renewable sector requires higher skill sets but generates a lower number of jobs compared to fossil fuel industries.

Many fossil fuel firms are in the public sector and act as a critical avenue for creating job opportunities for **Dalits and the lower castes** in India.

A shift to renewable energy can potentially slow down **generational mobility** achieved by these disadvantaged groups.

#### 2) **Regional inequalities:**

For instance, regions that are heavily reliant on coal production often struggle with pollution, poverty, and low-quality employment.

Coal, the cheapest source of energy, is in the poorer regions in eastern and central India while renewable energy hubs, powered by wind and solar photovoltaics (PV) technologies, are in the relatively wealthy southern and western India.

### What should be done?

- 1) India's energy transition strategy must pay attention to **regional inequalities**.
- 2) **Transfer of funds to States dependent on coal**, and carving out **State-specific programmes for reskilling development and local rehabilitation** should be undertaken.
- 3) Strategies must target **inequality reduction and green investment simultaneously**.
- 4) **Policy alignment and cooperation** should be achieved across the levels of government.
- 5) A deliberate focus on protecting livelihoods, offering alternative job opportunities, and ensuring that vulnerable communities are not adversely impacted.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

### 21. Farmer Producers' Organisations: Engines of agri-innovation in UP

**Source:** The post is based on the article “Farmer Producers’ Organisations: Engines of agri-innovation in UP” published in “Indian express” on 20th October 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Agriculture- marketing of agricultural produce and issues and related constraints; e-technology in the aid of farmers.

**News:** The article discusses how Farmer Producers’ Organisations (FPOs) in Uttar Pradesh (UP) help small farmers by pooling resources and improving farming practices. The government supports these FPOs through funding, resources, and collaboration. As a result, FPOs are boosting crop variety, enhancing farming methods, and increasing exports in UP.

#### What are FPOs?

FPOs, or Farmer Producers’ Organisations, are collectives of farmers who come together in a geographical cluster.

They help farmers by pooling resources, improving farming techniques, and accessing better markets.

#### How are governments supporting FPOs?

**Formation Plans:** The Centre aims to form 10,000 FPOs. In Uttar Pradesh (UP), the goal is to establish one FPO in each of its 826 blocks every year for five years.

**Dedicated Support:** UP has a dedicated FPO cell to guide these organizations, ensuring scheme convergence and addressing compliance.

**FPO Shakti Portal:** Launched in UP, it’s a platform for FPOs offering grievance redressal and business partnership opportunities. As of July 15, 1,600 FPOs with a turnover of Rs 229 crore have registered.

**Financial Assistance:** The Agriculture Infrastructure Fund provides FPOs with a 3% interest subvention. UP adds another 3%, cutting loan interest to around 3%.

**Subsidies:** Both Central and state-sponsored schemes offer capital subsidies, encouraging post-harvest infrastructure development.

#### How do FPOs in Uttar Pradesh (UP) help small farmers?

**Pooling Resources:** FPOs are groups of farmers collaborating to maximize collective resources and expertise.

**Crop Diversification:** FPOs are driving diversification, with 1,316 involved in cereals, 378 in horticulture, and others focusing on different crops.

**Seed Processing:** 100 FPOs have set up seed processing units, with many selling seeds in the open market or partnering with seed corporations.

**Farm Machinery Access:** Over 480 FPOs have created Farm Machinery Banks, renting out equipment at reasonable rates.

**Innovative Farming:** Techniques like direct seeding of rice are introduced via FPOs. An FPO also promotes farming special rice in Siddharthnagar.

**Collaboration with Companies:** FPOs have facilitated deals, like the 200 MoUs between 68 FPOs and 37 companies, boosting market linkages for small farmers.

#### What innovations do FPOs bring?

**Specialized Farming:** An FPO led the initiative to farm special Kalanamak rice in Siddharthnagar district.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

**Nutritional Focus:** FPOs are enhancing local diets by developing the value chain of nutrient-rich agri-products like millets, mushrooms, moringa, and fortified cereals.

