

9 PM Current Affairs Weekly Compilation

For UPSC CSE mains examination



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Features :

Arranged as per syllabus Topics
Most complete coverage of major
News Papers editorials

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GS Paper 1

Subject: History

Topic: Indian Culture - Salient aspects of Art Forms, Literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times

On the Sahitya Akademi – Awards for words

News: Sahitya Akademi has announced the annual Sahitya Akademi Awards 2023 in 24 Indian languages. This year's award includes poems, novels, short stories, essays, and literary studies.

What are the Sahitya Akademi Awards?

[Read Here.](#)

What is the significance of the Sahitya Akademi Awards?

1. **Linguistic Diversity:** The awards recognize linguistic diversity in a country like India with numerous dialects and marginalized communities.
2. **Empowers Writers:** It provides encouragement, boosts sales, and provide educational recognition for writers.
3. **Translation Opportunities:** It facilitates translation of awarded works into other regional languages including English, expanding their reach and impact.

What are the concerns associated with the Sahitya Akademi Awards?

1. **Limited Recognition:** The Sahitya Akademi struggles with limited recognition compared to global counterparts like the Booker Prize or the Pulitzer.
2. **Low Public Awareness:** The Akademi organizes various literary activities, lectures, and workshops. However, there is a lack in its promotion, hindering public awareness of its programs.
3. **Outdated Website and Social Media:** The Akademi's digital presence is inadequate, with an unmaintained website and minimal social media activity.
4. **Limited Book Availability:** Despite affordable publications, Akademi books are often difficult to find, hindering their reach and impact.

What should be the way ahead?

There is a need for Sahitya Akademi to enhance its promotional efforts, improve accessibility, and leverage its resources to fulfill its mission of celebrating and promoting India's diverse literary landscape.

Subject: Indian Society

Topic: Urbanization and associated issues

What does COP-28 mean for cities?

News: 28th Conference of Parties (COP-28) highlighted the significance of cities in addressing climate change.

How is significance of urban areas increasing?

The growing urban population is expected to reach **68% by 2050**.

Urban areas consume about 75% of primary energy and account for roughly 70% of CO2 emissions.

Therefore, desired results of the Paris commitments are not possible without addressing urban issues.

What was the major event for urban area development at COP-28?

COP-28 featured a special ministerial meeting on urbanization and climate change. The meeting was attended by various stakeholders including ministers, local leaders, and financial institutions. The conference highlighted the advocacy for formally recognizing cities' roles in global climate negotiations and providing them with direct financial and technical assistance was a key point of discussion.

What are the challenges faced by cities in the Global South?

1. **Vulnerability of Global South Cities:** Cities in the Global South face greater challenges due to weaker governance, informal employment, and higher vulnerability to climate disasters.
2. **Need for Empowerment and Support:** These cities require more support in terms of finance, governance, and recognition in climate action plans.
3. **Examples of Proactive Cities:** Some cities, like Chennai, are leading in climate action, aiming to achieve zero emissions by 2050. It exemplifies the importance of local initiatives.

Way forward:

1. **City governments need to be involved** in National Adaptation Plans and Nationally Determined Contributions.
2. A **climate atlas of cities**, for mapping them and identifying the most vulnerable hotspots, should be created.

GS Paper 2

Subject: Indian Polity

Topic: Parliament - structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these

Mass Suspension of MPs - Breach and stain

News: The article discusses recent problems in India's Parliament, including security breaches and the suspension of 141 Opposition MPs.

What are the rules on suspension of MPs?

[Read here.](#)

What are the reasons behind the recent mass suspension of MPs?

1. **Demanding a discussion:** Opposition MPs were disrupting Parliament for demand of discussion on the security breach in Parliament.
2. **Nature of Disruptions:** Disruptions in Parliament have evolved over time into a political strategy, rather than spontaneous acts. These disruptions often involve shouting and entering the well of the House. These were seen as deliberate acts to stall proceedings, as noted by the Speaker of the 14th Lok Sabha, Somnath Chatterjee.
3. **Government's Authority in Parliamentary Proceedings:** The Indian Constitution, drawing from the British parliamentary system, designed the Parliament primarily for the government to transact its business. The rules of parliamentary procedure give the government significant control over convening and conducting parliamentary proceedings.

What are the consequences of this mass suspension of MPs?

1. **Reduced Representation:** The suspension leaves five crore people that MPs represent, without a voice in Parliament.
2. **Undermining Democratic Principles:** The suspension is criticized for its disproportionality, suggesting a disregard for the essential democratic process of debate and opposition.
3. **Negative Precedent for Legislatures:** This action could set a concerning example for other legislative bodies, potentially encouraging similar measures against opposition parties elsewhere.
4. **Historical Precedent:** This mass suspension is unprecedented in scale, exceeding the past record of suspending 63 MPs during Rajiv Gandhi's tenure.

What are Interventions by the Court?

Judicial actions are typically rare due to the principle of separation of powers:

1. **Article 122 of the Constitution:** It prevents courts from questioning parliamentary proceedings, safeguarding legislative independence.

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2. **Judicial Intervention Exceptions:** Courts can step in for procedural violations or constitutional rights infringements.
3. **Maharashtra Legislative Assembly Case (2021):** An example where the Supreme Court intervened. The Assembly suspended 12 BJP MLAs for a year, but the Court deemed this excessive and limited the suspension to the session's duration. This instance **highlights the court's role in ensuring procedural correctness and protecting constitutional principles in legislative actions.**

What should be done?

1. **Ensure Open Investigation and Debate:** Conduct transparent investigations into security breaches and encourage open discussions in Parliament, as demanded by the Opposition regarding the December 13 incident.
2. **Reform Parliamentary Procedures:** Update the procedural rules, which are based on the pre-independence British model, to reflect the collaborative essence of a modern democratic legislature.
3. **Address Parliamentary Disruptions:** To address deliberate disruption, Parliament could implement structured debates and improved conflict resolution methods.
4. **Incorporate Opposition's Voice:** Parliament could enhance inclusivity and balance in the legislative process by allowing the Opposition a significant role in agenda-setting. This could mirror the UK House of Commons' approach, where specific days are designated for the Opposition to raise issues.

Misuse of Anti-Defection Law - The hollowing out of the anti-defection law

News: The article discusses how India's anti-defection law, designed to prevent lawmakers from frequently changing parties, is being misused. Politicians are exploiting loopholes to switch parties without consequences, leading to unstable governments and undermining the law's original purpose.

