

# 9 PM Current Affairs Weekly Compilation

For UPSC CSE mains examination



**3<sup>rd</sup> Week**

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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: Indian Society

#### Topic- Salient features of Indian Society, Diversity of India.

#### The issue of Proportional Benefits

**Context:** The article debates the slogan "Jitni abadi, utna haq," which suggests rights proportional to population share. It explores historical and current uses of the slogan, its constitutional implications, and the need for data to inform policies. It also discusses the importance of socioeconomic indicators for fair representation and the potential impact of a caste census on social justice and policy-making.

For detailed information on **Reservation in India** read [Article 1](#), [Article 2](#), [Article 3](#)

#### What is the slogan "Jitni abadi, utna haq" and its significance?

The slogan "Jitni abadi, utna haq" means that rights should be proportional to a group's share of the population.

#### Historical Significance:

The slogan has roots in India's social justice movements.

It was historically used by leaders to demand fair representation for marginalized groups.

For example, B.R. Ambedkar advocated for proportional representation in his work States and Minorities.

The British colonial government also introduced policies of proportional representation for certain sections of society.

#### Contemporary Significance:

The slogan is now used to push for policies for various groups like SCs, STs, OBCs, and others. There is increased demand for caste and sub-caste data to inform these policies. Critics argue it is against the Constitution, which emphasizes equality among all citizens. Implementation challenges include demands for sub-categorization within beneficiary groups, such as among Dalits and OBCs.

#### How should fair representation and reservation be determined?

**Socioeconomic and Educational Status:** Fair representation should be based on a group's socioeconomic and educational standing. For instance, while Parsis and Christians are minorities, they are advanced in education and socioeconomic status.

**Supplementary Indicators:** Population can be a supplementary indicator in the absence of detailed data. Historically, population was used as a tentative indicator for fair representation.

**Comprehensive Policies:** There should be general policies for economic and educational empowerment for all, irrespective of caste and religion, alongside specific policies for discriminated groups.

**Affirmative Action in Private Sector:** Discrimination is more rampant in the private sector. Hence, reservation should also apply there.

**Informed by Data:** Policies should be based on comprehensive data, including economic, educational, and social indicators, to ensure fair distribution of opportunities. For instance, a caste census can provide the necessary information to create fair and informed policies.

### Why is a caste census important, and what could be its impact?

**Detailed Data:** A caste census provides demographic and socioeconomic data about various castes and sub-castes.

**Informed Policies:** This data helps create fair and transparent policies. For example, accurate information on education and income levels can guide resource allocation

**Addressing Inequality:** It reveals the economic and social status of different groups, showing progress or persistent discrimination.

**Policy Shifts:** Data can highlight changes, such as certain SCs and OBCs moving out of poverty, impacting reservation policies.

**Reducing Bias:** Current policies based on political pressure can shift to evidence-based decisions.

## GS Paper 2

### Subject: Indian Polity

### Topic- Historical Underpinnings, Evolution, Features, Amendments, Significant Provisions and Basic Structure.

#### The Need for Judicial Vigilance

**Context:** The article highlights the importance of strong, immediate, and unambiguous judicial review in the case of statutes that are unconstitutional or have divisive agenda.

#### What are the issues with the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA)?

- 1) There is a lack of clarity on the fate of applicants whose requests for citizenship are rejected. It is possible that they may end up in detention centers.
- 2) There are worries about foreign applicants receiving dual citizenship without giving up their original citizenship, which contradicts the intent of the main Act.

Read more- [Citizenship Amendment Act \(CAA\) Rules](#)

#### Why do constitutional courts not interfere with statutes or statutory rules frequently?

Constitutional courts generally presume that laws made by Parliament are valid unless they are shown to breach constitutional provisions. The conventional wisdom is that the legislative process is not usually driven by malicious intent.

**For ex-**This was stated in the case of Manish Kumar vs Union of India in 2021. Similarly, in the case of Gurudev datta Vksss Maryadit and Ors. vs State of Maharashtra in 2001, the Supreme Court ruled that courts cannot judge the motives behind legislation.

#### What are the issues with this approach of the constitutional court?

- 1) **Lack of Judicial Interdiction-**The Supreme Court has refrained from interdicting (stopping or restraining) the operation of enactments due to the presumption of validity. This has led to delay in judgements in cases like Vivek Narayan Sharma vs Union of India (2023) (demonetization case) and by this time the situation had already become irreversible.
- 2) **Endangering Democracy-**

- A) The recent Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners Act, 2023 overturned the Supreme Court judgement in Anoop Baranwal vs Union of India (2023) case and reinstated the "Prime Minister's Committee" method for ECI selection.
- B) This new Act was subsequently challenged in **Jaya Thakur vs Union of India (2024)**, where the Court refused to prevent the implementation of the statute, despite it being unconstitutional and threatening the foundation of democracy.
- 3) **Counter Majoritarian Role:** Contemporary populist regimes globally often invoke targeted legislation, manipulating the electoral system and enacting laws with little regard for constitutional schemes. Such trends necessitate an assertive judicial approach to maintain the counter-majoritarian role of constitutional courts.

**Way forward-**The Supreme Court should learn from its track record and understand the political consequences of its insensitivity during critical times. The Supreme Court has effectively interdicted parliamentary legislations in cases like the 27% quota for OBC candidates in professional colleges in **Ashoka Kumar Thakur vs Union of India, 2007** and the 3 contentious farm laws in **Rakesh Vaishnav vs Union of India, 2021**.

## Topic- Structure, Organization and Functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary

### Impact of social media on Judicial Legitimacy

**Context-**The article highlights the issue of sustained digital campaign against the judiciary to diminish the credibility of the institution.

#### What are the issues with this sustained digital campaign against the judiciary?

- 1) **Rise of Online Criticism-** Court proceedings are discussed online, facilitated by platforms such as live-streaming, live-tweeting and legal reporting. However, it has given rise to troubling trend where the judiciary is being increasingly criticized by referring it as a relic of colonialism or incompatible with the norms of "new India."
- 2) **Personal Criticism-**A study of Twitter activity revealed that negative comments increased when the Chief Justice took stances contrary to the ruling government. This indicates that conservative groups are uneasy about the Chief Justice's liberal views and aim to shape the composition of court.

#### What is the implication of this sustained campaign?

- 1) **Undermine Judicial Independence-**These digital campaigns exploit public frustration with judicial inefficiencies and lack of diversity in the higher judiciary. They even spread rumors of a hidden group of influential lawyers controlling the court. All these undermines judicial independence.
- 2) **Establish Executive Dominance-**The aim of these attacks is to purge or remove liberal-leaning justices and facilitate executive dominance over the judiciary.

Read more- [Judicial Reforms](#)

#### What should be the way forward?

- 1) Restoring public trust requires improving service delivery, enhancing diversity in judicial appointments, and reaffirming the court's role as a check on majoritarian power.
- 2) The judiciary and legal community must counter online threats with accurate information and transparent

communication.

- 3) While individuals may recognize the court's imperfections, it's crucial for them to appreciate its significance in safeguarding constitutional rights, setting aside partisan considerations.
- 4) The role of television and social media is vital in shaping norms, and it's important to publicly recognize threats to judicial independence.

## Topic- Salient Features of the Representation of People's Act.

### The Rise of Social Media in Indian Politics

**Context-**The article highlights the impact of social media on the Indian political landscape. Social media influencers and local "influencers" have gained significant popularity among youth voters, even surpassing traditional TV journalists.

#### What are the reasons behind the emergence of social media as a key player in 2024 elections?

- 1) **Decline of traditional media-**Its importance has risen because traditional media could not discharge its professional duty of presenting political issues credibly. It has resorted to more provocative and biased content for its survival.
- 2) **Rise of social media influencer-** Influencers who present dissenting views have quickly gained traction, aided by algorithms. These algorithms on platforms like YouTube and Facebook promote content that is rapidly gaining popularity to a wider audience. This enables them to influence the choices of voters.

Read more- [EC Guidelines on Social Media Use in Political Campaigns](#)

#### What is the positive impact of rise of social media in Indian Elections?

- 1) Platforms like social media offer diverse perspectives beyond government control and help in challenging the official narrative.
- 2) Influencers who do not align with any political party have gained credibility among voters due to the rise in numbers of social media users.
- 3) Social media has offered a space for political engagement to voters who were not able to express their views publicly because of fear of political victimization.
- 4) It has been rapidly adopted by the educated youth population who are disillusioned with traditional politics.

#### What is the negative impact of social media in Indian Elections?

- 1) Political narratives are now being shaped outside the formal party system. This may distort the structure of political parties.
- 2) Social media is making the party workers and intermediaries less relevant. This enables greater centralization within political parties because the leader can directly shape narratives.
- 3) Algorithms deployed by the social media platforms may lead to deeper polarization.



## Topic- Issues and Challenges Pertaining to the Federal Structure, Devolution of Powers and Finances up to Local Levels and Challenges Therein.

### Collapse in Ghatkopar - A moment to reflect on ailing municipal governance

**Context-**The article discusses the tragic hoarding crash in Mumbai's Ghatkopar suburb that claimed 16 lives and injured 75 people. It highlights that urban governance lacks sufficient authority and responsibility to ensure the well-being of its residents.

#### What are the reasons behind the tragic accident?

- 1) **Violation of Rules** -The hoarding that collapsed was three times larger than the size sanctioned by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) and had a weak foundation.
- 2) **Shifting Accountability**-The BMC asserts that it informed the Government Railway Police (GRP), which is the landowner, about the irregularities. However, no action was taken by the GRP.
- 3) **Lack of Pro-activeness**- Information gathered from Mumbai's observatories indicates that there were dangerous wind speeds at the time when the billboard collapsed. The authorities did not learn any lesson from similar incidents in Pune (2017) and Pimpri-Chinchwad (April 2023), which also claimed lives.

#### What are the issues in urban governance in India?

- 1) **Devolution of Powers**-The 74th amendment requires state governments to devolve 18 functions, including land use regulation, to municipalities. However, as per NITI Aayog report, no state has delegated all 18 functions to civic bodies.

