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7 PM COMPILATION

1st to 15th October, 2023

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- ❖ Comprehensive coverage of a given current topic
- ❖ Provide you all the information you need to frame a good answer
- ❖ Critical analysis, comparative analysis, legal/constitutional provisions, current issues and challenges and best practices around the world
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**Caste Census Significance and Challenges- Explained Pointwise**

Caste census is again back in focus in the political landscape of the country as the Bihar government released the results of its recently concluded **Caste Survey** in the state. Caste survey of Bihar was an attempt at enumerating the strength and socio-economic conditions of different caste groups of the state. The Caste survey of Bihar is an attempt to pressurise the central government for conducting a **socio-economic caste census for 2021** which has been delayed due to corona.

Major results of Caste Survey of Bihar	
The Caste Survey result reveals that Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and Extremely Backward Classes (EBCs) constitute more than 63% of the population of Bihar.	
EBCs	4,70,80,514 Individuals **(36.01% of Bihar population)**
OBCs	3,54,63,936 Individuals **(27.12% of Bihar Population)**
SCs	2,56,89,820 Individuals **(19.65% of Bihar Population)**
STs	21,99,361 Individuals **(1.68% of Bihar Population)**
Unreserved	2,02,91,679 individuals **(15.52% of Bihar Population)**

Bihar's population, according to the survey, is **13,07,25,310, compared to the 10.41 crore** recorded in the 2011 census. Hindus comprise 81.99% of the population, and Muslims 17.72%. The populations of Buddhists, Christians, Sikhs, Jains, and other religious denominations are minuscule.
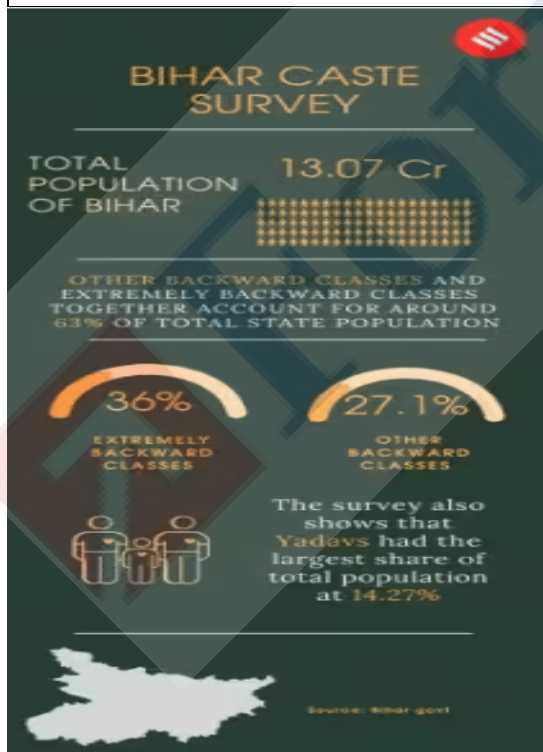
Source-The Indian Express

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What is Caste Census and Caste Survey?

Census- Census is the total process of collecting, compiling, analysing and disseminating demographic, economic and social data of all persons in a country at a specific period of time. Census in India is conducted at regular intervals of 10 years.

Every Census in independent India from **1951 to 2011** has published data on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, but not on other castes. Before that, every Census until 1931 had data on caste. Hence there has been demands for Socio-economic caste census to be conducted for 2021.

Caste Census- Caste census or more precisely Socio Economic caste census was conducted for the first time in Independent India in 2011. However the **findings were never made public**. The last published data for all castes was done in the 1931 census.

Caste Survey- Since only the Union govt has the power to conduct census, several state governments like **Bihar and Odisha have been conducting socio economic caste surveys** to ascertain the social and economic status of different castes for better policy making. The latest released Bihar caste survey is latest example of it.

Difference between Census, Caste Census(Socio Economic Caste Census) and Caste Survey

Parameters	Census	Caste Census(SECC)	Caste Survey
Legal Backing	Census is backed by the **census Act 1948**	Caste Census is **not backed by any particular specific statute.** Central govt by notification may provide for collection of Caste data	**No Statutory backing.** Caste surveys are used by the state governments since they do not powers to conduct census
Caste Data	Socio economic data of only **SCs and STs** were collected and released	Socio Economic data of OBCs were collected for the **first time in 2011 census** after independence.However the data was not released.	State Governments conducts **caste surveys** to ascertain the socio economic data of castes.
Confidentiality	All census data are kept confidential	All the personal information given in the SECC is open for use by Government departments to grant and/or restrict benefits to households.	State governments use the Caste survey data for informed policy making of state policies.

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What are the advantages of Caste Census?

Beneficial in Policy Making- Caste census will generate exhaustive data which will allow policymakers to develop **better policies and implementation strategies** for upliftment of

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marginalised classes. Caste census will lay the foundation for data-driven affirmative policy formulation in a society ridden with exclusion, discrimination and marginalization based on group identities.

Rationalisation of reservation- The current policies are based on the last caste census which was conducted in 1931. New caste census can help the government in **identifying the most benefited section and reduce their share** in the overall reservation to provide an opportunity to other castes.

Better targeting of Government welfare schemes- The government welfare schemes can be **better targeted towards the most marginalised sections** of the community with the help of data gathered from the socio economic caste census. **For example-** Under the National Food Security Act, 83.92% of the population of Bihar is entitled to subsidized food grain. The Bihar survey reported that the population of the state has increased from 103.8 million in 2011 to 130.7 million in 2023. Thus by current population estimates,109.7 million persons are eligible for the subsidy. However the current beneficiary count is just 87.1 million. That is, in Bihar alone, 22.6 million persons have been excluded from this benefit at a time when food inflation is high.

Caste has an Important Position in Indian Society- While census data has been captured for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, religions and linguistic profiles, there has been **no profiling of all castes in India since 1931.** Caste has an important position in the Indian society and the data on caste can be helpful in ascertaining the socio-economic positions of different castes in India.

Addressing the prevalent Inequalities- Unequal distribution of wealth, resources and education has meant an acute shortage of purchasing power among the majority of Indians. The census will help to address these issues in a democratic, scientific and objective manner. This will lead to **social justice** in the country.

Fulfilment of Constitutional Mandate- Our Constitution favours conducting a caste census. **Article 340** mandates the appointment of a commission to investigate the conditions of socially and educationally backward classes and make recommendations as to the steps that should be taken by governments.

Helpful in fulfilling the objectives of various commissions- Sachar committee which was formed to examine the socio-economic and educational status of the Muslim community in India, mentioned that the availability of data on religion was useful in highlighting the relative deprivation of minorities. So, similar data on caste is also desirable to identify vulnerable sections within castes. This data will be useful for **Justice Rohini Commission** which has been formed for the sub-categorisation of OBCs.

Addressing Intersectionality- Caste intersects with other factors such as gender, religion, and region, leading to **compounded disadvantages.** The census can reveal these intersections which will lead to more nuanced policy approaches that target multiple dimensions of marginalisation.

Break the myths associated with castes- The caste census will reveal the actual data on castes and remove ambiguities associated with the caste. For instance, In Karnataka, there were claims that among the castes, the **Lingayats** are the most numerous. So the census can reveal the true information on that.

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What are the disadvantages of Caste Census?

Caste based political mobilisation- The data can be used by the political parties for their narrow political gains. This will encourage **caste based mobilisations** in the country. As India seek to eliminate and weaken the notion of caste, a caste census would only strengthen it. There will be from every caste group for share in the power at the cost of administrative efficiency.

Hardening of caste identities may hamper growth of national integration- There have been concerns that counting caste may help **solidify or harden identities.** Due to these repercussions, nearly a decade after the SECC, a sizable amount of its data remains unreleased or released only in parts.

Strengthen demands for further reservations- Caste census may increase demand for larger or separate quotas. For instance, **Patels, Gujjars, Jats and other castes are demanding reservations**. The caste census might induce more such demands in future. The census would put pressure on the SC to lift the 50% ceiling.

Collection of caste data is not an easy task- Enumerating the caste numbers in India is a complex task as the **same caste is spelt in different ways in different states.** Also one caste maybe extremely backward in one state and can be backward in the other state.

Potential Stigmatization- Disclosure of caste identities could lead to individuals being **stigmatized or discriminated** against based on preconceived notions associated with certain castes. This can deter honest responses and undermine the survey's accuracy.

What should be the way forward ?

Need for sub categorisation of Backward classes- Instead of going behind the caste based census, the government can **subclassify the Backward Classes** like in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal etc. This will provide the benefit to intended beneficiaries.Since the government has already appointed Justice G Rohini Panel on Sub-categorisation of OBCs. The Panel has to fast pace the sub-classification process.

Use technologies to assess the caste date on SECC- The government can use technologies like **Artificial Intelligence and machine learning** to assess the SECC data and condense them into meaningful categories.

A Preliminary Census- Independent of census, a preliminary **socio-anthropological study can be done at the State and district levels** to establish all sects and sub-castes present in the population.

A caste census may not sit well with the goal of a casteless society, but it may serve as a means of addressing inequities in society. However the census must aim at gradual elimination of castes by uplifiting the socio-economically marginalised sections of the society.

Read More- **The Indian Express**

Nobel Prize for Medicine 2023-Explained Poitwise

The Nobel Prize for Medicine 2023 has been awarded to Katalin Karikó and Drew Weissman for developing the mRNA vaccine technology. This technology became the foundation for history's fastest vaccine development programme during the COVID-19 pandemic.


Source- Nobel Prize

What is the History of vaccine development?	
Early Stage Vaccines(Whole Virus Vaccines)	Whole Virus Vaccines based were based on killed or weakened viruses. Ex- Polio, measles and yellow are some examples of Whole Virus Vaccines.
Later Stage Vaccines(Protein Vaccines and Vector Based Vaccines)	Protein vaccines were based on individual viral components rather than whole viruses. Examples- hepatitis B virus and human papillomavirus. Vector Based Vaccines use a harmless carrier virus called "vector" to carry the viral genetic code. This method is used in vaccines against the Ebola virus.
Producing whole virus, protein and vector-based vaccines required large scale cell culture. This resource intensive process limited the possibilities for rapid vaccine production in response to outbreaks and pandemics.	
Modern Vaccines(mRNA Vaccines)	m-RNA technology has been used to produce modern vaccines in the fight against COVID-19. Nobel Prize has been awarded for making possible to use m-RNA technology to produce vaccines.

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What is the discovery for which they have been awarded Nobel Prize for Medicine 2023?

Discovery- Their discovery is concerned about the nucleoside base modifications that enabled the development of effective mRNA vaccines against COVID-19.

What is mRNA- Messenger RNA (mRNA) is a type of single stranded RNA molecule that carries the genetic information from DNA to the ribosome. This information from mRNA is used to make proteins. mRNA serves as the intermediate between the genetic information stored in DNA and the functional proteins produced in cells. The mRNA molecule is synthesized from a DNA template in a process called transcription.
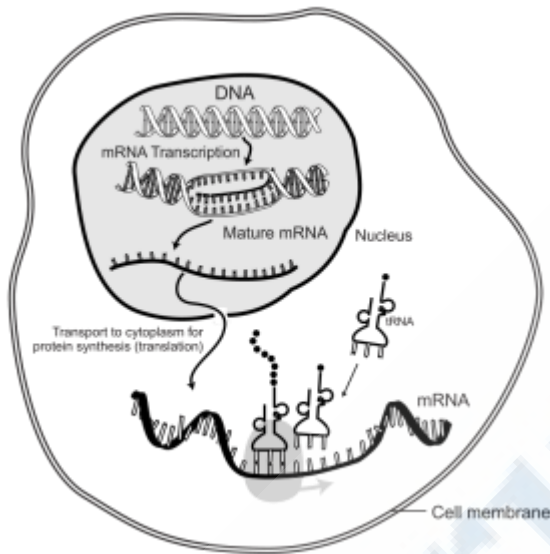
Source- Wikipedia

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Evolution of mRNA technology

In 1980s mRNA was produced in the lab for the first time. This method was called invitro transcription. It was hoped that using these invitro transcipted mRNAs could be used to produce vaccines and for other therapeutic purposes.

However there were challenges associated with these invitro transcribed mRNA-

1. The biggest challenge was that these In vitro transcribed mRNA gave rise to inflammatory reactions.
2. These In vitro transcribed mRNA were also considered unstable. Also it was challenging to deliver which required the development of sophisticated carrier lipid systems to encapsulate the mRNA.

These challenges reduced the enthusiasm for developing the mRNA technology for clinical purposes and vaccines.

However, these challenges with invitro transcribed mRNAs were solved by the Nobel Prize winners of this year.

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They noticed that cells recognize in vitro transcribed mRNA as a foreign substance which leads to their activation and the release of inflammatory signalling molecules. They observed that in vitro transcribed mRNA was recognised as foreign substance but mRNA from mammalian cells did not give rise to any inflammation. Karikó and Weissman realised that some critical properties distinguish between these two different types of mRNA.

Karikó and Weissman came to the conclusion that bases in RNA from mammalian cells are frequently chemically modified while in vitro transcribed mRNA they are not modified.

> RNA contains four bases, abbreviated A, U, G, and C, corresponding to A, T, G, and C in DNA, the letters of the genetic code.

Thus they started producing different variants of mRNA by making alterations in their bases. These modified mRNAs were delivered to the dendritic cells.

The results were striking as the inflammatory response was almost abolished when base modifications were included in the mRNA.

Their research represented through image-
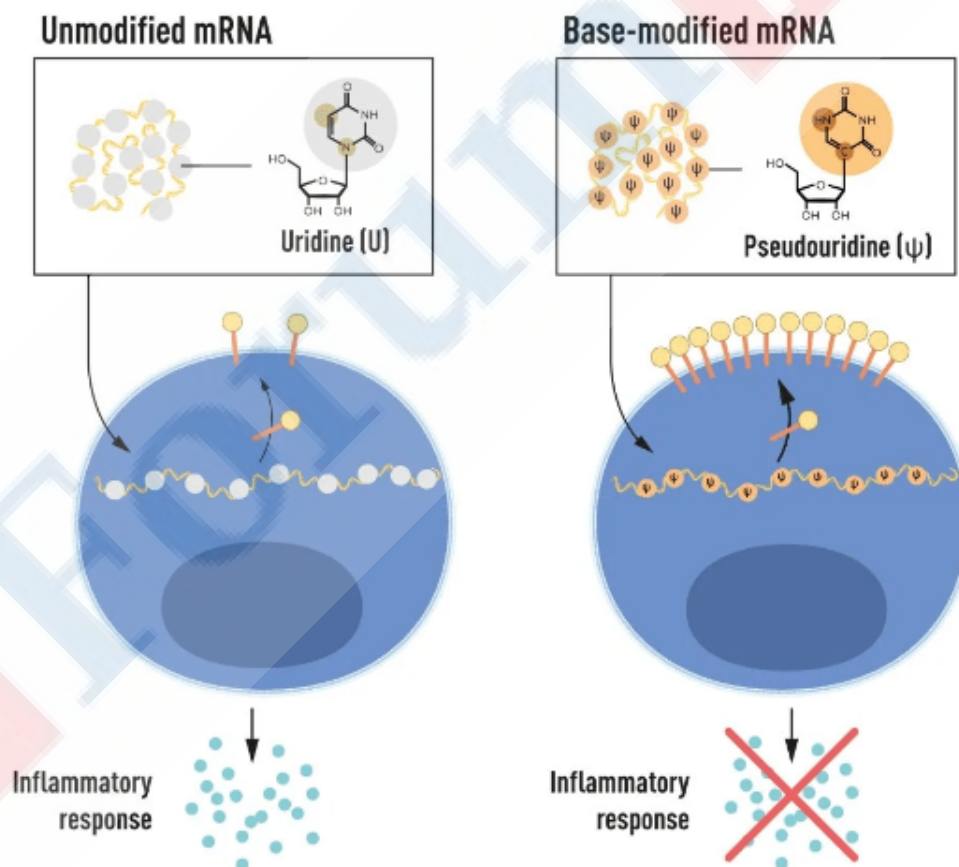
Figure 2. mRNA contains four different bases, abbreviated A, U, G, and C. The Nobel Laureates discovered that base-modified mRNA can be used to block activation of inflammatory reactions (secretion of signaling molecules) and increase protein production when mRNA is delivered to cells.