What is the Anti-Defection Law?

[Read here.](#)

What are the issues with Anti-Defection Law?

1. **Splits and Mergers:** The Anti-Defection Law allows legislators to avoid disqualification by forming new factions with a two-thirds majority, leading to **frequent party switches**. For example, In Uttar Pradesh and Haryana (1990-2008), legislators exploited this law by defecting, forming new groups, and then merging with other parties, demonstrating how the law can be manipulated to facilitate opportunistic politics.
2. **Formation of Government without Party Switch or Merger:** In Maharashtra, factions within the Shiv Sena and the Nationalist Congress Party managed to form a government without officially switching parties or merging. They claimed to be the original party and allied with the BJP, highlighting a significant loophole.

For more information [read here](#)

What are the consequences of this misuse?

1. **Government Instability:** The misuse of the Anti-Defection Law has led to frequent government collapses in states like Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Karnataka, and Arunachal Pradesh, disrupting political stability.

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2. **Erosion of Democratic Values:** By exploiting the law, politicians undermine the spirit of democracy. The law's intention to maintain political integrity is negated, as seen in the strategic alignments in Maharashtra with the Shiv Sena and NCP factions.
3. **Encouraging Opportunistic Politics:** The trend in Uttar Pradesh and Haryana (1990-2008) of legislators defecting and then merging with other parties illustrates how the law **encourages opportunistic politics rather than principled decision-making.**

What should be done?

Strengthening Law's Intent: Reinforcing the law to ensure it aligns with its initial intent of upholding political integrity and stability is essential. This requires identifying and sealing the loopholes that enable opportunistic politics, as observed in previous cases in Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, and Maharashtra.

For more Information on the above, [read here.](#)

Denial of legislative debate furthers democratic backsliding in India

News: Recently, there was a security breach in the Parliament by some individuals who highlighted unemployment concerns in India.

What are some of the essential characteristics of a democracy?

1. **Deliberation:** The essential characteristic of a well-functioning democracy is deliberation which involves elected legislators debating issues, utilizing committees, and thoroughly discussing bills before consideration.
2. **Popular Sovereignty:** The people are the ultimate source of authority in a democracy. This means that the government is accountable to the people and must act in their best interests.
3. **Free and Fair Elections:** Democracies hold regular elections that are free and fair. This means that all citizens have the right to vote and to stand for office.
4. **Separation of Powers:** In a democracy, the government is typically divided into three branches: **the legislature, the executive, and the judiciary.** This separation of powers helps to prevent any one branch from becoming too powerful.

What have been the recent concerns associated with India's democracy?

1. **Deficiency in Parliamentary Sessions:** Recent parliamentary sessions have witnessed attempts to pressure the Opposition, pass Bills without sufficient discussion, restrict amendments, and underutilize committees.
2. **Downgrading of India's Democratic Status:** The lack of proper parliamentary sessions has led to the characterization of India's democracy as an "**electoral autocracy**" by V-Dem Institute.
3. Similarly, the misuse of the **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act** to target dissenters, equating dissent with terrorism, has further led to India being labeled as "**partially free**".
4. **Concerns with Judicial independence:** Increasing political pressure on the judiciary has raised concerns about its capacity to act as a check on executive power.
5. **Erosion of Media Freedom:** Government pressure on media outlets and journalists has limited their ability to report critically and independently.
6. **Politicization of Institutions:** Appointment of individuals based on political loyalty rather than merit has weakened the neutrality of various democratic institutions.

For further reading on the democracy: [Click Here](#)

What should be the way ahead?

It is crucial for the government to address these issues, along with ensuring the effective functioning of parliamentary sessions, upholding the separation of powers, and ensuring the proper functioning of each pillar of democracy.

Topic: Indian Constitution - significant provisions

Qualitative Dilution of voting power – One person, one vote, one value

News: The article discusses how political equality in democracies is affected by the way electoral constituencies are drawn. It explains how this can lead to unequal voting power and highlights the need for fair delimitation to ensure equal representation for all citizens.

What is political equality in democracy?

Political equality means everyone has an equal chance to participate in politics and their votes have the same value. However sometime this political equality is diluted by diluting votes.

Ways to dilutes votes are:

- 1) Quantitative Dilution:** This occurs when constituencies have significantly different populations, resulting in unequal vote values. For instance, due to varied population growth from 1971 to 2011, the vote value varies greatly between states. In Uttar Pradesh, an MP typically represents about 2.53 million people, while in Tamil Nadu, an MP represents around 1.84 million people, illustrating a clear case of quantitative dilution.
- 2) Qualitative Dilution:** Gerrymandering, or the strategic redrawing of electoral boundaries, can diminish the effectiveness of votes. This process often reduces the ability of certain groups, especially minorities, to elect their preferred candidates, leading to an imbalance in representation. For instance, Muslim representation in Parliament is only 4.42%, despite Muslims comprising 14.2% of the population.

Three ways of qualitative dilution are:

- a) Cracking:** Splitting minority-dominated areas into separate constituencies to dilute their influence.
- b) Stacking:** Merging minority populations into constituencies where they are outnumbered by the majority, lessening their voting impact.
- c) Packing:** Concentrating minorities into a few constituencies, weakening their representation across other areas.

Dilution of votes can lead to unequal state representation, diminished minority political influence, and imbalanced constituencies.

What are the constitutional safeguards to maintain political equality?

- 1. Population Ratio Alignment:** Articles 81 and 170 of the Constitution ensure that the population ratio for Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assembly constituencies is as uniform as possible, aiding equal representation.

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2. **Parliament's Role in Delimitation:** Article 327 grants Parliament the authority to make laws regarding the delimitation of constituencies. This helps in legally shaping fair and equitable electoral boundaries.
3. **Independent Delimitation Commissions:** The government forms these commissions, led by retired Supreme Court judges, to redraw constituency boundaries without bias, thus preventing qualitative dilution. To date, four delimitation commissions (1952, 1962, 1972, 2002) have worked on this.
4. **Seat Reservation:** Articles 330 and 332 of the Constitution reserve seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Parliament and State Legislative Assemblies, ensuring representation for these groups.

For information on **Delimitation Commission**, [read here](#).

Way forward:

To ensure fair representation, delimitation must be timely, considering both population changes and the interests of southern states. The next Delimitation Commission should address both quantitative and qualitative vote dilution for more adequate minority representation.