Read more- [Issues with Local Governance in India](#)

- 2) **Overlapping Jurisdictions**-Urban local bodies are often constricted due to overlapping jurisdictions with other state agencies, leading to confusion and shifting of accountability. For ex- In Delhi, there is much confusion amongst the city's municipality, DDA and PWD over road maintenance.
- 3) **Regular Civic Election**- The failure of state governments to hold civic body elections violates the directives of the Supreme Court in the **Suresh Mahajan case (2022)**. The court ordered both state governments and State Election Commissions (SEC) to ensure the establishment of a newly elected body in all municipalities before the expiration of the outgoing council's five-year term. For ex- Bengaluru which is currently facing a severe water crisis does not have elected corporators.

## Topic- Appointment to various Constitutional Posts, Powers, Functions and Responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies, Statutory, Regulatory and various Quasi-judicial Bodies

### Issues Associated with Regulatory Fees

**Context-**The article discusses the issue of regulatory fees charged by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) from entities like the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE).

SEBI has asked BSE to pay regulatory fees retrospectively from FY 2006-07, based on the "notional value" of options contracts, amounting to around Rs. 70 crores with 15% interest.

### What is the importance of financial autonomy for regulatory bodies?

- 1) Regulators need to be distanced from political influences and government control.
- 2) Financial autonomy through the power to charge fees ensures independence and credibility with stakeholders.
- 3) It establishes a predictable rule-of-law environment for private investors.

### What are the main issues concerning the fees charged by regulators like SEBI?

1) **Lack of Checks and Balances**-In India, regulators have the power to impose fees without commensurate checks and balances, leading to self-aggrandizing behavior.

Read more- [Changes made by India's Securities and Exchange Board \(SEBI\) for NRIs and OCIs](#)

2) **Financial Accumulation and Spending Trends**- There is a propensity to levy high fees, support expansive expenditure programs, and amass pools of assets.

For ex-SEBI has a large income surplus. By the end of the financial year 2022-23, it had a closing balance of Rs. 4,508 crores.

3) **Legislative Action on Surplus Funds**- The parliament passed an amendment to the Sebi Act through the Finance Act, 2019 that was aimed to transfer surplus funds from SEBI to Consolidated Fund of India. However, despite parliamentary approval, this amendment has not been notified.

### What steps can be taken to address these issues?

- 1) **Alignment of Fees with Services Rendered**- Regulatory bodies should charge fees based on the services they offer. This means the fees should match the costs the regulator faces in overseeing particular entities.
- 2) **Prudent Budgeting**-There is a need to exercise more caution in determining the budget of regulatory bodies to prevent overspending. A tighter budget would make organizations like Sebi choose their regulatory and supervisory projects more carefully.
- 3) **Role of the Board**-The board should protect the interests of stakeholders against the self-interest of internal staff. It should enforce constitutional principles, block excessive fees, oversee budget processes, and ensure accountability of management.
- 4) **Consolidation of Financial Oversight**- A single parliamentary law should set the correct framework for all financial agencies, as recommended by the Financial Sector Legislative Reforms Commission. This approach will address financial impropriety and manage accumulated reserves across various regulators effectively.

## Registered and Recognized Political Parties

**Context**- The Election Commission of India (ECI), in its report on MCC enforcement, stresses that star campaigners should set a good example and avoid causing any disturbances to societal peace. This has sparked discussions about the ECI's authority to curb MCC violations.

### What are registered parties?

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1) **Defined under**- Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 (RP Act) defines the criteria for political parties to get registered with the ECI. As per the ECI, there are 2,790 active registered political parties in India.

2) **Requirement**-Registered political parties must submit their memorandum/constitution to the ECI, pledging allegiance to the Indian Constitution, principles of socialism, secularism, and democracy, and upholding India's sovereignty, unity, and integrity.

3) **Benefits enjoyed by the registered parties-**

- (a) tax exemption for donations received under Section 13A of the Income Tax Act, 1961.
- (b) common symbol for contesting general elections to the Lok Sabha/State Assemblies
- (c) twenty 'star campaigners' during election campaign.

### What are recognized parties?

1) **Defined under**-It's called a Registered Unrecognized Political Party (RUPP). Political parties are recognized either as 'national' or 'State' parties according to The Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968, by the ECI. At present, there are 6 'national' parties, and 61 'State' parties that have been recognized.

2) **Requirement**-To be recognized at the national or state level, a party needs to win a certain number of seats or get a specific percentage of votes in a Lok Sabha or State Assembly election.

3) **Benefits**- They receive benefits like a reserved election symbol and 40 star campaigners.

### What are the issues?

1) **Registered Parties and Election Contestation**-Less than one-third of registered parties contest elections. The RP Act does not confer explicit powers on the ECI to de-register any political party if it fails to contest elections, conduct inner-party elections or lodge requisite returns.

2) **Political Party Deregistration**- The Supreme Court in **Indian National Congress versus Institute of Social Welfare & Ors** (2002) had held that the ECI can de-register a political party only under exceptional circumstances like fraud or disloyalty to the Constitution.

3) **Abuse of Tax Exemptions**- RUPPs that abstain from contesting elections raise concerns about potential misuse of income tax exemptions and donations for money laundering purposes.

4) **Limited Enforcement of MCC by ECI**-The Model Code of Conduct (MCC) prohibits appealing to caste/communal sentiments and voter intimidation/bribery. Recognized parties have been guilty of MCC violations. However, the action of ECI has been limited. For ex- short campaigning bans.

Read more- [Model Code of Conduct](#)

### What reforms have been proposed to address these issues?

1) The ECI's electoral reforms memorandum (2016) suggests amendments in laws to grant the ECI de-registration powers.

2) The Law Commission's 255th report (2015) suggests deregistration for parties that do not participate in elections for ten consecutive years.

3) Paragraph 16A of the Symbols order grants the ECI the authority to suspend or revoke the recognition of parties for MCC violations, although this provision has rarely been applied. Therefore, there is a necessity to employ this provision more frequently to reduce breaches of the Model Code of Conduct.

## Use of State-funded Media During Polls

**Context-**Two Opposition leaders were recently asked to make certain changes to their speeches on Doordarshan and All India Radio (AIR) during the allocated broadcast time for the ongoing Lok Sabha elections.

### What are the rules regarding the allocation of time on state media for political parties?

- 1) Recognized political parties have been allowed to freely use state-owned TV and radio during polls since the 1998 Lok Sabha elections.
- 2) The **Election Commission of India (ECI)** decides the time allocation for national and state parties before the election campaign.
- 3) National parties get a minimum of 10 hours on Doordarshan's national channel, 15 hours on regional channels, 10 hours on AIR's national hook-up, and 15 hours on regional AIR stations.
- 4) State parties get a minimum of 30 hours on the appropriate regional Doordarshan channel and AIR radio station. For the 2024 elections, the ECI allocated broadcast and telecast time to 6 national parties and 59 state parties based on specific formulae.

Read more- [Registered and Recognized Political Parties](#)

### What are the guidelines on the content of speech made by political leaders?

- 1) Parties and speakers must submit transcripts of their speeches 3-4 days before recording for approval by the concerned authorities, in the respective AIR and Doordarshan stations.
- 2) The ECI's guidelines forbid criticism of other countries, attacks on religions or communities, obscenity, defamation, incitement of violence, contempt of court, aspersions against the President and judiciary, anything affecting national unity, sovereignty, and integrity, and criticism by name of any person.

### What are the issues with these guidelines?

The opposition leaders have written a letter to Director General of Doordarshan stating that the censorship denies their right to dissent in a democracy.

## Subject: Governance

### Topic- Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

## Key provisions of India's Digital Competition Bill, 2024

**Context:** The article discusses India's proposed Digital Competition Bill, 2024. The bill aims to prevent big tech companies like Google, Facebook, and Amazon from engaging in anti-competitive practices, similar to the EU's Digital Markets Act.

For detailed information on **Digital Competition Bill in India** read [Article 1](#), [Article 2](#)

### What are the key provisions of India's Digital Competition Bill, 2024?

#### Predictive Regulation:

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Proposes a preventive (ex ante) approach instead of the current post-incident (ex post) regulation. Aims to foresee and prevent potential anti-competitive practices before they occur.

### Significant Entities:

The Bill proposes that for certain “core digital services” like search engines, and social media sites. The Competition Commission of India (CCI) will designate “Systematically Significant Digital Enterprises” (SSDE), on various quantitative and qualitative parameters. Criteria include, in last 3 financial year, turnover over Rs 4,000 crore in India, global turnover over \$30 billion, gross merchandise value in India over Rs 16,000 crore, or global market capitalization over \$75 billion. SSDEs must have at least 1 crore end users or 10,000 business users.

### Prohibited Practices:

SSDEs cannot engage in self-preferencing, anti-steering, or restricting third-party applications. Violations can result in fines up to 10% of global turnover.

### Associate Digital Enterprises (ADEs):

Entities benefiting from data shared by a major tech group will be designated as ADEs. ADEs will have the same obligations as SSDEs.

### What criticisms have been raised against the draft Bill?

**Compliance Burden:** Big tech companies argue that the strict regulations could shift focus from innovation to compliance. For example, the EU’s Digital Markets Act (DMA) has increased the time to find things via Google search by 4,000%.

**Broad Definitions:** Companies are concerned about the broad criteria for designating significant platforms. Unlike the EU’s DMA, India’s draft law leaves the decision to the discretion of the Competition Commission of India (CCI).

**Impact on Smaller Businesses:** Tech giants claim changes to their platforms and reduced data sharing could negatively affect smaller businesses relying on their services to reach large audiences.

**Potential Arbitrary Decisions:** The discretion given to the CCI could lead to arbitrary decision-making, impacting start-ups and smaller businesses.