© The Nobel Committee for Physiology or Medicine. III. Mattias Karlén

Source- Nobel Prize

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What is the significance of this discovery for which Nobel Prize for Medicine 2023 has been awarded?

Development of COVID-19 Vaccine- The fundamental discoveries of the importance of base modifications in mRNA paved the way for record production of COVID-19 Vaccines in record time. More than 13 billion COVID-19 vaccine doses have been given globally. The vaccines have saved millions of lives and allowed societies to open and return to normal conditions.

Can be explored to treat Cancer and other diseases- The impressive flexibility and speed with which mRNA vaccines can be developed using the technology pave the way for using the new platform also for vaccines against other infectious diseases. In the future, the technology may also be used to deliver therapeutic proteins ,treat some cancer types and for diseases like Malaria, HIV and Zika.
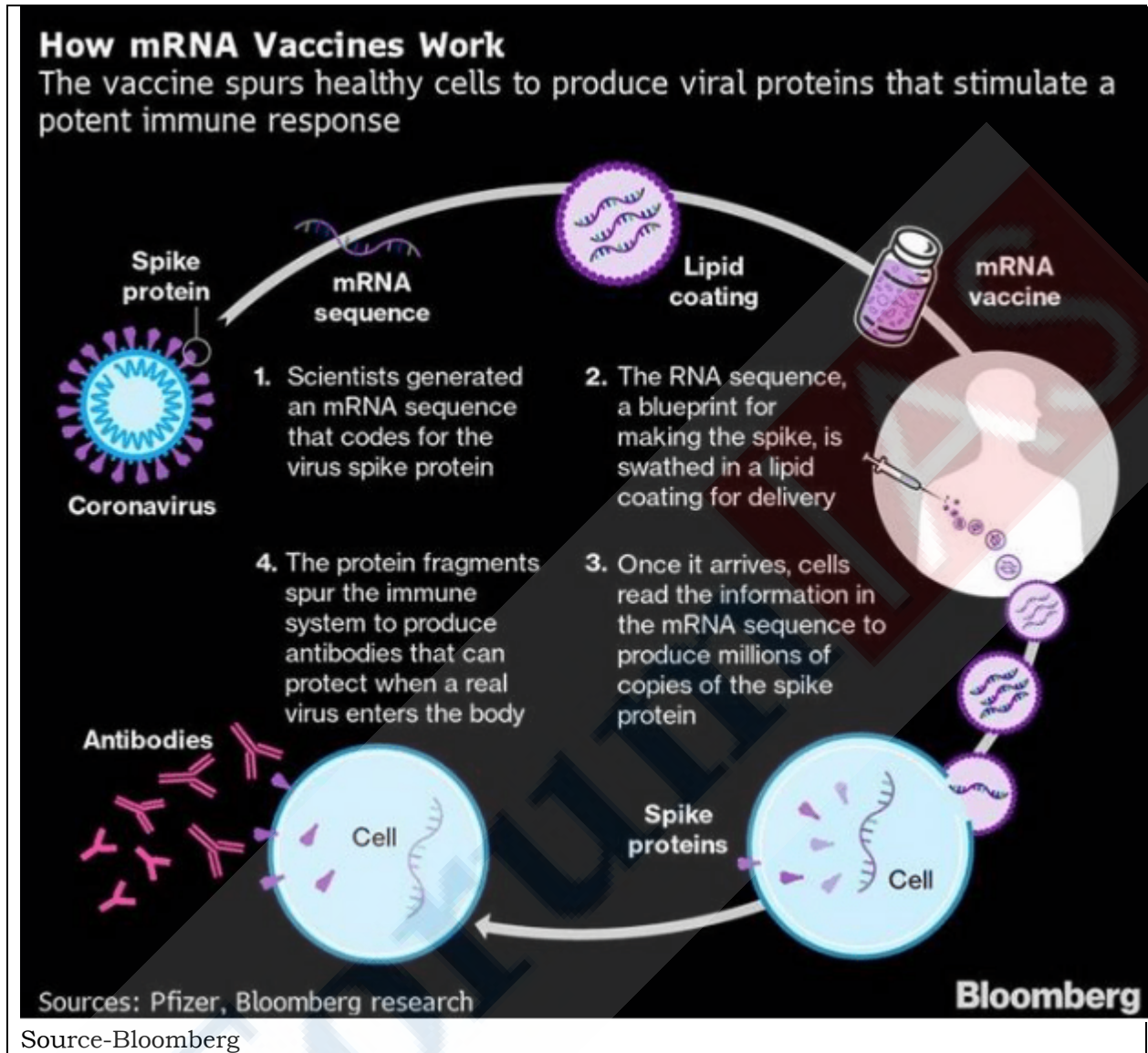
What Should be the way Forward?

Making the benefit of the discovery of m-RNA vaccines available to every segment of the society and country equally through platforms like COVERBAX and COVAX. The technology should not be monopolised by the big pharma giants. Rather it should be used for benefit of "all mankind".

India also needs to spend in research and development of new medical science technologies. India needs to shift its role from "Vaccine manufacturer" to "Vaccine Developer".

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

Related Information- mRNA Vaccines

mRNA vaccines work by introducing a piece of mRNA that corresponds to a viral protein usually a small piece of a protein found on the virus's outer membrane. By using this mRNA, cells can produce the viral protein. As part of a normal immune response, the immune system recognizes that the protein is foreign and produces specialised proteins called antibodies. Once produced, antibodies remain in the body, even after the body has rid itself of the pathogen, so that the immune system can quickly respond if exposed again. Antibodies help protect the body against infection by recognizing individual viruses or other pathogens, attaching to them, and marking the pathogens for destruction. If a person is exposed to a virus after receiving mRNA vaccination for it, antibodies can quickly recognize it, attach to it, and mark it for destruction before it can cause serious illness. Individuals who get an mRNA vaccine are not exposed to the virus, nor can they become infected with the virus by the vaccine.

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Source-Bloomberg

Old Pension Scheme(OPS) vs National Pension System(NPS)- Explained Pointwise

In recent times the issue of Old Pension Scheme(OPS) vs National Pension System(NPS)(commonly known as new pension scheme) has been a hotly debated topic in the economic and political circles of the country. The demand for returning back to the old pension scheme (OPS) is gaining traction. Several states such as Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh have already announced a shift back to the OPS.

Due to the growing clamour for returning back to the Old Pension Scheme, the Union government has formed a committee headed by Finance Secretary TV Somanathan to look into the issue of Old Pension Scheme vs National Pension System debate. The committee will consider if any changes are needed to the National Pension System (NPS) framework to improve pensionary benefits while ensuring fiscal prudence.

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What is Old Pension Scheme(OPS) and National Pension Scheme(NPS)?

Old Pension Scheme (OPS)- The Old Pension Scheme(OPS) is applicable to all government employees appointed before January 1, 2004. The scheme is a "defined benefit scheme" as the government employees were paid 50% of their last drawn salary plus Dearness Allowance (DA) as pension after their retirement. Under this scheme, the entire pension amount was borne by the government while fixed returns were guaranteed for employee contribution to the General Provident Fund (GPF).

National Pension System (NPS)- The National Pension System (NPS) was introduced on January 1 2004. It was made mandatory for central government employees as well as staff of those state governments which adopted this scheme. However it remains voluntary for the workforce in the unorganized sector. The scheme is a "defined contribution scheme" as the government employees have to make defined contribution of 10% of basic pay and dearness allowance (DA). There is matching contribution by the government. There is no defined benefit. The pension benefit is determined by factors such as the amount of contribution made, the age of joining, the type of investment and the income drawn from that investment.

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Old vs New

A look at the difference between the old and the new pension schemes

Old Pension Scheme	National Pension Scheme
■ The scheme guarantees a **life-long income, post-retirement**	■ **It** is a participatory scheme, where employees contribute **to their pension corpus from their salaries,** with matching contribution from the government
■ **Government bears the expenditure** incurred on the pension	■ The funds are invested in earmarked investment schemes through Pension Fund Managers
■ Under the scheme, a monthly payment is assured, where the **amount is equivalent to 50% of the last drawn salary**	■ On retirement, **60% of the corpus, which is tax-free,** is withdrawn while the remaining 40% is invested in annuities, which is taxed

Source- The Hindu

Read More- **OPS and NPS Forum IAS**

What is the status of NPS, the reasons for its introduction and the issues with the NPS?

Status of NPS today

With the introduction of NPS on January 1, 2004, all central government employees joining after this date were compulsorily enrolled in the National Pension Scheme(NPS). It was voluntary for the state governments to join the NPS. Almost all the states except for West Bengal and Tamil Nadu migrated to the NPS since adoption. However Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh have already announced a shift back to the OPS.

Reasons for the introduction of National Pension System (NPS)

Limited Coverage of the Old Pension Scheme(OPS)- The Old Pension Scheme(OPS) covered only the government employees which formed ~12% of the total workforce of the country.

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National Pension Scheme aim was to provide pension coverage to even the workers of the unorganised sector. Workers of the unorganised sector can also join the NPS voluntarily.

Huge Fiscal burden on the Central and State Governments due to OPS- With every new pay commission awards, the basic salaries of the Government servants were increasing. This was increasing the burden on the Union and state exchequers in making pension payments under OPS scheme. According to the India Pension Research Foundation, the expenditure on Union civil service pensions was around be 2.31% of the GDP in 2004-05 and the implicit pension debt of the Government of India was around 56% of the GDP.

Burden on the future Generation due to OPS- Under the OPS Scheme contributions of the current generation of workers were explicitly used to pay the pensions of pensioners. Hence OPS scheme involved direct transfer of resources from the current generation of tax payers to fund the pensioners.

Disincentivised Early Retirement- The OPS scheme used to disincentivise early retirement as the pension was fixed at 50% of the last drawn salary. Hence even the disinterested govt employees used to linger around to reach till their retirement age to avail maximum pension. This resulted in massive under utilisation of human resources.

Flexibililty- NPS allows the subscriber to choose the fund manager and the preferred investment option including a 100% government bond option. A guaranteed return option could also be considered to provide an assured annuity.

Simplicity and portability- Opening of account with NPS provides a Permanent Retirement Account Number (PRAN) which remains valid through out the lifetime of the subscriber. The NPS is also portable across jobs as PRAN account remains the same.

Well Regulated Scheme- An NPS Trust has also been constituted to regularly oversee performance of fund managers with a trustee bank to efficiently manage fund flows. A custodian has also been appointed to hold the securities with subscribers being beneficial owners of the assets.

Issues with National Pension System(NPS)

Market Volatility/Uncertainty- Contributions under the NPS scheme is invested in the markets through the fund managers. There is an apprehension that the new NPS will not deliver the same benefits as the old scheme. The returns will be impacted by the market volatility and uncertainity. As per SBI report, NPS asset growth has been affected by the Ukraine-Russia conflict and may fall short of the declared target of Rs 7.5 lakh crore by March 2022.

Increased burden on Employees- Under the old pension scheme all the burden of pension was borne by the government. There was no requirement of monthly contribution from employees in the pension fund. Hence the employees used to get greater disposable monthly income in their hands along with an assurity of pension. NPS has decreased the disposable monthly income in the employees hands as 10% of their basic pay and DA is deducted every month.

No General Provident Fund (GPF) benefits- Under the Old Pension Scheme (OPS), fixed returns were guaranteed for employee contribution to the General Provident Fund (GPF). However NPS has no General Provident Fund (GPF) provisions.

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Why were states shifting back to the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) and what are the concerns?

Some states are shifting back to the Old Pension Scheme due to the following reasons.

Reasons for Shifting to OPS

Political Gains- OPS scheme has been politicised for gaining vote bank by the political parties. Government employees are a very vocal and an important pressure group and Vote Bank.

Deferment of matching Govt contribution- The Government when they switch to OPS defer the payment of matching 10% contribution towards NPS by a few years. This however is a very short respite for the government as they have to end up paying much more after few years when the employees under NPS start retiring.

Concerns raised against the re implementation of OPS

RBI, NITI aayog and Finance Commissions have highlighted the grave concerns that re-implementation of OPS poses. These are as follows

Lack of proper funding mechanism for OPS- There is no separate corpus for funding the pension liability. Also there were no clear mechanisms through which money could be raised and given to the pensioner.

Unsustainable- OPS is unsustainable because the liability of pension will keep on increasing every year due to the increase in dearness allowances (DA) and increase in life expectancy rates.

Increase in the burden of states- According to RBI report "State Finances- A study of budgets 2022-23", the central bank has highlighted that OPS poses to the entire fiscal structure of the state governments. State governments are spending 1/4th of their revenues only on pensions. It will further increase the debts of the states.

Will further burden the taxpayers- The current generation of taxpayers is already facing the burden of paying for the pensions of OPS employees and the government contributions newer employees under NPS. Returning back to OPS will further increase the burden on the taxpayers.

What Should be the way ahead?

Various economists have suggested several way out which are being scrutinised by the TV Somanathan committee. Some of the ways ahead can be as follows-

Designing an "Assured pension Scheme"- Some states have suggested designing an "assured pension scheme" by linking it to minimum level of pay and not the last drawn salary as provided under OPS.

Combining the OPS and NPS scheme- New pension framework can be designed by taking "defined contribution" by employees element of NPS and "defined benefits" of the OPS.

Role of future pay commissions- The future pay commissions should move towards the concept of "cost to company" (C-to-C) and include the cost of assured pension while determining pay revisions.

Restructuring the civil services- The government should also revisit the structure of the civil services to ensure that the organizations don't become 'top heavy' as it would increase the pension burden liabilities.

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Implementing the CAG recommendations on NPS reform- The following CAG recommendations on the NPS reforms must be implemented in the meantime.