Subject: Governance

Topic: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors

On the Telecommunications Bill 2023 Controversy

News: The article critiques the Telecommunications Bill, 2023 in India for perpetuating colonial laws and increasing government control under the guise of cultural nationalism. It also highlights the bill's failure to address the digital divide or introduce meaningful innovation.

What are the key provisions of the Telecommunications Bill 2023?

[Read here](#).

Why is the Telecommunications Bill 2023 Controversial?

1. **Cultural Nativism:** The renaming of the **Universal Services Obligation Fund** to "**Digital Bharat Nidhi**" exemplifies the Bill's emphasis on national identity. However, this change **does little to address the actual digital divide**, as telecom user growth has stagnated and smartphone sales have declined for two consecutive years, according to reports by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India and the International Data Corporation.
2. **Authoritarian Tendencies:** The Bill's vague definitions, such as rebranding "licensing" as "authorisation," potentially extend government control over OTT platforms like WhatsApp and email services like Gmail. This could undermine encryption-based messaging security, leading to increased surveillance and interception without clear legal safeguards.
3. **Favoring Corporations:** Provisions allowing non-auction allocation of satellite spectrum and regulatory sandboxes are likely to benefit large corporations. This is exemplified by the potential market entry advantages for select firms, raising concerns about the fairness of these policies.

4. **Lack of Transparency and Debate:** The Bill's rapid passage through Parliament, despite objections from opposition members, highlights a lack of thorough debate and scrutiny. This is evident from the suspension of opposition members and the dismissal of requests to send the Bill to a Standing Committee for detailed examination.

What are the implications of this controversy?

1. **Cultural Nativity & Political Credit:** The use of "Bharat" and crediting the ruling government's vision reflects a strategy of cultural nativism and a branding tactic for political gain.
2. **Constitutional Concerns:** Critics argue that the Telecom Bill represents a shift from constitutional governance to rule by select doctrines, potentially undermining democratic principles.

Way forward:

The future steps should focus on closely examining the Telecom Bill to ensure it benefits all Indians. This requires open discussions, involvement of experts, and consideration of the bill's impact on digital rights and privacy. By doing so, we can create a telecom policy that truly bridges the digital divide and upholds democratic values.

Analysing the Post Office Bill, 2023

News: The Post Office Bill, 2023 replaces the colonial-era Indian Post Office Act, 1898, aiming to update the legal framework for postal services in India.

What are the key provisions of the Post Office Bill, 2023?

[Read here.](#)

What are the major concerns related to the Post Office Bill, 2023?

1. **Privacy Violation:** Critics argue the Bill infringes on the fundamental right to privacy, as it permits the interception of postal articles without robust safeguards. This will increase the risk of unauthorized state surveillance and abuse.
2. **Vague Terms:** The term 'emergency' is not clearly defined, leading to potential misuse of interception powers.
3. **Broad Powers:** The Bill allows officials to detain and open mail, raising concerns about unchecked government authority and potential for misuse.

What are the Supreme Court rulings related to these concerns?

1. **People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) vs. Union of India (1996):** The Supreme Court acknowledged telephone tapping as an infringement on privacy. It mandated safeguards against arbitrary state surveillance, ensuring any interception aligns with the right to privacy under Articles 19(1)(a) and Article 21.
2. **Justice KS Puttaswamy vs. Union of India (2017):** The Court declared the right to privacy as a fundamental right. It set forth six conditions for any state measure impacting privacy: legality, legitimate goal, suitability, necessity, proportionality, and procedural safeguards. This ruling highlighted that privacy and procedural safeguards cannot be overlooked, even for national security concerns. It underscored judicial oversight's critical role in upholding rights amidst state security measures.

What should be the way forward?

To address concerns, the government needs to establish clear, transparent rules for mail interception, ensuring these are fair and include procedural safeguards. Additionally, defining vague terms and setting up a strong grievance redressal mechanism are crucial. This approach would balance national security needs with citizens' right to privacy, responding to the criticisms raised by legal experts and parliamentarians.

Subject: Social Justice

Topic: Issues relating to Education

Measuring digital literacy – Why India must measure digital literacy

News: This article highlights the importance of digital technology in education and the need for youth to have digital skills for the future economy.

What is the current condition of youth education in India?

1. **Increased Elementary Education Enrollment:** The percentage of children aged 6-14 not in school dropped to 1.6% in 2022, showcasing significant progress in elementary education.
2. **Slower Secondary School Transition:** Despite the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan's launch in 2009, the transition to secondary education has been gradual, with a decline in out-of-school children aged 15-16 from 16.1% in 2010 to 7.5% in 2022.
3. **COVID-19 Impact:** The pandemic led to extended school closures, affecting education, especially at the primary level.

Why should India measure digital literacy?

1. **Supporting Educational Goals:** With the increase in smartphone usage from 36% in 2018 to 74.8% in 2022, measuring digital literacy helps ensure that digital tools effectively support education.
2. **Economic Development:** As the World Development Report suggests, understanding digital literacy is crucial for realizing the potential of the digital dividend in economic growth.
3. **Pandemic Recovery:** The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the necessity of digital literacy for uninterrupted learning, making its measurement vital for educational resilience.
4. **Future Workforce Preparedness:** Accurate measurement of digital literacy is key to preparing India's youth for a digital economy, ensuring they can contribute productively.

What are initiatives to enhance digital literacy in India?

- 1) **National Digital Literacy Mission (NDLM)** and **Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (DISHA)** (2014-2016): Aimed to train 52.50 lakh candidates in digital literacy.
- 2) **Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA)** (Since 2017): Targeted to impart digital literacy in rural India, covering 6 crore households.

Way forward:

To maximize India's demographic and digital dividends, India must focus on enhancing digital literacy and accessibility. As smartphone usage in rural areas rose to 74.8% in 2022, leveraging this for educational resources and skills development is crucial. Continued support for youth aspirations will drive economic participation and growth.

Topic: Mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections

On the Forest Rights Act (FRA) - An uphill struggle to grow the Forest Rights Act

News: The **Forest Rights Act (FRA)** was enacted in 2006 to resolve conflicts over forest encroachments, addressing historical injustices against forest-dwelling communities, and establish democratic forest governance.

However, even after 17 years, the Act's promise of justice and democratization remains largely unfulfilled.

What have been historical injustices done to the forest dwellers?