### Why is there a need for the Digital Competition Bill?

1. Big tech companies have a history of anti-competitive behavior. For instance, Google was fined Rs 1.337 crore for its conduct in the Android ecosystem.
2. The dominance of a few companies creates high barriers for new entrants. This limits innovation to within big tech firms.
3. The bill aims to lower these barriers and foster competition. This can lead to more innovation outside the big tech companies.
4. Smaller businesses struggle to compete with the market dominance of big tech. The bill aims to create a more level playing field.

## The rapid growth of the biopharmaceutical industry

**Context:** The article discusses the rapid growth of the biopharmaceutical industry, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. It highlights the importance of collaboration between industry and academia for innovation, drug development, and overcoming challenges in the evolving biopharma landscape.

### What is the biopharmaceutical industry?

The biopharmaceutical industry produces drugs and therapies from living organisms. This includes vaccines, biologics, biosimilars, and cell and gene therapies.

Since 1982, the global biopharmaceutical industry has grown significantly. It is estimated at \$528 billion and is expected to grow at a double-digit compounded annual growth rate.

India ranks among the top 12 biotechnology destinations globally. In 2023, the Indian biopharma industry surpassed \$92 billion, reflecting a 15% growth from the previous year.

The rise in chronic diseases, higher income levels, and demand for better treatments are driving this growth. Biopharma has advantages over traditional medicine, such as fewer side effects and greater effectiveness.

### Why is collaboration between industry and academia important?

Collaboration between industry and academia is essential for biopharmaceutical research and development. Industry and academia together can handle extensive research, clinical trials, and regulatory adherence. Academia has contributed to successful drugs like Paclitaxel, Vorinostat, Prezista, Viread, and Dexrazoxane. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the success of collaborations in developing life-saving vaccines and therapies.

India's first home-grown gene therapy for cancer involved IIT Bombay, Tata Memorial Centre, and ImmunoACT. Programs like Pfizer-IIT Delhi Innovation and INDOvation have fostered 34 healthcare innovators and filed 19 intellectual properties.

### What initiatives support India's biopharmaceutical capabilities?

Initiatives like establishment of a **department of biotechnology in 1986**, the **Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC)** and **National Biopharma Mission (NBM)** enhance India's capabilities. They aim for global competitiveness and improved healthcare through innovative products.

For detailed information on **National Biopharma Mission** [read this article here](#)

### What should be done?

1. Increase funding for schemes like India's **Uchchar Avishkar Yojana** to foster innovation among students and faculty.
2. Establish **technology transfer offices (TTOs)** in academic institutions to enhance technology transfer capabilities, ensuring research translates into practical solutions.
3. Recruit overseas Indian researchers with attractive incentives to address the shortage of qualified faculty, similar to **China's Thousand Talent Programme**.
4. Implement specialized training on legal and regulatory frameworks for new biotech interventions in universities.
5. Integrate these frameworks into the curriculum to better prepare students for the complexities of the biotech landscape and nurture a skilled workforce.

## Issues in the criminal justice system

**News:** The article discusses the tragic loss of two young lives in Pune due to reckless driving by a drunk youth. It highlights issues in the criminal justice system, delays in trials, and inadequate handling of juvenile offenders, calling for speedy and effective justice reforms.

For detailed information on **India's criminal justice system** [read this article here](#)

### What are the issues of India's criminal justice system?

**Delays in Verdicts:** Cases take years to conclude, as seen in Salman Khan's 2002 accident case which took 13 years and ended in acquittal. Long delays reduce respect for the law.

**Low Conviction Rates:** In cities, the conviction rate for negligent driving and hit-and-run cases is only 30%. Over 90% of such cases are pending in courts.

**Judicial and Police Staffing Shortages:** India has 21 judicial officers per million people, far below the recommended 50 per million. The police population ratio is 152 per lakh citizens, while the norm is 222 per lakh. There are 400,000 police vacancies.

**Weak Prosecution:** Delays make it difficult to trace witnesses, and their memories fade, weakening cases. The general impression is that many criminals go scot-free due to time-consuming judicial processes.

**Juvenile Justice Issues:** The Juvenile Justice Board in Pune handled a serious case with minor penalties, showing leniency.

### What should be done?

**Enhance Police Training and Technology:** Regularly train police in using technology and equip forensic labs better. This would improve investigation quality and conviction rates. The police have charged 75% of rash driving cases and 65% of hit-and-run cases within a year.

**Stricter Juvenile Justice:** Handle serious offenses by juveniles with stricter measures. The Maharashtra government's decision to try the Porsche driver as an adult is a positive step.

**Public Accountability:** Encourage citizens to follow traffic rules and act responsibly. The Pune case should lead to greater public awareness and accountability in road safety.

## Subject: Social Justice

**Topic- Welfare Schemes for Vulnerable Sections of the population by the Centre and States and the Performance of these Schemes; Mechanisms, Laws, Institutions and Bodies constituted for the Protection and Betterment of these Vulnerable Sections.**

### Efforts of Indian companies to protect women employees from sexual harassment

**Context:** The article discusses the inadequate efforts of Indian companies to protect women employees from sexual harassment, despite laws and regulations. Reports of harassment have increased, but resolution rates are poor, indicating inefficacy in handling complaints. Compliance remains uneven.

For detailed information on **sexual harassment in the workplace** [read Article here](#)

### What is the Protection of Women from Sexual Harassment (PoSH) Act, 2013?

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**Definition and Purpose:** The Protection of Women from Sexual Harassment (PoSH) Act, 2013, mandates that companies establish **internal complaint committees** (ICCs) to address and resolve complaints of sexual harassment at the workplace.

**Reporting Requirements:** The Act also requires companies to disclose the number of sexual harassment complaints and their resolution status in their annual reports.

For more detailed information [read this article](#)

### What do recent studies reveal about this act?

**Increase in Reports:** Recent studies, including one from Ashoka University, reveal that reports of sexual harassment have increased significantly, from 161 cases in 2014 to 1,160 in 2023 among 300 companies listed on the National Stock Exchange.

**Gap in Resolution:** Despite the rise in reported cases, there is a widening gap between the number of complaints made and those resolved, suggesting inefficiencies within internal complaint committees (ICCs).

**Lack of Training and Trust:** A survey by Walchand Plus indicated that about one-third of organizations do not conduct any PoSH training, and a similar proportion lacks faith in the effectiveness of ICCs as a means of addressing complaints.

### What are the broader implications of these findings?

**Workplace Hostility:** The persistent gap between reporting and resolution of complaints suggests a continuing hostile environment for women in many Indian workplaces.

**Impact on Workforce Participation:** The inadequate resolution of harassment cases could be contributing to the already low participation of women in the workforce.

**Compliance Disparity:** With 98% of complaints reported by large-cap companies and virtually none by small-cap companies, there is a clear disparity in compliance, highlighting a broader issue of uneven adherence to the PoSH Act across different segments of the corporate sector.

## Issue of fake online reviews on e-commerce websites

**Context:** The article discusses the issue of fake online reviews on e-commerce websites. The Department of Consumer Affairs plans to enforce quality standards for reviews. E-commerce firms support this initiative. Implementing regulations and using AI can help detect and remove fake reviews.

For detailed information on **framework for safeguarding consumer from fake reviews in e-commerce** [read this article here](#)

### What impact do online reviews have?

1. Online reviews shape consumer behavior significantly, acting as a digital form of trying out products in stores. They address information asymmetry between buyers and sellers by offering insights into product quality.
2. Conversion rates on websites that display consumer reviews have been shown to increase markedly.
- 3) According to a report by customer acquisition security vendor CHEQ, online reviews influenced about \$3.8 trillion of global e-commerce spending in 2021.
4. The authenticity of reviews impacts the trust and credibility of e-commerce platforms, influencing consumer choices and market outcomes.



### What are the issues with online reviews?

1. **Fake and sponsored reviews mislead consumers**, pushing them towards incorrect purchase decisions, which distort market outcomes.
2. The **use of malicious bots and users to generate fake reviews** benefits specific sellers or firms at the expense of others.
3. The number of complaints about fake reviews on e-commerce platforms registered with the National Consumer Helpline has dramatically increased by 366% from 2018 to 2023.
4. Misleading reviews **harm the credibility and trustworthiness of digital platforms**, affecting their reputation among consumers.
5. Search algorithms that rely heavily on reviews can be manipulated, impacting product visibility and sales negatively.

### What are the proposed solutions?

**Enforcing Quality Standards:** The Department of Consumer Affairs plans to implement quality standards for online reviews, as mentioned in the discussions of new regulations.

**Prohibiting Biased Reviews:** The proposed quality control order will likely ban e-commerce platforms from publishing biased reviews, editing reviews to change their message, or discouraging negative reviews.

**Verifying Reviewers:** Regulations will require the identification and verification of review writers' credentials to ensure authenticity.

**Leveraging AI:** Artificial intelligence is suggested to help identify fake reviews using textual analysis methods, improving the detection and removal of misleading content.

## Topic-Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health

### NITI Aayog's study related to cancer detection

**Context:** The article discusses the need for early cancer detection in India. Government programs aim to improve screening for cervical, oral, and breast cancers. However, many health centers lack proper screening. More training and investment in health workers are needed to improve cancer detection.

For detailed information on **Cancer in India** [read this article here](#)

### Why is early cancer detection important?

Early detection of cancer significantly increases survival chances. Government programs in India focus on screening for cervical, oral, and breast cancers. These cancers make up a third of all cases in the country.

### What are the government initiatives?

1. The government launched the **National Programme for the Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Disease, and Stroke**. This program emphasizes screening for cervical, oral, and breast cancers.
2. Under **Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY)**, 1,50,000 health and wellness centers (HWCs) were designated as cancer detection points.
3. **Low-tech screening methods** and **community-level workers like ASHA workers** are utilized.

4. The **National Institute for Cancer Prevention and Research** in Noida is designated as a training hub for these efforts.