(a)A foolproof system needs to be put in place to ensure all nodal offices and eligible employees are registered under NPS

(b) Delays need to be penalized and compensation affected to avoid loss to the subscriber

(c) Government to ensure that rules on the service matters are in place for the government NPS subscribers.
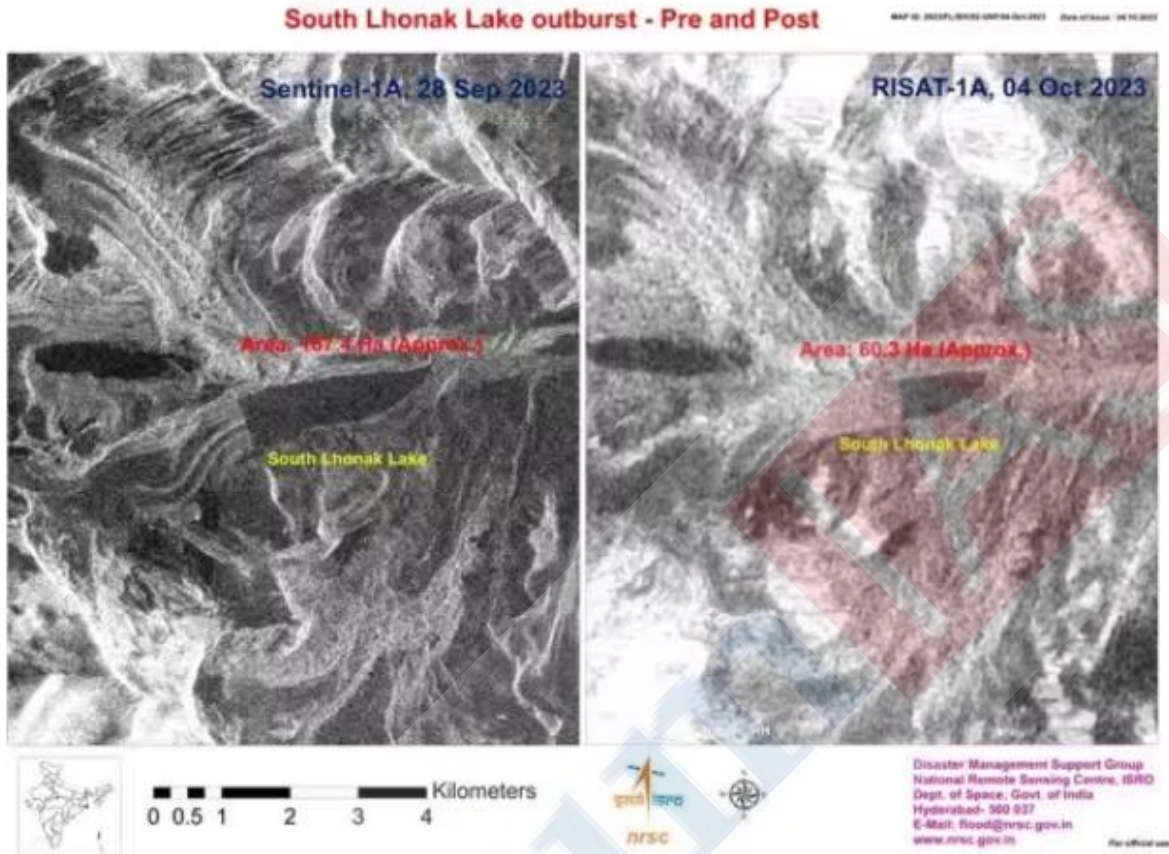
The experience so far has been that NPS has given good returns and many experts believe that the annuity is likely to be as attractive as in the old pension scheme, if not better. However, another set of experts criticize NPS due to its uncertainty. There is no doubt that old pension system will prove to be fiscally unsustainable. Thus current scenario warrants reforming NPS and providing a greater degree of assurance to the subscribers.

Read More- **Indian Express**

Glacial Lake Outburst Flood(GLOF)- Explained Pointwise

Recently, Glacial lake Outburst flood(GLOF) has caused heavy destruction in Sikkim. South Lhonak Lake- which is a glacial lake situated in north western Sikkim at 17,000 ft- burst due to incessant rains. This led to release of large volume of water in downstream areas. It caused a rise in the water levels of Teesta river that flooded the four districts of Mangan, Gangtok, Pakyong and Namchi of Sikkim. Atleast Fourteen people have been killed and 102 people (including at least 23 Army personnel) are missing due to this disaster.

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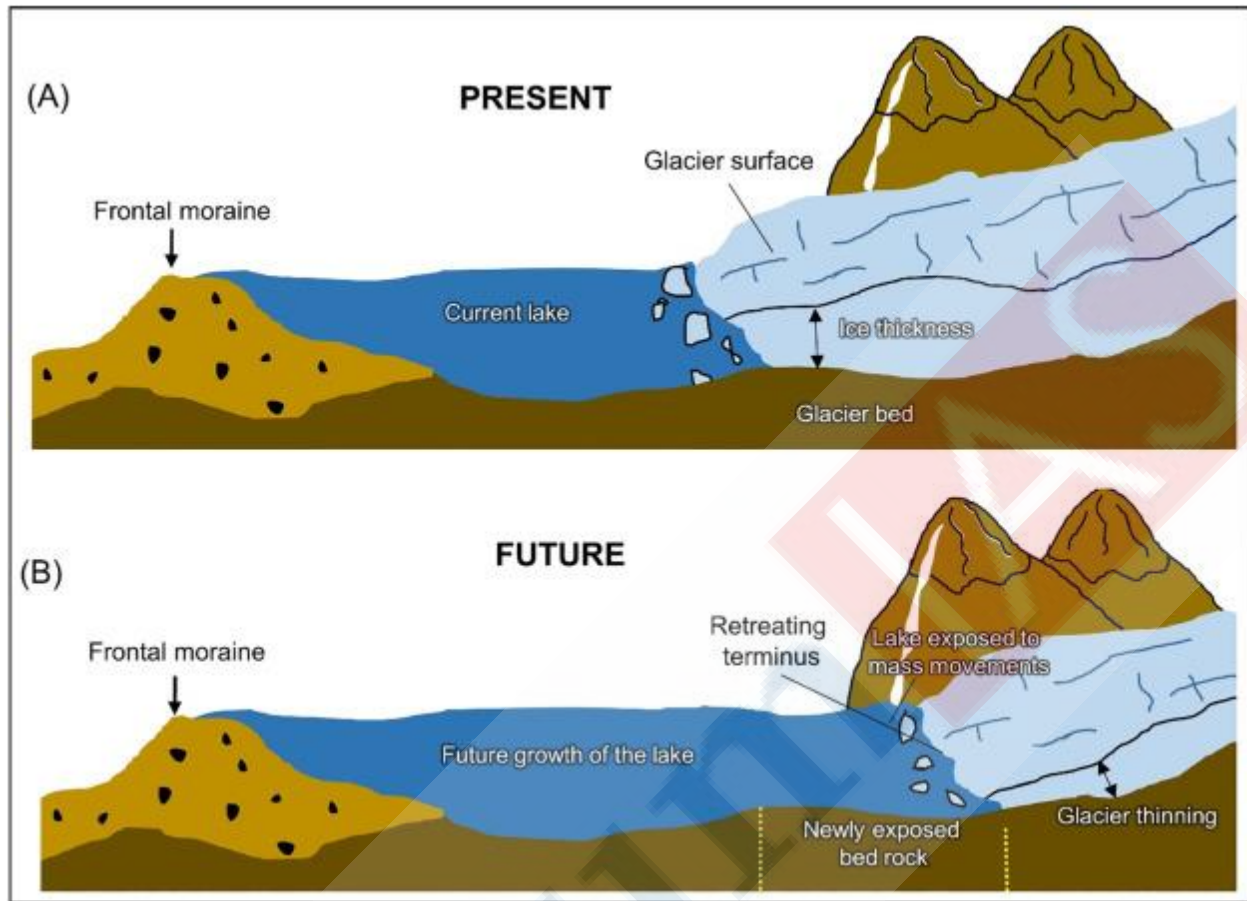
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ISRO said that about 105 hectares have been drained out from the lake and gave a comparison of a September 28 image and an October 4 image. This might have created a flash flood downstream, it added. (Image via ISRO website)

Source- The Indian Express

What is Glacial Lake Outburst Flood(GLOF)?

Glacial Lakes- Glacial lakes, like the South Lhonak Lake, are large bodies of water that sit in front or on top or beneath a melting glacier. These glacial lakes are mostly dammed by unstable ice or sediment composed of loose rock and debris.

Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF)- As the glacial lakes grow larger, they become more dangerous because they are dammed by unstable ice or sediments composed of loose rock and debris. When the boundary around these glacial lakes breaks, huge amounts of water rush down the side of the mountains, which causes flooding in the downstream areas. This is called glacial lake outburst floods or GLOF.

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Source- Science Direct

Some Examples of GLOF in India- 1.Uttarakhand Kedarnath Flash Flood 2013 induced by GLOF in the **Chorabari Tal glacial lake**. 2. GLOF in Uttarakhand **Chamoli District in the Nanda Devi Glacier.**

Read More- **GLOF Forum IAS**

What are the reasons for the Glacial Lake Outburst Flood(GLOF)?

The reasons for the Glacial Lake Outburst Flood(GLOF) are mentioned below.

Melting of Glaciers- Rapid melting of glaciers due to rising global temperature is increasing water level in the glacial lake. The increase in the volume of water puts pressure on the boundary of the glacial lake which consists of unstable ice and rubbles. The breaking of these natural boundaries lead to glacial lake outburst floods.

Avalanches and Earthquakes- Landslides or ice avalanches in the area near glacial lakes displace large volumes of water. This large volume of displaced water breaches the natural dams resulting in GLOF.

Extreme Meteorological Conditions- Heavy rainfall, extreme storms and sudden temperature changes can influence the stability of glacial lakes and trigger GLOF.

Climate Change Impact- The Himalayan-Hindukush region is a climate change hotspot region. Accelerated glacier melting leads to the formation of glacial lakes. These have increased the

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GLOFs in the Himalayan region. Climate change has also increased the frequency and intensity of cloudbursts leading to GLOF.

Volcanic Activities- Volcanic activities near the glacial regions of the world can increase the chances of GLOF due to melting of the glaciers.

Susceptibility of Moraine embankments- Moraines and piles of debris carried by glaciers act as natural barriers of the glacial lakes. However these moraines which act as dams of the glacial lakes are susceptible to breaching leading to GLOF.

Anthropogenic Reasons- Modern infrastructure like dams and roads in the mountaneous regions intensify geological stresses which have led to GLOF like the Chamoli GLOF 2021 due to multiple hydro power projects.

Reasons for the Vulnerabilities of the Himalayan Region to GLOF

The Himalayan states of India like **Uttarakhand, Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh** are vulnerable to GLOF.

1. Out of the **8800 glaciers** present in the Himalayan region, **200 glaciers** have been classified as dangerous, which can trigger the Glacial outburst.

2. According to the **Hindu Kush Himalayan Assessment report,** one-third of the region's glaciers would melt leading to increased GLOF.

3. The Indian plate is continuously moving towards north about 2 cm every year. So the Himalayas is rising about 5 mm a year. **This makes the Himalayan region geologically active and structurally unstable.** Landslides and earthquake are regular features here triggering glacial outburst floods.

4. The large human settlements and human activities have resulted in large scale deforestation. This intensifies the GLOF, as there is **no natural barrier** to control the flood.

What are the Impacts of Glacial lake of Outburst Flood(GLOF)?

GLOF have large negative impacts which breaks the back of economy and the country.

Loss of life- GLOF are deadly events which cause loss of life for those living in the affected area. People are caught off guard and there is not enough time to evacuate or prepare for the flood.

Infrastructural damage- The high volume and force of water released during a GLOF causes significant damage to infrastructure such as roads, bridges, buildings, and power plants. This leads to severe economic losses and long term disruption of essential services.

Agricultural damage- GLOF damage agricultural land, crops and livestock leading to food shortages and loss of income for farmers. These also have long-term effects on the local economy and pose challenges to food security.

Environmental damage- GLOF causes heavy destruction of biodiversity in the areas of its occurrence with heavy destruction of flora and fauna.

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What should be the Way Forward?

Natural Disasters are difficult to stop. But mitigating the impacts of theses disasters is in our hands. Thus NDMA has realised its guidelines for prevention from the negative impacts of Glacial Lake Outburst Flood which must be followed in letter and spirit.

Identification of Potentially Dangerous Lakes- Potentially dangerous lakes must be identified based on field observations, records of past events, geomorphologic and geotechnical characteristics of the lake/dam and surroundings. This will help us in preparing our development plan near these potentially dangerous lakes.

Increased Use of Technology- Promotion of use of Synthetic-Aperture Radar imagery (a form of radar that is used to create two-dimensional images) to automatically detect changes in water bodies, including new lake formations, during the monsoon months.

Channel out Potential Floods- Reducing the volume of water in the glacial lakes with methods such as controlled breaching, pumping or siphoning out water and making a tunnel through the moraine barrier or under an ice dam.

Enhancement of Early Warning Systems (EWS)- The number of deployed Early Warning Systems must be increased in the Himalayan region for effective mitigation of damage from the GLOF.

Comprehensive Alarm Systems- Modern communication technology using smartphones must complement the traditional alarming infrastructure of acoustic alarms. This will help in early evacuation in case of danger.

Development of Uniform Codes for Construction Activity- We must developing a broad framework for infrastructure development, construction and excavation in vulnerable zones. We must develop procedures for land use planning in the GLOF prone areas.

Training of Local Manpower- Apart from the specialised forces such as National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), ITBP and the Army, NDMA has emphasised on the need for training local manpower. It has been observed that over 80% of search and rescue is carried out by the local community before the intervention of the state machinery and specialised search and rescue teams.

Read More- **Indian Express**

Left Wing Extremism (LWE) in India and its challenges – Explained pointwise

Introduction

Recently, a review meeting on Left Wing Extremism was chaired by the Union Home Minister New Delhi. The Chief Ministers, Deputy Chief Ministers and other concerned officials of Left Wing Extremism affected states were part of this meeting. Union Home Minister highlighted the achievements of government in countering Left Wing Extremism. Government has set the goal of completely uprooting Left Wing Extremism in the next 2 years.

Key Highlights of the High level Meeting on Left Wing Extremism

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There has been a decline of more than 52 per cent in Left Wing Extremism related violence between 2014 and 2023 compared to the period from 2005 to 2014.

There has been a decline of 69 per cent in deaths, 72 per cent in security forces deaths and 68 per cent in civilian deaths between 2014 and 2023 compared to the period from 2005 to 2014.

195 new camps of CAPFs have been established with another 44 more new camps to be established in the coming years.

In the last 9 years, Modi government has increased the Security Related Expenditure (SRE) by more than double in comparison to the earlier period.

What is Left Wing Extremism?