During the Colonial Period:

The **Indian Forest Act, 1878** gave the British ownership of all Indian forests. The **Imperial Forest Department maximized revenue** for the British and treated forests as state property. This resulted in banning shifting cultivation, biased land surveys, forced labor for forest communities and restricting their access to forest resources.

Post-Independence:

1. **Inclusion of Princely states and Zamindari estates:** This led the forest areas being declared state property.
2. **Land leases:** Forest lands were leased for "**Grow More Food**" and other initiatives to meet the needs of a growing population, leaving communities in vulnerable situations.
3. **Construction of Dams:** Communities were displaced and were forced to encroach on other forest areas.
4. **The Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 and Forest (Conservation) Act 1980:** Both the Acts followed the colonial nature of state ownership. The creation of sanctuaries and national parks led to the forced resettlement of communities.
5. **Developmental Projects:** Forest lands were diverted for the developmental project without the consent of local communities.

How did the Forest Rights Act address these historical injustices?

1. **Encroachments:** It recognized **Individual Forest Rights (IFRs)** for habitation and cultivation. Forest villages are converted to revenue villages with full rights recognition.
2. **Access and Control:** It granted access and control by giving the rights to utilize forests, own and sell minor forest produce, and manage forests within their boundaries. These rights extended to sanctuaries and national parks.
3. **Balanced Wildlife Conservation and Community Rights:** It created a democratic process creating a balance between conservation goals and community needs.

4. **Supreme Court Judgment:** The SC in the **Niyamgiri case**, empowered forest communities by stating that they enjoy veto power over any proposals to divert that forest for other purposes.

However, despite attempts by the [Forest Conservation Rules 2022](#) and [FCA Amendment 2023](#) to bypass this right, states can still establish consent mechanisms.

What have been the challenges over the implementation of the Forest Rights Act?

1. **Politicization:** Many states focused solely on individual rights, framing the FRA as an "encroachment regularization" scheme, encouraging illegal cultivation in some areas. They often view forest dwellers as recipients of state benefits, rather than recognizing their rights over forest.
2. **Bureaucratic Obstacles:** The recognition of Individual Forest Rights (IFRs) was affected by Forest Department resistance and technology misuse. There was a hindrance in recognizing **Community Forest Rights (CFRs)** as it would lead to loss of bureaucratic power and control over forests.
3. **Claiming Processes:** Claimants faced difficulties in filing claims, encountering rejections due to faulty processes and arbitrary decisions. The digital processes, like the VanMitra software in Madhya Pradesh, continued the injustice in areas with poor connectivity and literacy.

Read More: [The Conflict Between Forest Rights and Forest Conservation - Explained](#)

How has the implementation of the Forest Rights Act been carried out in some of the states?

Maharashtra, Odisha, and Chhattisgarh have made progress in recognizing Community Forest Rights (CFRs). **Maharashtra has actively implemented by de-nationalizing minor forest produce** in Scheduled Areas, empowering villages to manage their own forests.

Subject: International Relations

Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests

Challenges in the Red Sea – The stormy Red Sea

News: This article discusses the security challenges in the Red Sea region, including the involvement of the **Hamas (Palestinian-based)** and **Houthi militia (Yemen-based)** and its impact on global trade and Asian economies. It also highlights the growing role of non-state militant actors in shaping geopolitical dynamics.

Background:

In October, Hamas attacked Israel, shaking regional stability. The Iran-aligned Houthi militia responded by joining the conflict, supporting Gaza. They are targeting all the ships travelling through Red Sea, which has association with Israel. **This involvement threatened the Red Sea's critical waterways**, linked to the Suez Canal, vital for 15% of global trade.

What are the challenges in the Red Sea?

1. Strengthening of militant:

a) Houthi Aggression- The Houthis, aligned with Iran, have intensified their attacks in the Red Sea, targeting commercial vessels, particularly those with Israeli affiliations.

b) Enhanced Missile Capability- The Houthis have significantly upgraded their military arsenal, now possessing a variety of missiles, including long-range ones, and other advanced weaponry like torpedoes.

c) The growing political and military influence of non-state actors like the Houthis highlights the growing impact of such groups on regional stability and security.

2. Escalating Military Presence:

a) U.S. Involvement: The U.S. has deployed military assets, including longer-range drones and missiles, in response to the Houthi threat.

b) Call for International Cooperation: The U.S. urges the formation of a multinational task force to protect the Bab al-Mandab Strait, underscoring the strategic importance of securing this critical waterway.

What are the implications of these challenges?

- 1. Global Trade Disruptions:** The Red Sea's instability affects crucial trade routes, impacting global economies, especially since nearly 15% of global trade passes through.
- 2. Rising Tensions:** The involvement of multiple nations, including the U.S., Saudi Arabia, and Iran, leads to heightened regional tensions.
- 3. Energy Security Concerns:** With the Red Sea being a key route for oil and gas shipments, disruptions pose significant risks to energy security, particularly for Asian economies reliant on these imports.

What should be done to address them?

- 1. Multinational Military Collaboration:** Inspired by the U.S. initiative, a multinational task force is needed to secure the Red Sea, particularly around strategic points like the Bab al-Mandab Strait.
- 2. Balanced Diplomatic Approaches:** Considering Riyadh's call for restraint and ongoing talks with the Houthis, diplomatic efforts, like those observed in the Saudi-Iran détente brokered by China, are essential.
- 3. Enhanced Naval Protection:** Following the example of **India's Operation Sankalp**, which began in 2019 to escort India-flagged ships, other nations should bolster their naval presence to safeguard commercial shipping.
- 4. Acknowledging Non-State Actors' Roles:** Recognizing the increasing military capabilities of groups like the Houthis, strategies must adapt to consider the influence of non-state actors in the region's stability.

For more information on **India's Operation Sankalp**, [read here](#)

GS Paper 3

Subject: Indian Economy

Topic: Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment

Issues related to Credit Ratings – CEA's concerns apart, India needs better data

News: India has experienced substantial economic growth in recent years. However, credit rating agencies (CRAs) have not correspondingly raised its sovereign credit rating.

How have various credit rating agencies (CRAs) rated India's sovereign credit?

- 1) **S&P Global and Fitch:** They both raised India's sovereign credit rating to BBB, marking the lowest investment grade.
- 2) **Moody's:** It initially upgraded India from the lowest investment grade (Baa3) to the next level (Baa2) in November 2017 but later reversed this upgrade to Baa3 in June 2020. India receiving such ratings despite being the fifth largest economy raises concerns regarding the **opaque methodologies used by CRAs.**

What concerns exist regarding the methodologies employed by CRAs?