**Local Campaigns:** In Rampur, an FPO collaborated with district administration for the “Aahaar Se Upchar Tak” campaign, supplying nutrition-rich products to anganwadi kendras, enhancing local nutrition.

**Unique Recognition:** FPOs have successfully registered local products under Geographical Indications, such as Adam Chini rice and Banarasi langda.

### 22. Why we need norms on government spending

**Source:** The post is based on the article “Why we need norms on government spending” published in “Indian express” on 20th October 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Economy- Government Budgeting.

**News:** The article discusses the challenges democracies face in deciding where to spend public money. Governments often prioritize “freebies” for citizens to gain votes, even though these might not always be economically efficient. The balance between fulfilling promises and making sound economic decisions is tough. Suggestions include setting spending limits and revisiting expenditure allocations.

#### What challenges do democracies face in deciding where to spend public money?

**Public’s Voice:** While people vote political parties into office, there’s no referendum on specific expenditure allocations, causing potential disconnect.

**Economic vs. Social Impact:** The ideal is to maximize the economic multiplier effect, but much is spent on “non-development expenditure” that can still empower people.

**Public Preferences:** For instance, a regular train from Mumbai to Nashik costs Rs 380, but the Vande Bharat charges Rs 720. The majority prefers more affordable options.

**Land and Employment Concerns:** Projects might require land acquisition, affecting landowners and landless laborers alike, leading to contentious compensation issues.

**Popularity of “Freebies”:** Schemes like the Amma meal in Tamil Nadu and free electricity in Delhi cater to the majority at the lower end of the income distribution, sidelining the views of the richer class.

#### What should be done?

**Public Participation:** Engage citizens in decisions about expenditure allocations, even if indirectly, to ensure their needs are met.

**Evaluate Economic Value:** While capital expenditure often has a broader economic benefit, the impact of non-development expenditure, which can empower recipients, should also be considered.

**Affordable Services:** Recognize the needs of the common man, such as the preference for regular trains like Panchvati Express over pricier options like Vande Bharat.

**Address Land Acquisition Issues:** Ensure that compensation for land acquisition is fair and that landless laborers are not left unemployed.

**Examine “Freebies” Critically:** While schemes like the Amma meal in Tamil Nadu are popular, their overall economic and social impact should be reviewed.

**Set Guidelines on Expenditure:** The Finance Commission could consider drawing up norms for expenditure allocations to ensure balanced spending

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

### 23. Tax uncertainty- SC ruling will increase uncertainty in telecom

**Source:** The post is based on the article “Tax uncertainty- SC ruling will increase uncertainty in telecom” published in “Business standard” on 20th October 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Economy- infrastructure (telecommunication)

**News:** The Supreme Court ruled that telecom companies’ licence fees after July 1999 are capital expenses, not revenue expenses.

#### What is the recent Supreme Court decision on telecoms license fees?

The Supreme Court ruled that licence fees paid by telecom companies after July 1999 should be treated as capital expenditure (capex) and not revenue expenditure.

This verdict goes against previous decisions made by the Delhi High Court, Bombay High Court, and Karnataka High Court, which had sided with the telecom companies.

#### What are the implications of this decision?

**Higher Taxes for Telecoms:** Treating licence fees as capital expenditure means telecom companies might face increased taxes in the initial years of the license.

**Past Dues:** Older telecoms, such as Bharti Airtel and Vodafone India, could see significant one-time outgoings if tax authorities demand payments for past years.

**Change in Profit Calculation:** Telecom companies used to set licence fees against revenues to calculate profits. With the new ruling, these fees would be spread over 20 years, affecting profit calculations.

**Increased Uncertainty:** The telecom sector, already facing financial challenges, now grapples with more unpredictability due to policy inconsistencies.

**Potential Legal Challenges:** The new classification of licence fees as capex might lead to further litigation as the sector seeks clarity and stability.