Left Wing Extremism- Left-wing Extremism (LWE) is an armed movement rooted in political ideologies that seek to bring about socio-political and economic changes through violent means. It is also known as Naxalism or Maoism. It is a significant security threat in India particularly in regions like Chhattisgarh,Jharkhand. The recent attack in Dantewada, which claimed the lives of ten police personnel and a civilian driver, highlights the ongoing challenges that India faces in countering LWE and underscores the need for comprehensive strategies to address LWE in India.

Read here: Left Wing Extremism in India – Explained, Pointwise

About the prevalence of Left-wing extremism (LWE) in India
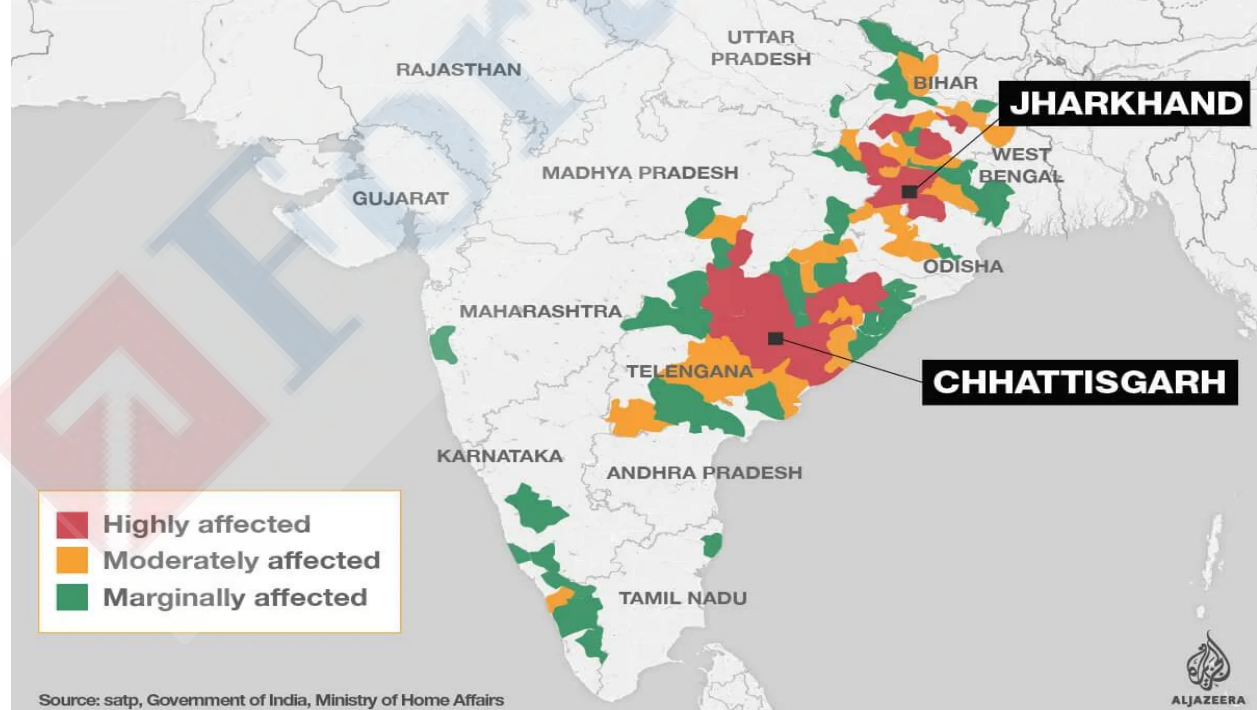
Source: Aljazeera

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The prevalence of LWE in India, often referred to as the "Red Corridor," remains a significant security challenge. This region stretches across several states, including Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Odisha, West Bengal, and parts of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Maharashtra.

> **Read here: Why have Maoists killed again — and why do they repeatedly attack in Chhattisgarh?**

What are the reasons that led to the growth of Left-Wing Extremism in India?

The 2006 D Bandopadhyay Committee identified governance gaps and extensive discrimination against tribals in economic, socio-political, and cultural spheres as the primary causes of Naxalism's proliferation. Some of the reasons are enumerated below-

1.Inequitable Socio-economic development- Increasing Socio-economic inequities and unemployment in hinterland region nudge the youth to take up arms. There has been disruption of traditional occupations and lack of alternative work opportunities.

2.Governance failure- Governance deficit in the remote parts of Red Corridor regions led to the growth of Left Wing Extremism.There was development apathy and huge corruption in the red corridor area. For example- There was lack of food security due to corruption in the PDS scheme.

3.Political Marginalisation- The tribal groups were politically marginalised by the self-serving dominant groups. This led to political deprivation among the marginalised groups leading to hopelessness and a sense of powerlessness.

4.Land Alienation and Displacement- There was failure of land reforms especially in land redistribution after independence. The development projects and acquisition of land for industrial purposes have sometimes led to the displacement of local communities without adequate compensation or rehabilitation. This has been a focal point of Naxalite agitation.

5.Discrimination against tribals- There has been poor implementation of laws prohibiting transfer of tribal land to non-tribals in the Fifth Schedule areas. Non-regularisation and hasty rejections of land grants of traditional land rights under FRA, 2006 have also led to the growth of left-wing Extremism.

What are the challenges posed by Left-wing extremism (LWE) in India?

Threat to Internal Security- Left-wing extremism poses significant internal security threats to India, leading to violent clashes and loss of lives among security forces and civilians. For example, Maoist rebels often engage in deadly attacks on security forces in remote areas like Dantewada.

Social and Economic Disruption: LWE in India disrupts social and economic development in affected regions, hindering infrastructure and welfare projects. For instance, the Maoists target roads, schools, and other vital infrastructure to maintain control over their territories.

Forced Recruitment and Child Soldiers: Maoist groups have been known to force vulnerable individuals, including children, to join their ranks, exploiting them for their cause. This practice violates human rights and disrupts the lives of countless innocent people.

Extortion and Illegal Activities: LWE groups often engage in extortion and other illegal activities to fund their operations. For example, they may demand "protection money" from local businesses, leading to economic stagnation in affected areas.

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Political Instability: LWE contributes to political instability in India, as the affected regions struggle with governance issues and weakened trust in democratic institutions. This can undermine the overall stability of the country.

Human Rights Violations: LWE groups have been known to commit human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings, abductions, and torture. These actions not only harm innocent civilians but also tarnish India's international reputation.

Alienation of Tribal Populations: LWE often exploits and alienates tribal populations in their strongholds, creating a cycle of violence and mistrust between the communities and the government. This makes it difficult to address the root causes of extremism and to foster long-term peace and stability.

What are the various government policies to control LWE in India?

The Indian government has employed various approaches to control Left-wing extremism (LWE), focusing on a combination of security, development, and political initiatives. Some of these approaches include:

Security Schemes for LWE

'National Policy and Action Plan to address Left Wing Extremism 2015'- This comprehensive action plan aims to enhance the capabilities of security forces to combat LWE. This action plan ensures that the rights and entitlements of local communities are safeguarded and focuses on socio-economic development in affected regions.

SAMADHAN Doctrine- SAMADHAN Doctrine encompasses the entire strategy of government from short-term policy to long-term policy formulated at different levels. SAMADHAN stands for- S- Smart Leadership, A- Aggressive Strategy, M- Motivation and Training, A- Actionable Intelligence, D- Dashboard Based KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) and KRAs (Key Result Areas), H- Harnessing Technology, A- Action plan for each Theatre,N- No access to Financing.

Security Related Expenditure (SRE) Scheme- Under the Security Related Expenditure (SRE) Scheme, the Central Government reimburses the Security Related Expenditure of 10 LWE affected States. These security related expenditures are related to training and operational needs of security forces, ex-gratia payment to the family of civilians/security forces killed/injured in LWE violence, rehabilitation of surrendered LWE cadres, community policing, village defence committees and publicity materials.

Special Infrastructure Scheme (SIS)- Under this scheme, funds are being provided to States for strengthening the infrastructure related to Security. Under this scheme 250 Fortified Police Stations are being constructed.

Development Schemes for LWE

Road Connectivity Project for LWE affected areas (RCPLWE)-The Government introduced this scheme in 2016 for improving road connectivity in LWE affected States. The roads included under the scheme have been identified by the Ministry of Home Affairs in consultation with the State Governments and the security agencies. 8124 km roads and 306 bridge works have been completed under this scheme.

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LWE Mobile Tower Project- This project has been launched to improve mobile connectivity in the LWE affected areas. The aim is to improve the communication network for better governance delivery.

Aspirational District Programme- The Ministry of Home Affairs has been tasked with the monitoring of Aspirational districts programme in 35 LWE affected districts. Government has implemented various welfare and development schemes to address the root causes of LWE, such as poverty, unemployment, and social inequality in these aspirational districts.

Socio-Political Schemes for LWE

Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act, 1996- Through this act government aims to strengthen local governance in LWE-affected areas by promoting democratic participation and empowering local institutions.

Civic Action Programme (CAP)-This Scheme aims to bridge the gaps between Security Forces and local people through personal interaction and bring the human face of Security Forces before the local population. The CAPFs deployed in LWE affected areas are provided funds for conducting civic activities for the welfare of the local people.

Media Plan- Maoists use false propaganda to lure the youth to join them in their fight against the democratic setup of our country. Government is implementing this Scheme in LWE affected areas to counter the false propaganda of Maoists. Under this scheme activities like Tribal Youth Exchange programmes are organised by NYKS along with radio jingles, documentaries and pamphlet distribution.

Inter-State Coordination- The government is promoting coordination among states affected by LWE to ensure a unified response. Ex- Regular meeting of Union Home minister with the CMs and DyCMs of all LWE states.

Surrender and Rehabilitation Policies- Government has introduced surrender and rehabilitation policies for LWE cadres willing to renounce violence and join mainstream society. These policies offer financial incentives, vocational training, and support for reintegration into society.

> **Read more: Government of India's approach to counter the challenges posed by LWE**

What are issues associated with government measures to control Left-wing extremism (LWE)?

Human Rights Violations: Security operations against LWE have sometimes led to human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests, and harassment of civilians. These actions can alienate local communities and create resentment against the government.

Inadequate Implementation of Development Schemes: Despite numerous welfare and development programs, their implementation in LWE-affected areas is often hampered by corruption, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and a lack of coordination between various agencies. As a result, the intended benefits may not reach the affected communities.

Insufficient Capacity Building of Security Forces: The security forces sometimes lack specialised training, equipment, and intelligence support to effectively tackle LWE. This sometimes leads to operational failures and increased casualties among security personnel.

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Reliance on Force: Excessive focus on security operations overshadows the need for political engagement and dialogue with LWE groups. A purely militaristic approach could prolong the conflict and hinder efforts to find a peaceful resolution.

Incomplete Rehabilitation Programs: While surrender and rehabilitation policies exist, they are not effectively implemented. There are certain cases of Inadequate support for reintegration such as insufficient vocational training or financial assistance.

Lack of Trust and Cooperation: Mistrust between the government and affected communities hinders the implementation of development initiatives and security operations. Building trust is crucial for fostering cooperation and addressing the root causes of LWE.

Political Instability and Opportunism: Political instability and opportunism undermines efforts to address LWE. Politicians often exploit the issue for electoral gains. This further complicates the government's response to the problem.

What should be done to effectively control LWE in India?

Focus on Development- The successful implementation of development projects in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana reduced Maoist influence. Thus we must focus more on the effective implementation of development projects.

Strengthen Local Governance: Empowering local governments to address grievances and deliver public services effectively, as seen in the Panchayati Raj system's success in reducing Naxalism in West Bengal, can help build trust between communities and authorities.

Enhance Security Forces' Capabilities: Provide specialized training and better equipment to security personnel, similar to the Greyhounds force in Andhra Pradesh, which proved effective in countering LWE due to their specialized training and local knowledge.

Encourage Dialogue and Peaceful Resolution: Engage in meaningful dialogue with Maoist groups to address their grievances, similar to the peace talks between the Indian government and Naga insurgents, which led to a ceasefire and reduced violence in the region.

Foster Community Engagement: Involve local communities in decision-making processes and development projects, as seen in the success of the Janmabhoomi program in Andhra Pradesh, where community participation helped build trust and reduce Maoist influence.

Ensure Accountability and Transparency: Strengthen measures to prevent corruption and human rights abuses, as demonstrated by the National Human Rights Commission's interventions in cases of alleged human rights violations by security forces, which can help restore public trust in government institutions.

> **Read more: Tackling the Maoists: On left-wing extremism**

Sources: The Hindu (**Article 1**, **Article 2**, **Article 3** and **Article 4**), Indian Express (**Article 1** and **Article 2**), **TOI** and Livemint (**Article 1** and **Article 2**)

> **UPSC Syllabus**: GS 3: Security Issues – Linkages between development and spread of extremism.

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Israel-Palestine Conflict and India-Explained Pointwise

Israel-Palestine Conflict has again grabbed the international headlines. On October 7,2023, Palestinian militant organisation Hamas attacked Israel that left at least 400 people dead. The retaliatory attacks from Israel have led to the deaths of more than 300 people in the Gaza Strip as on 8th October 2023. Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has warned of a "long and difficult" war. This may add another war in the long drawn history of Israel-Palestine conflict.

What is Israel-Palestine Conflict?

Israel-Palestine Conflict- The Israel-Palestine conflict is one of the world's longest-running and most controversial conflicts. It is a conflict between two self-determination movements- the Jewish nationalist project and the Palestinian nationalist project, in the same territory.