1. **Focus on Subjective Factors:** CRAs rely too heavily on subjective qualitative factors like good governance and democracy while neglecting objective measures of a country's ability and willingness to repay debt.
2. **Concerns with Governance Indicators:** Governance indicators used by CRAs explain only 68% of India's rating. This is because a country's macroeconomic fundamentals, like GDP growth, inflation, and debt levels, are ultimately the key determinants of its ability to pay debt.

Hence, even if India improves its economic fundamentals, it might not affect its credit rating significantly due to the **heavy reliance of CRAs on subjective factor like "governance indicators"**.

Read More: [India's Sovereign Ratings don't reflect its fundamentals](#)

What should be the way forward for India?

1. **Fiscal Consolidation:** India needs to reduce the government debt-to-GDP ratio, currently at 82%, to levels seen in 2006 (77.2%) and 2010 (66.4%).
2. **Data Quality:** There are absence of Census or household consumer expenditure survey results post-2011-12. Hence, India needs to improve its data accuracy and transparency by conducting required surveys.

IMF's annual report on India's Economy

News: The article discusses the IMF's annual report on India's economy, highlighting its currency stability and government debt. The IMF changed India's currency regime classification and advised fiscal consolidation to manage debt risks, while India defends its economic policies and stability.

What is the IMF's observation on India's currency and government debt?

1. Observation on India's currency:

IMF Observation: The IMF observed the Indian rupee's stability against the dollar, noting a narrow fluctuation range between 81.04 and 83.29 per US dollar (a 2.8% band), compared to the Euro-dollar rate band of 7.3%. Consequently, it reclassified India's exchange rate from "floating" to a "stabilized arrangement" for the period between December 2022 and October 2023.

India's Response: India, particularly the Reserve Bank of India, asserts the rupee is market-determined with interventions only for excessive volatility, contesting the IMF's short-term view.

2. Observation on Government Debt:

IMF's Warning: The IMF warns that if past economic shocks recur, debt could exceed 100% of GDP in the medium term. It also warns that long-term risks are high because considerable investment is required to meet India's climate change mitigation targets.

India's Position: India counters, India argues that the sovereign debt risk is low since it's predominantly in domestic currency, b) Despite various economic shocks, India maintains that its general government debt level has been relatively stable, barely increasing from 81% in 2005-06 to around 81% in 2022-23, c) India suggests that the IMF's assessment might be overlooking the broader historical stability and resilience of India's debt management.

For more information on **IMF's annual report on India's Economy**, [read here](#).

Why did the Indian currency decline narrowly between December 2022 and October 2023?

Internal Factors:

1. **Trade Deficit improved:** India's trade deficit averaged \$20 billion a month during the period, a slight improvement from the previous year's \$22.1 billion.
2. **Current Account Deficit:** The current account deficit was \$27.3 billion, nearly half of the previous year's \$53.5 billion.
3. **Foreign Investment:** Net foreign investment increased to \$30.7 billion, despite a decrease in FDI (by almost \$22 billion), offset by a surge in FPI.
4. **Forex Reserves:** Forex reserves modestly rose from \$563 billion to \$586 billion, indicating improved currency health.

External Factors:

1. **Global Dollar Strength:** The relentless increase in the US Federal Reserve's policy funds rate strengthened the dollar, impacting other currencies including the Rupee.
2. **Rupee Volatility vs. Dollar:** Rupee's movement was narrower (2.8%) compared to other major currencies like the Euro (7.3%), indicating active central bank management to stabilize it amidst global volatility.

Findings in the RBI bulletin on Inflation

News: The article discusses the December bulletin from the Reserve Bank of India, focusing on how India's inflation is affected by supply and demand. It explains that during COVID-19, supply issues caused inflation, but after the Russia-Ukraine conflict, demand factors became more significant,

What is inflation?

[Read here.](#)

What are different types of inflation?

[Read here.](#)

What are the major findings in the RBI December bulletin on Inflation?

1. **Data Analysis:** Using the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy's data, the bulletin categorizes inflation based on price and quantity shifts. If both rise, it's demand-driven; if they move oppositely, it's supply-driven.
2. **Cause of supply driven inflation:** a) **COVID-19 Restrictions-** Lockdowns caused production declines, leading to supply shortages, b) **Excess Rainfall (2019-2020)-** Resulted in supply disruptions, especially for agricultural products, c) **Global Events:** The **onset of the Russia-Ukraine** conflict in 2022 exacerbated supply chain issues, impacting global commodity prices.
3. **Cause of demand driven inflation:** a) **Post-Lockdown Recovery-** As COVID-19 restrictions lifted, there was a release of pent-up demand, outpacing supply recovery. b) **Vaccine Distribution-** Accelerated reopening of the economy, boosting consumer demand rapidly, c) **Russia-Ukraine Conflict- Post-conflict,** demand-side factors became more prominent, impacting prices.
4. **Overall Inflation Trends:** From January 2019 to May 2023, supply factors contributed to about 55% of CPI headline inflation. In contrast, demand factors dropped to 27.1% in 2020 from 41.5% in 2019 but rose again post-COVID-19 and during the Russia-Ukraine conflict.
5. **Specific Categories:** (from January 2019 to May 2023):
Supply Constraints item: Vegetables, oils, fats, milk, eggs, pulses, sugar.
Demand Influences item: Non-alcoholic beverages, personal care, health related goods.

Evergreening of Loans in India

News: This article discusses the **issue of "evergreening" loans in India**, where banks give new loans to prevent defaults on existing ones. It highlights the Reserve Bank of India's concerns and actions against such practices, emphasizing the risks to the banking system and the need for regulatory vigilance.

What is Evergreening of Loans?

[Read here.](#)

What are the RBI's findings on the practice of evergreening loans in India?

1. **Banks' Innovative Methods:** Banks were found using creative ways to hide stressed loans, like, a) sale and buyback arrangements between two banks to reset the history of a stressed loan, b) Banks were extending loans to entities related to already stressed borrowers, using this to hide the actual stressed nature of the original loans.

