



**9 PM**

# **Compilation**

**23<sup>rd</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> October, 2023**

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

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2. On India's role in the Arctic – Breaking the ice: How India can help save the Arctic

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# General Studies Paper – 1

### General Studies - 1

#### 1. On India's linguistic diversity – Multilingualism can be magical if it's error-free

**Source:** This post on **India's linguistic diversity** is based on the article "**Multilingualism can be magical if it's error-free**" published in "**Live mint**" on 27th October 2023.

**Syllabus:** **GS Paper 1 Indian Society** – Salient features of Indian Society, Diversity of India.

**News:** The article discusses the importance and benefits of multilingualism in India, highlighting the rich linguistic diversity in the country. The author also emphasizes the role of multilingualism in enhancing cognitive skills, problem-solving, and creativity.

#### What are the various constitutional provisions related to language in India?

**Protection of Linguistic Minorities: Article 29** ensures that any section of citizens with a distinct language, script, or culture can conserve it.

**Educational Rights: Article 30** grants minorities the right to establish and administer educational institutions. State aid to these institutions cannot be discriminatory.

**Language in Parliament:** Article 120 stipulates that business in Parliament is transacted in Hindi or English. However, a member can address the House in his mother-tongue with permission.

**Official Language:** Article 343 designates Hindi in Devanagari script as the Union's official language. English usage is allowed for 15 years from the Constitution's commencement.

**Language Commission:** Article 344 mandates the constitution of a Commission to recommend the progressive use of Hindi for official purposes.

**State Official Languages:** Article 345 allows states to adopt any language in use in the State or Hindi for official purposes.

**Communication Between States:** Article 346 specifies the languages for communication between states and between states and the Union.

**Language in Judiciary:** Article 348 states that the Supreme Court and High Courts use English for proceedings, but with certain exceptions.

**Linguistic Development: Articles 350, 350A, 350B, and 351** provide directives for redressal of grievances, primary education in mother-tongue, appointment of a Special Officer for linguistic minorities, and promotion and development of the Hindi language, respectively.

#### How linguistically diverse is India?

**Language Landscape:** India boasts an impressive linguistic diversity, with **over 19,500 languages** spoken throughout the nation.

**Local Linguistic Varieties:** Even within small regions, the linguistic richness is evident.

**Daily Multilingual Exposure:** People are frequently exposed to different languages, either audibly or visually, aside from the one or more used at home. For instance, New Delhi reflects this linguistic diversity in its street signage. The city employs four scripts – English, Devanagari, Gurmukhi, and Urdu – on its street signs.

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### What are the benefits of being multilingual?

- 1) **Enhanced Cognitive Skills:** Multilingual individuals often display improved cognitive abilities, allowing them to process and adapt to information more efficiently.
- 2) **Research Findings:** A study had demonstrated that bilingual children could adapt and process information better than their monolingual counterparts.
- 3) **Delay in Cognitive Decline:** Elderly people who are multilingual tend to experience a slower onset of cognitive decline, safeguarding their mental faculties for longer.
- 4) **Boost Creativity:** Being multilingual can foster creativity. The mental juggling between languages enhances the mind's ability to think divergently and convergently.
- 5) **Subconscious Processing:** For those fluent in multiple languages, shifting between them occurs subconsciously, further refining their mental agility.
- 6) **Open-mindedness:** Multilingual individuals often develop an open-mindedness to different sociocultural constructs, expanding their horizons and making them more receptive to varied perspectives.

### Question for practice:

How does India's rich linguistic diversity, as reflected in street signs and the broader cultural landscape, impact cognitive abilities and foster creativity among its multilingual population?

### 2. On India's role in the Arctic – Breaking the ice: How India can help save the Arctic

**Source:** This post on **India's role in the Arctic** has been created based on the article "Breaking the ice: How India can help save the Arctic" published in **The Indian Express Hindu** on **27<sup>th</sup> October 2023**.

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper 1 Geography — Changes in critical geographical features (including water bodies and ice-caps) and in flora and fauna and the effects of such changes.

**GS Paper 2 International Relations — Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.**

**News:** This article discusses the impact of climate change on the Arctic and how multiple challenges are worsening its impact. It also highlights India's upcoming role in tackling these challenges in global fora related to the Arctic.

### What are the growing challenges in the Arctic due to climate change?

- 1) The Arctic is **warming at a rate 4 times faster than the global average**.
- 2) It is leading to an unprecedented **loss of sea ice**, as well as the **thawing of permafrost**.
- 3) This might lead to **the escaping of vast quantities of stored carbon** into the atmosphere. This can trigger multiple catastrophic and **irreversible climate tipping points**.
- 5) **Impact on Global South and India:** For instance, research shows an intricate correlation between the melting of Arctic sea-ice and extreme rainfall events during the Indian summer monsoon.

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For more on **Arctic Amplification**, read: <https://forumias.com/blog/arctic-amplification-what-is-causing-arctic-warming/>

### What are the reasons for the worsening of the impact of climate change on the Arctic?

- 1) **Rapid pace of development:** For instance, **Russia is commercialising and expanding trade channels** along the Northern Sea Route.
- 2) **Geopolitical interests and conflicts:** Other Arctic countries are also planning oil and gas development endeavours.
- 3) **Failure of global governance mechanisms:** The Arctic Council stands suspended due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This has made it difficult to hold countries accountable and to monitor activities.
- 4) **Non-representative forums:** The Arctic Council does not have any member from the Global South, though some, including India, have observer status.

### What is the Arctic Council?

Formally established in 1996 by The **Ottawa Declaration**, the Arctic Council is an intergovernmental forum for promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction between the Arctic States.

Members include eight countries – **Canada, Denmark (Greenland), Norway, Russia, United States, Iceland, Finland, and Sweden.**



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**Arctic Council Member Countries.** Source: Britannica.

In addition to the member states, observer status is granted to non-Arctic states. **India, China were given observer status** in 2013.

Originally, the council's focus was to address environmental issues and the concerns of the indigenous people in the region. Global warming, shorter sea route, hydrocarbons prospects have added on to the stakes in the region. The approach adopted by the Arctic Council is to **regulate the shipping lanes, hydrocarbons prospecting and the exploitation of marine resources.**

**For a detailed account of Arctic governance, read:**

<https://forumias.com/blog/governance-of-the-arctic-explained-pointwise/>

### **What is India's role?**

1) **Establishing consensus:** India has shown it can balance the competing interests of the Global North and the Global South.

This capacity to generate consensus will be needed to reform Arctic governance and protect the climate.

2) **Voice of the Global South:** The active involvement of India as a member of the Arctic Council to voice the concerns of the Global South could help push for an end to further exploitation.

This is essential to protecting our global climate, including critically important ecosystems such as the Arctic.

### **Question for practice:**

'India can steer the global agenda on the Arctic'. Discuss in light of the suspension of the Arctic Council and threats to the Arctic due to climate change.

# General Studies Paper -2



### General Studies - 2

#### 1. Behind the Global South-The geopolitical phrase of 2023

**Source:** The post is based on the article “Behind the Global South-The geopolitical phrase of 2023 – but what does it actually mean?” published in **Business standard** on 23rd October 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS2- International relation- Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India’s interests

**News:** The article discusses India’s aspirations to lead the “Global South,” comprising developing nations not aligned with traditional Northern Hemisphere powers. India seeks to offer an alternative to Chinese dominance and Western patronage, aiming to enhance its global influence and represent shared concerns of developing nations.

#### What is the Global South?

As per the definition provided by University of Virginia, the Global South was traditionally defined as economically disadvantaged nations, an alternative to the “Third World”. Following are presently accepted features of Global South.

- **Beyond Geography:** It’s now a term for areas affected by capitalist globalization, regardless of actual location. For example, there can be “Souths” in the geographical North.
- **Shared Experience:** It represents a shared experience of subjugation under global capitalism. The term captures the collective resistance against global capitalist forces, reminiscent of cold war discourses.

Essentially, it’s an evolving term reflecting complexities in global power and economy.

#### What grievances does the Global South hold?

**Pandemic Response:** The Global South felt neglected during the COVID-19 crisis. While northern countries had ample vaccines, many developing nations struggled without.

**Economic Setbacks:** Post the pandemic, many countries in the Global South faced economic hardships. They accumulated debt but couldn’t recover the growth they lost between 2020-22.

**Effects of Global Politics:** The instability caused by events like the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the subsequent Western sanctions affected the Global South, especially in terms of food and fuel.

#### Why is India championing the Global South?

**Alternative to China:** India wants to offer an alternative to countries caught between Chinese dominance and Western influence. This positions the Global South as the developing world excluding China.

**Increase Global Influence:** By leading the Global South, India seeks to elevate its global status. This aligns with its ambition to be recognized as a “Vishwaguru” or world leader.

**Address Common Grievances:** India aims to voice the shared concerns of the Global South. For instance, the disparity in vaccine distribution during the pandemic saw the North getting vaccinated multiple times over, while the South struggled.

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**Bolster Partnerships:** Initiatives like the India-Middle East-Europe Corridor (IMEEC) showcase India's strategy. By using European funds, American security, and its goodwill, India seeks to strengthen relationships with other nations.

### What challenges does India face in this role?

**Resource Limitations:** Unlike China, which offers benefits through trade and projects like the Belt and Road Initiative, India lacks such vast resources. India's primary asset is its reputation.

**Balancing Influence:** As India's influence grows, it needs to ensure that it remains seen as a friend and not a dominator. This is crucial to avoid situations where its leadership could be viewed negatively.

**Positive Image Maintenance:** The situation in Maldives serves as a reminder. India's high profile there turned into a disadvantage during a recent election.

**Competition with China:** China sees itself as the leader of the developing world and expects their support. India's championing of the Global South challenges this assumption, potentially leading to geopolitical friction.

**Delivering Tangible Benefits:** India must provide real, tangible benefits to its partners, not just symbolic gestures or promises.

### Question to practice:

Analyse the strategies and implications of India's efforts to position itself as a leader of the Global South in the context of geopolitical dynamics with China and the West.

## 2. Trade potential — India should reconsider its RCEP decision

**Source:** This post has been created based on the article "Trade potential — India should reconsider its RCEP decision" published in **Business Standard** on **23<sup>rd</sup> October 2023**.

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper 2 International Relations – Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

**News:** This article discusses the need for India to reconsider its position on the RCEP considering the recent developments.

### What is the RCEP?

**RCEP** is a trade deal that created one of the world's largest trading blocs.

### Its members include:

10 Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) members: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

5 other FTA partner countries of ASEAN: Australia, China, Korea, Japan, and New Zealand.

RCEP members account for about 30% of the global GDP and 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the world's population.

### What are the ongoing developments with respect to RCEP?

**Slower economic growth** and increasing **geopolitical fragmentation** has led to slowdown of global trade.

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In light of this, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh are considering joining the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).

For **Sri Lanka**, which is dealing with an economic crisis, easier access to regional markets could help it become more competitive.

For **Bangladesh**, RCEP could help compensate for export loss as it exits from the group of least developed countries.

Their joining the RCEP will also open markets for China in India's neighbourhood.

### What has been India's position regarding the RCEP?

**India exited the RCEP 4 years ago** due to various concerns. These include:

- 1) Potential increase in the **import of cheaper goods** from member countries, particularly China.
- 2) **Geopolitical and national-security considerations:** Especially with respect to China.
- 3) **Lack of safeguards:** India had cited the grouping's refusal to accede to its requests on safeguards as a deal breaker.

### What is India doing to counter the impact of not joining the RCEP?

India has been working with a different **strategy of higher tariffs**, along with **fiscal incentives for large manufacturers**.

Additionally, India is working on **various free-trade agreements (FTA)**.

### Why should India reconsider its position?

- 1) Countries such as **Australia and Japan** have joined RCEP **despite ongoing geopolitical tensions** with China.
- 2) **Lost opportunity** to become part of the **world's largest and most dynamic trading bloc**, which has the potential to enhance transnational economic integration.
- 3) **India's trade deficit with China** has been increasing significantly despite India not joining.
- 4) It would give India the opportunity to deal with trade-related issues more effectively, besides **opening markets of member countries**.
- 5) **Opportunity to become part of large global value chains:** This will improve participation in global trade, which is critical in **boosting local manufacturing** and **generating employment**.
- 6) **Limited gains through FTAs.**

### Question for practice:

India needs to rethink its stand on multilateral trade agreements like the RCEP considering the recent geopolitical and economic developments. Discuss.