**What are the major findings of NITI Aayog's study related to cancer detection?**

1. NITI Aayog's study found significant gaps in the performance of health and wellness centers (HWCs). Less than 10% of HWCs completed one round of screening for non-communicable diseases, including cancer. Despite plans, many centers lack proper screening facilities.
2. ASHA workers, who are crucial for community-level cancer screening, are not adequately trained. Previous studies emphasized the need to educate ASHA workers about cancer risks and symptoms.
3. The study highlights the importance of improving working conditions and investing in training for these frontline professionals.

**Politicisation of Indian higher education**

**Context:** The article discusses how Indian higher education has become deeply politicized. Politicians influence college and university locations, naming, and appointments. Despite some adherence to academic freedom, political interference is growing, threatening the autonomy and quality of institutions.

For detailed information on **Freedom in Indian Universities** read **Article 1, Article 2**

**How has politics influenced Indian higher education?**

Politicians have long influenced Indian higher education by es colleges and universities to boost their careers and gain political support.

Institutions were often established in politically advantageous locations to cater to the socio-cultural demands of the electorate.

State governments frequently renamed universities for political reasons.

Academic appointments and promotions sometimes favored political connections over qualifications.

In Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, and Punjab, non-BJP states are trying to remove centrally-appointed Governors as chancellors of State universities.

**What are the impacts of politics influencing Indian higher education?**

1. Increasing politicization in universities **undermines academic freedom and autonomy**.
2. Political appointments of vice chancellors often result in **less qualified individuals** reshaping universities with politically aligned faculty.
3. This trend is visible in states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, and Punjab, where **attempts are being made to remove centrally-appointed State Governors as chancellors**.
4. **Self-censorship among academics is rising**, with scholars fearing repercussions for controversial work. Pratap Bhanu Mehta's resignation from Ashoka University exemplifies this.
5. **Respected journals face restrictions**, as seen with Professor Sameena Dalwai facing an online smear campaign.
6. Students are also affected, such as a Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) PhD **student suspended for protesting** central government policies.
7. These impacts threaten the quality of education and intellectual freedom, potentially harming India's global academic partnerships.

## Issues with Scheme for Care and Support to Victims

**Context-**The article discusses the issues with the Scheme for Care and Support to Victims that was notified under Section 4 & 6 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012" by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.

### What is the objective of the scheme?

The objective is to provide integrated support and assistance to minor pregnant girl child victims "under one roof" and facilitate immediate emergency and non-emergency access to services for long-term rehabilitation.

Read more- [One Stop Centre](#)

### What are the issues with the recently notified "Scheme for Care and Support to Victims" program?

#### 1) Discrepancies Regarding Inclusion and Classification-

- a) The scheme's name doesn't reflect its intent anymore. It now covers all pregnant girl victims under the mentioned sections of the POCSO Act, not just abandoned or orphaned one.
- b) The scheme's misleading name creates uncertainty about whether it applies to victims of any gender under Sections 4 and 6 of the POCSO Act.
- c) It remains silent on whether the benefits will continue if the victim opts for a medical termination of pregnancy (MTP) or has a miscarriage.
- d) It's uncertain whether the benefits will persist for a girl who reaches 18 after the case is reported or if her personal situation changes while she's eligible for benefits.

#### 2) Inconsistencies with Existing Legislations and Guidelines-

- a) The scheme wrongly refers to Section 27 of the POCSO Act (which deals with medical examination of a child) to decide on the placement of the minor pregnant girl.
- b) It wrongly implies that the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) can approve the medical examination for sexual assault of any child under 12 years old without parental or guardian consent.
- c) The need for the district magistrate's approval for MTP, as advised by the district chief medical officer, is unnecessary and doesn't align with the MTP Act.
- d) There's not enough emphasis on MTP, even though it's important to facilitate discussions about whether to continue or end the pregnancy.

#### 3) Contradictions with Existing Rules and Regulations-

- a) It contradicts Rule 4(4) of the POCSO Rules and Section 2(14) of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, by automatically categorizing all pregnant girls as Children in Need of Care and Protection (CNCP).
- b) It's uncertain if the benefits for girls in institutional care also extend to those living with their families outside of institutions.
- c) The scheme's provision about giving up a newborn contradicts with the adoption regulations which don't have age limits for mothers surrendering their infants.

#### 4) Financial Implications and Data Considerations-

- a) Given India's high ranking in child marriages and teenage pregnancies, the financial burden on the exchequer due to the scheme could be substantial.

b) With the mandatory reporting provision in the POCSO Act, 2012, there could be an exponential increase in reported cases. This would require a thorough analysis of health and police data for budgeting and planning.

**Way Forward**-The Ministry of Women and Child Development must amend the scheme while considering how it aligns with existing laws, regulations, and protocols.

### Food safety violations in India

**Context:** The article discusses food safety issues in India. One in four food samples tested did not meet safety standards. Despite this, authorities did not inform consumers about unsafe food brands. There are calls for stricter regulations and better consumer protection.

For detailed information on **Food Safety Regulations in India** [read this article here](#)

#### What is the status of food safety violations in India?

In three years up to March 2023, 43 million food samples were tested in India.

One in four samples failed to meet food safety laws.

Unsafe or substandard samples made up one in six of these failures.

FSSAI and state agencies initiated legal actions, achieving over 60% conviction rates. However, they did not alert consumers about unsafe products.

No product recalls or license cancellations were reported in FSSAI's 2021-22 report.

# FOOD SAFETY AT STAKE

In the three years to March 2023, about 16% of samples analysed were either unsafe or substandard

Year	Samples analysed	Non-conforming samples		
		Unsafe	Substandard	Labeling defects*
2020-21	1,07,829	5,220	13,394	9,733
2021-22	1,44,345	4,890	16,582	11,462
2022-23	1,77,511	6,579	21,917	16,130
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,29,685</b>	<b>16,689</b>	<b>51,893</b>	<b>37,325</b>

\*Includes cases of misleading labels

Source: Fssai

## FALLOUT OF UNHEALTHY DIETS

Nutritional status and health indicators of children aged 10-19 years

(Prevalence in %)



Source: Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey 2019, cited in Dietary Guidelines for Indians, ICMR-NIN, May 2024

### What are the reasons for the increase in food safety violations in India?

**Inadequate Testing Facilities:** Many smaller states and union territories lack FSSAI-accredited labs.

**Limited Resources:** Shortage of food safety officers and testing labs at the state level hampers enforcement.

**Rampant Adulteration:** Adulteration is common in spices like turmeric and chili, edible oils, and paneer.

**Lax and Reactive Enforcement:** FSSAI did not inform consumers about unsafe food products, did not conduct product recalls, and responds to issues reactively rather than proactively.

**Unscientific Farming Practices:** Overuse of chemicals and pesticides by farmers leaves high residue levels in crops.

**High Consumption of Processed Foods:** A significant portion of household budgets (about 10.6% of household budgets in urban and 9.6% in rural areas) is spent on processed foods, which often do not meet safety standards.

**Cheaper and Accessible Junk Food:** Junk food is more affordable and accessible, leading to higher consumption.

**Celebrity Endorsements:** Celebrity endorsements increase the appeal of junk food, encouraging higher consumption.

#### What are the impacts of unsafe foods in India?

**Health Risks:** Unsafe foods contribute to an epidemic of non-communicable diseases like diabetes and hypertension. About 56% of India's disease burden is due to unhealthy diets.

**Child Health Issues:** Every tenth child is prediabetic, and one in four is anaemic.

**Adult Health Problems:** A fifth of adult women are undernourished, while a quarter are obese.

#### What is the different food safety regulatory in India?

**Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006:** Defines unsafe food and mandates safe and wholesome food for consumption. It is an independent statutory agency under the health ministry.

For more information on **Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006** [read this article here](#)

**Multiple Regulatory Agencies:** Food exports are regulated by agencies like the **Export Inspection Council, Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority, and Spices Board of India**, all under the **commerce ministry**.

For more detailed information on **Concerns about India's food safety Regulations** [read this article here](#)

### Growth of student enrolment in India's higher education

**Context:** The article discusses the growth of student enrolment in India's higher education from 2012-13 to 2021-22, emphasizing the inclusion of disadvantaged groups and the progress towards gender equality.

For detailed information on **All India Survey on Higher Education** [read this article here](#)

#### How much has student enrolment grown in India?

**Total Enrolment Growth:** From the academic year 2012-13 to 2021-22, student enrolment in Indian higher education increased from 30 million to 43.2 million.

**Annual Growth Rate:** The compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) over these nine years was 4.1%.

**Impact of Reservation Policy:** Enrolment of marginalized groups significantly increased due to the reservation policy:

**Scheduled Castes (SC):** Increased from 3.84 million to 6.6 million (6.2% CAGR).

**Scheduled Tribes (ST):** Rose from 1.32 million to 2.71 million (8.3% CAGR).

**Other Backward Classes (OBC):** Grew from 9.4 million to 16.3 million (6.3% CAGR).

## Enrolment gains

The numbers have broadly risen although there is scope for improvement in the case of minorities whose proportion of higher-education enrolment is significantly lower than their share in India's population.

Community	Enrolment (in million)			Population (in %)	HE Enrolment
	2012-13	2021-22	Share (in %)	Census 2011	9-yr CAGR (in %)
SC	3.9	6.6	15.3	16.6	6.2
ST	1.3	2.7	6.3	8.6	8.3
OBC	9.4	16.3	37.8	40.90	6.3
Muslims	1.3	2.1	4.9	14.2	6.0
Other minorities	0.6	0.9	2.1	6.0	5.4
General	13.8	14.6	33.6	13.6	0.7
<b>All</b>	<b>30.2</b>	<b>43.3</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>4.1</b>

Community	Enrolment (male, in million)			Enrolment (female, in million)		
	2012-13	2021-22	CAGR (in %)	2012-13	2021-22	CAGR (in %)
SC	2.1	3.5	5.6	1.7	3.2	7.0
ST	0.7	1.4	7.2	0.6	1.4	9.6
OBC	5.1	8.5	5.9	4.3	7.8	6.8
Muslims	0.7	1.1	5.4	0.6	1	6.6
Other minorities	0.3	0.4	6.0	0.3	0.5	4.9
General	7.8	7.8	0.0	6.0	6.8	1.5
<b>All</b>	<b>16.6</b>	<b>22.6</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>13.5</b>	<b>20.7</b>	<b>4.8</b>

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Source: Census 2011, NSSO, AISHE

### How close is enrolment to population composition?

The enrolment of SC, ST, and OBC groups in 2021-22 closely matches their percentages in the population:

SC: 15.3% enrolment vs. 16.6% population.