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2. **Use of Alternate Investment Funds (AIF):** Banks invested in AIFs, which then bailed out stressed entities, indirectly continuing the cycle of evergreening.
Note: Alternate Investment Funds (AIF) in India are investment vehicles that pool funds to invest in non-traditional assets like real estate, hedge funds, and derivatives. They are lightly regulated by the Securities and Exchanges Board of India (Sebi) and are typically subscribed to by high-net-worth individuals or entities, aware of the associated risks.
3. **Use of Commercial Paper (CP):** Mutual funds heavily invested in CPs issued by banks, which offered higher returns than government securities. Banks then used CP proceeds for short-term funding, contributing to indirect evergreening.
4. **Rapid Growth of unsecured loan:** Non-Bank Finance Companies (NBFCs) unsecured loan assets grew by 51% up to 2022-23, raising concerns about under-reported stressed loans.

What are the implications of evergreening loans in India?

1. **Misrepresentation of Loan Quality:** Banks using evergreening tactics distort the actual health of their loan portfolios.
2. **Governance and Audit Failures:** Such practices indicate lapses in the governance and audit mechanisms within banks.
3. **Round-Tripping :** The practice of mutual funds investing in commercial papers and returning funds to banks , this will lead to a) increases the correlation between bank and mutual fund performances, **escalating market concentration risk**, b) If banks face liquidity issues, mutual funds might be unable to redeem commercial papers, possibly **triggering a liquidity crisis**, c) Evergreening through such round-tripping **hides the true credit risk**, as commercial papers might be underpriced compared to the actual borrowing cost.
4. **Regulatory Challenges:** Continual adaptation of evergreening methods poses significant challenges for regulators like RBI to ensure financial stability.

Way forward:

To tackle evergreening in India, it's vital that regulatory bodies like the RBI and SEBI increase their oversight and seal regulatory gaps. Improving transparency in loan reporting, especially in fast-growing areas like non-bank financial companies, is key. Moreover, reinforcing governance and audit processes in banks and dealing with the complexities of cross-regulatory financial instruments is crucial to uphold the financial system's integrity and stability.

Terminology used:

Commercial Paper (CP): It is an unsecured money market instrument issued in the form of a promissory note (legal instrument). It was introduced in India in 1990 with a view to enabling highly rated corporate borrowers/ to diversify their sources of short-term borrowings and to provide an additional instrument to investors.

On the Benefits of Cryptocurrency for India

News: The status of Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies is evolving, as they edge closer to mainstream acceptance in the global financial system. Therefore, there is a need for regulatory clarity in India regarding cryptocurrencies.

Cryptocurrencies are gradually becoming a “mainstream alternative financial asset”.

What is Crypto-Asset Reporting Framework?

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Visit academy.forumias.com for our mentor based courses.

Released by: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Objectives: To enhance transparency in the global financial system, combat tax evasion, and ensure tax compliance related to crypto assets.

It was designed to establish a standardized framework for the reporting and exchange of information related to financial transactions involving cryptocurrencies and other digital assets.

What are the developments concerning cryptocurrencies?

- 1) El Salvador launched a Bitcoin "volcano" bond.
- 2) An approval of a Bitcoin ETF by BlackRock in the United States is pending.
- 3) Nasdaq has listed several companies focused on crypto mining.

What are the significances of cryptocurrencies?

1. **Digital gold:** Due to their performance, Investors have stated seeing cryptos as "digital gold" which provides a hedge against inflation.
2. **Remittances:** Cross-currency remittances done via cryptos are substantially cheap compared to conventional bank transfers. Remittances to India are roughly \$100 billion per annum.
3. **Loss for freelancers:** Indian freelancers working in crypto and blockchain start-ups are often offered payments in cryptos.
4. **Loss of new business opportunities:** The Indian citizens interested in Crypto mining, thriving gaming and non-fungible token (NFT) ecosystems, are discouraged due to uncertainty in the Crypto regulations space.

What is its present status in India?

1. **First**, under the **Crypto-Asset Reporting Framework**, Overseas transactions in cryptocurrencies by Indian citizens will be reported to Indian tax authorities. However, it is not clear, how Indian citizens can use cryptocurrencies.
2. **Second**, Regulations have resulted in imposition of a very high tax on trading in these assets.
3. **Third**, there is no clarity on whether cryptocurrencies can be used for cross-currency remittances, or as alternatives to the rupee in buying goods and services.
4. **Fourth**, therefore, India to establish clear rules and guidelines on the use and taxation of cryptocurrencies to keep pace with global trends and safeguard interests of developers, entrepreneurs, and investors.

Topic: Changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth

Terms of Trade (ToT) for Indian agriculture – How ToT have moved for agriculture

News: The article explains the changes in the Terms of Trade for Indian agriculture, highlighting the evolving price relationship between farm and non-farm goods. It also discusses the varying impacts on farmers and agricultural workers, leading to economic and social consequences.

What is meant by Terms of Trade (ToT)?

Terms of Trade (ToT) in simple terms refers to the **ratio of the prices at which a country sells its exports to the prices at which it buys its imports**. In an economic context, TOT refer to the relationship between how much money a country pays for its imports and how much it earns from exports. It is expressed as a ratio of import prices to export prices.

For agriculture, ToT compare the price farmers get for their agricultural products (like wheat, rice) against the prices of the goods and services they need to pay (like for machinery, fertilizers).

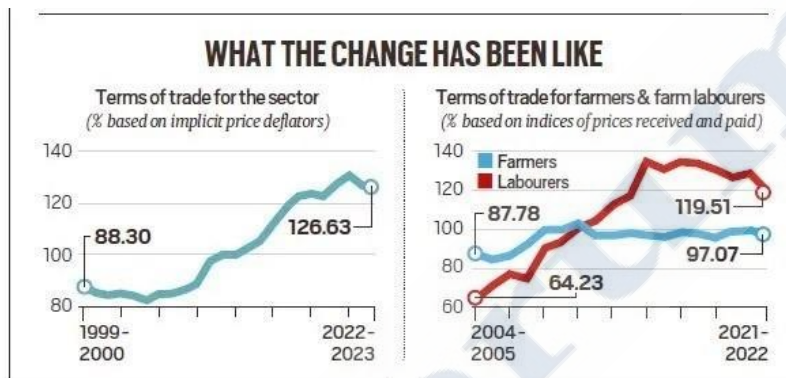
For farmers and agricultural laborers, Terms of Trade measure how much they are earning from their crops and labor, when compared against the costs of essential items like food and tools.

This metric reflects whether they are making more money from their work than they spend on daily needs. Favorable Terms of Trade occur when these earnings surpass their expenses.

What is the significance of ToT?