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### 3. **Women's Reservation Bill: After passing, challenge now to ensure promise translates to equality**

**Source:** This post has been created based on the article **“Women's Reservation Bill: After passing, challenge now to ensure promise translates to equality”** published in **The Indian Express** on **23<sup>rd</sup> October 2023**.

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

**News:** This article discusses the various advantages of increasing the representation of women in politics in India through the passage of the Women's Reservation Bill by the Parliament. It also provides suggestions for women willing to join politics.

**Rest of the aspects of this news have been already covered in detail in the following article:**  
<https://forumias.com/blog/women-reservation-bill-explained-pointwise/>

#### **What are some of the possible benefits of the passage of the bill?**

- 1) Can help transition India from the **“politics of rhetoric”** to the **“politics of presence”** (from **“words to action”**).
- 2) **Morally binding on the state:** The idea of political equality is integral to the Constitution, making the inclusion of women in politics morally binding.
- 3) **Marginalisation of women can be prevented:** The political sphere has been largely dominated by men and masculinist politics.
- 4) Some have advocated that women can bring **unique skills and political strategies** rooted in their life experiences, making them **role models** for future generations.
- 5) **Revitalising of democracy:** The presence of women ensures **fair negotiations and deliberations between genders** on various issues, free from biases.
- 6) **Exercised leadership roles:** Women have held positions at the highest level – President, Prime Minister, Chief Ministers, etc.
- 7) **Increasing competence of women:** They have made progress in education. They are also informed, responsible, and demanding voters.
- 8) **Rising aspirations:** Women have excelled in fields such as aviation, bureaucracy, medicine, space, arts and literature.

#### **What should be the way forward for women aspiring to become part of Indian politics?**

- 1) **Training:** This should include encouraging them to pursue higher education in subjects such as public policy, political science and law.
- 2) **Engagement:** Women leaders need to engage with local issues and facilitate local solutions to local problems.
- 3) **Empathy:** A sense of empathy needs to be nurtured that underlines harmony in society.

It will ensure that the formal equality promised by the Act will transform into substantive equality for women.

#### **Question for practice:**

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The Women's Reservation Bill has come as a breath of fresh air in the male-dominated political setup of India. Highlighting the benefits of the passage of the bill, provide suggestions how women in politics can contribute positively to the women empowerment?

### 4. On the Supreme Court's Decision of 'no fundamental right to marry'

**Source:** This post has been created based on the article "No Indian has the right to marry" published in **The Indian Express** and the article "The Court's 'no fundamental right to marry' is wrong" published in **The Hindu** on **23<sup>rd</sup> October 2023**.

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

**GS Paper 1 Indian Society – Diversity of India**.

**News:** This article discusses the issues with the recent Supreme Court judgment on same-sex marriages in India in the context of the denial of the fundamental right to marry.

**Rest of the aspects of this news have been already covered in detail in the following article:**  
<https://forumias.com/blog/same-sex-marriage-verdict-implications-explained-pointwise/>

#### What were the outcomes of the judgment?

In the **Supriya Chakraborty v Union of India case**, a 3-2 majority favoured the **refusal of legal recognition to unions other than heteronormative ones**. The bench asserted that there is **no fundamental right to marriage** under the Indian Constitution.

#### What are the jurisprudence issues with the judgment?

1) **Constitutional morality not considered:** Prevailing ethos of "**majoritarian morality**" were given precedence over "constitutional morality". In Navtej Johar Case (2018), CJI DY Chandrachud had held that "the Court has to be guided by the conception of constitutional morality and not by societal morality".

2) **Refusal of the Court to innovative:** It cited the limits of its jurisdiction and emphasised the legislative authority over such matters.

3) Extensive scope of **Article 32** and the judiciary's duty to safeguard citizens' rights not exercised by the judiciary.

4) **Restriction of the scope of the Puttaswamy judgment (2017):** The privacy judgment upheld privacy of choice, which should ideally include the choice of entering into a matrimonial relationship.

5) **Departure from judiciary's liberal interpretation of Article 21.**

6) **Against the right to life:** The conservative position considers procreation to be the primary purpose of marriage. Hence, the right to marry should be an extension of the right to life.

7) **UDHR ignored:** India is an original signatory to the UDHR. The Indian Constitution and courts have also been greatly influenced by the UDHR. For instance, in **the Maneka Gandhi** case, the Court relied on Article 10 of the UDHR to include principles of natural justice in the administrative process.

8) **Indian constitutional jurisprudence ignored:** Jurisprudence of the courts interpreting constitutional provisions and including new rights in a liberal and expansive manner was not put into practice in this case.

### Question for practice:

Illustrate the issues with the recent Supreme Court ruling regarding the denial of the fundamental right to marry for same-sex couples in India.

### 5. On politicization of bureaucracy – Crossing a line

**Source:** This post on politicization of bureaucracy has been created based on the article “Crossing a line” published in **The Hindu** on **25th October 2023**.

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

**News:** This article discusses the recent government decision to showcase its achievements across the country by deploying government officials, which has raised concerns around it

#### What is politicization of bureaucracy?

It refers to the dilution of the principle of non-partisanship and implies a politically committed bureaucracy.

The bureaucracy loses its public-orientation and becomes subservient to one political party/ideology.

#### What is the recent incident regarding politicization?

The Central government has requested all ministries to assign officials to present its accomplishments nationwide, reaching even the rural areas, under an initiative called the **Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra**.

The outreach is about the achievements of the last 9 years under the present ruling party.

Joint Secretaries, Directors, and Deputy Secretaries will be appointed **Rath Prabharis** (chariots in-charge) for the roadshow.

The government has been criticized by opposition parties for **politicizing the bureaucracy and the military**.

#### What can be the possible effects of politicization of bureaucracy?

- 1) **Separation of power:** Goes against the spirit of Indian Constitution’s **separation of power** among the three arms of the state — **the executive, the judiciary and the legislature**.
- 2) **Non-partisanship of bureaucracy:** It also goes against the line of **separation between the bureaucracy and the military from the political executive**. These directives compel civil and military officials to assume **partisan positions**.
- 3) **Undermines Impartiality of Elections:** It can undermine the **election process in India**, which has largely retained its credibility because of bureaucratic impartiality.
- 4) **Irreversible damage to institutions:** Disregarding norms in pursuit of electoral gains leading to **undermining of institutions** may lead to irreversible damage.

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### What should be done to avoid politicization of bureaucracy?

- 1) **Merit-based appointments and promotions** in bureaucracy.
- 2) **Transparent transfer policies.**
- 3) **Legal and institutional measures** to strengthen the **autonomy and independence** of the bureaucracy. For instance, Whistleblower protection.
- 4) **Code of Conduct:** Adherence to **Code of Conduct** by civil servants.
- 5) **Moral education: Strengthening ethics and values** through **training.**
- 6) **Code of Ethics:** Enforcing a **Code of Ethics** for both the civil servants and the political executive.
- 7) **Strengthening civil society:** Civil society organizations can play a crucial role in holding bureaucrats and politicians accountable.

### Question for practice:

In recent years, there have been rising concerns about the “politicization of bureaucracy” in India. What do you understand by the term? What are its consequences for India’s democracy?

### 6. On Pakistani artists in India – Bombay High Court’s ‘salaam’ to art without borders

**Source:** This post has been created based on the article “**Bombay High Court’s ‘salaam’ to art without borders**” published in **The Indian Express** on **25th October 2023**.

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

**News:** This article discusses the recent Bombay High Court decision to lift the ban on Pakistani artists performing in India and its impacts on the Indo-Pakistan relations.

### What were the events leading to the ban on Pakistani artists?

- 1) **26/11 Mumbai attacks in 2008** disrupted Indo-Pakistan cultural exchanges.
- 2) In **2015, Shiv Sena** protested Ghulam Ali’s concert in Mumbai and led to its cancellation.
- 3) After **2016’s Uri attack**, there was a blanket ban on Pakistani artistes working in the Indian film industry. **Pulwama attacks in 2019** reinforced it.

### What were the observations of the Bombay High Court in this matter?

The **Bombay High Court quashed a plea to ban** Indian companies, citizens and associations from working with Pakistani artistes – including actors, singers, musicians, lyricists, and technicians – in India.

The court also observed that art, music, sports, culture, and dance can truly bring about peace, tranquility, unity and harmony in the nation and between nations.

Art has the capacity to evoke a sense of community, solidarity and self-awareness, and get through people’s hearts. The recent camaraderie between the Indian and Pakistani cricket teams – both men’s and women’s – has proven it.

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### What are the rules regarding entry of Pakistani artists in India?

Officially, as per the **India-Pakistan Visa agreement 2012**, “Reputed Pakistani artistes, including actors, musicians etc., who desire to visit India for giving commercial performances in India on remuneration basis may be granted **visitor visa** for a period not exceeding one year subject to the condition that each stay in India shall not exceed three months and with a special endorsement ‘Commercial performance permitted’.”

These cross-border exchanges were put to an end by the September 2016 Uri attack leading to resolutions by the **Indian Motion Pictures Producers Association and the Federation of Western India Cine Employees**, preventing Pakistani artists from working in the Indian film industry.

In 2019, the Pulwama strikes brought forth a resolution by the **All-Indian Cine Workers Association**, upholding the 2016 ban.

### What should be done?

Both countries must show the ability to **rise above differences** to find ways to collaborate.

### Question for practice:

“Confidence-building measures like the welcoming of Pakistani artists in India are required to put Indo-Pakistan relations on a positive trajectory.” Discuss.

## 7. On Blood Transfusion in India – Bloody mess

**Source:** This post on Blood Transfusion in India is based on the article “**Bloody Mess- Patients infected via transfusion in UP hospital tells larger all-India story of poor regulation**” published in **The Times of India** on **25th October 2023**.

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

**News:** In Kanpur, 14 thalassemia children received infected blood, causing HIV and hepatitis. India has many thalassemia cases. Blood transfusions are essential but risky. Blood management in India is poor. Stronger regulations are needed.

### What is blood transfusion?

According to the American Red Cross Society, blood transfusion is generally the process of receiving blood or blood products intravenously. Transfusions are used for various medical conditions to replace lost components of the blood.

### What is the system of blood transfusion in India?

The system of blood transfusion in India is structured and regulated to ensure the safety, quality, and availability of blood and blood components to those in need. Here’s an overview:

- **NACO’s Role:** The National AIDS Control Organization (NACO) has been pivotal since 1992 in ensuring the provision of safe blood across the country.
- **Network of Blood Banks:** India has a network of 1131 blood banks, spread across over 600 districts, primarily supported by NACO.
- **National Blood Policy:** Introduced by the Government of India in April 2002, this policy aims to guarantee easy access to adequate, safe, and high-quality blood.



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- **Regulatory Body:** The National Blood Transfusion Council (NBTC), formed as per a Supreme Court mandate in 1996, serves as the apex policy-making body for issues related to blood and plasma.
- **Modernization and Quality Control:** NACO has undertaken numerous steps to modernize blood banks, ensuring that the country's blood supply is safe.

### Why is blood transfusion becoming important in India?

**Thalassemia Prevalence:** India has 1-1.5 lakh children with thalassemia. These patients require a lifelong regimen of blood transfusions.

**Chronic Conditions:** The country has a growing number of people with chronic diseases like cancer. For such patients, transfusions are integral to treatment.

**Maternal Health:** Studies indicate that 25% of maternal deaths result from haemorrhaging. A report by The National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) highlighted that 70% of deaths from postpartum haemorrhage occur due to a lack of available blood.

**Health Issues:** High demand for blood is driven by preventable health problems, including complications from malnutrition, anaemia, and pregnancy-related issues.

### What are the issues with blood management in India?

**Shortage of Safe Blood:** Blood is consistently a health emergency. High demand is driven by conditions like malnutrition, anaemia, and complications from pregnancy. However, supply often falls short.

**System Mismanagement:** Blood and its components are among India's most mismanaged resources, with issues ranging from collection, safety, storage, to distribution.

**Inadequate Regulation and Oversight:** Despite having testing and screening regulations, there is minimal monitoring. This permits the operation of fraudulent blood banks with outdated testing facilities.

**Illicit Blood Trade:** A concerning grey market for blood exists, taking advantage of desperate families and patients.

### What should be done?

**Investigation and Accountability:** India's haemovigilance programme should thoroughly investigate incidents like the one in Kanpur to ensure accountability and prevent future occurrences.