ST: 6.3% enrolment vs. 8.6% population.

OBC: 37.8% enrolment vs. 40.9% population.

However, minorities, who make up about one-fifth of the population, have only 7% enrolment in higher education.

### What are the trends in gender parity in higher education?

**Achievement of Gender Parity:** Gender parity in higher education was achieved in the academic year 2019-20.

**Women's Enrolment:** Women constitute 48% of the total enrollment in 2021-22, showing increased participation.

**Enrollment Growth Rate:** The 10-year compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) for women's enrolment is

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4.7%, compared to 3.4% for men.

**Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER):** Women's GER in 2021-22 was 28.5, higher than men's GER at 28.3, indicating a higher proportion of women in the 18-23 age group are pursuing higher education.

**Enrolment Across Social Groups:** The enrollment growth rate for women is higher than for men across various social groups.

Scheduled Castes: 7% for women, compared to 5.6% for men.

Scheduled Tribes: 9.6% for women, versus 7.2% for men.

Other Backward Classes: 6.8% for women, against 5.9% for men.

Muslim Community: 6.6% for women, versus 5.4% for men.

**Way forward** -To further boost higher education enrolment, India should expand educational infrastructure and utilize distance learning, especially in regions with low institutional capacity. This strategy helps accommodate more students without merely redistributing limited resources.

### Safe motherhood

**Context-** The article highlights the significance of identifying and screening pre-eclampsia for ensuring safer motherhood. It states that prematurity, low birth weight, growth issues, and pre-eclampsia due to pregnancy-related hypertension are preventable problems that harm mothers and babies worldwide.

As per the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) perinatal mortality rates stand at 32 for 1,000 pregnancies, neonatal mortality rates at 25 for 1,000 live births, and hypertensive disorders in pregnancy remain a leading cause of maternal death.

#### What is pre-eclampsia?

**Description-**It is a hypertensive disorder of pregnancy leading to multiorgan dysfunction in the mother.

**Symptoms-** Apart from having high blood pressure, which often starts after 20 weeks of pregnancy, these mothers may also show signs like swelling in the face, hands, and feet, severe headaches, vision changes, upper abdominal pain, and trouble breathing.

**Implication-** Studies show that pre-eclampsia significantly raises the risk of heart failure, coronary heart disease, stroke, and cardiovascular death in mothers.

#### What steps can be taken to ensure safe motherhood and birth, especially in dealing with pre-eclampsia?

1) **Screening and Managing High-Risk Pregnancies Early** -There is a need to carry out screening for conditions like pre-eclampsia and fetal growth restriction during the initial three months of pregnancy. Further, it's important to handle pregnancies with elevated risks according to established guidelines.

2) **Comprehensive Screening for Pre-eclampsia in High-Risk Pregnancies** -Since pre-eclampsia is a systemic disorder, clinical criteria alone are inadequate to predict adverse outcomes. Thus, there is a need for a comprehensive screening approach involving factors like the mother's medical background, demographics, specialized ultrasounds, blood pressure, placental indicators, and administering medicine promptly to high-risk pregnancies in the first trimester.

3) **Comprehensive Monitoring for Pre-eclampsia** - Monitoring for pre-eclampsia during the second and third trimesters helps observe, detect it early, and determine when to deliver the baby. Thus, there is a need to offer comprehensive care throughout all trimesters, with colour Doppler ultrasound as its cornerstone.



4) **Samrakshan Programme**-The Indian Radiological and Imaging Association started the "Samrakshan" program to spread safe motherhood efforts throughout India's districts. The program promises to decrease pre-eclampsia from 8%-10% to 3% and fetal growth issues from 25%-30% to 10% by the end of the decade. This programme should be implemented effectively.

## Topic- -Role of civil services in a democracy.

### The role of Indian Forest Service officers

**Context:** The article is from a speech by President Droupadi Murmu at the convocation ceremony of the 2022 batch of the Indian Forest Service (IFS). It emphasizes the urgent need for biodiversity and forest conservation. It highlights the sacrifices of Indian Forest Service officers and the importance of learning from tribal communities.

#### What is the role of Indian Forest Service officers?

**Conservation of Biodiversity:** Indian Forest Service officers are crucial for the protection and conservation of biodiversity. They work to preserve various ecosystems, forests, and wildlife.

**Promotion of Forests:** They are involved in afforestation and reforestation projects, using modern methods like the Miyawaki technique to accelerate forest growth in urban and rural areas.

**Role Models in Environmental Conservation:** Officers like P Srinivas, Sanjay Kumar Singh, and S Manikandan, who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty, serve as inspiring examples of dedication to environmental conservation.

#### What changes occurred during the Industrial Revolution?

**Increased Demand for Timber:** The Industrial Revolution led to a heightened demand for timber and other forest products due to the expansion of industries and urban areas.

**Formation of Imperial Forest Service:** To manage and regulate forest use, the Imperial Forest Service was established, primarily to fulfill the British Raj's objectives by exploiting India's forest resources.

**Massive Wildlife Hunting:** From 1875 to 1925, over 80,000 tigers, 1.5 lakh leopards, and 2 lakh wolves were hunted, indicating a drastic reduction in wildlife populations due to excessive hunting for sport and trade during this period.

#### What changes are required in the training of forest officers?

**Integrate Traditional and Modern Knowledge:** They should use both traditional knowledge from tribal communities and modern scientific methods. This integration helps protect ecosystems and supports sustainable development.

**Uphold Rights of Tribal Communities:** The officers must protect the interests and rights of indigenous peoples, ensuring their equal participation in development and conservation efforts.

**Adhere to Constitutional Values:** When facing dilemmas, officers should make decisions based on the principles of the Constitution and in the best interests of the people of India, ensuring fairness and justice in their actions.

**Focus on Climate Change:** Given the urgency of the climate crisis, emphasize training on climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies.

**Update the curriculum** to include modern scientific methods and technologies. For example, using artificial intelligence tools to identify optimal areas and species for afforestation can enhance the effectiveness of conservation efforts.

## Subject: International Relations

### Topic- India and its Neighborhood- Relations.

#### India-Pakistan Relations and Para Diplomacy

**Context-** The article discusses the Shiromani Akali Dal's (SAD) promise to negotiate with the Centre for an "exchange of territory" with Pakistan to get back Kartarpur Sahib, the final resting place of Guru Nanak. The article suggests that instead of changing territorial boundaries, the focus should be on transforming these frontiers from zones of military confrontation into areas of commercial cooperation.

#### What are the challenges in India-Pakistan economic cooperation?

- 1) Pakistan's military establishment has shown little interest in economic cooperation with India, especially until the Kashmir issue is resolved to its satisfaction.
- 2) Pakistan has not granted Most Favored Nation (MFN) status to India and suspended trade ties following incidents like the Pulwama terror attack and India's revocation of Jammu and Kashmir's special status.

#### What steps can be taken to address this?

- 1) **Push to cross-border trade-** There is a need to open the Hussainiwala borders with Pakistan for trade and tourism to boost economic prosperity.
- 2) **Transborder economic zones-** These have gained traction in Southeast Asia and China is also encouraging cross-border collaboration in its frontier provinces. Thus, there can be the creation of a "special economic zone" along the entire Punjab border in collaboration with Delhi that will attract small and medium enterprises.
- 3) **Deploying para diplomacy-** Para diplomacy involves formal interactions between entities below the federal level, such as provincial and local governments, to pursue shared national goals. It can complement the engagement by national governments and potentially generate openings that are not achievable at the national level.

#### What should be the way forward?

- 1) Regardless of which party is in power, the government should rethink using para diplomacy as an important part of India's diplomacy.
- 2) India's neighborhood policy should consider the needs of people living in border areas. This means that both the central government and regional parties must agree on how to build positive relationships with neighboring countries.

## Topic- Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests

### Importance of Chabahar port for India

**Context:** India signed a 10-year agreement with Iran to develop and operate the Chabahar port. The project is crucial for India's trade with Afghanistan and Central Asia. The U.S. warned of potential sanctions, but India aims to improve its trade routes and connectivity.

For detailed information on **Chabahar Port Agreement** [read this article here](#)

#### Why is the Chabahar port important for India?

**Alternative Trade Route:** Chabahar offers a route to Afghanistan and Central Asia, bypassing Pakistan.

**Investment:** India is investing \$120 million and offering a \$250 million credit facility.

**International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC):** Chabahar is expected to connect to INSTC, reducing trade time and costs between India, Iran, Azerbaijan, and Russia.

**Geopolitical Influence:** Located 200 km from Pakistan's Gwadar port, Chabahar helps India counter China's Belt and Road Initiative in the region.

#### How has the U.S. policy affected the Chabahar port Project?

**Sanctions Delay:** U.S. sanctions on Iran delayed the project since its conception in 2003.

**2015 MoU:** India signed a memorandum of understanding in 2015 after the U.S. eased sanctions.

**2016 Agreement:** The project progressed during Prime Minister Modi's visit to Iran.

**2018 Sanctions:** The U.S. withdrew from the nuclear deal in 2018, reimposing sanctions on Iran, raising questions about India's cooperation.

**Sanctions Waiver:** India received a sanctions waiver due to U.S. interests in Afghanistan, which has now changed with the Taliban in power.

**Way forward** -India should stay invested in Chabahar. It should improve trade and connectivity projects with Central Asia, which is essential for India's continued rise. India should not change its policy based on U.S. stance.