1. **Economic Indicator:** ToT shows a country's economic strength. Better ToT means earning more from exports than spending on imports, leading to a stronger economy.
2. **Living Standards:** For individuals, especially in sectors like agriculture, favorable ToT can mean higher income from their produce, which can improve their living standards. Conversely, unfavorable ToT can lead to reduced income and lower standards of living.
3. **Income Distribution:** In the agricultural context, ToT affects income distribution within the economy. If farmers are getting better prices for their products, it can lead to a more equitable distribution of income, benefiting rural communities.

How does ToT affect farmers and farm workers?



Overall Trend: While there has been an improvement in ToT for the farm sector, the gains have been more pronounced for agricultural laborers than for farmers. The last few years have seen a stagnation or decline for both groups.

What are the social and economic implications of ToT?

1. **Impact on Marginalized Communities:** The rise in ToT benefited agricultural laborers, primarily from Dalit, Adivasi, and Most Backward Classes, historically at the socioeconomic bottom.
2. **Economic Growth and Labor Opportunities:** Growth in the wider economy around 2003-04 opened up non-agricultural jobs, particularly in construction and urban services, impacting labor availability in agriculture.
3. **Tightening of labor markets:** Initiatives like the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act and public distribution systems contributed to the tightening of labor markets and improvement in laborers' wages and ToT.
4. **Challenges for Farmers:** Farmers have been under **financial pressure due to rising labor and input costs**. Despite government support through subsidies and MSP, their Terms of Trade (ToT) have not shown significant improvement, remaining largely stagnant. This increased demands from agrarian communities like Marathas, Jats, and Patidars for government job reservations and educational benefits.

Subject: Agriculture

Topic: Marketing of agricultural produce and issues and related constraints

Policy Inconsistency in Agriculture Sector – Avoid sending out mixed signals on farm reforms

News: The article discusses the Indian government's inconsistent policies on agriculture, like changing rules for sugarcane ethanol and banning exports. It suggests the need for more market freedom in farming, less government control, and better planning and consultation for farm reforms.

What are the concerns related to government inconsistency in agriculture policy?

1. **Create uncertainty:** The government's rapid changes, like the ban and subsequent lifting of the ban on sugarcane for ethanol production, create uncertainty in the agricultural sector.
2. **Impact on Farmers and Industry:** Sugar and distillery businesses faced potential losses due to the sudden ban, given their investments in cane-derived ethanol, aligned with India's biofuel goals.
3. **Market Disruption:** These policy changes interfere with natural market forces of demand and supply, potentially leading to unforeseen economic consequences.
4. **Political Influence on Decisions:** With national elections approaching, policies seem driven more by political considerations, like controlling inflation, rather than sustainable agricultural practices.
5. **Contradiction with Reform Goals:** The government's actions contradict its earlier attempts to liberalize the farm sector, as seen in the 2020 farm laws aimed at reducing state control.

What should be done?

1. **Stakeholder Consultation:** Engage with farmers and industry players before implementing policies, learning from the backlash against the 2020 farm laws.
2. **Market Freedom Emphasis:** Shift towards market-driven agriculture, allowing farms to respond to real demand and supply, as opposed to heavy state control.
3. **Balanced Approach to Inflation:** While controlling inflation is important, it shouldn't lead to abrupt policy shifts that disrupt the market, as seen with export bans and import duty changes.
4. **Parliamentary Discussion and Transparency:** Encourage open discussions in Parliament on agricultural reforms for informed decision-making and consensus building.

Subject: Science & Technology

Subject: Environment

Topic: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation

Green Industrial strategy – No alternative to green industrial strategy

News: The article discusses the need for a comprehensive Green Industrial Strategy. It emphasized the importance of sustainable development, innovation, and securing significant investment.

What is Green Industrial strategy?

A Green Industrial Strategy is a coordinated approach to economic growth that emphasizes sustainability and innovation.

It aims to secure substantial funding, estimated at \$5-7 trillion yearly globally, to meet environmental goals and promote sustainable development.

This strategy involves reorienting industries towards green technologies and practices, ensuring long-term investment in clean growth, and fostering inter-sectoral collaborations. It's exemplified by Germany's transition to a circular economy in its steel industry, driven by supportive public policies.

What are the benefits of a Green Industrial strategy?

1. **Promoting Sustainable Development:** It aims to meet the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, requiring substantial investment in sustainable initiatives.
2. **Economic Growth:** Green industries are poised to be engines of growth, potentially worth over \$10 trillion globally by 2050. It can drive innovation and create new industries and jobs in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and other green sectors.
3. **Enhancing Competitiveness:** By investing in green technologies and industries, countries can maintain and advance their competitive standing globally.
4. **Energy Security:** Shifting away from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources reduces dependency on imported fuels and enhances national security.

What are the issues with Green Industrial strategy?

1. **Financing Gap:** Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals requires an immense investment of \$5-7 trillion per year, presenting a significant funding challenge.
2. **Long-term Uncertainty:** Investors need confidence in the stability of policies over decades, which is currently hindered by political and policy fluctuations.
3. **Coordination Across Sectors:** Effective strategy requires robust collaboration across different supply chains, which is complex and difficult to manage.
4. **Need for a Just Transition:** Ensuring the transition is fair to all workers and sectors is vital but challenging, requiring careful planning and execution.

What are India's initiatives in green industrial strategy?

1. **Renewable Energy Production:** Increasing renewable energy with the aim to achieve 500 GW capacity by 2030.

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2. **Innovation and Infrastructure:** Launched E20 fuel and emphasized biofuels, with development of waterways for greener transport logistics.
3. **Green Credits and Policies:** Implementing green credit, PM KUSUM Yojana, and vehicle scrapping policy to encourage sustainable practices.
4. **Ethanol Blending and Incentives:** Achieving 10% ethanol blending in petrol 5 months early, with a goal of 20% by 2025-26.

Way forward:

To tackle worldwide climate and economic challenges, countries should adopt mission-driven industrial strategies centered on green innovation and sustainability across all sectors. This involves fostering public-private partnerships and channeling investments towards ambitious objectives. Ultimately, this approach unlocks a \$10 trillion green industry potential, fostering economic growth, environmental sustainability, and an equitable transition for everyone.

Subject: Internal Security

Topic: Money-laundering and its prevention

Supreme Court's observations on the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA)

News: Supreme Court (SC) of India's narrowing interpretation of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), has sparked criticism due to the perceived overreach of the Enforcement Directorate. This overreach is particularly noted in opposition-governed states, raising significant concerns about the impact on federalism and democratic values.