**Strengthen Regulations:** Clearer and stricter regulations are essential. This includes rigorous testing and screening standards for blood and its components.

**Enhanced Monitoring:** Regular monitoring of blood banks, especially for their testing facilities, is crucial. This will help weed out spurious blood banks with outdated methods.

**Empower NACO:** NACO should be granted more authority. It should be able to mandate audits, set strict standards, and most importantly, penalize mismanaged blood banks and hospitals.

**Collaborative Effort:** State authorities must invest more resources and collaborate with agencies like NACO to streamline procedures and improve blood management.

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**Public Awareness:** There's a need for campaigns to educate the public about the importance of safe blood donation and the risks of the grey blood market.

**Terminology used:**

**The National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO):**

The National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) was established in 1992.

It is the nodal organization for National AIDS response in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

National AIDS Control Programme is a fully funded Central Sector Scheme implemented through State/ UT AIDS Control Societies (SACS) in States/Union Territories (UTs) and closely monitored through District AIDS prevention and control unit (DAPCU) in 188 high priority districts.

**Questions to practice:**

How can the integration of stricter regulations, public awareness campaigns, and enhanced monitoring mechanisms improve the safety and efficacy of blood management in India, especially in preventing tragedies like the one in Kanpur?

### 8. On regulatory environment of India – When the regulated become the regulator

**Source:** This post on **regulatory environment of India** has been created based on the article “When the regulated become the regulator” published in **Business Standard** on **26<sup>th</sup> October 2023**.

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** **GS Paper 2 Indian Polity** — Statutory, **regulatory**, and various quasi-judicial **bodies**.

**News:** This article discusses the issues with the regulatory environment of India. It also suggests reforms in the public consultation process to tackle these challenges.

Recently, Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) invited suggestions from the public for a comprehensive review of its regulations.

Several other regulators have also initiated similar exercises involving a comprehensive review of existing regulations, in line with the government's proposal in the Union Budget for 2023-24.

**What are the issues with regulations?**

- 1) **Difficult task** to ensure the **right quality and quantity** of regulations.
- 2) A regulator is accused of **lacking democratic legitimacy**.
- 3) Regulations stay in the legal framework once enacted, even if **outdated** or leading to **unnecessary costs**.

**What should be done by regulators to ensure ease of doing business?**

- 1) **Engaging with the public:** Every regulator should **engage with the public** to both formulate new regulations and review existing ones.
- 3) **Releasing of draft regulations:** Drafts of proposed regulations must be released to invite suggestions.

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- 4) **Periodic review:** Periodically review existing regulations to ease the compliance burden.
- 4) **Universal application:** These principles should also apply to subsidiary directions (such as orders, circulars, guidelines, etc.).
- 5) **Remove outdated regulations:** Regulations should be made contemporary and in tune with the requirements of dynamic businesses.

### What is the need for public consultations?

In 2016, the Supreme Court exhorted Parliament to mandate consultation with stakeholders for making laws and regulations. It has the following advantages:

- 1) **Bridges democratic deficit:** Public consultations help to **bridge the democratic deficit** of regulators.
- 2) **Raises awareness among the public:** Public consultation enables **the regulated** to know the rationale and implications of regulations.
- 3) **Large number of solutions can be offered by the people:** The regulated have **first-hand experience of the market**, and they can offer a wide range of **practical solutions**.

### What are the limitations of public consultations?

- 1) **Not conducted periodically:** A public consultation is meaningful only if it is **done periodically** and when a comprehensive picture of regulations and their intended objectives is presented.
- 2) **Technology not utilized:** It is efficient if it uses **technology which** is currently not being utilized substantially.
- 3) **Passive participation of the public:** Public consultation is **passive participation**, as stakeholders limit their comments to what is asked, and have a short timeframe to formulate their views.

### What should be done?

- 1) **Providing opportunity to the regulated:** The regulated must be given an opportunity to ask for/suggest new regulations and changes in existing regulations at their convenience.
- 2) **Periodic examination of proposals:** The regulator should periodically examine proposals coming from stakeholders and publicly comment on those proposals.
- 3) **Incorporating proposals in regulations:** It should take forward the proposals it considers useful for making regulations, following due process.

### Question for practice:

A comprehensive public consultation framework can augment the Indian regulatory structure. Discuss.

### 9. The legality of using white phosphorus

**Source:** This post on the topic **white phosphorus** has been created based on the article “**The legality of using white phosphorus**” published in **The Hindu** on **26<sup>th</sup> October 2023**.

**UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 2 International Relations — Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements.**

**News:** This article discusses the military applications of white phosphorus in the wake of their recent usage by Israel in Gaza. It also highlights the international legal framework associated with its use.

**Human Rights Watch** has accused Israel of using white phosphorus munitions in Gaza which are putting civilians at risk of serious and long-term injury.

In the past, a **2009 UN Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict** had also condemned Israel’s use of white phosphorus in civilian areas.

#### What is white phosphorus?

White phosphorus is a waxy, yellowish-to-clear chemical with a pungent, garlic-like odour. It is a highly combustible chemical that burns quickly and brightly when exposed to air.

Its chemical reaction with atmospheric oxygen can create **intense heat (about 815°C)**, light, and smoke



**Source:** Mohammed Abed/AFP (Al Jazeera).

**Read More on white phosphorus here:** <https://forumias.com/blog/what-is-the-white-phosphorus-that-israel-is-accused-of-using-in-gaza/>

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### What are the military uses of white phosphorous?

- 1) Employed to create **dense smoke screens** in combat, hindering visibility and providing cover for military movements.
- 2) Used in **incendiary devices** such as grenades and artillery shells, which can result in **persistent and intense fires**.

### What are the safeguards in international law regarding usage of incendiary weapons?

- 1) **Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW)**: It imposes restrictions on the use of incendiary weapons, including white phosphorus, with the aim of safeguarding civilians.
- 2) **International humanitarian law**: White phosphorus use is subject to the rules and principles of **international humanitarian law**, which aims to minimize harm to both civilians and combatants in armed conflicts.
- 3) **1980 Geneva Convention**: White phosphorus bombs are internationally prohibited under it. It forbids their use against both humans and the environment.

### What should be the way forward?

- 1) **Bringing white phosphorus under the ambit of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)**.
- 2) **Strengthening and removing ambiguity in Protocol III of the CCW**: Protocol III deals with incendiary weapons. It does not effectively regulate multi-purpose munitions such as those containing white phosphorus.
- 3) **Strict adherence to international humanitarian law**: Parties involved in armed conflicts must ensure that their actions conform to legal standards.

### Question for practice:

In the light of the recent controversy regarding the usage of white phosphorus bombs by Israel in Palestine, discuss the role of various international agreements in protecting the human rights of civilians during war.

## 10. Urban health in India – Unhealthy urban India must get into street fight mode

**Source:** The post on **Urban health in India** is based on the article “**Unhealthy urban India must get into street fight mode**” published in **The Hindu** on **26<sup>th</sup> October 2023**.

**UPSC Syllabus:** **GS 2 – Social issues – Issues Related to Health**

**Relevance:** Health related concerns with urban Indians

**News:** India’s urban population is expected to become the second largest in the world by 2035. However, despite their role in driving economic growth, most Indian cities are struggling to meet healthcare, environmental, and equity goals for their residents.

### What are the concerns associated with Urban health in India?

Urban residents in India face a variety of health risks, including air and noise pollution, limited green space, lack of sidewalks and parks, outdated transportation, unhealthy food, and significant exposure to toxic substances.

These factors, especially when combined with a lack of physical activity, increase the risk of heart disease and diabetes, **also known as cardiometabolic diseases**.

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**In India**, 20% of the population is inactive, 37% are only mildly active, which means that a total of 57% of the surveyed population does not meet the physical activity guidelines set by the World Health Organization.

Hence, physical activity becomes necessary to mitigate the problems of cardiometabolic diseases.

### **What factors contribute to the rising health risks in India?**

**Dysfunctional Provisioning Systems:** Globally, seven key provisioning systems: food, energy, transportation, housing, green infrastructure, water, and waste management, are fundamental to human health, well-being, equity, and sustainability.

However, these systems are often dysfunctional and contribute to environmental degradation and health disparities.

**Colonial Origins:** Urban provisioning systems in India are often rooted in colonial legacies. These systems both reflect and worsen social inequalities in cities, resulting in significant disparities in health risks and outcomes.

Hence, **a new approach that aligns with** global frameworks like the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the New Urban Agenda, and the Health in All Policies approach is needed.

**Stagnant Health Infrastructure:** Investments in clean energy and electric transport in India offer an opportunity to reduce air pollution and advance climate and equity goals.

However, their potential impact on health may be limited without changes in other systems like food, transportation, and green infrastructure.

Studies have also shown that even small changes to urban planning can have a big impact on health and productivity. **For example**, creating safe walking and biking lanes can improve physical activity and reduce air pollution.

**Long Working Hours:** A majority of urban Indians work long hours, often in sedentary jobs. This leaves them with little time and energy for exercise.

**High Stress:** The high levels of stress that many Indians experience make it difficult to motivate themselves to exercise.

**Lack of Awareness:** The lack of awareness of the benefits of physical activity is another factor that contributes to the lack of regular exercise in Indian urban cities.

Many people are not aware of the link between physical inactivity and chronic diseases such as heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and obesity.

### **How can the issues related to urban health in India can be addressed?**

**Regular Physical Exercise:** Regular physical exercise is an effective way to reduce the risk of heart disease and other cardiometabolic diseases.

Further, electrifying transportation alone would not be enough as studies have shown that increasing physical activity is much better for health.

**Investing in Footpaths:** Investing in active transportation, like walking and biking paths, can also provide added health and economic advantages.

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**Comprehensive Policies:** Encouraging healthy diets along with promoting active transportation should be integral components of comprehensive policies, benefiting both public health and economic productivity.

**Increasing Awareness:** It is necessary to increase awareness of the benefits of physical activity and to promote healthy lifestyles through public education campaigns.

### What lies ahead?

Unhealthy diets, reduced physical activity, and urban air pollution in India pose greater health risks than drugs, tobacco, and alcohol. Hence, India needs to tackle these issues urgently.

**Question for practice:** Despite playing a role in driving economic growth, Indian urban population faces significant health risks. Discuss.

### 11. On internationalization of higher education -Why India must offer student work visas

**Source:** The post on **internationalization of higher education** is based on the article “**Why India must offer student work visas**” published in “**Indian Express**” on 26th October 2023.

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

**News:** The article discusses India’s aim to internationalize its higher education. Many Indian students study abroad due to varied college quality at home. India struggles to attract and retain foreign students, mainly because they can’t work after studying. Changes in visa policies are suggested to address this.

### What is the meaning of internationalizing higher education?

According to the International Association of universities, Internationalization of higher education is the process of integrating an international/intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service elements of an institution.

This ensures that students, faculty, and the community experience a globalized curriculum and environment, preparing them for a more interconnected world.

It also helps one to understand and appreciate diverse cultural and ethnic groups, including those within one’s own country.

**NEP 2020’s goal:** Internationalization of education is one of the goals of NEP 2020. It aims to achieve it by making the Indian education system self-reliant and compliant to global standards & norms. It would help India in attracting students from abroad, in large numbers.

### What is India’s Student (“S”) visa policy?

India’s student visa policy allows foreign students to pursue education in recognized institutions. It is characterized by:

The Student Visa duration is either the course length or 5 years, whichever is shorter.

Working on a student visa is prohibited, but NRIs, OCIs, and PIOs are exempted.

### What is the significance of internationalizing higher education in India?

**1) Raising Standards through collaboration** as provided in the NEP 2020: This includes updating syllabi, offering joint degrees with foreign institutions, and enhancing campus diversity.

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**2) Meeting Demand:** Despite having 54,000 colleges, there's a gap in quality. This has led to 7.5 lakh Indian students seeking education abroad annually.

**3) Economic Opportunities:** Attracting foreign students can boost India's economy.

**4) Building Global Networks:** Indian companies benefit from hiring foreign talent who understand both India and their home countries.

**5) Addressing Workforce Challenges:** India's aging population means a potential workforce decline. Foreign students working post-studies can help fill this gap.

### What is the concern associated with permitting foreign students to work?

**Job Competition:** A primary worry is that foreign students might take jobs that would otherwise go to Indian students.