### 24. Citius, Altius, Fortius’: Save it for the economy

**Source:** The post is based on the article “Citius, Altius, Fortius’: Save it for the economy” published in “Live mint” on 20th October 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Economy- mobilisation of resources

**News:** India wants to host the 2036 Olympics. Historically, rich countries hosted these games. Hosting often costs more than the benefits gained. India should focus on economic growth before bidding. The Olympics may not be a wise investment now.

#### What are the implications of hosting the Olympics?

**Financial Costs:** Hosting often results in high expenses. For example, the Tokyo 2020 Olympics cost around \$13 billion.

**Maintenance Issues:** Post-event infrastructures can be expensive to maintain. Sydney’s Olympic Stadium incurs a \$30 million yearly cost.

**Underutilized Venues:** Some facilities remain unused after the event. Beijing’s Bird’s Nest, for instance, stands empty.

**Questionable Returns:** Tangible economic benefits for the host city or country are often minimal. Research from New York University suggests the economic gains don’t surpass the costs.

**Regret Among Past Hosts:** Some previous hosts, like London, have expressed regret, implying that the returns weren’t worth the investment.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

### What should India do?

**Reevaluate Economic Priorities:** The Olympics often costs more than the benefits gained. India should focus on other economic priorities.

**Learn from Past Hosts:** London's Olympics minister regretted their decision to host, implying the benefits weren't worth the costs. India should consider such experiences.

**Evaluate the True Benefits:** Research, like that from New York University, indicates the Olympics might not offer economic benefits higher than its costs. India should weigh this before bidding.

**Address Pressing Needs:** India has competing needs that urgently need attention. These should be prioritized over hosting events.

**Wait for Economic Stability:** Only if India continues to grow at 6-8% and addresses poverty should it consider hosting the Olympics.

**Limit Expectations:** Benefits from hosting are often intangible, like global visibility, rather than clear economic gains.

### 25. Mind The Gap, It's Quickly Narrowing

**Source:** This post has been created based on the article “Mind The Gap, It's Quickly Narrowing” published in **The Times of India** on **21st October 2023**.

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper 3 Indian Economy Times of India— Indian Economy and issues relating to employment.

**News:** This article discusses the trends in of female labour force participation and wage gaps in India in the context of the recent Nobel Prize-winning research by Claudia Goldin.

**A detailed discussion on Claudia Goldin's research have been already covered in the following article:** <https://forumias.com/blog/nobel-prize-in-economics-2023-explained-pointwise/>

There are **two types of gender gaps** according to Claudia Goldin:

**First**, women participate less in market work than men.

**Second**, women earn less than men.

These are considered critical for the economy by the **IMF** because a decline in these gaps contributes to “growth, resilience, financial stability and income equality”.

### What is the paradox observed with respect to female LFPR in India?

With **development and education**, LFPR has gone upwards in most economies.

In India, both economic growth and female educational attainment had increased rapidly between 2004-05 and 2011-12. However, during the same period, Female LFPR in the Indian labour market declined.

The trend in FLFPR has not followed the increasing pattern estimated and forecast by Goldin.

**Application of Goldin's research:** The accompanying table shows that regardless of the definition, **FLFPR estimates for 2022-23 are very close to the 1993-94 estimates**, thus **confirming the Goldin 'U'-shaped curve**.



## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

Usual Status' Labour Force Participation India: 1993-2022. Levels and Gender Gap						
	1993	2004	2011	2017	2019	2022
<b>Women in Labour Force (%)</b>						
Ages 15-64	44.2	44	32.8	24.8	31.8	39.2
Ages 25-64	48.1	48.7	37.5	29.6	37.5	45.6
<b>Men in Labour Force (%)</b>						
Ages 15-64	87.6	86.4	82.3	79.4	80.5	82.5
Ages 25-64	96.5	95.9	95.8	94	94.4	95.3
<b>Gap - Labour Force Participation (%) **</b>						
Ages 15-64	49.5	49.1	60.1	68.8	60.5	52.5
Ages 25-64	50.2	49.2	60.9	68.5	60.3	52.2

**Source:** Times of India

### What is the status of the wage gap in India?

For ages 25-64, the gender wage gap is **30%**. However, this wage gap does not adjust for education.