Status of Israel and Palestine- The claims of both Jews and Arab Muslims date back to a couple of thousand years. However the current political conflict began in the early 20th century. Since then, there has been a gradual expansion of territory occupied by Israel and today Palestinians are confined to only two regions – West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Source-Aljazeera

Historical Timeline of Israel-Palestine Dispute

Year	Event	Significance
1897	Start of Zionist movement and creation of World Zionist Organisation.	Zionist Movement was started by the Jewish community to escape persecution and establish their own state in their ancestral homeland, Israel.As a result, a large number of Jews started flowing into Palestine, they bought land and started settling down there.
1916	Sykes-Picot Agreement- A secret agreement between Great Britain and France was signed.	This agreement led to the division of Ottoman Turkish Empire. Palestine came under the British control after the agreement.
1917	Balfour Declaration issued by the British Government during the WW I.	British expressed official support for a Jewish "national home" in Palestine under the Balfour Declaration.
1920s-1940s	Nazi Rule and Holocaust in Germany	More and more Jews started fleeing Europe fearing persecution. The tensions grew as Palestinian Arabs opposed the relocation of Jews in the area.
1947	United Nations adopted Resolution 181 known as the Partition Plan.	A partition plan was presented for independent Jewish and Arab states in Palestine and Jerusalem as an international city . This was accepted by Jews and on May 14, 1948, the State of Israel was created. This partition plan was not accepted by Arabs.
1948-1949	First Arab Israel War	The Jewish declaration of Israel's independence induced surrounding Arab states to attack. At the end of the war, Israel controlled around 50 percent more territory than originally envisioned in the UN partition plan. Jordan controlled the West Bank and Jerusalem's holy sites, and Egypt controlled the Gaza Strip. Large number of Palestanian people were killed and forced to flee. This was the beginning of Palestanian refugee crisis.
1964	Formation of Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO)	The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was formed as the national representative of the Palestinian people.
1967	Six day war between the Israeli forces and Egypt, Jordan, and Syria.	Israel emerged victorious in this war. After the war, Israel gained territorial control over the Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip from Egypt; the

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		West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan; and the Golan Heights from Syria.
1973	Yom Kippur war between Israel and Syria and Egypt to regain their lost territories.	The war did not result in significant gains either for Egypt, Israel, or Syria. But it allowed Egypt and Syria to negotiate over previously ceded territory in the Six Day War.
1979	Camp David Accords signed between Egypt and Israel.	The peace treaty that ended the thirty-year conflict between Egypt and Israel. This accord improved relations between Israel and its neighbours. But the question of Palestinian self-determination and self-governance remained unresolved.
1987	First Intifada or First Palestanian Uprising in the regions of Gaza and West Bank. Hundreds of people were killed.	The Intifada came to an end with the Oslo Peace Accords signed in 1993 and a second accord signed in 1995. The Oslo Accords resulted in the Palestanian rights of self governance, withdrawal of Israeli forces from 6 cities and 450 towns in the West Bank and mutual recognition between the newly established Palestinian Authority and Israel's government.
2000	Second Intifada was launched over Palestinian grievances over Israel's control over the West Bank, a stagnating peace process, and former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's visit to the al-Aqsa mosque	In response, the Israeli government approved the construction of a barrier wall around the West Bank in 2002, despite opposition from the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court. A ceasefire was finally announced and Israel planned to withdraw all troops and Jewish settlements from the Gaza Strip by 2005 end.
2008	Beginning of Israel Hamas wars. Three wars were faught in 2008, 2012 and 2014.	These Israel Hamas wars are regular yearly features now. The current war is also being faught between Israel and Hamas which controls the Gaza strip.

*Hamas- Hamas is an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood movement. It fights for the rights of Palestinians. After the death of Yasser Arafat who headed the Fatah party in 2004, Hamas emerged stronger. In 2007, the group seized power from Fatah party in Gaza after a civil War. Since then Hamas controls Gaza strip while Fatah party rules in West Bank. Hamas has been declared as a terrorist organisation by the US, Israel, EU, Canada etc.

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Increasing Israel's area under occupation- Explained through Map

ISRAEL/PALESTINE

Palestinians expelled

In 1948, Zionist military forces expelled at least **750,000**
Palestinians and captured 78 percent of historic Palestine.
The remaining 22 percent was divided into the West Bank
and Gaza Strip.

Palestinian ☐ Israeli ☐ Under Israeli occupation

1917   **1948**   **1967**   **1995**   **2020**

■ Jewish control

Conceptual Map

Pre-British Mandate Palestine

Before the British Mandate in Palestine, Jews made up around six percent of the total population.

750,000 Palestinians expelled

Zionist military forces expelled at least 750,000 Palestinians and captured 78 percent of historic Palestine.

Israel occupies Gaza and the West Bank

During the June 1967 War, Israel occupied all of historic Palestine and expelled a further 300,000 Palestinians from their homes.

The Oslo Accords

The occupied West Bank was divided into three areas – A, B and C.
Area A: Palestinian control
Area B: Joint Israeli-Palestinian control
Area C: Israeli control

Trump's conceptual map

US President Donald Trump's plan would allow Israel to annex huge parts of the occupied West Bank and give Palestinians control of only 15 percent of historic Palestine

Source- AlJazeera

Current Situation of Israel-Palestine territories

Source: BBC

Gaza Strip	Hamas rules over Gaza. Gaza's borders are tightly controlled by Israel and Egypt. Gaza has been under Israeli sea and air blockade since 2007.
West Bank	According to the Oslo accord ,the occupied West Bank was divided into three areas – Area A(Under Palestinian control), Area B(Under Joint control) and Area C(Under Israeli control). Control of areas had to be gradually transferred from Israel to Palestine. However Israel has been construction Separation Walls, Increasing the security checkpoints and allowing illegal settlements in these areas. Israel has been increasing its hold over the West Bank.
Jerusalem	West Jerusalem has been Israeli territory since 1948 with Jews in the majority. East Jerusalem, which houses the

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	Old City of Jerusalem including the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, is Palestinian majority and was occupied by Israel in 1967.The whole of Jerusalem is claimed by Israel as its capital. Palestinians claim East Jerusalem as the capital of a future Palestinian state.

Read More- Forum IAS

What are the reasons for the Israel-Palestine Dispute?

With the Israel-Palestine dispute again back in focus, we must look at the reasons for this dispute.

Normalisation of Relations between Israel and Arab World- Abraham Accords was signed between Israel and UAE, Bahrain in 2020. Later Sudan and Morocco joined in 2020. Saudi Arabia and Israel have also been coming together for various economic projects like IMEC. Hamas wants to disrupt this normalisation of relation between Israel and the Arab countries.

Hamas's aim of taking leadership of Palestinian cause from the Palestinian Authority(PA)- The Palestinian Authority (PA) is the official government of the Palestinians that signed the Oslo Peace Accords with Israel but it never resulted in the promised Palestinian state. The PA today is riddled with corruption, misgovernance and has lost legitimacy. Hamas through this attack has been trying to take leadership of the Palestinian cause from the PA.

Support to Hamas operations by Hezbollah ,Iran and Qatar- Hamas is being provided logistical, technological and intelligence support by terrorist organisations like Hezbollah operating in Lebanon and funding by Iran and Qatar.

Unresolved Jerusalem Dispute- Both Israel and the Palestinians hold competing claims to the city. Israel, which occupied the formerly Jordanian-held eastern part in 1967, regards the whole of Jerusalem as its capital. The Palestinians insist on East Jerusalem as their future capital. This has resulted in Intifada like the Al-aqsa intifada.

Increasing Israeli Settlements in West Bank- Since 1967, Israel has built about 140 settlements in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem. They are considered illegal by most of the international community, though Israel disputes this. Palestinians say all settlements must be removed for a Palestinian state to be viable.

Border Dispute- Israel and Palestine have dispute on the border. Palestinians insist on borders based on ceasefire lines which separated Israel and East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza between 1949 and 1967. However, Israel insists on an extended eastern border stretching up to the Jordan River.

No Consensus on Palestinian Statehood- No consensus has been developed over the status of Palestinian Statehood among PLO and Israeli officials. Further Israel insists that any peace deal must include Palestinian recognition of it as the "nation-state of the Jewish people".

Political Division among Palestinians- The Palestinians remain politically divided between Fatah and Hamas, and thus are unable to negotiate jointly. Further, Israel is unwilling to negotiate with the violent group Hamas.

Lack of pursual of peace process- Both Israel and Hamas have not been following the path to achieve peace in the region. Israel has continued to build settlements in the West Bank, raising

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security barriers and checkpoints, limiting Palestinian movements, and never hesitating to use force or collective punishment to keep organised Palestinians under check. But the recent attacks from Hamas killing 700 Israelis does not help the Palestinian cause. It has only escalated the conflict.

What are the Global Ramifications of the Conflict?

Disrupt the geopolitical realignment Process in Middle East- Middle East in recent times has been witnessing geopolitical realignments from the Israel-Arab reconciliation to the Iran-Saudi détente. However the recent conflict will disrupt this peace and normalisation process being pursued by middle eastern countries.

Make the Middle East as theatre of War- Middle East had been a theatre of War with Wars like Gulf War, Iraq war, 6 day war. The recent conflict has potential to become a full blown war with involvement of foreign powers like US, EU. This would make the region a theatre for proxy wars like US and Iran.

Disrupt the global connectivity projects and global transport routes- The envisaged projects like India Middle East Economic Corridor (IMEC) will be disrupted by this prolonged conflict. The escalation of the conflict would endanger the strategic supply routes like the Strait of Hormuz and the red sea.

Disrupt the Global supply Chains and increase Inflation- The escalation of the conflict will impact the oil production and supply of goods. This will further increase inflation which has already been rattling the world economy.

What has been India's position on the Israel-Palestine Conflict?

India's Position on the Israel-Palestine conflict is tabulated below-

India's position on Israel-Palestine conflict from 1947 to 1992
India blindly supported the Palestianian cause rooted in idealism.
In 1947, India voted against the partition of Palestine at the United Nations General Assembly. Also, Indian political leadership actively supported the Palestinian cause and refused to have full diplomatic relations with Israel.
In 1964, India supported the formation of Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). This made India the first non-Arab country to recognise PLO as the sole representative of the Palestine.
In 1988, India was one of the first countries to recognize the State of Palestine .
India's Policy towards the Israel-Palestine conflict after 1992
As a part of the Link West Policy, India de-hyphenated its relationship with Israel and Palestine. As part of the Policy, India started treating both countries as mutually independent and exclusive. It means India's relationship with Israel will depend upon its own merits. Thus began a phase of independent and exclusive engagement.
In 1992, India established full diplomatic ties with Israel. But at the same time, India supported the Palestinian cause.

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In 1993, after the Oslo Peace accord, India opened a Representative Office for it in Gaza. This office was later shifted to Ramallah in 2003.

In 2011, India voted in favour of accepting Palestine as a full member of UNESCO.

In 2014, India supported the UNHRC's resolution to probe Israel's human rights violations in Gaza. But in the next year, India abstained from voting against Israel in UNHRC.

In 2017, the de-hyphenation policy enabled the first Indian PM visit to Israel in 2017 while supporting the Palestinian cause.

India has maintained the image of a historical moral supporter for Palestinian self-determination. At the same time, the policy of de-hyphenation allowed India to engage in the military, economic, and other strategic relations with Israel.

India's stance on the current Conflict

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has called the Hamas attack on Israel as "terrorist attacks" and conveyed "solidarity with Israel". This recent conflict has put India into diplomatic tight spot. The current hostility tests the Abraham Accords and the rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Israel, which held the promise of reshaping age-old fault lines in the Middle East. India was hoping to reap the dividends of the newfound peace in the region.

What will be the impact of the Israel-Palestine Conflict on India?

India through its support for Israel has chosen sides in the recent conflict. However any prolonged conflict will not augur well for India.

Impacts our De-hypenation and West Asia Policy- India had been successfully implementing its de-hyphenation policy in the region. India's relation with both the Arab World and Israel has improved. However the current conflict puts India in a diplomatic tightspot to choose one side. India cannot afford to loose either.

Increase in Inflation- Any prolonged conflict in the Middle East will impact the oil and gas production. Inflation in the country will further increase as India is heavily dependent upon imported oil and gas.

Depreciation of the Indian Rupee- The conflict will impact the inflow of FPI and FDI in the Indian financial market. Increase in oil prices will further increase India's Current Account Deficit(CAD). All these will lead to depreciation of the Indian rupee.

Effect on the India Israel Trade- Israel is a major defence and strategic partner of India. Involvement of Israel for a long period in the conflict will drastically reduce the trade between India- Israel. In FY23, India's total exports to Israel stood at $8.4 billion while India's imports from Israel were at $2.3 billion.

Reduction of the remittances from West Asia and safety of Indian emigrants- India has a large diaspora and emigrant population in West Asia. These are a source of large amount of remittance to India(~40 bn dollars). If the conflict turns into a full blown war across the middle east, India will be severely impacted. The remittances will plummet. Safe Evacuation of the Indian diaspora will also be a grave challenge.

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What should be the way forward?

The recent Israel-Palestine dispute can turn into a major crisis if the global leadership does not act in time. Following methods should be adopted for early resolution of the dispute.

Adoption of the Arab Peace Initiative offer- This offer was proposed by the Saudi Arabia in the name of all Arab countries in 2002. This offer required the creation of a Palestinian state on the lands Israel occupied in the Six-Day War of 1967. In return, Israel would be fully recognised and accepted. .This offer can be the only basis for a lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

Need to treat it as Israel-Arab conflict rather that Israel-Palestine(Hamas) conflict- The conflict is not only between Israel and Palestine but also with other Arab countries such as Egypt, Jordan, Iran, Syria. All of them should participate in the negotiations and the final agreement should be recognized formally by each one of them along with UN general assembly and security council.

UNSC must step up- UNSC must broker a peace talk between the two warring fractions. Global leadership platforms must be used to not let middle east become another theatre for warfare.

Ensure proper adherence to UNSC resolution 2334- UNSC resolution 2334 concerns the Israeli settlements in Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem.The illegal Israel settlements in West Bank must be removed at the earliest.

Follow the ICC ruling of February 2021- The February 2021 International Criminal Court (ICC) ruling should be implemented in spirit. It allows the ICC to investigate persons committing war crimes in the Palestinian Territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

India should act as a mediator- India has good relations with both the Arab World and Israel. Instead of India choosing side in the war, it must use its soft power and diplomatic outreach to solve the dispute.

Conclusion

The world is at inflexion point today after COVID and the Ukraine-Russia war. We cannot let another war continue which will disrupt the global supply chains. The international community must try to instill peace among the two states. Further any successful peace initiative would need to resolve the four core issues that have plagued the peace process- West Bank borders/settlements, Israeli security, Palestinian refugees, and Jerusalem.

Read More-Indian Express

UPSC Syllabus- Effects of Policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian Diaspora.

[Yojana October 2023 Summary] Space Infrastructure In India- Explained Pointwise

Development of Space Infrastructure in India has played a crucial role in the success of Indian Space Sector. Indian Space sector is being primarily led by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). There has been a considerable development in ISRO's space infrastructure

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since its inception in 1962. The development of these critical infrastructure has attracted private players and private investments in the space sector.

What is space infrastructure?

Space infrastructure refers to the physical and organizational components which are necessary to support human activities and operations in space. This infrastructure is critical for various space-related endeavours, including scientific research, communication, navigation, national security, and commercial ventures.

Source-Yojana

What are the components of space infrastructure and India's progress in these infrastructure?

The various components of space infrastructure and India's progress in these infrastructures are mentioned below.

Components	India's organisation and its achievements
Launch Vehicle Technology	**Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC), Thiruvananthapuram** is responsible for the design and development of launch vehicle technology. **Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC)-SHAR** is the spaceport of India and provides the launch base infrastructure facilities in launching these vehicles. **Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (LPSC)** is responsible for the design, development, and realisation of advanced propulsion systems for launch vehicles and space propulsion systems for spacecrafts.Major achievements of VSSC,SDSC,LPSC has been enumerated below-
	Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV)- The PSLV is capable of launching satellites weighing up to approximately 1,750 kilograms to sun-synchronous orbits (SSO) and around 3,800 kilograms to geosynchronous transfer orbits (GTO). It has been used to launch Chandrayaan-1 lunar orbiter in 2008 and the Mars Orbiter Mission (Mangalyaan) in 2013. It has been the workhorse of ISRO.