**Bureaucratic Procedures:** Currently, foreign students cannot gain work experience post-studies. Changing this requires an amendment to India's "S" Visa, involving bureaucratic procedures.

**Tax Implications:** The Ministry of Finance would need to address how India's tax laws and double taxation treaties would apply to income earned by foreign students.

**Regulatory Coordination:** Multiple ministries, including Education, Home Affairs, and Finance, must coordinate closely to implement such changes, which can be a complex task.

**Long-term Residency Concerns:** While the idea is to offer work status to foreign students, it might lead to concerns about whether this could be a pathway to longer-term residency in India.

### What should be done in this regard?

**Amending of Visa Rules:** India should modify the "S" Visa policy to allow foreign students to work post-studies in India.

**Enhancing Coordination between Ministries:** The Ministry of Home Affairs needs to work alongside the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Education for a cohesive approach to visa and tax issues.

**Issuing of Guidelines on Recruitment:** The Ministry of Education, through bodies like the UGC and AICTE, should issue guidelines for on-campus hiring of foreign students.

**Promoting Higher Education Abroad:** India's Prime Minister has highlighted higher education as a key export sector. For instance, IIMs and IITs are opening branches overseas.

**Engaging Private Universities:** Institutions like Manipal, Sharda, and Amity, which already have foreign campuses, can share insights and best practices.

**Involving Indian Companies:** They can advocate for student visa changes, benefiting from hiring globally acquainted talent.

### Question for practice:

In this era of globalization and the resulting internationalization of education, India should reconsider its stance on student work visas for foreign students. Analyse.



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### 12. The T.N. experience on caste survey

**Source:** The post is based on the article “The T.N. experience on caste survey” published in **The Hindu** on **27<sup>th</sup> October 2023**.

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

**Relevance:** Issues associated with providing reservation to Backward Classes in Tamil Nadu

**News:** The Bihar caste-based survey has sparked a national debate about increasing the 50% reservation limit. But Tamil Nadu’s experience shows that a caste census alone may not be enough to provide reservation.

**Read Here for other aspects related to the caste-based survey: [Caste Census Significance and Challenges- Explained](#)**

**When were the First and the Second Backward Classes Commissions formed by the Tamil Nadu government?**

The first Backward Classes Commission was formed for the period 1969-1970. It suggested raising Backward Classes (BCs) reservation.

**How did the Second BC Commission come into being?**

In Jan. 1980, the AIADMK government in Tamil Nadu increased the reservation for Backward Classes (BCs) from 31% to 50%.

This brought the total reservation to 68%, including 18% for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs).

**This decision was challenged in the Supreme Court.** After which the state government set up (Second Backward Classes Commission), headed by J.A. Ambasankar.

**What was the finding of the Ambasankar Commission?**

The Ambasankar Commission conducted a survey to enumerate and classify Backward Classes (BCs), primarily focusing on BCs without providing a comprehensive breakdown of all communities.

The survey found that BCs made up 67.15% of the state’s population. In March 1989, an exclusive quota of 20% was provided for Most Backward Classes (MBCs) and Denotified Communities (DNCs) within the total share of BCs of 50%.

**What were the issues related to reservation for Backward Classes faced by the Commission?**

**Amount of Reservation: The Chairman wanted to** reduce the quota from 50% to 32% to keep the overall quota within the 50% limit.

However, **the other panel members argued that the quota should** be at least 50%, since BCs made up 67% of the population.

**Scope of Reservation: The Chairman insisted on** maintaining two separate lists of Backward Classes (BCs): one under Article 15(4) and another under Article 16(4).

He believed that being eligible for a quota under Article 15(4) did not automatically entitle individuals to reservations in job appointments under Article 16(4).

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**However, the majority of panel members supported having only one list.** They argued that social and educational backwardness were interconnected, and educational benefits provided under Article 15(4) were a means to achieve employment benefits under Article 16(4).

### **What were the recommendations given by the Commission?**

The government received two sets of recommendations, one from the Chairman and the other from panel members.

However, the government retained the status quo of 50% reservation for Backward Classes and accepted the inclusion of 29 communities but did not agree to remove 24 communities from the list.

### **How did the 1992 Supreme Court judgment affect State reservations?**

Tamil Nadu government enacted a law to protect its 69% reservation for BCs and SCs by placing it under the Ninth Schedule after the Supreme Court's Mandal Commission judgment in 1992.

The Tamil Nadu government has also provided reservation to other groups such as Muslims, Christians, Arunthathiyars (a sub-caste of SCs), and Vanniyars.

However, the Supreme Court has struck down the law providing a separate quota for Vanniyars on the ground that the data used by the government was not contemporaneous.

### **What can be the conclusion drawn?**

The Tamil Nadu case illustrates that conducting a survey alone is insufficient for implementing reservations for the Backward Classes. Overcoming challenges such as court intervention, political will, scope and amount of reservation is also essential in providing reservation.

**Question for Practice** – Critically examine the issues and challenges associated with conducting a caste-based survey and providing reservation based on it, with proper examples.

## 13. On Abortion Rights – Judges & doctors, listen

**Source:** The post on **Abortion Rights** is based on the article **“Judges & Doctors, Listen–** A recent SC judgment shows why Indian medical boards must be made aware of scientific evidence on the impact of forcing women to continue an unwanted pregnancy” published in **“The Times of India”** on 27th October 2023.

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

**News:** The article discusses the Supreme Court's decision to deny an abortion for a woman with mental health issues in India. Medical boards and courts often advise women to continue unwanted pregnancies and consider adoption. This neglects the mental and physical consequences for the woman.

### **What is abortion?**

An abortion is a medical procedure to terminate a pregnancy. It uses medication or a surgical procedure to end the pregnancy. However, this medical procedure has a 'Pro-Choice' vs 'Pro-Life' surrounding it.

**Pro-Choice-Support abortion rights of women.** 'Right of women to bodily autonomy' is paramount.

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**Pro-Life- Oppose abortion rights of women.** 'Right to life of the foetus' is paramount.

Read here for more details: [Abortion laws in India](#)

### **What are the implications of the Supreme Court's decision to deny an abortion to a woman with mental health issues?**

- 1) **Mental Health Neglect:** Evidence suggests of forcing a woman to continue an unwanted pregnancy can result in depression, anxiety, and other mental health problems.
- 2) **Lack of Empathy in Medical Advice:** Medical boards frequently suggest women to complete pregnancies and then give the baby up for adoption. This dismisses the impact such decisions have on the woman's mental well-being.
- 3) **Risks for Young Girls Ignored:** For instance, in the 2018 case of a 10-year-old, the risks of a full-term pregnancy were overlooked, even though she had a congenital heart condition and other pregnancy-associated risks.
- 4) **Contradiction with Mental Healthcare Law:** The 2017 law supports mentally ill individuals making their own healthcare decisions. The recent case contradicted this.

### **What are the issues with the current medical view on late abortions?**

**Foetal Injections:** These are routinely administered for late abortions in cases of foetal anomalies. This practice is aligned with the health ministry's guidelines.

**Discriminatory Gestational Limits:** The Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act sets different gestational limits for foetal anomalies. This is seen as discriminatory as it reinforces stigma and negative attitudes towards disabilities.

**Late Abortion Safety:** If a late abortion is deemed safe in the case of a foetal anomaly, it raises the question of why it wouldn't be considered safe for other unwanted pregnancies.

**Paternalistic Attitudes:** Women seeking late abortions often face judgment and reprimand for their delay in seeking the procedure, reflecting a paternalistic medical model.

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

- 1) **Update Medical Training:** Medical professionals' education needs to integrate the concept of reproductive rights and ensure they understand individual agency regarding reproductive choices.
- 2) **Exposure to International Standards:** Medical practitioners should be made familiar with international standards for late abortions, ensuring they're equipped with the recommended techniques.
- 3) **Embedded Patients' Rights:** There's an urgent need to include patients' rights and ethics in medical training, emphasizing respect for patient autonomy and decision-making.
- 4) **Redefine "Counseling":** Counseling should be genuine and respectful, not a tool to repeatedly persuade women to continue unwanted pregnancies.

### **Terminology used:**

**Reproductive rights:** As per the United Nations, reproductive choice entails women's right to make decisions about reproduction, which includes the freedom to choose whether to continue

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or terminate an undesired pregnancy and the ability to select their preferred family planning and contraception methods.

### Question for practice:

Discuss how the Supreme Court's recent denial of an abortion impacts women's reproductive rights and mental health in India.

### 14. On India's bid to host Olympics 2036 – Is India ready to host the Olympic Games?

**Source:** This post on **India's bid to host Olympics 2036** has been created based on the article "Is India ready to host the Olympic Games?" published in **The Hindu** on **27<sup>th</sup> October 2023**.

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper 2 International Relations — India's Soft Power.  
**GS Paper 2 Governance — Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors.**

**News:** This article discusses the opportunities and challenges in front of India in its bid to host the 2036 Olympic Games.

A detailed account of **India's bid to host Olympics 2036** has been discussed here: <https://forumias.com/blog/indias-bid-to-host-olympics-2036-explained-pointwise/>

### What is the process of Selection of Host Country/City for Olympics?

In the 2014 IOC session, roadmap for the future of the Olympic Movement, Olympic Agenda 2020, was laid out. It dealt with a new process for host city selection, and it was called the 'New Norm'. It is based on 3 Pillars – **Flexibility, Sustainability and Cost Effectiveness**.

### Why does hosting an Olympics hold such great importance?

- 1) **Pinnacle of sports:** It showcases not only the nation to the world, but also **soft power**.
- 2) **Political statement:** India is a geopolitical power, and its standing will go up if it hosts the Games.
- 3) **Showcasing development:** Hosting the Olympics would also underscore India's importance as a sporting nation and showcase its development.
- 4) **Promotion of Investment and Tourism-** India's bid for hosting the Olympics can catalyse investment and tourism in the country.

### What are the necessary conditions for making an Olympics successful?

- 1) **Strong National Olympic Committee (NOC):** The Games are given to the NOC, which is India's Indian Olympic Association (IOA). It has to be governed efficiently.
- 2) **Strong legacy:** Including people's participation, the social structure, and building of infrastructure.
- 3) **Coordination and cohesion:** Knowing how to work with one another well would be important. All elements such as culture, hospitality, infrastructure, government, and sports bodies have to work in coordination.

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### What does India need to do to host a successful Olympics?

- 1) **Games Village:** You need to have a top-class village for the Games.
- 2) **Specialists:** Including marketing specialists, engineers, scientists, etc.
- 3) **Sound ports governance:** Indian sport is governed poorly. Most federations are not functioning properly.
- 4) **Temporary movable structures:** Temporary structures, instead of big stadia, can be built, and after the Games, they can be used by the community.
- 5) **Shortlist cities and hire feasibility consultants:** To report on cities that can host the Games best.

### Question for practice:

‘India’s ambitious bid for 2036 Olympics has brought with it various opportunities and challenges’. Elaborate.

### 15. On India-Qatar relations – Qatar Questions

**Source:** This post on **India-Qatar relations** has been created based on the article “**Qatar Questions**” published in **The Times of India** on **27<sup>th</sup> October 2023**.

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** **GS Paper 2 International Relations — Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India’s interests.**

**News:** This article discusses the recent challenge for Indian foreign policy in the wake of a Qatari court sentencing 8 former Indian navy personnel to death.

Aspects of **India-Qatar bilateral relations** have been discussed in detail here: <https://forumias.com/blog/india-qatar-and-the-continuing-saga-of-eight-detained-ex-indian-navy-officers/>

### What was the reason for the sentencing?

The precise charges remain unknown.

Various news reports suggest that they were arrested for allegedly **leaking classified information** related to a high-value Qatari submarine project.

There is also speculation in some news reports that the receiver of the classified information was Israel.

### What makes the situation challenging?

- 1) **Secrecy of the trial:** The precise nature of charges is not yet known.
- 2) **India’s investments in bilateral relations:** India has invested a lot to improve bilateral relations with Qatar, in line with India’s greater engagement with other Gulf states.
- 3) **Qatar’s geopolitical standings:** Qatar also hosts a plethora of opposition and militant movement leaders from the Islamic world, including from Palestinian Hamas, Muslim Brotherhood, and Taliban.