For all **unmarried college degree workers**, the wage gap is almost non-existent – **only 3%** (lower than the USA).

For all **college educated workers**, the wage gap is just **16%** (again, lower than in the USA).

India has shown consistent improvement over the years in decline in the gender wage gap.

In conclusion, there is a labour force participation gap in India, but its **level has been declining** and is today very close to the level observed during 1993-2004, when India had a **more liberal definition of female work**.

The **gender wage gap is low**, and comparable to the best of the advanced countries, especially for college educated women.

### 26. Climate finance needs private funding too. This is how it can be done

**Source:** This post has been created based on the article “Climate finance needs private funding too. This is how it can be done” published in **The Indian Express** on **21st October 2023**.

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper 3 Environment — Conservation.

**News:** This article discusses the requirement of private-sector funding for climate action and suggests ways to accomplish the same.

To address the overlapping challenges of **poverty reduction, climate change and biodiversity protection**, a monumental increase in global investments is needed.

Only public sector financing will not be sufficient. We also need private-sector funding. In this context, the **Paris Pact for People and Planet** proposes actions aimed at scaling up private capital flows.

### How to ensure an increase in private-sector funding?

**First, optimizing the use of resources** of global climate funds and increasing partnerships.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

**Second, simplicity and consistency in financial rules** to lower risk for investors who fund sustainable projects. This includes maintaining a stable and **transparent** environment and promoting investment opportunities.

**Third, credit-rating agencies** must be included in the reform agenda of multilateral development banks (MDBs).

**Fourth**, aligning the private financial sector with the objectives of the Paris Agreement. For e.g., partnerships such as **Just Energy Transition Partnerships**.

**Finally**, governments should **address debt vulnerabilities** in developing countries. For e.g., in the case of **Sri Lanka**.

### What should be the role of India in countering these challenges?

India has a crucial role to play because of its **economic size**, and its **unique capacity to build bridges** rather than stir up divisions within the international community.

The spirit of India's **Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam** must guide our efforts to make the global financial system more efficient and more just.

### 27. Water bodies are often seen as real estate which must be built on — that causes a cycle of floods and droughts

**Source:** The post is based on the article “Water bodies are often seen as real estate which must be built on — that causes a cycle of floods and droughts” published in “**The Times of India**” on 21st October 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Environment – Impact of global warming

**News:** The article discusses the changing relationship with water due to global warming and urbanization. It contrasts traditional Indian views with colonial perspectives. Modern practices, including medication and industrial waste, pollute water. Poor urban planning in the Global South leads to water issues. Solutions include ecological methods and modern science. The goal is a sustainable water future.

### How is the relationship with water changing?

**Global Warming's Influence:** Global warming is making water sources unpredictable, altering our interactions with this vital resource.

**From Joyous to Crisis-Centered:** Traditionally, water was seen as a nurturing element in India. Now, it's often linked to crises like floods and droughts.

**Colonial Impact:** European colonials in India viewed water more as real estate or a tool. This shifted the perspective from water as life-sustaining to a utilitarian resource. For example, in Mumbai, valuable marshlands were built upon.

**Health Concerns:** Modern medication habits pollute water, leading to antibiotic-resistant bacteria. This has changed water from a source of health to a potential threat.

**Infrastructure Lag:** In the Global South, rapid urban growth outpaces the development of water infrastructure, intensifying pollution.

**Neglect of Ecological Knowledge:** Earlier, drains used plants to purify water. Now, concrete structures prevent natural cleaning, altering the way we handle water waste.

### What are the impacts of this changing relationship?

**Water Quality Decline:** Due to indiscriminate medication usage, water bodies are polluted, causing antibiotic-resistant bacteria to emerge.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

**Ecological Disruption:** Modern urban planning often overlooks ecological methods. Drains no longer use plants that naturally clean water, harming aquatic ecosystems.

**Loss of Wetlands:** In the past, wetlands naturally filtered waste, enhancing farming and fishing. Many, like those in Hooghly, are now at risk or gone.