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	Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV)-The GSLV is used to deploy communication satellites, weather satellites and other payloads into various orbits.There are different versions of GSLV, including GSLV Mk I, GSLV Mk II and GSLV Mk III (also known as LVM-3 or GSLV Mk III). GSLV has been more powerful than PSLV.
	Launch Vehicle Mark-3 (LVM3)- GSLV Mk III is the heaviest and most powerful launch vehicle developed by ISRO and is primarily used for launching heavier payloads into GTO and beyond. It has played a crucial role in India's Chandrayaan-2 mission to the Moon and the launch of the GSAT series of communication satellites.
	Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV)- It is a type of rocket designed specifically to launch small satellites into space. These small satellites are often referred to as CubeSats or SmallSats. These are typically much smaller and lighter than the traditional larger satellites. These have been developed for increased launch of small private sector satellites.
	Critical technologies towards human spaceflight Gaganyaan- These have been designed by VSSC, SDSC and LPSC.
Satellites	**U R Rao Satellite Centre (URSC)-Bengaluru, Space Applications Centre (SAC)-Ahmedabad** and **ISRO Telemetry, Tracking and Command Network (ISTRAC)-Bengaluru** have helped in the development of various satellites ranging from navigation to communication. Some of the Major satellite series of India are as follows-
	INSAT (Indian National Satellite System)- A series of communication satellites that have provided a wide range of services, including telecommunication, television broadcasting, and meteorology. IRS (Indian Remote Sensing) Program- This program has launched a series of Earth-observing satellites, providing valuable data for applications in agriculture, forestry, water resource management, and disaster monitoring. NaVIC System- ISRO has developed the Navigation with Indian Constellation (NavIC) system, a regional satellite navigation system similar to GPS.
Lunar, Martian and Human Space Infrastructure	**Human Space Flight Centre (HSFC)** has helped India develop critical technologies which will help India in sending humans in space. Some critical technologies have already been tested in our Lunar and Martian missions like the Chandrayaan and Mangalyaan.
Commercial Space Ventures	**Antrix Corporation Limited (ACL)**, **New Space India Limited (NSIL)** and **Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre (IN-SPACe)** have been created to increase the private sector participation in the space sector.

What is the significance of development of Space Infrastructre in India?

Boost to India's push for "Space Industrialization"- The development of India's space infrastructure provides an opportunity for India to push for Space Industrialization.

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Boost to the Indian space-tech ecosystem- The development of Indian space infrastructure has given a major boost to Make in India space program. India's space economy can reach $100 billion by 2040.

Boost to future ISRO's Vision and programs– The growth and development of Indian space infrastructure has given boost to ISRO's future vision like launch of satellites powered by electric motors, quantum communications, human space flight, reusable launch vehicles, planetary habitation and interplanetary communications.

Enhancement of India's role and position in the Artemis accord- India is now a member of the Artemis Accords (the U.S.-led multilateral effort to place humans on the moon by 2025 and thereafter to expand human space exploration to the earth's wider neighbourhood in the solar system). With the growth of the infrastructure of space missions, India has an opportunity to lead the other Artemis countries alongside the U.S.

Expansion of cooperation in outer space- While geo-political rivalry is a reality, India's space infra provides it an opportunity to limit competition and expand cooperation in outer space. India can also gain military advantage in space over their geopolitical rivals on Earth.

Read More- **Forum IAS**

What are the challenges in further development of space infrastructure in India?

Budgetary Challenges in expansion of space infrastructure- Space sector faces budget constraints despite its successes in launching missions. There has been an 8% decline in budget allocations to ISRO in 2023-2024 with respect to 2022-2023. The funds allocated to the space sector are very less in comparison to other countries. The US spent 10 times and China 6 times more than India in the space sector in 2019-20.

Manpower Challenges- ISRO faces manpower challenge due to the problem of Brain Drain and fewer students pursuing advanced spaced space studies.

Solely Government funded space infrastructure- Some critics have argued that such massive spending by the government alone in these space infrastructure curtail Indian government's spending capability in social sectors like poverty alleviation, education and health which must be the priority for developing country like India.

Absence of a Clear Legislative Framework- The draft Space Activities bill which was introduced way back in 2017 but hasn't been passed yet. This has hindered the further growth and development of the space infra in India.

Lack of robust Dispute Settlement Mechanism- This discourages private investment in the space infrastructure in India. The void was seen in Antrix – Devas cancelled satellite deal. The Government of India owes nearly $1.2 billion to Devas Multimedia as per an order of a tribunal of the International Chamber of Commerce.

Technological Challenges- ISRO faces technological up gradation challenges like powerful launch vehicles with higher payload capacity. It was seen in the case of Chandrayaan-3. While Chandrayaan-3 took nearly six weeks to get to the Moon, the failed Russian mission Luna-25 took just one week to touch down (although it crashed).

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What should be the Way forward?

Push for privatization- India must frame its space policy to allow for greater private sector investment in field of space technology and infrastructure. India's space programmes should be driven by commerce.

Passage of space Activities Bill- The passage of the Space Activities Bill should also be done in order to give private players greater clarity and protection. This should involve proper consultation and discussions with the concerned stakeholders.

Setting up Space Dispute Tribunal- The plan to set up an independent tribunal to adjudicate disputes among private space entities should be implemented promptly.

Enhanced International Collaboration- India must do more collaboration and research with pioneer countries like the US & Russia who have already ramped up their space infra.

Conclusion-

Indian Space sector possesses huge untapped potential which can be realized with adequate policy measures by the government. This would boost the confidence of the private sector and deliver optimum results, thereby helping the country acquire the top spot in the global space industry.

Read More- **The Hindu**

UPSC Syllabus- Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Airports, Roads, Railways, and others Indigenization of technology and development of new technology

India-Israel Relations- Explained Pointwise

News and Context

India-Israel relations have further deepened, after the Indian PM assured 'unqualified support to Israel' in the recent Israel-Palestine conflict. India has completely backed Israel in the wake of Hamas terror attacks. This unqualified support of India to Israel, shows the progress of India-Israel relations from 'Palestine-leaning' to 'strategic embrace of Israel'.

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Source: BBC

Source-BBC

What is the History of India-Israel Relations?

In 2022, India and Israel jointly celebrated 30 years of full diplomatic relations. However the arc of India's ties with Israel has been a 'roller coaster' over the past seven decades.

India-Israel Relations from 1947 to 1992

During this phase, India firmly supported the Palestinian cause. India rejected the idea of two nations on the basis of religion. Thus India's relations with Israel remained limited to bilateral recognition.

Major Milestones in India-Israel Relations between 1947-1992	
1947	India voted against the partition of Palestine and admission of Isreal as member in the UN.
1950	India recognised Israel in 1950 after two Muslim-majority countries, Turkey and Iran, recognised Israel.
1953	Israel was allowed to open a consulate in Mumbai in 1953, but no diplomatic presence was granted in New Delhi.

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However, the progress in India-Israel relations remained slow as compared to the progress in India-Palestine Relations.
In 1975, India recognised PLO as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and permitted it to open an independent office at New Delhi.
In 1983, at the NAM summit of New Delhi, a statement of solidarity for Palestine was passed.
In 1987, India supported Palestinian intifada (uprising) in Gaza and West Bank.

India was one of the last non-Muslim states to recognise Israel but it became the first non-Arab state to recognise the PLO.

India-Israel Relations from 1992 to 2017

India made drastic changes in its policy towards West Asia and Israel. This change of Policy was driven by several factors.

Firstly, the Arab countries adopted neutral position during the 1962 India-China war and supported Pakistan during the 1965 and 1971 war.
Secondly, Israel helped India with arms and ammunition in the 1962 and 1965 wars.
And finally, with the disintegration of Soviet Union in 1990 and PLO's support of Iraq in Kuwait war, India changed its policy of total support to Palestine and ignorance of Israel.

India adopted Link West Policy. As part of the Policy, India de-hyphenated its relationship with Israel and Palestine. As part of the Policy, India started treating both countries as mutually independent and exclusive. It means India's relationship with Israel will depend upon its own merits. Thus began a phase of independent and exclusive engagement with Israel.

Major Milestones in India-Israel Relations between 1992-2017	
1992	India established full diplomatic ties with Israel.
1999	Precision target bombs were provided by Israel which played a decisive role in the Kargil War.
2000	Beginning of the High level Political Visits. Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh went for the first bilateral visit in 2000. This was followed by more bilateral visits later.
2003	Ariel Sharon became the first Israeli Prime Minister to visit India.

However, despite of deepening engagement with Israel in military, economic and scientific domains, India continued to support Palestinian self-determination.
In 1993, after the Oslo Peace accord, India opened a Representative Office for it in Gaza. Later the office was shifted to Ramallah in 2003.
In 2011, India voted in favour of accepting Palestine as a full member of UNESCO.
In 2014, India supported the UNHRC's resolution to probe Israel's human rights violations in Gaza.

India-Israel Relations from 2017 onwards

After 2017, there have been visible signs of preference of Israel as a major partner. In 2017, India dropped the customary line in support of East Jerusalem, the capital of Palestine. In 2017, Indian PM visit to Israel did not include Ramallah, which was the customary practice.

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However, India did try to balance its relations with Palestine in this time period. In 2018, Indian PM made a separate visit to Ramallah. India voted against the recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

But in the present conflict, India has chosen Israel's side for the first time. Also for the first time, India has condoned Hamas' actions.

What is the significance of India-Israel relationship?

Israel is a significant partner for India because of the following reasons-

Economic and Commerce

India has a positive trade balance with Israel. India is Israel's third-largest trade partner in Asia. The bilateral merchandise trade has grown from USD 200 million in 1992 to USD 6.35 billion (excluding defence). In recent years, bilateral trade has diversified into several sectors such as pharmaceuticals, agriculture, IT and telecom, and homeland security. Many Israeli companies have set up R&D centres in India and have been involved in technology transfers.

Defence

India imports critical defence technologies from Israel. Nearly 41 % of Israel defence exports are to India. Indian armed forces use Israeli Phalcon AWACS (Airborne Warning And Control Systems), Heron drones to Barak anti-missile defence systems. India and Israel have also set up Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism. On Kashmir issue (broadly Pakistan), Israel has stood by India, either by providing crucial intelligence inputs or weapons during wars.

Energy

India has been awarded exploration license to extract and import natural gas from the Tamar and Levianthan gas fields. This is a clear sign of diversification of the relation from defence to energy sector.

Science & Technology

India-Israel Industrial R&D and Technological Innovation Fund (I4F) has been set up to promote, facilitate and support joint industrial R&D projects. Joint Committee on S&T has been established under the S&T Cooperation Agreement signed in 1993.

Space

In 2002, India and Israel signed a cooperative agreement promoting space collaboration. India has successfully launched TecSAR and RISAT-2 radar imaging satellites of Israel from PSLV of ISRO.

Agriculture

India has benefited from Israeli expertise and technologies in horticulture mechanization, orchard and canopy management, micro-irrigation(drip irrigation technology) and post-harvest management. India and Israel have launched a three year joint working program in 2021 for enhanced agricultural cooperation.

Diaspora

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There are about 85,000 Jews of Indian-origin in Israel (with at least one Indian parent), who are all Israeli passport holders. This diaspora population forms a strong emotional connect between India and Israel.

What are the challenges in India-Israel Relations?

However, despite the progress made in India-Israel relations, there are several challenges in the relations-

Balancing relations with the Arab world and Israel- Israel's strained relations with Arab counties like Iran, has created difficulties for India in balancing its relations with both of them. Arab countries have a large expatriate Indian population(source of remittances) and are a major pillar of energy security for India.

Recurring Israel Palestine skirmishes- It becomes difficult for India to delink Israel and Palestine in India's foreign policy. The recurring Israel Palestine skirmishes and wars create challenges for India at the Socio-political and economic level.

Human rights violations- Israel has been accused of commiting human rights violations against Palestinians. India faces tough diplomatic tests in UN, UNHRC and UNSC on frequent resolutions against Israel.

Increasing Chinese influence in Israel- China is Israel's largest trading partner in Asia. China is attracted to Israel's technology sector. Israel is welcoming China's investments and research collaboration projects. Increasing Chinese influence reduces the Indian diplomatic space.

Bilateral Trade and investment still below potential- Bilateral trade has stagnated at around \$6 billion(excluding defence). Bilateral trade is also mainly confined to diamonds and defence. Also there has not been further progress on the Free Trade Agreement.

Read More- **Impact of the Israel-Palestine conflict on India**

What Should be the way Forward?

Diffusion of tensions between Israel and Palestine- Israel-Palestine war will be a major threat to the financial stability of India and the World. India must undertake sincere efforts to mediate between Israel and Hamas for peace.

Ensure the principles of Abraham Accords are followed- India must diplomatically negotiate with the Arab countries so that the principles of Abraham Accords are followed. India must also nudge Saudi Arabia to sign the rapprochement deal with Israel despite the ongoing tensions.

Proactive Diplomacy- India must be diplomatically proactive to counter the growing Chinese influence in Israel.

Early conclusion of FTA- The Free trade Agreement between India and Israel must be negotiated and signed at the earliest. This will increase the bilateral trade between the countries.

Proper implementation of the dehypenation Policy- India's dehypenation policy of Israel and Palestine must be properly implemeted. Though Israel comes across as a natural partner, India should also be concerned about the human rights issues in Palestine. India needs to balance its geostrategic needs and international morality. Read More- **The Indian Express**

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UPSC Syllabus- Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.
Effect of Policies and Politics of Developed and Developing Countries on India's interests, Indian Diaspora.

Nobel Prize in Economics 2023- Explained Pointwise

News and context

Nobel Prize in Economics 2023 has been awarded to Claudia Goldin. Claudia Goldin's work has uncovered the key drivers of gender difference in the labour market. Goldin is individually the first and only the third woman in history to win this honour.

About Nobel Prize in Economics

The Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences was established in 1968 by the Sveriges Riksbank (the central bank of Sweden) in memory of Alfred Nobel, the inventor of dynamite and the founder of the Nobel Prizes. It is officially called the Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel.

The Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences or the Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences is not one of the original Nobel Prizes. The original Nobel Prizes are awarded only in the fields of Physics, Chemistry, Medicine, Literature, and Peace. The original Nobel prize has been established by Alfred Nobel's will.