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- 4) **Interests of global and regional powers:** Qatar houses American and Turkish military-bases and simultaneously has a working relationship with Iran.
- 5) **Soft power:** In the government-owned Al Jazeera broadcaster, Doha has an opinion-influencer in the region.
- 6) **Fuel exports to India:** India is one of the largest importers of Qatari gas.
- 7) **Large Indian diaspora:** 800,000 Indians live and work in Qatar.

India will have to tread very carefully as it tries to help the ex-navy personnel.

### Question for practice:

India's outreach in the Gulf has received a setback in the form of the recent diplomatic row with Qatar. In this context, analyse the challenges in India's bilateral relations with Qatar.

### 16. On Potential of India-China Relations: A China-India partnership, its vast global potential

**Source:** The post on **Potential of India-China Relations** is based on the article "A China-India partnership, its vast global potential" published in "The Hindu" on 28th October 2023.

**UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 2 International Relations** – Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

**News:** The article discusses the ongoing global crises and suggests that China and India, as ancient Asian civilizations, can lead the way in promoting peace and development. They propose building a global community with shared values and future goals, emphasizing cooperation, mutual respect, and multilateralism.

#### What history and vision do China and India share?

**Ancient Civilizations:** Both countries have a rich history, having coexisted as neighboring ancient civilizations for thousands of years.

**Common Philosophies:** The Chinese vision of "a world of fairness and justice for the common good" and the Indian motto "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" emphasize global unity.

**Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence:** In the 1950s, China and India together introduced these principles, which have since become foundational norms for international relations.

**Developmental Stage:** Both nations, with populations exceeding one billion each, are at a pivotal phase of development and revitalization.

**Global Community Vision:** China's President proposes building a global community of a shared future, an idea also supported by multiple international platforms including the UN.

#### What are the key vision points proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping?

**Economic Globalization:** The focus is on guiding economic globalization in the right direction, ensuring it benefits developing countries. Rejecting practices like unilateralism, protectionism, and "winner-takes-all" strategies is emphasized.

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**Peaceful Development:** The world should prioritize peace, likening its importance to air and sunshine. The pitfalls of colonialism and hegemonism are highlighted, advocating instead for cooperation and win-win situations.

**New International Relations:** The goal is to establish relations where emerging and established powers coexist peacefully. Mutual respect, equity, and cooperation should be the foundation.

**True Multilateralism:** Multilateralism should be genuine, not based on cliques or supremacy. The UN should remain central in this vision, with international law guiding global order.

**Common Human Values:** There's an emphasis on universal values like peace, development, equity, and justice. Recognizing the diversity of civilizations and respecting each nation's unique development path is vital.

### How can China and India collaborate?

China and India's collaboration potential may include:

- 1) **Shared Population Strength:** Together, China and India account for a third of the global population. This demographic weight offers a significant platform for collaborative influence.
- 2) **Global Community Building:** They can jointly spearhead the vision of a global community with a shared future, leveraging their historical ties and combined wisdom.
- 3) **Joint Initiatives and Unique solutions:** By aligning on global development, security, and civilization initiatives, they can present unified solutions to global challenges.
- 4) **Global South Leadership:** As representatives of the Global South, both countries can demonstrate a will to create an open, inclusive world that prioritizes peace, security, and common prosperity.

### Terminology Used:

Global South

### Question for practice:

How might the collaboration between China and India, rooted in their shared historical ties and visions, influence the trajectory of global peace and development, especially in the context of ongoing crises in regions like Ukraine and West Asia?

### 17. On Israel-Palestine Conflict- Israel & limits of military power

**Source:** This post on the **Israel-Palestine conflict** has been created based on the article "**Israel & limits of military power**" published in **Business Standard** on **28<sup>th</sup> October 2023**.  
**UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 2 International Relations – Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests.**

**News:** This article discusses the shortcomings of military action in solving geopolitical issues, especially in the context of Israel's military action in Gaza.

A detailed article on the **Israel-Palestine Conflict** can be [read here](#).

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### What is the Israel-Palestine Conflict?

It 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.

On October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Palestinian militant organisation Hamas attacked Israel. The ongoing retaliatory attacks from Israel in the Gaza Strip have led to a huge loss of life and property. This may add another war in the long-drawn history of Israel-Palestine conflict.



Source: BBC

### What are the limitations of military power?

The military is central to a nation's Gross National Power (GNP). However, history has shown that relying on military power, however formidable, is an ineffective approach to achieving a larger political and strategic objective.

- 1) **Failure to achieve objectives:** For instance, five Israeli wars in Gaza since 2003 have failed to defeat Hamas.
- 2) **Incapability to solve issues in the long-term:** History has shown the futility of settling issues using purely military means. For instance, **the Kashmir problem.** Military action works initially. It puts down the problem in the immediate term and satisfies the urge for revenge. However, the problem stays intact, and may even get stronger.

**USA's military action in Afghanistan** as part of the 'War on Terror' is another example of this. In the absence of diplomacy, politics and compromises going together, it was eventually unsuccessful.



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Specifically for Israel, despite Israel's military action, its enemies, including non-state actors, such as Hamas or Hezbollah, still exist.

### What makes Israeli military action complicated?

- 1) **Demands for a two-state solution:** From the US to India, Europe and China. Due to the overwhelming Arab and Muslim opinion on Palestine, demands will also come from UAE, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain.
- 2) **Non-state actors:** Israel's challenge is complicated by the fact that they do not face a hostile, sovereign power, but a non-state actor (Hamas).
- 3) **Urban warfare:** Gaza itself is really a little urban sprawl. Cities trap troops and give an advantage to the defender.
- 4) **Civilian casualties and destruction:** Hamas's ideology won't just survive; it will return stronger.

### What should be Israel's strategy?

Israel would be better off fighting a more patient, long war, using its intelligence, targeted attacks, targeting terrorist leaders.

### Question for practice:

Israel's military action in Gaza might not yield the results Israel expects. Discuss in light of the challenges of urban warfare and the limitations of military action.

# General Studies Paper – 3

### General Studies - 3

#### 1. Can Generals Chanakya, Kamandaka, Thiruvalluvar Help?

**Source:** The post is based on the article “Can Generals Chanakya, Kamandaka, Thiruvalluvar Help?” published in “The Times of India” on 23rd October 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS1- Art and culture- literature from ancient times & GS3- Security

**News:** The article discusses the Indian army’s Project Udbhav, which uses ancient Indian texts for strategy lessons. It argues that while these texts offer valuable wisdom, modern warfare demands understanding contemporary tactics and technologies. Studying ancient texts alone won’t address today’s military challenges.

#### What is Project Udbhav?

**Initiator:** Launched by India’s Defence Minister, Rajnath Singh.

**Inspiration:** Draws from significant ancient Indian treatises. Examples include: Chanakya’s Arthashastra, Kamandaka’s Nitisara, Thiruvalluvar’s Thirukkural.

**Primary Objective:** To extract lessons on statecraft, strategy, diplomacy, and warfare rooted in ancient Indian philosophy.

**Connection to Modern Warfare:** The project seeks to integrate ancient wisdom with contemporary military strategy.

**Relevance:** While Project Udbhav is a commendable academic pursuit enhancing understanding and pride in ancient wisdom, the article underscores a cautionary note. It emphasizes that the challenges of today’s warfare are vastly different and may not align entirely with the teachings of these old texts.

#### Why is there skepticism about relying on ancient texts?

**Modern Complexity:** Modern warfare has intricacies that ancient texts might not address.

**Evolution of Warfare:** Military strategy has evolved since the Napoleonic era, influenced by advancements like mobile artillery, muskets, and sophisticated logistics.

**Influential Thinkers:** Modern strategists like Carl von Clausewitz and Antoine-Henri Jomini have shaped current military strategies, focusing on the nuances of contemporary warfare.

**Changing Battle Landscape:** 19th-century innovations, such as rifles, machine guns, and the telegraph, revolutionized the battlefield, moving beyond the scope of ancient teachings.

**Limited Practicality:** Ancient proverbs, while wise, might not offer practical solutions or tactics for modern warfare’s vast and multifaceted domains.

**Modern Warfare Challenges:** With the advent of technologies like AI and advanced weaponry, warfare demands current understanding, possibly beyond the grasp of ancient wisdom.

#### Question to practice:

Critically examine the efficacy of using ancient Indian treatises like Chanakya’s Arthashastra and Thiruvalluvar’s Thirukkural in the formulation and execution of modern-day military strategy in the context of Project Udbhav.

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### 2. A Damocles sword hangs above laptop importers

**Source:** The post is based on the article “A Damocles sword hangs above laptop importers” published in “Live mint” on 23rd October 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS3- Economy- Effects of liberalisation on the economy

**News:** The Indian government has changed its policy on importing laptops, mainly from China. Instead of licenses, an “import management system” will quickly approve imports. The goal is to boost local production and reduce reliance on China. This might affect laptop prices and quality in India.

#### What is India’s new “import management system”?

India’s new “import management system,” set to start from November 1. Under this system, companies must register the quantity and value of their imports, along with the source country. As of now, the government won’t reject any import requests for laptops. Instead, the data gathered will be used for monitoring purposes. This change aims to ensure a trusted and secure digital ecosystem in the country.

**Previous System:** Before this, on August 3, 2023, a licensing regime for these imports was introduced, potentially causing supply chain disruptions by enabling the government to delay or reject import requests and imposing a license requirement for each shipment.

**Impact on Tech Giants:** Major companies like Dell, HP, Apple, Samsung, and Lenovo had concerns about the past restrictions.

#### Why did the Indian government change its laptop import policy?

**Reduce Dependence on China:** A significant portion of laptop imports come from China. By altering the policy, India aims to diminish Chinese dominance in its key markets.

**Promote Local Production:** The new “import management system” supports India’s broader policy goal of self-reliance, known as “Atmanirbhar Bharat”. Over time, companies are expected to increase local manufacturing.

**National Security Concerns:** The system ensures imports come from “trusted sources”. If challenged at the World Trade Organization (WTO), India might cite “national security” as a reason, much like the US did with steel and aluminium tariffs.

**Shift in Global Trade Patterns:** With global geopolitical divides growing and past norms of globalization eroding, India is adapting its trade policies to the changing landscape.

#### What will be the impact of this policy change?

##### Positive Impact:

**Boost to Local Production:** With this policy change, laptop marketers are likely to increase the share of locally produced items. This aligns with India’s aim for self-reliance.

**Controlled Imports:** By monitoring imports through the “import management system”, the government ensures that products are sourced from “trusted vendors”, ensuring national security.

**Flexibility for Importers:** The new system allows importers to source items from multiple overseas vendors across different regions using a single authorization, offering greater flexibility.

##### Negative Impact:

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**Potential Price Increase:** Historically, policy-enforced import substitution has made local products costly, as seen in India's pre-1991 economy.

**Dependency on Fiscal Support:** To gain an edge in hardware, there might be a reliance on fiscal subsidies, which, if not reduced over time, could keep products uncompetitive.

**Uncertainty for Hardware Sellers:** The policy acts as a check, ensuring they align with India's broader goals, which may create operational challenges.

**License Raj:** License Raj or Permit Raj was a system of regulations and licenses that were required to set up and run a business along with the accompanying red tapes, delays and corruption between 1947 and 1990 in India.

Under this it was mandatory to obtain a license from the government to start a business.

### Terminology used

**Atmanirbhar Bharat:** Read here – <https://forumias.com/blog/pm-aatmanirbhar-swasthya-bharat-yojana/>

### Question to practice:

Critically analyse the Indian government's shift from a licensing proposal to an "import management system" in the context of its broader goal for an "Atmanirbhar Bharat" and the implications for trade relations with China.

### 3. On Air Pollution in Mumbai – Climate change has made it harder to breathe in Mumbai

**Source:** This post has been created based on the article "Climate change has made it harder to breathe in Mumbai" published in **The Indian Express** on **25th October 2023**.

**UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 3 Environment — Environmental pollution and degradation.**

**News:** This article discusses the causes behind the recent degradation of air quality in Mumbai. It also suggests steps to tackle the rising challenge aggravated by climate change.

The Air Quality Index (AQI) in Mumbai has registered "**moderate**" or "**poor**" during the post-monsoon period for the second consecutive year.

### What is Air Quality Index?

Notified by Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), AQI considers **8 pollutants** (PM10, PM2.5, NO2, SO2, CO, O3, NH3, and Pb). There are six AQI categories, namely Good, Satisfactory, Moderately polluted, Poor, Very Poor, and Severe.