### Russia-China Relationship and implications for India

**Context-** Putin and Xi have met over 40 times in 11 years, earning the title of "old friends." Their recent Summit in Beijing, marking 75 years of diplomatic relations, is seen as one of their most important meetings yet.

#### How has the relationship between Russia and China evolved over time?

- 1) 19th century- Czarist Russia expanded towards the Pacific, taking advantage of a weak China.
- 2) Post-1949- The formation of the People's Republic of China in 1949 initially led to a short-lived period of friendship, which was then overshadowed by ideological and geopolitical disagreements, notably sparked by China's invasion of India in 1962. These tensions intensified with armed confrontations in 1969, mainly concerning border issues.
- 3) 1972 onwards- After Nixon's visit, China leaned towards the West in pursuit of prosperity and liberalization. The relationship between Russia and China weakened as the Soviet Union fell apart.
- 4) 2012 onwards-The U.S. became concerned about China's assertiveness, prompting a strategic shift towards

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Asia and efforts to disentangle economically. Consequently, China tilted towards Russia, resulting in the establishment of the "No Limits" partnership announced in 2022.

### What is the current status of Russia-China economic ties?

The Western blockade pushed Moscow closer to China, which was also facing economic pressure from the West. This led to a significant increase in Russia-China ties over the past two years, both in terms of quantity and quality.

- 1) Russia-China trade reached \$240 billion in 2023, growing 26% from 2022. , but it still trades more with the U.S. (\$575 billion)
- 2) Russia is heavily dependent on China as a market for energy exports and a source of critical inputs, including for the Ukraine war.

### What were the outcomes of the recent Summit?

- 1) The joint statement was silent on bilateral economic, financial, and military ties, possibly to avoid Western sanctions or due to disagreements.
- 2) It accused the U.S. of "dual containment" and a negative "Indo-Pacific Strategy,". This signals a united front against American influence.
- 3) **In the short term**, the summit could bring stronger cooperation, especially in providing materials for Russia's actions in Ukraine. China might also want better deals for Russian resources and access to important technologies. It could also try to strengthen its control over Central Asia with Russia's agreement.
- 4) **Long term impacts:** While China wants to enjoy the economic profits from both Russia and West, US has warned it that "You cannot have it both ways." This, combined with China's ambition for global dominance, may lead to a new Cold War, challenging the U.S.-led global order established after World War II.

### What are the implications for India?

- 1) India needs to carefully examine the depth and durability of the Russia-China partnership given their turbulent history and Russia's potential vulnerability before China due to western countries-imposed sanctions on it. This may lead to a situation where the reliability of Russian supplies to India may become subject to Chinese pressures.

Read more- [On Potential of India-China Relations](#)

- 2) India needs to carefully balance between the current global system and China's emerging alternative. It should aim for a stronger presence that aligns with its own interests.
- 3) During the previous Cold War, India advocated non-alignment principle without prioritizing its socio-economic progress and the practical politics it needed, Thus, India should adopt a pragmatic approach by leveraging its strengths and pursue long-term goals with clarity and determination in the evolving global dynamics.

## Topic - Effect of Policies and Politics of Developed and Developing Countries on India's interests.

### Generalized System of Preferences (GSP)

**Context-** The article highlights the need for the USA to renew its generalized system of preferences with India. What sets apart the U.S. GSP program is that it requires periodic renewal by Congress as its authorization expires.

#### What is Generalized System of Preferences?

- 1) GSP is the oldest and most widespread form of trade assistance in the current global trading system, recognized by the World Trade Organization (WTO).
- 2) It is an important international trade terminology referring to an approach adopted by developed countries to offer lower tariffs as incentives for economic reform in developing countries.
- 3) Each developed country tailors its GSP program to find important criteria for economic reform ensuring that it doesn't hurt local production.

Read more- [Recent Development in India-US Relations](#)

#### What is the significance of GSP for developing nations?

- 1) GSP can play a vital role in establishing stable market access for developing countries that otherwise struggle to tap into global trade flows.
- 2) It can be especially valuable for small businesses and women-owned enterprises, thus helping to empower them beyond limited domestic markets.
- 3) It is vital in offering alternatives to Chinese imports and providing an advantage to suppliers in trusted developing country markets.
- 4) It promotes reforms on labour and environmental sustainability and intellectual property rights protection.
- 5) Imports facilitated by GSP lead to lower tariff costs for American businesses especially for small and medium-sized enterprises.

#### What are the issues in India-USA trade relations?

- 1) There are several trade dialogues between the two. However, these dialogues lack the necessary leverage for tough trade negotiations that can aim for ambitious outcomes.
- 2) Private sectors in both countries are collaborating to boost investments in key sectors like smartphone manufacturing and semiconductor production. However, they face challenges due to the lack of regulatory stability and ease of doing business, which could be addressed by a robust and enforceable trade agreement.

#### What is the significance of renewal of GSP for India?

There is bipartisan support for renewing GSP with India with Florida House members emphasizing its role in diversifying sourcing away from China and reducing tariff bills for consumers and manufacturers.

- 1) Renewing GSP serves as a platform for extensive trade talks between the U.S. and India. These negotiations could elevate their bilateral trade from its current \$200 billion mark to even greater heights.
- 2) The Biden administration has stated that it will not sign FTA with any nation. In the absence of that, there could be no better trade tool or policy with India than GSP.

- 3) It will cover a wide-ranging sectors like medical devices, agriculture, fuel ethanol, and information technology products.
- 4) GSP negotiations with India could cover trade in goods and services, labor rights, environmental laws, regulatory practices, and ease of doing business.

As the U.S.-India strategic partnership strengthens, they should aspire to deepen their trade ties. Renewing GSP could serve as a powerful symbol of their shared commitment to this path of advancement.

### Death of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi

**News-** President Ebrahim Raisi, Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian and other Iranian officials were recently killed in a helicopter crash. Raisi played an important role in attempts to foster a "resistance economy" and increasing cooperation with anti-West nations like Russia and China. The article tries to explain how Iran's political system works and the potential impact of Raisi's death.

#### What is the Conservatism vs. Reformism confrontation in Iranian Politics?

Since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Iranian politics has been divided between two poles: conservatives and reformists.

Conservatives want to strictly adhere to the tenets of Twelver Shi'ism and implement its religious codes across society.

Reformists, while loyal to the Revolution, want more flexibility in domestic and international matters, such as greater rights for women, strengthening civil society, and conciliatory relations with the West.

**Current balance of power-**Conservatives has been dominant for most of Iran's post-Revolution history, maintaining a firm grip despite economic challenges and protests.

#### What is the political structure of Iran?

- 1) The Supreme Leader is the head of state and the most powerful person in Iran. He has great influence in choosing presidential candidates.
- 2) The President operates within the overall authority of the Supreme Leader. However, he has significant power in determining how the country functions, including key foreign policy decisions. For ex- When President Hassan Rouhani negotiated the JCPOA, he had a lot of power. One of Raisi's big accomplishments was the Iran-Saudi deal, arranged by China. He also advocated for an 'Axis of Resistance,' a coalition led by Iran.
- 3) The Supreme Leader's authority is superseded only in the event of a clash with the President, which has happened during reformist governments.

Read more- [Challenges Between India and Iran Bilateral Ties](#)

#### What is the impact of sudden death of President on Iranian politics?

- 1) **Succession and Power Struggle-**Raisi was seen as a protege of the 85-year-old Supreme Leader Khamenei but was not guaranteed to be his successor. Raisi's death changes the field for the succession and could lead to a more fraught power struggle.
- 2) **Appointment of Acting President-** Constitutional measures have been followed that resulted in the appointment of Mohammad Mokhber as the acting President.
- 3) **Upcoming Election and Transition Efforts-** An election is scheduled to take place within 50 days, and efforts will be made by the establishment to ensure a smooth transition. It is possible that conservatives

would try to strengthen their influence.

4) **Policy changes** - In terms of policy, significant changes are unlikely to occur, particularly in the short run, as Acting President Mokhber has a strong affiliation with Raisi.

5) **Foreign policy**-Raisi and Foreign Minister Amir Abdollahian worked well together and made Iran's foreign policy more confrontational. Iran saw their efforts as successful in challenging the West. After the president's death, there might be a pause in this approach.

### **What are the geopolitical challenges due to sudden death of Iranian President?**

**US Sanctions:** The United States has imposed sanctions on Iran, affecting international business. Although there have been waivers for Chabahar, recent noises about possible punitive sanctions could threaten the project.

**Political Instability in Afghanistan:** The Taliban's takeover in 2021 disrupted the original plan involving Afghanistan in the Chabahar trade project. This instability jeopardizes regional collaborations and security.

**Competition with Pakistan and China:** India faces strategic challenges from the development of Pakistan's Gwadar port by China. This rivalry is part of the broader Belt and Road Initiative, creating direct competition for Chabahar's intended economic and strategic roles.

### **How will the death of Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi impact India?**

**Impact on Chabahar Agreement:** Raisi's interest facilitated the recent renewal of the Chabahar agreement. His demise might affect the continuity and enthusiasm for this joint initiative.

**Election of a New Leader:** An election within two months might bring a hardliner to power, influenced by Iran's supreme leader, which could alter Iran's foreign policy and its approach towards collaborative projects with India.

## **Topic- Important International institutions, agencies and fora, their structure, mandate.**

### **The ICC prosecutor's request for arrest warrants for Israeli and Hamas leaders**

**Context:** The article discusses the International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutor's request for arrest warrants for Israeli and Hamas leaders. It highlights skepticism about the ICC, noting its selective enforcement and challenges in international law. The request raises stakes, potentially harming Israel's reputation and creating global tension.

For detailed information on ICC [read this article here](#)

### **What is the ICC prosecutor's request?**

**Arrest Warrants Sought:** The ICC prosecutor seeks arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Defence Minister Yoav Gallant, and three Hamas leaders, including Yahya Sinwar.

**Expert Support:** This request is backed by five international law experts.

**Humanitarian Violations:** The prosecutor accuses Israel of deliberately starving civilians and both Israel and Hamas of violating armed conflict laws.