The Prize recognizes individuals or organizations for their exceptional research, discoveries, or contributions that have advanced the understanding of economics and its application to real-world problems.
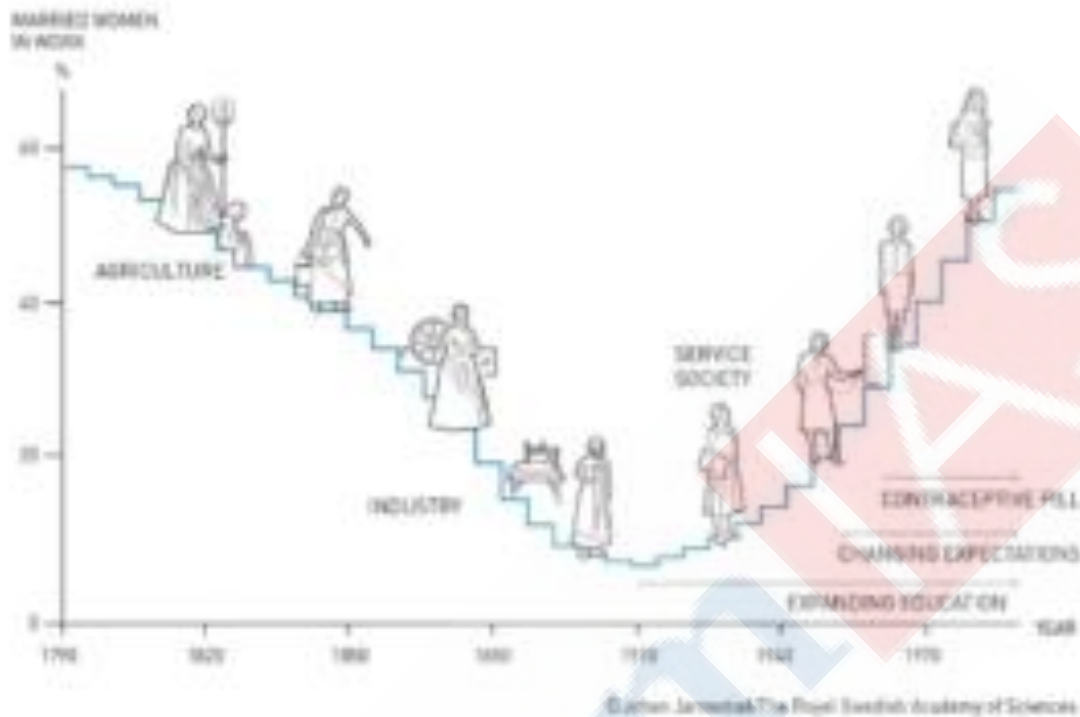
What are the observations of Claudia Goldin's research work that has been awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics 2023?

Claudia Goldin collected over 200 years of data from the US for her research work. According to Goldin, women are vastly underrepresented in the global labour market. Women are paid less than men.

Claudia Goldin has demonstrated the gender differences in employment rates and earnings. She has provided the explanation for her observations.

1.Women's Labour Force Participation(LFP) Rate

What is Goldin's Observation- The participation of married women decreased with the transition from an agrarian to an industrial society in the early nineteenth century, but then started to increase with the growth of the service sector in the early twentieth century. There is a U-shaped relationship between economic development and women's Labour Force Participation(LFP).

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Source- Nobelprize.org

Goldin's Explanation of the observation-According to Goldin, in the agrarian economies, women had a higher Labour Force participation, as women could fulfill both her domestic responsibilities and her duties on the farm. However, industrialisation made it harder for married women to work from home since they were unable to balance the demands of family and work. But with the growth of service sector and rise in women education levels in the 20th century, Labour force participation of women has increased.

2.Earning gap between women and men

What is Goldin's Observation- Despite modernisation, economic growth and rising proportions of employed women in the twentieth century, there still exits significant gap between the earnings of men and women.

Goldin's Explanation of the observation- Goldin has attributed the existing gap in the wages of men and Women to three factors-

1.Occupational segregation– Women work in stereo typically feminine jobs that are lower paying.

2."Greedy Jobs" and "Mommy Track"- "Greedy jobs" have massive wage premiums but, in return, require long work hours, networking, late-night meetings, travel. "Mommy track" jobs are less paying & less demanding jobs, which allows taking care of the kids' school, homework, sports, music lessons, and doctor visits. According to Goldin, in most families, the man is in the greedy job and the woman is on mommy track. This creates a large pay gap between men and women.

3.Role of Expectations and Career Choices– Women are expected to play a mother's role and

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raise children. Thus their educational decisions and career choices are impacted by the future expectations from them as mothers. Hence, women settle for low paying careers from childhood itself.

3.Marriage Barriers in Employment

What is Goldin's observation- By the beginning of the 20th century, while around 20% of women were gainfully employed, the share of married women was only 5%.

Goldin's Explanation of the observation- Goldin has attributed this low share of married women participation in the workforce to two factors. 1."Marriage bars"- the practice of firing and not hiring women once married. 2."Long and uninterrupted careers" in the service sector led to the exclusion of married women from the workforce. These two factors explain why the average employment level for women increased by so little, despite the massive influx of women into the labour market in the latter half of the century.

4.Role of Contraceptive Pills

What is Goldin's observation- Use of easy-to-use contraceptive pills by the end of the 1960s led to an increase in the female labour force participation rate.

Goldin's Explanation of the observation- Contraceptive pills allowed women to exercise greater control over childbirth and plan their careers and motherhood. This led to more women studying subjects like law, economics and medicine and entering various fields of employment.

5. Bias in hiring of female candidates

What is the research- In her work, "Orchestrating Impartiality: The impact of blind auditions on female musicians", Goldin showed that auditions for symphony orchestras done behind a screen, where the jury cannot see the candidate, resulted in greater hiring and advancement of women.

What is Goldin's Explanation- Goldin has attributed the low women labour force participation rate, to lower hiring of women due to the patriarchal bias of the recruiter. The patriarchal bias of the recruiter leaves the deserving women out of the workforce.

Read More-**Forum IAS**

What is the significance of the research awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics 2023?

The research of Claudia Goldin has provided significant insights on the status, role and participation of women in the workforce. This has a lot of significance which are mentioned below-

Making all economic analysis and policy-making gender sensitive- The research of Goldin can be applied in making the Government policies more gender sensitive. It can also be used to design special policies for women employment.

Provides knowledge about underlying barriers hindering women employment– Goldin's work has made us aware about various barriers like "marriage bars", "mommy track", "greedy jobs" phenomena, which hinders women employment in modern economies. India which is transitioning into a modern economy, must remove these barriers to reap rich economic dividends.

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Effective implementation of birth control Programmes- Goldin's work has demonstrated how the use of birth control pills gave women the choice and agency to shape their careers. India must promote and effectively implement its Antara programme, to increase the use of oral contraceptive pills.

Increase in the investment in women education- Goldin has pointed at the role of Women education in propelling economic growth and increasing individual productivity. There is a strong link between the "American Century" and the "Human Capital Century". Developing countries like India, must also commensurately invest in women education so as to make it the "Indian century".

Conclusion

There had always been a widespread prevalence, of the acutely unfounded notion that economic growth alone can automatically reduce gender differences in the labour market. Many developing countries like India, need to study this issue more closely to develop better women centric labour policies.

Source- **Indian Express**

UPSC Syllabus- Inclusive Growth and issues arising from it

Global Hunger Index 2023- Explained Pointwise

News and Context

Recently, Global Hunger Index 2023 was released by Concern Worldwide (Irish NGO) and Welt Hunger Hilfe (German NGO). India has been placed at 111th position out of 125 countries. In the Global Hunger Index(GHI) 2022, India was placed at 107th position out of 121 countries. The Women and Child Development Ministry has said that the global hunger index suffers from "serious methodological issues and shows a malafide intent".

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Key Findings of the Global Hunger Index(GHI) 2023

Global Hunger Trends

Stagnation in the progress of hunger reduction efforts	The progress of hunger reduction efforts was rapid till 2015. However after 2015, the hunger reduction efforts have not brought such rapid decline in the global hunger levels. In 2015, World's GHI score was 19.1 which has just improved to 18.3 in 2023. (0 is the best score (no hunger) and 100 is the worst).
Reason for stagnation	Reason for stagnation has been attributed to the compounding impacts of climate change, conflicts, economic shocks, the global pandemic, and the Russia-Ukraine war.
Best and worst performing countries	**Belarus, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Chile, China and Croatia** are the top five countries in GHI 2023.**Chad, Niger, Lesotho, Congo, Yemen, Madagascar, and Central African Republic** are the countries ranked at the bottom of the index.

India's Performance in GHI 2023

Key Data Points	**India's Rank-** 111 out of 125 India's Score- 28.7 on a 100-point scale (0 is the best score (no hunger) and 100 is the worst) Hunger status- Severe Undernourishment rate- 16.6% Child Wasting- 18.7% (Low weight for height) Child Stunting- 35.5% (Low height for Age) Child Mortality-3.1% (Death of Children below 5 years) Anaemia among women (age 15-24)- 58.1%
Comparison with other South Asian Countries	India fares worse (rank lower) than all South Asian countries. **India** is at 111th position while **Pakistan** is at 102nd, **Bangladesh** is at 81st, **Nepal** is at 69th and **Sri Lanka** at 60th.

What is Global Hunger Index and what is its methodology?

Global Hunger Index(GHI)- The GHI is a tool designed to comprehensively measure and track hunger at global, regional and national levels.
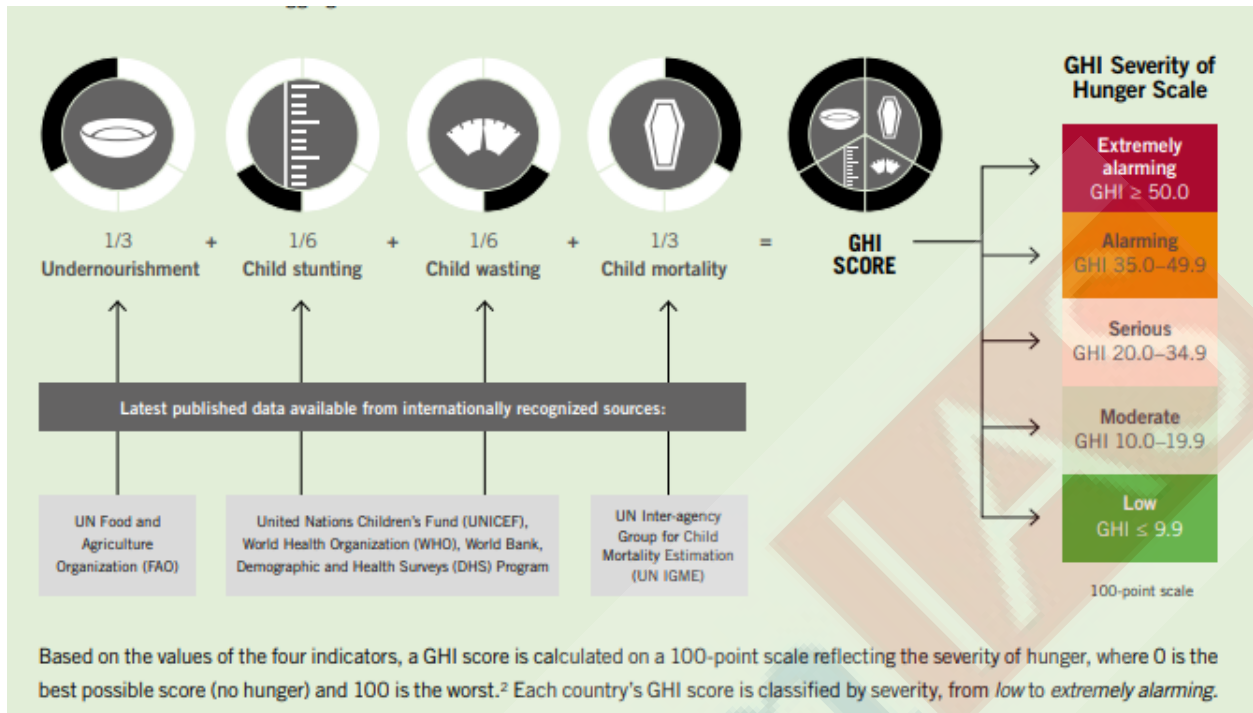
Methodology of Calculation of GHI

The GHI score of each country is calculated based on a formula combining four indicators that together capture the multidimensional nature of hunger.

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S.No.	Indicators	Description	Logo
1	**Undernourishment**	The share of the population with insufficient caloric intake	
2	**Child stunting**	The share of children under age five who have low height for their age. Reflects chronic under nutrition.	
3	**Child wasting**	The share of children under age five who have low weight for their height. Reflects acute under nutrition.	
4	**Child mortality**	The share of children who die before their fifth birthday. Reflects the fatal mix of inadequate nutrition and unhealthy environments.	

These four indicators are aggregated as follows to calculate the final GHI score-

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Source- Global Hunger Report

Why has the Methodology of Global Hunger Index 2023 been criticised by the Indian Government?

Indian Government has rejected the methodology of Global Hunger Index. It has called it a flawed measurement of "hunger" that does not reflect India's true position. Government of India's criticism are as follows-

1.Use of Child Centric Indicators to determine overall hunger- The government contends that three indicators(Child stunting, Child Wasting & Child Mortality) of the four indicators used in the GHI calculation pertain solely to child health. Govt has argued that such indicators cannot accurately represent the entire population's hunger status.

2.Calculation of Undernourishment- The significant indicator-'Proportion of Undernourished population'- relies on a limited opinion poll of only 3,000 individuals. Govt of India has challenged the legitimacy of drawing nationwide conclusions from such a limited sample size.

3.Use of Child Mortality as an indicator- Use of Child mortality as an indicator of GHI is based on the assumption that Child mortality is directly linked to hunger. However government has challenged this assumption. Govt has asserted that child mortality is influenced by multifaceted factors, making it an insufficient metric for evaluating hunger levels.

4.GHI data contradicts with Poshan Tracker Data of Indian govt- The government has highlighted a significant disparity between the GHI 2023's data of 18.7% child wasting rate and Poshan Tracker's data of ~7.2% child wasting rate.

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What are the causes of Hunger in India?

Despite Indian Government's categorical rejection of the methodology of Global Hunger Index, we can not be oblivious to the presence of hunger and malnutrition in the country. Government of India's NHFS data has confirmed the presence of large number of Wasted and stunted Children. Listed below are the reasons for the hunger and malnutrition in India-

Declining agriculture output from small and marginal holdings- Almost 50 million households in India are dependent on small and marginal holdings. However the agricultural productivity of these holdings is declining due to reduced soil fertility, fragmented lands and fluctuating market prices.

Declining income levels- The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2017-18 has revealed that rural unemployment stood is at 6.1 per cent, which is the highest since 1972-73. These have adverse effects on the capacity to buy adequate food, especially when food prices have been on the rise.

Ineffective implementation of PDS scheme- PDS scheme is not functioning well in many states due to corruption and inclusion errors.

Protein hunger- Pulses are a major panacea to address protein hunger. However, there is a lack of budgetary allocation for inclusion of pulses in PDS. Also there is no inclusion of eggs in the mid-day meal menus of many states.

Micro-nutrient deficiency (hidden hunger)- India faces a severe crisis in micro-nutrient deficiency due to poor dietary intakes, prevalence of diseases & non-fulfilment of increased micro-nutrient needs during pregnancy and lactation.

What steps have been taken by Government to reduce hunger in India?

Government of India has taken the following steps to fight the hunger and malnutrition in India-

Implementation of National Food Security Act 2013- It has legally entitled 75% of the rural population and 50% of the urban population to receive subsidized food grains under the Targeted Public Distribution System.

Launch of POSHAN Abhiyan- It has been launched by the Ministry of Women and Child Development in 2018. It targets to reduce stunting, under nutrition, anaemia (among young children, women and adolescent girls).