## CENTRAL POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD'S AIR QUALITY STANDARDS

AIR QUALITY INDEX (AQI)	CATEGORY
0-50	Good
51-100	Satisfactory
101-200	Moderate
201-300	Poor
301-400	Very Poor
401-500	Severe

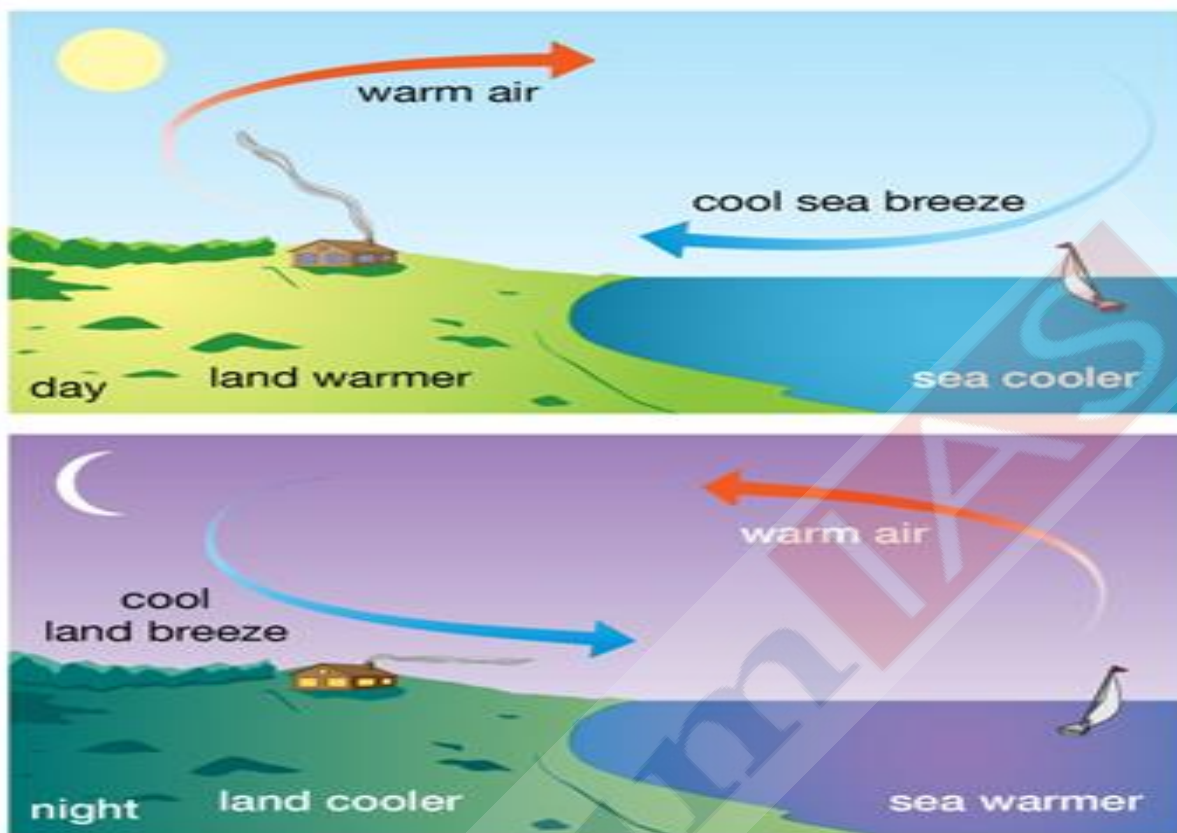
Source: NDTV.

Read more on AQI here: <https://forumias.com/blog/air-quality-index-aqi-2/>

### How does Mumbai's geography affect its air quality?

The coastal city has a **natural cleaning mechanism**.

Strong surface winds lead to faster dispersal of pollutants, and the strong sea-breeze sweeps away these particles from the land.



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Source: Britannica

### What are the reasons behind rising air pollution in Mumbai recently?

It is a result of a combination of factors. These include:

#### 1) “Triple dip” La Niña:

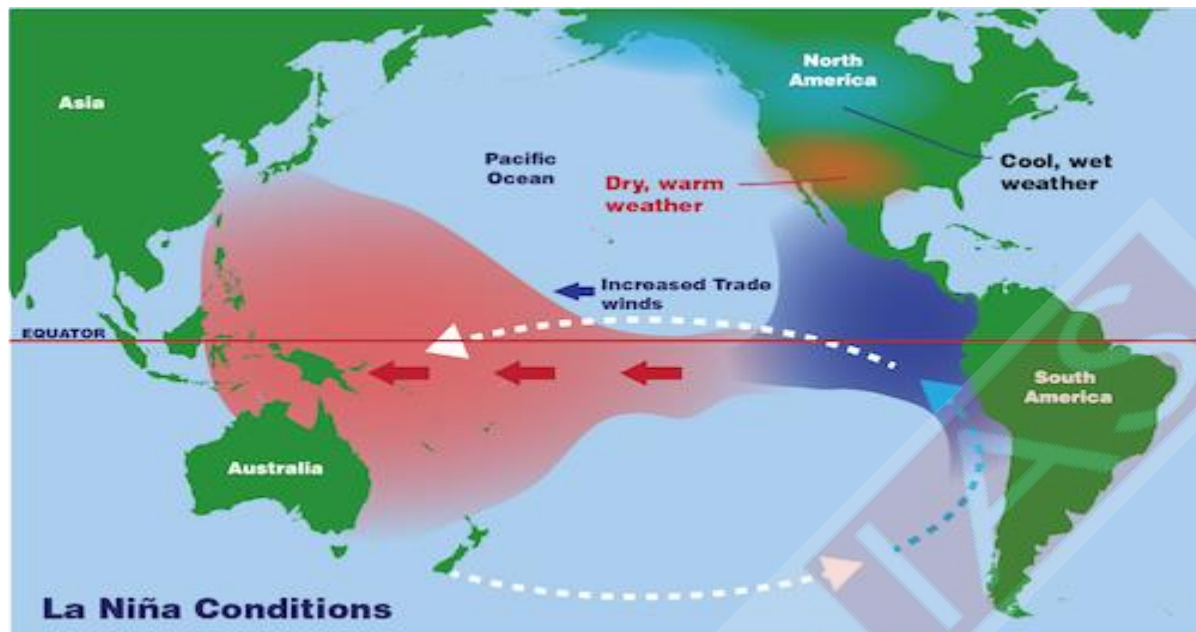
Last winter, Mumbai experienced record-breaking particulate pollution, which was related to the unusual “triple dip” La Niña conditions— linked to climate change.

This had led to **hardly any wind reversal from across the Arabian Sea**, which would otherwise occur every 2 to 3 days and disperse pollutants in the air.

#### What is La Niña?

The weather pattern known as La Niña brings warmer-than-normal sea-surface temperatures (in red) to the southern Pacific Ocean around northern Australia, New Guinea, and the islands of Indonesia. The cooler sea-surface temperatures of La Niña (in blue) occur in the southern Pacific off the coast of South America.

A “triple-dip” La Niña is a **multi-year cooling of the surface temperature of the equatorial Pacific Ocean**. It’s called a “triple-dip” because it lasts for three consecutive northern hemisphere winters.



Source: NASA.

#### 2) Delay in the withdrawal of monsoon:

The **withdrawal of the monsoon was delayed** till October. It plays a critical role in Mumbai's air quality.

The withdrawal is always followed by an **anti-cyclonic circulation above Mumbai** leading to weak ventilation in the city.

#### 3) Role of transport winds:

At the same time, the transport level winds (a measure of the average rate of the **horizontal transport of air**) transported pollutants towards Mumbai.

These winds encountered warmer winds which were laden with **local dust**. This dust-filled cloud pushed towards Mumbai and was halted because of the calm winds, deteriorating the city's air quality.

#### 4) PM10 pollution due to anthropogenic emissions:

PM10 stands for particulate matter with a diameter of 10 micrometers or less. It continues to be the major pollutant in the city. These coarser particles are largely a result of **dust emissions**.

Many **development and construction activities** are being undertaken across the city — these include the **coastal corridor**, the **Metro** and other digging activities.

#### What should be done to tackle this?

1) **Prioritizing long-term mitigation planning:** This should be based on **mapping airsheds** — areas where pollutants get trapped.

2) **Tackling climate change:** It is leading to extreme and unusual weather events leading to changes in the ecosystem.

3) **Addressing anthropogenic emissions** (root cause of air pollution)



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- 4) **Data- and science-driven approach:** Data from reliable scientific sources should be taken into account.
- 5) **Using green curtains:** in construction sites to reduce dust.
- 6) **Regular spraying of water:** Dampens dust particles and prevents them from becoming airborne.
- 7) **Fossil fuel-less transportation:** Ensuring transitioning to **electric vehicles**.
- 8) **Waste Management:** Addressing solid waste management, cleaning up dumping grounds and industrial toxin management can improve air quality in the medium term.

### Question for practice:

Climate change has worsened air pollution in India. Discuss with reference to the deteriorating air quality of Mumbai in recent years. What steps should be taken in order to tackle this challenge?

#### 4. On FRBM Act – Either repeal or revise the country’s fiscal law

**Source:** The post is based on the article “**Either repeal or revise the country’s fiscal law**” published in “**Live mint**” on 25th October 2023.

**UPSC Syllabus: GS3: Economy-** Fiscal policy

**News:** The article discusses India’s fiscal position and its deviation from the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act’s 3% deficit cap. Despite exceeding this limit, the economy hasn’t faced severe inflation or high lending rates post-COVID. The article suggests reconsidering the FRBM Act’s relevance and possibly adjusting the government’s spending approach.

#### Write about FRBM Act?

FRBMA stands for the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act enacted in 2003, aims to promote fiscal discipline, transparency, and accountability in the management of the India’s finances.

Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act, 2003 is regulated by the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance.

Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act ,2003 ensures intergenerational equity in fiscal management and long-term macro-economic stability by reducing fiscal deficit. It further ensures effective conduct of monetary policy and prudential debt management consistent with fiscal sustainability.

#### Read for more details: [FRBM Act](#)

#### What is the current fiscal position of India?

**Fiscal Status:** India’s fiscal position is termed ‘solid’ by the Union finance ministry.

**Revenue and Expenditure:** There has been consistent revenue growth, and the Centre has prudently rationalized its spending.

**Deficit Target:** The goal is to reach a 5.9% deficit for the fiscal year 2023-24.

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**Comparison to FRBM Act:** This 5.9% deficit stands out as it's nearly twice the 3% cap mandated by the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act of 2003.

**Economic Repercussions:** Post-COVID, even with such deficits, neither high inflation nor soaring lending rates have been observed.

**Economic Recovery:** There's a robust recovery in commercial activity, and consumer demand is bouncing back.

**Central Bank's Role:** The central bank has played a pivotal role in ensuring stability, monitoring monetary conditions amidst the increased deficits, and fostering an environment for economic recovery.

### What is the relevance of the FRBM Act in the present situation?

**FRBM Act's Original Intent:** The FRBM Act of 2003 set a 3% deficit cap for India.

**Current Scenario:** India aims for a 5.9% deficit in the fiscal year 2023-24, surpassing the FRBM's stipulation.

**Act's Modern Relevance:** Many consider the 3% cap outdated in the current economic environment.

**Provisions for Crises:** The Act has flexibility for extraordinary situations, like the COVID pandemic.

**Government's View:** The government's deviation suggests they might see the Act more as a guideline than a strict rule.

**Need for Policy Flexibility:** Economic experts believe fiscal policy should have room to adjust, especially when state intervention can stabilize the economy.

**Post-COVID Economic Impact:** Despite exceeding the FRBM's limits after COVID, India hasn't experienced high inflation or lending rates, raising questions about the Act's strictness in today's context.

### Questions to practice:

Evaluate the effectiveness of the FRBM Act in the context of India's current 'solid' fiscal scenario and its deficit target for 2023-24.

## 5. On Migration from India – Movers Are Shakers

**Source:** The post on the topic **migration from India** is based on the article "**Movers Are Shakers- OECD data shows Indians continue to be world champion economic migrants.**

Good for West and good for us" published in "**The Times of India**" on 25th October 2023.