### **Why is skepticism present regarding the ICC?**

**Selective Attention:** The ICC is accused of focusing selectively on certain cases.

**Enforcement Issues:** Many ICC rulings go unenforced, even by its member states.

**Major Power Non-Signatories:** Three of the five permanent members of the Security Council—China, Russia, and the United States—are not ICC members.

**Perception of Control:** Signatories worry the ICC is a tool to control smaller nations and petty dictators.

**Deep-Political Conflicts:** There is concern that juridifying political conflicts can be counterproductive, potentially entrenching parties further.

#### **What implications do the arrest warrants hold?**

**Damage to Israel's Reputation:** Equating Israel with Hamas could harm its reputation. Israel is accused of causing a humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza.

**U.S. Reaction:** The United States has publicly condemned the request, and senators have threatened ICC officials with sanctions.

**Obligation for ICC Members:** Member states are obligated to execute the warrants and defend the ICC against intimidation.

**Potential Entrenchment:** The fear is that the warrants might entrench both sides further, complicating humanitarian aid and hostage negotiations. For example, the ICC's warrant against Netanyahu faces backlash, unlike its welcomed ruling against Putin.

#### **What role does moral intuition play in global conflicts?**

**Common Moral Refrains:** Historical resistance movements led by Gandhi and Mandela shared common moral intuitions, emphasizing safety and dignity for all groups.

**Empathy Gap:** In modern conflicts, there is often a lack of empathy for the existential threats faced by the other side.

**Global Condemnation:** The unified condemnation of the ICC by major powers underscores the need for "humanity's law" over national laws and power politics

## **GS Paper 3**

### **Subject: Indian Economy**

#### **Topic- Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilisation of resources, growth, development and employment.**

#### **The new government in India needs to focus on**

**Context:** The article discusses how the Indian economy grew well for three years but faced challenges due to the pandemic. It highlights areas for improvement like private investment, household consumption, taxes, job creation, agriculture, and increasing exports.

#### **How has the Indian economy performed recently?**

The Indian economy grew impressively by over 7% annually for three years, outpacing other major economies during the same period.



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However, growth faced setbacks due to the pandemic. From 2014-2019, the economy expanded by Rs 41.9 lakh crore in real GDP terms.

In contrast, from 2019-2024, amidst COVID-19 disruptions, it added only Rs 33 lakh crore.

### **What are the areas that the new government in India needs to focus on?**

#### **Reviving Private Investment:**

The government has been proactive with capital expenditures, particularly in infrastructure, boosting sectors like steel and cement.

However, private sector investment remains low due to insufficient demand. Expansion of the PLI scheme, particularly in electronics and green energy sectors, and introducing incentives such as investment allowances could help stimulate private investment.

#### **Rethinking Taxes:**

Reconsidering tax structures is vital for boosting economic activity. Lowering direct tax rates and rationalizing GST slabs can significantly increase the disposable income of individuals, promoting greater household savings and spending.

#### **Boosting Household Consumption:**

Consumption patterns have been volatile, with a temporary boost during the pandemic but generally suppressed due to high inflation and surplus capacity.

Reducing direct tax rates and rationalizing GST slabs could increase disposable income, thereby fostering greater consumer spending.

#### **Enhancing Employment Opportunities:**

Employment growth is crucial and can be supported by filling government vacancies and improving private sector job creation through stimulated economic activities.

#### **Reforming Agricultural Policies:**

Revisiting controversial farm laws and promoting discussions with stakeholders could lead to more acceptable agricultural policies.

Enhancing government involvement in agriculture and standardizing procedures for crop procurement and distribution can stabilize market prices.

#### **Expanding Global Market Presence:**

Entering more free trade agreements and improving merchandise exports, in addition to the already successful IT services exports, could position India more strongly in global supply chains.

#### **Fiscal Responsibility:**

Aiming to reduce the fiscal deficit to 4.5% of GDP by 2025-26 with a longer-term goal of reaching 3%, requiring careful financial management and policy adjustments.

## Importance of providing housing for factory workers

**Context:** The article emphasizes the importance of providing housing for factory workers to boost India's manufacturing sector. It argues that accommodating workers near factories can improve productivity, reduce costs, and enhance worker well-being, thereby aiding in achieving India's economic goals.

For detailed information on **India's manufacturing sector** read [Article 1](#), [Article 2](#), [Article 3](#)

### What is the status of India's manufacturing sector?

India aims to grow its economy to \$10 trillion by 2035. It plans to increase manufacturing's share of GDP from 15% to 25%. This goal requires a four-fold growth in manufacturing.

### How are states contributing?

**Attracting Large Manufacturers:** States are inviting big companies like Foxconn, Micron, and Tata to set up factories.

**Developing Industry Hubs:** Sriperumbudur is emerging as an assembly and packaging hub, while Hosur is becoming an Electric Vehicle hub.

**State-Level Initiatives:** States are providing incentives and facilities to make it easier for manufacturers to operate and expand.

### What is the role of workers in this growth?

**Crucial to Productivity:** Workers are essential for achieving the desired increase in manufacturing productivity.

**Empowerment Needed:** Better living conditions and empowerment are necessary to maximize their contribution.

**Economic Impact:** Improved worker conditions lead to higher productivity and reduced attrition, aiding economic growth.

### What are the current challenges faced by workers?

**Long Commutes:** Many factory workers travel about two hours each way, as seen in Bengaluru, costing over Rs 5,000 per worker per month and leading to exhaustion.

**Ad Hoc Accommodation:** Workers live in inadequate housing, often far from factories, affecting their productivity and well-being.

**Neglect of Worker Empowerment:** While capital and land receive attention, worker needs are often overlooked, despite their crucial role in manufacturing.

**Housing Infrastructure:** India's factories lack integrated worker housing, unlike China's Foxconn with dormitories for 300,000 workers.

### What lessons can be learned from other countries?

**China's In Situ Housing:** China has integrated worker housing within factory complexes, like Foxconn in Guangzhou, which houses 300,000 workers, enhancing productivity and reducing commute times.

**Korean Model:** Korea's stringent labor laws and worker-friendly policies offer a more suitable parallel for India, balancing worker rights with industrial growth.

**Historical Examples in India:** Post-Independence, Bhilai and Tata Steel Jamshedpur integrated worker housing into their industrial setups, showing the importance of community in large-scale manufacturing.

### What should be done?

**Land Allocation:** Industrial land should include worker housing. This requires state-level regulation changes and flexibility in operating arrangements.

**Government Support:** The Union government should offer tax incentives and fiscal support for worker housing. Collaborative financing through the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) can further aid this.

**Private Sector Involvement:** Companies must lead in creating top-notch accommodations, reducing transportation costs, and enhancing training and productivity.

### Challenges and debates around the RBI's approach to controlling inflation

**Context:** The article discusses the challenges and debates around the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) approach to controlling inflation through its interest rate policy. It examines the effectiveness of the current inflation-targeting framework and suggests reconsidering the targeted indices and their calculations.

For detailed information on **Concerns related to India's interest rates** [read this article here](#)

### What is the current status of interest rates in India?

In 2020-21 and 2021-22, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) kept interest rates low. However, by mid-2021, inflation started rising, which the RBI initially ignored, labeling it transitory. Then, in May 2022, the RBI dramatically increased the repo rate from 4% to 6.5% by February 2023 and has maintained that level since.

### What are the issues with high interest rates?

High real interest rates are currently seen as too restrictive for economic growth.

Experts argue that these rates discourage new investments, which is vital for sustaining economic momentum.

There is speculation in the market about when the RBI will reduce these rates, indicating widespread concern about their impact.

The debate focuses on whether the high rates have already achieved their purpose of controlling inflation and whether it is time for a reduction.

### What are the challenges faced by RBI in controlling inflation through its interest rate policy?

1. The RBI's strict mandate to target CPI inflation at 4% +/- 2% limits its flexibility to adjust to other inflation measures or economic nuances.
2. External factors, such as US Federal Reserve policies, also constrain the RBI's decisions due to the global influence on the Indian economy, especially considering the dollar's dominance in international trade and finance.

### What should be done?

**Reducing Interest Rates:** The RBI should consider reducing interest rates as the current high rates may have already achieved their purpose of controlling inflation.

**Re-evaluating the Inflation-Targeting Framework:** There should be a reevaluation of the inflation-targeting framework, particularly examining the effectiveness of the CPI as the sole index. Other indices like the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) and GDP deflator could provide additional insights.

**Improving Transparency and Accountability:** Transparency should be improved regarding the RBI's decision-making processes and the factors influencing these decisions, especially concerning any reports submitted on failing to meet inflation targets, to foster greater accountability and public trust.

## **Topic- Effects of Liberalization on the Economy, Changes in Industrial Policy and their Effects on Industrial Growth.**

### **USA's Trade Barrier**

**Context-**The article criticizes the recent move by the US to impose steep tariff hikes on clean-tech imports from China, such as electric vehicles from 27.5% to 102.5% (102.5%), lithium batteries, computer chips, and solar cells.

#### **What are the arguments given by the USA to justify its stance?**

- 1) The USA justifies imposition of high tariffs on the ground of national security and to counter China's "unfair" subsidies.
- 2) The USA claims that it wants to increase imports from other countries

#### **What are the implications of US trade barriers?**

- 1) **Weaponization of Trade** -It leads to weaponization of trade. Such protectionist measures go against economic principles, climate concerns, and geo-pacifist recommendations.
- 2) **Impact on Free Trade and Geopolitics** -Cutting off trade relations has historically led to war, and the actions of the US further harm free trade. This may have negative geopolitical outcomes.
- 3) **Shifting Away from Global Free Trade Advocacy**-Both political parties in the US supporting protectionist tendencies indicates America moving away from being a global advocate for free trade. It has set global trade back with its protectionist measures.