**Increased Floods and Droughts:** Chennai, for instance, faced floods in 2015 and water shortages in 2019 due to building over river systems and marshes.

**Health Disparities:** During colonial times, Europeans prioritized clean water for themselves, leaving native areas with contaminated sources.

**Unsustainable Urban Growth:** Cities in the Global South grow faster than their infrastructure, leading to widespread pollution, as seen across South America, Africa, and India.

### What should be done?

**Preserve Vital Ecosystems:** Mangroves should be protected, as they play a crucial role in coastal areas.

**Revive Nature-Based Solutions:** Drawing from the colonial history of using wetlands for natural filtration, as seen in the Hooghly, we need to create and adopt modern nature-based solutions.

**Improve Urban Infrastructure:** Given the exponential growth of cities in the Global South, infrastructure, including roads and water systems, needs to be developed and upgraded.

**Promote Waste Management:** Introduce circular systems of waste management and segregate garbage to prevent pollution of marshes.

**Harvest and Reuse:** Encourage rainwater harvesting and the reuse of grey water to manage resources better.

**Restore Traditional Practices:** Drains once utilized certain plants for water purification. Such ecological knowledge should be re-introduced.

**Focus on Upland Afforestation:** Deforestation affects river volumes. Hydrological assessments and tree planting can mitigate this.

### 28. The evolving process of RE

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**The evolving process of RE**” published in **Business standard** on 21st October 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Economy- infrastructure (Energy)

**News:** The article discusses the growing interest in renewable energy due to fossil fuel supply concerns. Solar power is becoming cheaper, making it more popular. However, challenges like technology development and supply constraints exist.

### Why is renewable energy (RE) popular?

**Supply Disruptions:** Concerns about disruptions in fossil fuel supply, like those seen during the Ukraine war and Israel-Hamas conflict, have heightened interest in RE.

**Historical Precedence:** The oil crises of 1973 and 1979 showcased a relationship between high fossil fuel prices and increased renewable investments.

**Cost-effectiveness:** Solar energy is becoming cheaper and, in many places, it's the most affordable energy source. By 2027, it's expected to be the cheapest almost everywhere.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of October [Third Week] 2023

**Major Investments:** Companies and countries are heavily investing in RE. For instance, India added 2.6 Gw of renewable capacity in just six months in 2023. Big names like Wipro, Google, and Amazon are also making the shift.

**Future Predictions:** A study indicates solar could provide 56% of global electricity by 2050, highlighting its growing prominence.

### What challenges do we face?

**New Technology Needs:** The development of cheap green hydrogen and synthetic petrol technologies is essential. Current costs for green hydrogen are between \$3 and \$8/kg, with a target of \$1/kg by 2030.

**Storage Solutions:** Lithium-storage batteries face potential shortages due to limited global reserves. Alternatives to lithium, such as sodium batteries, need to be developed.

**Hydrogen Challenges:** Hydrogen storage and transport remain significant hurdles for its broad use in fuel cells.

**Energy Grid Balancing:** Smart grids, mainly using solar and wind, need advancements to handle intermittent RE sources effectively.

**Resource Scarcity:** Some rare earth elements, crucial for RE technologies, are in short supply.

**R&D Investment:** Significant research is needed for aspects like storage solutions, electrolytes, and efficient recycling of industrial metals.

**Advanced Propulsion:** Electric propulsion systems for aircraft and ships still require significant development.

### How do investors view RE?

**Huge Investments Expected:** The transition to renewables suggests that large amounts of money will be channeled into the sector.

**Potential for Booms and Busts:** Historically, significant transitions like these lead to market booms and busts. Investors recognize this pattern, as it's challenging to value new renewable businesses accurately.

**Opportunities and Risks:** The shift to renewables presents both potential growth areas and risks for investors. With the growing interest in RE, there's potential for high returns.

**Valuation Challenges:** As RE technologies and businesses are still emerging, determining their market value can be complex, leading to financial uncertainties.

**The Next Investment Frontier:** The RE transition is seen as a significant opportunity for financiers, positioning it as a primary focus for future investments.