**UPSC Syllabus:** GS3- Economy- migration

**News:** This article discusses the recent trend of increased migration from India to OECD countries, particularly for work in the tech industry. It highlights the economic benefits for India, including a boost from remittances. It also emphasizes the need for India to focus on improving education, employment, and the quality of life to continue this positive trend and achieve developed country status by 2047.

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### What is Human Migration?

Human migration is the movement of people from one place to another, often over long distances. Throughout history, humans have migrated for various reasons, such as seeking better opportunities or escaping danger. For example, people may move within their country or to a different country, either by choice or force. Migrants can be called emigrants, immigrants, or settlers, depending on the situation.

Depending on the goal and reason for relocation, people who migrate can be divided into three categories: migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.

### What is the difference between immigration and emigration?

**Immigration:** It refers to the act of coming to a country to live there permanently. For example, if a person moves from India to the United States to live, that person is immigrating to the United States.

**Emigration:** It refers to the act of leaving one's own country to settle permanently in another. Using the same example, that person is emigrating from India.

### What is the migration trend between India and OECD?

In 2020, India surpassed China as the largest source of migrants to OECD countries.

By 2022, 6.1 million permanent-type migrants moved to OECD, a 26% increase.

Most migrants went to the Anglosphere, especially the US, UK, and Singapore.

80% of these migrants were working, contributing to the economies.

The tech industry absorbed a significant number of these migrants.

### How does India benefit from this migration?

**Economic Boost:** India received a significant economic boost through remittances. In 2022 alone, remittances to India totaled \$111 billion, representing 3.3% of its GDP.

**Leading Remittance Recipient:** With this migration trend, India positioned itself as the world's largest recipient of remittances.

**Skilled Migrant Earnings:** The World Bank highlighted that 36% of these remittance inflows were from high-skilled Indian migrants based in prominent destinations like the US, UK, and Singapore.

**Tech Industry Collaboration:** The tech industry, particularly in countries such as the US, UK, and Singapore, has employed a vast number of these migrants. This creates a bridge for both skills and investments between India and these developed nations.

**Intellectual and Economic Dynamics:** The migration trend amplifies the economic and intellectual connection, fostering collaborations and transfer of skills back to India.

### What should India focus on for future growth?

**Enhancing Education:** India should invest in improving its educational institutions beyond the elite schools to ensure quality education for all.

**Boosting Employment:** By creating more and better job opportunities, India can retain its skilled workforce and contribute to the global labor market.

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**Improving Quality of Life:** Enhancing living standards will make India an even more attractive place for its citizens, potentially slowing down emigration.

**Aiming for Developed Status:** With these improvements, achieving developed country status by 2047 becomes a realistic goal.

**Capitalizing on Human Capital:** Recognizing that the world is always in need of top-notch talent, India should continue to nurture and produce highly skilled individuals.

### Terminology used:

OECD:

Read here: [OECD](#)

### Questions to practice:

How will the outflow of high-skilled migrants to OECD countries affect India's goal of achieving developed status by 2047?

## 6. On ESG framework- This Notion Asks Us To Think Beyond Nation

**Source:** This post on **ESG framework** has been created based on the article “**This Notion Asks Us To Think Beyond Nation**” published in **The Times of India** on **26<sup>th</sup> October 2023**.  
**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper 3 Indian Economy — Indian Economy and issues relating to mobilization of resources.

**GS Paper 4 Ethics — Corporate governance.**

**News:** This article discusses the importance and limitations of the ESG framework, in the context of an increasing transition towards renewable energy.

Read in detail about ESG here: <https://forumias.com/blog/esg-framework-in-india/>

### What is ESG?

**ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance)** investing involves making investment decisions that consider not only conventional financial metrics (such as Return on Investment (RoI)), but also **non-financial aspects related to the environment, society, and corporate governance**.

ESG can help us handle various challenges in the realm of economics, healthcare, education or environmental sustainability.

### What are the reasons behind the phenomena of ‘renewablisation’ (rising renewable energy adoption)?

- 1) **Lower costs:** The cost to use renewable energy sources is reducing and dropping below that of fossil-oil energy.
- 2) **Immune to fluctuations:** Unlike fossil fuels, prone to inflationary impacts, renewable energy costs remain relatively stable and are largely immune to global price fluctuations.

However, **geopolitical issues and manipulation of supply chain costs** by nations can reduce adoption.

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### What are the issues with ESG Framework?

- 1) **Lack of ESG frameworks with all nations:** Only a handful of influential nations possess proprietary ESG frameworks.
- 2) **One-size-fits-all approach:** It ignores **cultural nuances**, unique **financial conditions**, **stage of economic growth**, and **social obligations** of countries.
- 3) **Tool of dominance and control:** The imposition of ESG, without accounting for local variation, can act as a tool of exerting dominance and control rather than collaborations.

### Question for practice:

The 'ESG' framework is regarded as key to drive the energy transition across the world. However, it is plagued by various challenges. Analyse.

### 7. A green transition, but not without the coal-rich states

**Source:** The post is based on the article "A green transition, but not without the coal-rich states" published in "Indian Express" on 26th October 2023.

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS3 Indian Economy – infrastructure (Energy)

**News:** The article discusses India's energy transition from coal to renewable energy (RE). India has seen waves of power plant constructions. New renewable energy projects mainly benefit certain states, leaving others with financial strain. Solutions are needed to ensure all states benefit from the transition.

### What is the history of the evolution of India's power sector?

#### First Wave (mid-1970s to mid-1990s):

Central Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) took the lead. Notable creations include: NTPC and Coal India. Aimed to fix imbalances in state power supplies. The initial plants were strategically placed to serve multiple states.

#### Second Wave (2000-2015):

Triggered by the Electricity Act, 2003. Private promoters played a major role. New plants mostly located in central, western, and southern India. Private investment in power centered around states with industrial demand and strong finances.

### What is the significance of coal in India's energy mix?

**Continued Use and Investment:** Coal remains a significant part of India's energy landscape.

**New Power Plants:** The power minister has announced plans to build new coal power plants.

**Addressing Peak Power Problems:** The reliance on coal is evident in efforts to manage seasonal demand surges in electricity.

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### What is Energy Transition?

In the present context, **Energy Transition** refers to the transformation of the energy sector from fossil-based systems of energy production and consumption to renewable energy sources. It involves a shift in the energy mix to reduce, if not eliminate, the carbon emissions (and other greenhouse gases).

Read here for more detail: [What is the meaning of Energy Transition?](#)

In India's context, by 2030, solar and wind could account for 51% of generation capacity. Solar and wind's contribution might rise from 8.3% in 2019 to 31% by 2030.

### What are the implications of the renewable energy transition?

#### 1) Regional disparities in distribution:

As of August 2023, eight states generated 92.5% of all renewable energy. Mainly western and southern states are benefiting.

#### 2) Challenges for RE-Poor States:

Coal royalties, a key revenue, will decrease.

Power procurement costs will rise for these states leading to budget deficit.

#### 3) State vs. Union Tensions:

Disagreements over revenues, power operations, and transition costs.

State transmission companies bear the integration costs of RE projects.

### What can ensure a balanced energy transition?

**1) Support for RE-Poor States:** States with less renewable energy need more involvement in the transition.

**2) Financial Assistance:** Offer preferential lending for RE projects in states with less renewable resources.

**3) Increased Federal Negotiations:** Give RE-poor states a bigger voice in power discussions, possibly by reviving institutions like the Inter-State Council.

**Financial Transfers:** The Finance Commission can provide explicit financial aid to RE-poor states.

**Collaborative Policies:** Implement a just transition mechanisms and collaborative industrial policies.

**Equitable Green Policy:** Ensure all states, not just the historically privileged ones, benefit from the green industrial policy.

### Question for practice:

Critically examine the potential economic and fiscal disparities created by India's energy transition. How will this shape future regional development and centre-state relations?

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### 8. There is no easy escape from the middle-income trap

**Source:** This post on **middle income trap** is based on the article “**There is no easy escape from the middle-income trap**” published in “**Live mint**” on 26th October 2023.

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS3 – Indian Economy

**News:** The article discusses the challenges of countries trying to move from middle-income to developed status. The World Bank’s chief economist says it’s harder now due to global trade and investment issues.

#### What defines a middle-income country?

The **World Bank** classifies Middle Income Countries (MICs) as those with a per capita gross national income ranging from \$1,086 to \$13,205 in 2022.

MICs play a significant role in various aspects, including financial stability, global trade, and the promotion of sustainable energy in response to climate change.

#### What is the middle-income trap?

According to the **World Bank**, the middle-income trap is a condition in which a middle-income country faces difficulties in moving towards becoming a high-income economy.

This challenge arises from **increasing costs and decreasing competitiveness**, leading to a **plateau in per capita income and a lack of progress or a decline in economic competitiveness**.

This leads to an **inability to attain the necessary levels of investment and innovation** required to advance to a high-income status.

#### Why is it now more challenging for countries attempting to transition from middle income to developed status?

**1) Trade Environment:** The current trade setting is more protectionist, affecting global business and development.

**2) Decline in Investment:** Foreign direct investment (FDI) is declining.

**3) Global Economic Landscape:** There’s a rise in public debt and a drop in private investment, hindering economic growth.

**4) Governance Concerns:** Countries like China have unexpected changes in leadership, raising questions about stability.

**5) Educational and Bureaucratic Issues:** Countries like India face challenges in improving education and bureaucratic efficiency, critical for development.

**6) Global Trade Slowdown:** Trade is expected to grow by less than 2% this year, compared to an average growth of more than 10% in the early 2000s.

#### What actions should be taken by governments of middle-income countries?

**Enhance Education:** Prioritize improvement, especially in school education, to produce skills that match economic needs.

**Efficient Bureaucracy:** Speed up and make bureaucratic and judicial decisions more predictable. This can help businesses and the economy.

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**Avoid Fiscal Temptations:** Resist short-term fiscal populism that may seem attractive but can hinder long-term development.

**Strengthen R&D:** Invest in research and development to drive innovation and growth.

**Good Governance:** Ensure stable and transparent governance. For example, abrupt leadership changes in China raised concerns.

**Resist Lobbyists:** Avoid the influence of powerful lobbyists who might sway policies for personal interests, not national growth.

**Focus on Trade and Investment:** Given the decline in global trade and FDI, governments should create conducive environments to attract investments and boost trade.

### Question for practice:

How are global trade challenges and internal governance affecting the transition of middle-income countries to a developed status?

### 9. On Digital Lending – RBI should step up efforts to control illegal loan apps

**Source:** The post on **Digital Lending** is based on the article “**RBI should step up efforts to control illegal loan apps**” published in “**Live mint**” on 27th October 2023.

**Syllabus:** GS Paper 3 Indian Economy – RBI and banking system.

**News:** The article discusses the problem of illegal loan apps in India. The government and RBI are trying to find ways to regulate them. RBI has proposed some solutions but hasn't implemented them all. Blockchain technology can help track valid lending partnerships.

#### What is digital lending?

**Digital Lending** refers to lending through web platforms or mobile apps by use of technology.

It utilizes automated technologies and algorithms for customer acquisition, credit evaluation, decision making, authentication, disbursements and recovery.

Not only does it lower costs but also ensures speedy disbursal.



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**Source:** Maharashtra Government.

Read here for more details: [Digital lending and its regulation](#)

### What are the guidelines of RBI related to digital lending?

**Digital Lending Definition:** Even if some steps involve a physical interface, lending can still be categorized as 'Digital Lending'.

**Lending Service Provider (LSP):** Service providers are only designated as LSPs when the transaction falls under 'Digital Lending'.

**Grievance Redressal:** LSPs interacting with borrowers must have a Grievance Redressal Officer. REs, however, are responsible for resolving complaints tied to LSPs.

**Credit Card EMI Programs:** Specific EMI programs on credit cards don't fall under Digital Lending Guidelines, but other credit card loans do.

**Third-party Control:** No third party, including LSPs, should control the flow of funds in lending transactions.

**Payment Aggregators:** LSPs under Digital Lending Guidelines shouldn't handle funds. Pure Payment Aggregators are not under this scope.

**Recovery for Delinquent Loans:** For delinquent loans, cash recoveries bypass the direct repayment to RE's bank account requirement.

**Salary-based Repayments:** Loans repaid by employers deducting from salaries are allowed.

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### How is India doing in digital finance overall?

**Retail Payments Growth:** India witnessed significant growth, with 16% of all global real-time payments in 2022 originating from the country.