Food Fortification Programs- Food Fortification or Food Enrichment is the addition of key vitamins and minerals such as iron, iodine, zinc, Vitamin A & D to staple foods such as rice, milk and salt to improve their nutritional content. Food fortification has been launched by the government to fight the micro-nutrient deficiency(hidden hunger).

Eat Right India Movement- An outreach activity organised by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) for citizens to nudge them towards healthy eating.

What should be the way forward fight hunger in India?

Listed below are the recommendations of the Global Hunger Report that should be implemented to fight hunger and malnutrition in India.

Focus on small and marginal holdings- A renewed focus on small and marginal holdings is imperative as it would ensure food security in the country.

Dietary supplements in Mid day meals- Mid-day meals in Anganwadis and Schools must include dietary supplements so as to reduce micro-nutrient deficiency.

Give boost to rural employment schemes- Rural employment schemes such as MGNREGA should be given a boost to increase employment and wages. This will enable the rural population to ensure their food security.

Streamline PDS System- Access to food grains under the PDS needs to be streamlined by simplifying technical processes and reducing Aadhaar-related glitches. Also 'One Nation One ration Card' scheme's implementation must be thoroughly monitored.

Read More- **Indian express**

UPSC Syllabus- Issues relating to poverty and hunger

India-Maldives Relations- Explained Pointwise

News & Context

India-Maldives relations has become a major challenge for India's foreign policy establishment. In the recently concluded Maldivian Presidential elections, the Challenger candidate Dr. Mohamed Muizzu defeated President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih. The Maldivian Presidential election was being seen as a tussle between India First vs India out campaigns. The victory of Mohamed Muizzu is being seen as Victory of India Out Campaign.

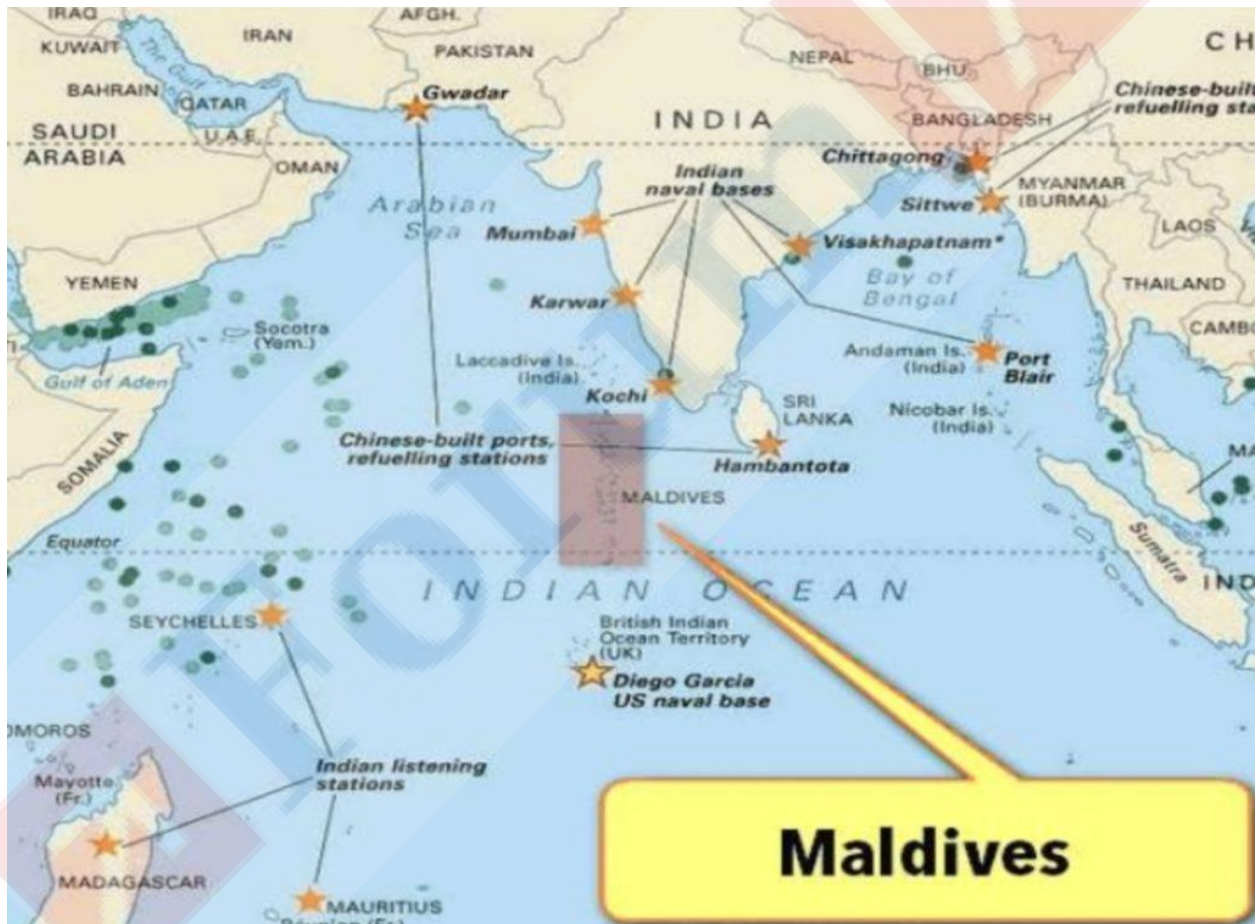| What is the 'India out' Campaign and 'India First' Policy?	
India Out Campaign	**'India Out' campaign-**It is a political movement to mobilise people in Maldives against India. The campaign is against the presence of Indian military on Maldivian soil. The campaign got louder around key bilateral developments such as the signing of the Uthuru Thila Falhu (UTF) harbour development deal with India in February 2021 & India's announcement of the opening of a consulate in the southern Addu Atoll.
	Supporters of the Campaign- Abdulla Yameen who was the President of Maldives from 2013-2018 joined the campaign. Yameen was Pro-China during his tenure. Yameen signed FTA with China and gave ultimatum to India to withdraw two Indian helicopters from the strategically important Laamu and Addu atolls. The current president designate Dr. Mohamed Muizzu rallied support around the 'India Out' campaign.
India First Policy	**India First Policy-** Maldives preference for India as the first choice in security partnership, socio-development assistance and COVID response(Vaccines).

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Proponent of the Policy- Ibrahim Mohamed Solih after he became the president in 2018 adopted the India First Policy. This Policy aimed to reverse the anti-India policies of Yameen between 2013-2018.

What is the Historical Background of India-Maldives Relations?

India and Maldives share ethnic, linguistic, cultural, religious, and commercial connections that date back to ancient times. The name Maldives is believed to be of Sanskrit origin (Mala (garland) + Dweep (Island)). The islands are believed to have been inhabited as early as 5th century BC by settlers from Sri Lanka and Southern India. There were close trade relationships between India and Maldives during ancient and medieval times.

Source- Asian times

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Historical Evolution of India-Maldives Relations

1965	In 1965, Maldives gained Independence from the British. India was one of the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with Maldives. Indian Mission was set up in Male in 1972.
1978	In 1978, President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom took charge in Maldives. Gayoom made many visits to India which strengthened India-Maldives ties.
1988	In 1988, India sent its troops and ships to help Gayoom overthrow a coup attempt by a Maldives businessman and Sri Lankan Tamil fighters.
2008	In 2008, Mohamed Nasheed was elected President. During his tenure, India began closer security cooperation with Maldives. India loaned 2 helicopters, dornier aircraft and patrol boats to Maldives. These were for maritime reconnaissance, surveillance and coast guard security ops.
2013	In 2013, Abdulla Yameen of the opposition PPM was elected to power. The Presidential Period of Yameen saw major strains in the India-Maldives ties. India raised objections to Yameen's imposition of emergency. Yameen adopted pro-China policies. Yameen signed FTA with China & invited Chinese companies in for a number of major investments including the Hullumale island housing projects and friendship bridge. On the other hand Yameen threatened to evict Indian pilots and personnel from Maldives.
2018	In 2018, Ibrahim Mohamed Solih won the presidential elections by defeating Yameen. He adopted India-First Policy. India was invited to start many infrastructure projects including the $500mn Greater Male connectivity project. In 2021, India-Maldives signed the Uthuru Thilafalhu project to maintain a coastguard harbour base for India. This sparked the India Out campaign.

The election of Dr. Mohamed Muizzu who rallied support around the 'India Out' campaign will test the friendly India-Maldives relations. New Delhi is anxiously watching the developments in Maldives.

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What is the Significance of Maldives for India?

Maldives holds enormous significance for India. The Significance of Maldives for India is mentioned below-

Geo-Economic Significance- Maldives is strategically located at the crossroads of several important trade routes that run through the Indian Ocean. 50% of India's external trade and 80% of India's energy imports transit through the Sea lanes of communication (SLOCs) in the vicinity of the Maldives.

Geo-Political Significance- Maldives has been a partner of India in many regional groupings. Maldives is a member of the Colombo Security Conclave (CSC), Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), SAARC, SASEC and SAGAR initiative of India. Maldives supports India's permanent membership of UNSC.

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Security Significance- For India, Maldives is the first line of defence against terrorism, piracy on the high seas, drug trafficking, narcotics, and other maritime crime. Maldives geographical location makes it a 'toll gate' between the choke points of the western Indian Ocean (Gulf of Aden and the Strait of Hormuz) and the eastern Indian Ocean (Strait of Malacca).

Indian Diaspora Significance- There is a sizeable Indian Diaspora in Maldives. Numerous Indians are employed in Maldives' education, medical care systems, tourism and hospitality sector.

What have been the areas of Co-operation between India and Maldives?

India has been a major partner of Maldives in its development journey. The major areas of cooperation between India and Maldives are mentioned below-

Economic Cooperation- The economic co-operation between India and Maldives is a major pillar of cooperation between India and Maldives. Mentioned below are some of the economic cooperation pillars-
(a) $500 million in grants and financing to support maritime connectivity.
(b)$ 800-million line of credit from the Export-Import Bank of India
(c)India is Maldives' 2nd largest trading partner.
(d) Maldives is an important tourist destination for many Indians. Tourism is the backbone of Maldives economy.

Infrastructure Cooperation- Development of sustainable infrastructure in Maldives is one of the main goals of India. India is developing many infrastructure projects in Maldives some of which are mentioned below-
(a)India is developing the Greater Male Connectivity Project- one the largest project infrastructure project in Maldives. The project aims to connect Male to Villingili, Gulhifalhu and Thilafushi islands through a series of bridges, causeways and roads. The project is crucial for the proposed Gulhifalhu Port.It will be a major catalyst for the Maldivian economy in the future through jobs and economic activity.
(b)India is undertaking Airport Redevelopment Project at the Hanimaadhoo International Airport.
(c)India is undertaking the development of strategic harbour projects like Uthuru Thila Falhu Project(UTF). It will serve as a harbour for the coast guard of the Maldives National Defence Force
(d)India has also undertaken the design and construction of 61 police infrastructures across Maldives. This will contribute to improved access to policing and will ensure the safety and security of the communities in the islands.

Military and Security Cooperation- Maldives relies heavily on trilateral maritime security cooperation with India and Sri Lanka. Hence securing the maritime borders of Maldives is one of the foremost priorities of Indian Government. The major areas of Military and security co-operation are as follows-
(a)India and Maldives co-operate in maritime security, maritime domain awareness and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations.
(b)India has donated Landing Assault Craft and 24 Utility Vehicles to Maldives in order to bolster maritime security.
(c)India has signed a comprehensive Action Plan for Defence in April 2016 to consolidate India-Maldives defence partnership.

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(d)India provides the largest number of training opportunities for Maldivian National Defence Force (MNDF), meeting around 70% of their defence training requirements.

(e)India and Maldives conduct many security Joint Exercises like "Ekuverin", "Dosti", "Ekatha" and "Operation Shield".

(f)India launched the Operation Cactus in 1988 to help the government of Maldives in the neutralizing the coup attempt.

Humanitarian Assistance Cooperation- India has always lent a helping hand to Maldives in humanitarian assistance. Mentioned below are some of the examples of humanitarian assistance

(a) India has signed an MoU with Maldives for High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDPs) in 2019. A number of socio-economic development projects are planned to be implemented in Maldives through these projects.

(b) India has provided 100,000 Covishield vaccines to Maldives in January 2021 during the peak of the pandemic. Through Operation Sanjeevani, India supplied 6.2 tonnes of essential medicines to Maldives in the fight against COVID 19. India has handed over two sea ambulances to the Ministry of Defence of Maldives.

(e) India provided assistance to Maldives during recovery efforts after the 2004 Tsunami. India also helped address the shortage of drinking water in Maldives in 2014 through Operation Neer.

What are the Challenges in India-Maldives Relations?

India-Maldives relations suffer from a lot of challenges. Some of which are mentioned below-

Political Challenges- The president elect Dr. Mohamed Muizzu and the former president Abdulla Yameen have been vocal advocates in the 'India Out' Campaign. Both leaders are opposed to India's military presence in Maldives. Since they will be wielding power in Maldives, it will become a major challenge for India.

Radicalisation- A large number of Maldive citizens had joined violent extremist organisations such as the Islamic State (IS). There has been a steady rise in recruits joining jihadi groups in Pakistan over the last decade. There is now a greater risk that terrorist organisations based in Pakistan will use Maldives as a staging ground for attacks on India and Indian assets.

Growing Chinese Influence- China has enhanced its influence in Maldives. Maldives is an essential 'pearl' in China's 'String of Pearls' initiative in South Asia. With the return of pro-chinese government in Maldives, India's diplomatic space will reduce in the region.

Climate Change- As both India and Maldives are low-lying island nations, they are vulnerable to the effects of climate change, including rising sea levels and marine heatwaves. Maldives faces the risk of submergence.

What Should be the Way forward for India-Maldives Relations?

Engage with the newly elected government- India must engage with the newly elected government of Maldives and address its concerns. India must convey that the projects being undertaken are for the general good of the people of Maldives. Ex- The redevelopment project at Hanimadhoo will improve tourist inflow as both the runway and terminal capacity will be increased. Tourism is the mainstay of Maldives economy.

Increase the development assistance- India should increase development assistance to Maldives. India should target projects that have larger impact on general population of Maldives.

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This will enhance India's goodwill among the people of Maldives. It will address concerns that have led to 'India Out' Campaigns.

Timely Completion of Infrastructure Projects- Timely completion of infrastructure projects being undertaken by India like the Greater Male Connectivity Project (GMCP) will offer a credible and lucrative alternatives to Chinese projects.

Target Youth Employment- India's High Impact Community Development Projects (HICPs) in Maldives must include projects that aim to improve employability and foster entrepreneurship among the youth. This will help in countering the threats of radicalisation and extremism emanating from the soil.

The newly elected regime of Maldives must understand that China's entry in Maldives is solely to advance its own gains. A strong relationship with India will be to Maldives's benefit.

Read More- Indian Express

UPSC Syllabus- India and neighbourhood relations

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