What is the PMLA Act?

[Read here.](#)

What are the Supreme Court's observations on the PMLA?

1. **Proceeds of Crime definition:** In *Vijay Madanlal Choudhary vs Union of India* (2022), the Supreme Court noted that only property derived from criminal activity related to a scheduled offence qualifies as "proceeds of crime" under Section 2(1)(u) of the PML Act 2002.
2. **ED's style of functioning:**
 - a) **ED's Overreach-** Criticism of the Enforcement Directorate's overreach was especially noted in the case *Pankaj Bansal vs Union of India*, where the Supreme Court highlighted issues with the ED's approach.
 - b) **Need for Fairness-** In the same case, the Court emphasized the need for the ED to act with fairness, highlighting inconsistencies and lack of transparency in its operations.
3. **Violations of Procedure: Judicial Misuse-** In the handling of cases like *Pavana Dibbur vs The Directorate of Enforcement, 2023 INSC 1029*, the Supreme Court observed procedural violations and misuse, pointing out the need for strict adherence to legal standards by the ED and other authorities.

For more information on the **SC Judgment on the PMLA**, [read here](#)

What are the concerns related to the misuse of the PMLA Act?

Impact on Federal Structure: Actions perceived as biased or overreaching by central agencies like the ED are seen as **eroding the federal structure and democratic principles of the country.**

Topic: Linkages between development and spread of extremism

Grass-root democracy as a bulwark against Maoists

News: The article discusses the low voter turnout in Maoist-affected areas in Chhattisgarh's elections, by highlighting how Maoists discourage tribal people from voting. It emphasizes the need for empowering tribal communities and implementing the PESA Act effectively to counter Maoist influence and strengthen democracy at the grassroots level.

Background:

India has the **second-largest tribal population in the world.** As per the Census 2011, the tribal population constitutes about **8.9% of the total population in India.** Around **92% of the ST population lives in rural areas.**

How do Maoists impact democracy?

1) **Election Boycotts:** Maoists actively promote election boycotts, undermining the democratic process. This contradicts their claim of representing tribal interests, as it **prevents tribal communities from exercising their voting rights.** For example, In Maoist-affected areas like Bijapur and Konta in Chhattisgarh, the voter turnout was drastically low, ranging from 3% to 4%.

2) **Exploitation of Legislative Gaps:** The improper implementation of the PESA Act, which aims to empower tribal communities, is exploited by Maoists. They use these legislative gaps to maintain control in their strongholds.

What are the initiatives for empowering democracy in tribal communities?

1. **Constitutional initiatives:** The makers of the Constitution of India made special provisions for the protection of tribal culture and the development of Scheduled Tribes.

These include the conservation of their language, script and other cultural elements (article 350), ensuring their educational interests (article 46), providing economic safeguards and taking steps for political empowerment (article 330, 332, 243, fifth schedule).

For more information on **Constitutional Safeguards for tribal community**, [read here](#).

2. **Legislative initiatives: PESA Act:** The Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA) aims to empower tribal gram sabhas (village councils) to govern their socio-economic aspects, enhancing local self-governance. The Act is designed to align with the tribal way of life, respecting their historical and traditional governance structures.

For more information on **PESA Act**, [read here](#).

3. **Separate Ministry: Ministry of Tribal Affairs was set up in 1999** with the objective of providing a more focused approach to the integrated socio-economic development of the Scheduled Tribes (STs).

What should be done?

1. **Increase Tribal Voting:** Tackle low turnout in Maoist areas like Bijapur and Konta by motivating tribal communities to vote, overcoming Maoist boycotts.

2. **Proper Implementation of PESA Act:** Ensure the PESA Act is fully enacted to empower tribal gram sabhas, countering the legislative gaps Maoists exploit.
3. **Strengthen Tribal Democracy:** Empower tribal communities through democratic means, recognizing and nurturing tribal leadership.
4. **Focus on Tribal Aspirations:** Address the genuine issues of tribals, such as their constitutional rights, highlighted in movements like Pathalgadi in Jharkhand.

Topic: Basics of Cybersecurity

Issues with Digitization of Healthcare in India

News: Recently, personal details of more than 80 crore people including Aadhaar and phone numbers, passport details, and health records had been leaked from the ICMR website and put on sale on the dark web. This incident highlights the risk associated with the digitization of health records and a need for robust cyber security.

For further reading on the **ICMR Data Breach:** [Click Here](#)

What are the benefits of digitization of health records?

1. **Quicker Diagnosis:** Electronic repositories of patients' medical histories, diagnoses, treatments and other healthcare information can lead to quicker diagnosis.
2. **Better Treatment Decisions and Improved Safety Standards:** Electronic repositories can also lead to better treatment decisions and improved safety standards.
3. **Accessibility:** Patients can easily access their medical history from anywhere, allowing them to be more informed in their healthcare decisions.
4. **Continuity of Care:** Healthcare providers can seamlessly share patient information between different hospitals and clinics, ensuring continuity of care even if a patient changes doctors or facilities.
5. **Personal Health Management:** Patients can track their health data, such as medication schedules, which can help them manage chronic conditions more effectively.

What are the concerns associated with the digitization of health records?

1. **Disclosure of Personal Information:** Concerns arise regarding the unauthorized disclosure of information related to financial transactions, personal communications, and medical details. The breach also causes worries about violations of privacy.
2. **Issues with Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission:** The scheme has elevated digital healthcare. It operates on a federated architecture where data flows among participants rather than being stored centrally. Despite this, a **World Bank study raised concerns** as health insurers can access patient data within the ecosystem, posing potential data security issues.
3. **Cyber-attacks:** It can disrupt the functioning of medical systems. **For example**, a ransomware attack on AIIMS servers last year forced the hospital to switch a significant portion of its operations to manual mode for nearly two weeks.

What vulnerabilities do other countries face in terms of cyber-attacks on health data?

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The healthcare systems of both the US and the UK have experienced cyberattacks.

Legal frameworks such as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act in the US and the UK's Data Protection Act have not entirely succeeded in preventing breaches.

What can be the way ahead for India?

India's recently introduced [Data Protection Act](#) has faced criticism for not prioritizing the security of health-related information. Hence, there is a need for policymakers to enhance the robustness of the system to prevent such attacks.