**Digital Lending Surge:** The digital lending sector expanded rapidly, disbursing close to 73 million loans in 2022-23.

### What's the issue with digital loan apps?

- 1) **Harmful Effects:** A BBC documentary revealed that aggressive recovery tactics of these apps have been linked to at least 60 suicides.
- 2) **Regulation Challenges:** MeitY has proposed additional KYC-like procedures for banks and finance companies, but a holistic approach might be more effective.
- 3) **RBI's Role:** Despite its nodal role in supervising digital finance, the RBI hasn't been proactive in direct supervision. They proposed the Digital India Trust Agency but never implemented it.
- 4) **App Store Burden:** App stores, like Google Play, face the immense task of filtering out unauthorized lenders, with the potential for errors in the process.
- 5) **Potential for Fraud:** With many banks and NBFCs, there's a vast scope for misrepresentation of lender-app partnerships. Simple KYC might not be enough to deter bad actors.

### What should be done?

#### RBI's Role and Measures:

**a. Direct Oversight:** The RBI should assert a direct role in supervising digital lending.

**b. Standardized Proof:** Mandate a clear, standardized proof-of-partnership between digital lenders and regulated entities (REs).

**c. Blockchain Utilization:** Implement blockchain technology to validate and secure proofs of partnership, with REs issuing and tracking certificates.

**Broader Perspective:** Include state-level institutions and other relevant entities in the regulation process.

**Consumer Awareness:** Promote public education about the risks associated with unauthorized loan apps and the importance of responsible borrowing.

**Strengthen Institutional Mechanisms:** Collaborate with relevant stakeholders like app stores and public bodies to enhance app authenticity and safety.

#### Question for practice:

Enumerate and explain the guidelines issued by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) pertaining to digital lending. How do these guidelines aim to ensure consumer protection and maintain financial stability?

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### 10. On Labour Productivity in India- NRN Gets It Wrong

**Source:** The post on labour productivity in India is based on the article “NRN Gets It Wrong- Working long hours doesn’t increase productivity” published in “The Times of India” on 28th October 2023.

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper 3 Indian Economy – Employment and labour productivity.

**News:** The article discusses India’s low productivity as highlighted by Narayana Murthy. Despite Indians working about 48 hours weekly, their hourly output is low. The author also highlights how productivity isn’t just about hours but also technology and education.

#### What is productivity?

Productivity measures how efficiently inputs like labor and capital are used to produce outputs, such as goods and services. On a country level, it affects living standards and economic growth.

#### What are the different kinds of productivity?

**Labor Productivity:** Measures the output produced per hour of work. For example, for a GDP of \$1 trillion with its people working 20 billion hours, the labor productivity is \$50 per hour. It is directly linked to increased wages, better living standards, and consumers’ purchasing power.

**Capital Productivity:** Assesses output generated by using physical assets like machinery, buildings, and equipment. It indicates how efficiently investments in physical assets are used, impacting profitability and competitiveness.

**Total Factor Productivity (TFP):** Accounts for growth in output not explained by labor or capital alone, often termed as “innovation-led growth”. It reflects efficiency improvements, technological progress, and innovation in an economy.

#### What is current labor productivity in India?

**Working Duration:** Indians average almost 48 hours a week, one of the highest globally.

**Hourly Output:** India’s productivity rate is \$8.47 per hour, despite the long work hours.

In comparison, Countries like France work fewer hours (about 30 weekly) but achieve higher productivity (\$58.5 per hour).

#### What influences productivity?

- 1) **Role of Technology:** The level of technological diffusion in an economy positively impacts productivity.
- 2) **Human Capital:** The quality of human capital, or education and skills, directly relates to productivity. A well-educated workforce can produce more in less time.
- 3) **Impact of Agriculture:** A significant portion of the workforce in agriculture can lower a country’s overall productivity.

#### Question for practice:

Evaluate how India’s working-hours and technology-adoption impact productivity compared to countries like France.

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### 11. Political misinformation is a problem. But asking WhatsApp to risk user privacy is the wrong solution

**Source:** This post is based on the article “Political misinformation is a problem. But asking WhatsApp to risk user privacy is the wrong solution” published in “Indian Express” on 28th October 2023.

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper 3 Internal Security – Challenges to internal security through communication networks, role of media and social networking sites in internal security challenges, basics of cyber security.

**News:** The article discusses the challenges of political misinformation, especially deep fakes. The central government wants to use Rule 4(2) of the 2021 IT Intermediary Guidelines to find the original sender of a message on platforms like WhatsApp which could compromise privacy and might not effectively address the issue.

#### What is Political Misinformation?

Political misinformation means having wrong political beliefs but holding them confidently. Its features include:

**Different from being ‘uninformed’:** Misinformed individuals have wrong beliefs, while uninformed individuals lack knowledge on the topic.

**Impact:** When many people share the same wrong beliefs, it can influence public opinion.

**Different from ‘rumors’:** While rumors are statements that lack solid evidence and might occasionally turn out to be true, misinformation is unequivocally false.

**Connection with Conspiracy theories:** Some conspiracy theories can be seen as a subtype of political misinformation.

**Continued Influence Effect (CIE):** Political misinformation falls under the broader psychological phenomenon of the persistence of false beliefs even after they have been debunked.

#### What initiatives have been taken to curb misinformation in India?

##### 1) Laws and Regulations:

**Indian Penal Code:** Various sections (e.g., 153, 153A) address provocations, disharmony, and defamation.

**Information Technology Act 2000:** Section 66D pertains to fake news through fake accounts.

**IT Rules 2021:** Guidelines for regulating content on social media platforms and news portals. Platforms with over 50 lakh users face increased compliances.

**Recent:** The government plans to combat misinformation by using Rule 4(2) of the 2021 IT Intermediary Guidelines. This rule requires social media platforms to identify the original sender of a message (the source), especially on encrypted platforms like WhatsApp.

##### 2) Regulatory Bodies:

**Press Council of India:** Addresses violations of journalistic ethics.

**News Broadcasters Association (NBA) & Indian Broadcast Foundation (IBF):** Handle complaints against electronic media content.

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**Broadcasting Content Complaint Council (BCCC):** Manages complaints against objectionable TV content and fake news.

### 3) Private Initiatives:

**Facebook:** Partnerships with third-party fact-checkers and banning false accounts.

**WhatsApp:** Restrictions on bulk messaging and a fact-checking hotline for users to flag messages.

### What are the concerns regarding the government's plan to use Rule 4(2) of the 2021 IT Intermediary Guidelines?

1) **Privacy and Encryption:** The rule can compromise user privacy by tracing every message's origin. Platforms like WhatsApp use end-to-end encryption for user privacy. This rule challenges that security.

2) **Vague and Misleading Definitions:** "Public order" is open to interpretation, which might lead to misuse. The "first originator" isn't clearly defined, risking innocent users being wrongly targeted.

3) **Effectiveness and Misuse:** Sophisticated users can spoof identities, evading the rule's purpose. Tracking all messages affects everyone's privacy, not just wrongdoers.

4) **Legal and Real-world Implications:** The real-world analogy suggests a significant impact on individual freedom, like tagging every citizen when they step out.

### How can misinformation impact elections?

**Deep Fakes:** Modern AI tools can create authentic-looking media of events that never occurred.

**Targeting people through online platforms:** Online services like WhatsApp, social media sites, YouTube, etc. mediate users' relationship with online information, making them crucial in the spread or control of misinformation.

**Risk to Democracy:** Misleading users through fake media can significantly influence election outcomes and distort democratic processes.

**Election Integrity:** Misinformation challenges the core principle of informed voting, jeopardizing the very foundation of democratic elections.

### Question for practice:

Critically examine the potential impact of Rule 4(2) of the 2021 IT Intermediary Guidelines on individual privacy and its effectiveness in addressing political misinformation.

## 12. On Inflation – No policy for troubled times

**Source:** This post on inflation has been created based on the article "No policy for troubled times" published in **Business Standard** on **28<sup>th</sup> October 2023**.

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

**News:** This article discusses the various reasons which have led to the current inflation scenario in the world.

Read a detailed article on [Inflation Management in India here](#).

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### What is inflation?

Inflation refers to the rise in the prices of most goods and services of daily or common use such as food, clothing, housing, recreation, transport, consumer goods.

It measures the average price change in a basket of commodities and services over a period of time.

### What is the current inflation scenario?

The target for inflation in most advanced economies is 2%. However, inflation in the USA is at 3.7%, in the Euro area at 5.6%, and in Britain at 6.8%.

In India, where inflation is typically much higher than in these advanced economies, it is hovering at 5%. India is not heavily indebted and showing good economic growth. This should give the RBI room to raise interest rates and aim for the 4% target.

### What are the current global challenges with respect to inflation?

- 1) **Global Economic Situation:** The world is witnessing a global economic slowdown.
- 2) **Geopolitical conflicts:** It has led to inflation in the oil market, and also in various food and other commodity markets.
- 3) **Climate-change** imposes additional costs.
- 4) **Ineffectiveness of monetary policy:** Due to the above factors, prices will rise even if demand is weak. Monetary policy in this situation will not be as effective.
- 5) **Twin-Balance Sheet problem:** Banks and company balance sheets are getting stressed by debt becoming more costly.
- 6) **Lower Investments:** Investment will get hit because it would have to deliver higher returns to match the higher cost of capital.

### Question for practice:

Inflation management has become a growing concern due to emerging challenges in the global economy. Explain.

### 13. On GI Tags – Is India sub-leveraging the advantages of GI tagging?

**Source:** This post on GI Tags has been created based on the article “Is India sub-leveraging the advantages of GI tagging?” published in **Business Standard** on **28<sup>th</sup> October 2023**.

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper 3 Science & Technology – Issues relating to Intellectual Property Rights.

**News:** This article discusses the implications of Geographic Indication or GI-Tag. It also highlights the issues with India’s utilization of the GI-Tag.

### What is a GI Tag?

According to the **World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO)**, a GI tag is a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that is due to that origin.

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A GI right prevents its use by a third party whose product does not conform to the applicable standards.

However, a protected GI does not enable the holder to prevent someone from making a product using the same techniques as those set out in the standards for that indication.

GI tags in India are issued as per the **Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, of 1999**.

### What is the importance of a GI Tag?

- 1) **Revenue generator:** Patents and copyright protection of products result in higher economic gains, fostering quality production and better distribution of profits.
- 2) **Global reach:** For e.g., Amazon's 'local to global' programme has taken Indian GI-tagged products to the global market.
- 3) **Passion economy and entrepreneurship:** It will convert talent into entrepreneurship and create a "passion" economy.
- 4) **Employment creation:** The labour-intensive nature of GI-tagged products can boost the employment in India.
- 5) **Women empowerment:** It can also increase India's low female labour force participation rate.
- 6) **Reverse urban migration:** it will conserve India's ancient crafts, culture and food and may also rejuvenate local MSMEs.
- 7) **Positive benefits for local communities:** It encourage the preservation of biodiversity, local know-how and natural resources.
- 8) **Soft power:** A strong GI ecosystem can be a source of soft power. For instance, French Champagne.
- 9) **Consumer rights:** GIs protects producers and their reputations and reassures consumers that a product is authentic.
- 10) **Preserve intellectual property:** They authenticate and symbolise an IPR owned collectively by producers in a region.

### What are the challenges India is facing with respect to GI-Tags?

- 1) **Lack of a strategy for using the GI to commercial advantage**, especially in global markets.
- 2) Lack of organised effort — governmental or institutional — to **go beyond merely establishing distinctiveness**.
- 3) Lack of dedication to **quality control**, as opposed to a mere indication of source. For instance, in the case of **Alphonso Mango**.
- 4) Lack of **marketing, branding, advertising, and trade promotions**. For instance, with respect to Basmati rice.

### What should be the way forward?

**First**, a required skill for GI producers is **digital literacy**. This should be a priority agenda item for NGOs and stakeholders like the DPIIT.

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**Second**, the Indian GI economy can showcase to the world a model for ethical capitalism, **social entrepreneurship**, **de-urbanisation**, and bringing **women to the workforce**.

**Third, regular audits and consultations** with the GI producers must be mandated.

**Fourth, organised marketing and value creation** to grow the **exclusivity** and **premiumness** attached to their products.

### **Question for practice:**

Despite earning GI-Tags for a wide range of domestic products, India has failed to utilize the certification fully. Analyse.