Read more- [WTO Reforms and India](#)

#### **What should be India's response?**

- 1) **Balancing Export Ambitions with Economic Reasoning-** India should try to grab export opportunities. However, India should exercise caution and base its trade policies on economic reasoning rather than yielding to geopolitical influences.
- 2) **Cautious from Chinese Imports** -Cheap Chinese wares, especially in clean-tech markets, could aid India's economic emergence and climate aims. However, India should remain cautious of potential dumping by Chinese state-subsidized manufacturers.

## Topic- Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc

### India's airline market is growing rapidly but is still underdeveloped

**Context:** India's airline market is growing rapidly but is still underdeveloped compared to China and the US. More Indians are flying, but still very few overall. Airlines are ordering more planes to meet increasing demand and expand internationally.

For detailed information on **Opportunities and Challenges for Aviation Sector in India** [read this article here](#)

#### What is the current status of India's airline?

**Growth:** India's airline capacity reached 230 million departing seats this year, nearly double that of a decade ago.

**Comparison:** India's capacity is a fourth of China's and a fifth of the US's.

**Penetration:** Only 3% of India's population, or 40 million people, fly regularly.

**Fleet:** India has 771 aircraft, with 150 more expected this year.

**Expansion:** IndiGo and Air India are ordering new planes, including long-haul models like the A350-500.

**International Share:** International carriers hold 56% of outbound international flight capacity from India.

#### Why is airline penetration low in India?

**Railways Comparison:** Indian Railways carries as many passengers in one day as airlines do in a year, highlighting the preference for rail travel.

**Per Capita Capacity:** India's domestic per capita seat capacity is 0.13, much lower than China's 0.49 and the US's 3.09. Even Thailand has a higher capacity at 0.51.

**Economic Barriers:** Many Indians may not afford air travel frequently due to economic constraints.

**Infrastructure and Fleet:** Limited fleet size and infrastructure also contribute to low penetration. India has 771 aircraft, with more on order, but still lags behind China and the US.

#### What is the future of India's airline?

**Capacity Growth:** India's airline capacity is expected to nearly double to 400 million departing seats in 7-10 years.

**Fleet Expansion:** India plans to add 150 aircraft this year, increasing its total fleet to 3.2% of the global fleet. Indian carriers have ordered over 2,100 new planes.

**International Expansion:** Indian carriers like IndiGo and Air India are expanding their international operations. IndiGo has ordered 30 A350-500 planes for long-haul flights.

**Government Support:** The Indian government is encouraging airlines to enhance their international presence, aiming to make India a global aviation hub.

**Economic Growth:** India's fast-growing GDP and rising population suggest increased future demand for air travel.

## Subject: Science & Technology

### Topic- - Developments and their Applications and Effects in Everyday Life.

#### Impact of AI for drug development process

**Context:** The article discusses how AI can speed up drug development. AI helps identify target proteins and predict drug interactions. Advanced AI tools like AlphaFold 3 improves accuracy. However, AI has limitations and requires significant computing infrastructure, which India currently lacks.

For detailed information on **AlphaFold 3** [read this article here](#)

#### How does drug development start?

Drug development starts with identifying and validating a target, usually a protein. Computers analyze target protein sequences to find the best-fitting drug from millions of small molecules. This process saves time and money by avoiding laboratory experiments.

Once a target protein and suitable drug are identified, the pre-clinical phase tests the drug's safety and toxicity on cells and animals.

The clinical phase then tests the drug on human patients for efficacy and safety.

Finally, the drug undergoes regulatory approval, marketing, and post-market surveys.

Due to a high failure rate, the discovery phase limits the number of drugs that progress to the pre-clinical and clinical phases.

#### How can AI help the drug development process?

AI can speed up target discovery by cutting down time and increasing prediction accuracy.

Tools like AlphaFold and RoseTTAFold use deep neural networks to predict three-dimensional protein structures.

AlphaFold 3 and RoseTTAFold All-Atom can predict interactions for proteins, DNA, RNA, small molecules, and ions.

In a test of 400 drug-target interactions, AlphaFold 3 accurately predicted interactions 76% of the time, compared to 40% for RoseTTAFold All-Atom.

These AI tools save money and avoid time-consuming lab experiments.

#### What are the drawbacks?

1. AI tools can provide up to 80% accuracy in predicting interactions, which drops significantly for protein-RNA interactions.
2. AI tools only aid in target discovery and drug-target interaction phases, not in pre-clinical or clinical development phases.
3. Diffusion-based architectures in AI models can cause hallucinations, leading to incorrect predictions due to insufficient training data.
4. The code for AlphaFold 3 is not publicly available, limiting independent verification and broader use.
5. AI-derived molecules might not succeed in later drug development phases, despite initial promising predictions.

### What about India?

1. India needs large-scale computing infrastructure with fast GPUs for developing AI tools in drug development. GPU chips are expensive and quickly become outdated.
2. India lacks skilled AI scientists compared to the U.S. and China.
3. Despite a rich history in protein X-ray crystallography and structural biology, India couldn't establish a first-mover advantage in AI drug development.
4. India's growing pharmaceutical industry can lead in applying AI tools for target discovery and drug testing.
5. Investment in computing infrastructure and training AI scientists is essential for progress.

## Topic- Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, Robotics, Nano-technology, Bio-technology and issues relating to Intellectual Property Rights.

### Carrington Event

**Context:** This article describes a powerful solar flare observed by Richard Carrington in 1859, known as the Carrington Event. It explains the effects of such flares, including disruptions to technology and the ongoing threat they pose due to solar activity cycles.

#### What was Carrington Event?

The Carrington Event, observed by Richard Carrington on September 1, 1859, was the **largest recorded geomagnetic storm**. This massive solar flare, equivalent to 10 billion atomic bombs, hurled electrified gas and particles at Earth.

Occurring just months before a solar maximum, a peak in the sun's activity that happens every 11 years, the Carrington Event highlights the significant impact solar storms can have on our technology-dependent society.

#### What Causes Solar Storms?

Solar storms are intense bursts of energy and light from the sun.

Solar storms originate from magnetic distortions on the sun's surface, creating dark patches called **sunspots**. These **sunspots are the birthplace of solar flares and coronal mass ejections (CMEs)**.

During solar cycle, the sun's magnetic field lines in the corona can become entangled. This **magnetic entanglement** causes the field lines to snap back to their original positions, releasing vast bursts of plasma and magnetic fields, known as CMEs. These CMEs can take days to reach Earth and cause geomagnetic storms upon arrival.

For detailed information on **Solar Storms** [read this article here](#)

#### What are the effects of solar flares?

Solar flares emit bursts of X-ray and gamma radiation, which can damage the delicate electronics onboard satellites. To mitigate this, engineers protect satellites with robust radiation shielding. When solar flares, along with CMEs, reach Earth, they can disrupt the planet's magnetic field, causing geomagnetic storms. These storms generate powerful electrical currents that can affect power grids. In today's technology-dependent world, solar flares pose serious risks to power grids, internet, and satellite communications.

For detailed information on **Understanding solar flares** [read this article here](#).

## Subject: Environment

### Topic- Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation, Environmental Impact Assessment.

#### India addressing carbon emissions

**Context:** The article discusses the impact of climate change, particularly a recent heatwave, and emphasizes the need for green energy. It highlights India's efforts to reduce carbon emissions, including government initiatives and voluntary actions by industries, while also outlining the challenges and investment needs.

For detailed information on **impact of climate change on India** read [Article 1](#), [Article 2](#), [Article 3](#)

#### How is India addressing carbon emissions?

**Government Initiatives:** India has launched several initiatives to promote green energy, including the PLI scheme for solar modules, viability gap funding for offshore wind and battery storage, and the FAME scheme for electric vehicles.

For more information on **FAME scheme** [read this article here](#)

**National Green Hydrogen Mission:** This mission aims to use green hydrogen in refining, chemicals, fertilizers, and transport, with a projected capex of Rs 8-9 lakh crore.

For more information on **National Green Hydrogen Mission** [read this article here](#)

**Climate Target:** The government aims to enhance non-fossil power to 50% by 2030.

#### What challenges exist in reducing carbon emissions?

**High Emissions:** As the third-largest carbon emitter, India faces immense pressure to reduce emissions in key sectors like power, steel, and cement.

**Transition Risks:** These sectors face risks such as policy, regulatory, technology, market, reputation, and legal challenges during the shift to green technology.

**Investment Needs:** India needs Rs 11-12 lakh crore for renewable energy investments and Rs 5-6 lakh crore for transmission infrastructure and storage by 2030.

**Hard-to-Abate Sectors:** Sectors like steel and cement need carbon capture utilization and storage (CCUS) to reduce emissions. The cement sector requires two million tonnes of CCUS capacity per year by 2030, costing Rs 1,600-1,800 crore.

#### How are industries responding to the push for green technology?

**Steel Industry:** Domestic steel-makers aim to reduce their carbon footprint by 25-30% by 2030 through various technological interventions.

**Green Hydrogen:** Many Indian entities have launched pilot projects and announced plans to set up production facilities for green hydrogen and green ammonia.

**Carbon Capture:** For the cement industry, carbon capture utilization and storage (CCUS) is being considered to reduce emissions, with a need for two million tonnes of CCUS capacity by 2030.



### What should be done?

**Promote Hybrid Projects:** Use hybrid renewable energy projects (wind and solar) with energy storage systems to ensure round-the-clock supply.

**Enhance Carbon Sequestration:** Implement carbon capture utilization and storage (CCUS) in sectors like steel and cement.

**Provide Government Support:** Offer policy interventions, subsidies, duty exemptions, and tax benefits to accelerate the green technology transition in hard-to-abate sectors.

## Wars impacting Carbon Emissions

**Context:** The article argues that the focus on climate change has overshadowed the immediate threat of war. It highlights how wars cause significant carbon emissions. It calls for global efforts to reduce wars and urges UN reform to address both climate and security issues.

For detailed information on **Emissions by the Military** [read this article here](#)

### How do wars impact Carbon Emissions?

**Significant Emission Sources:** Wars are major sources of carbon emissions. For example, during the first 60 days of the Israel-Gaza conflict, emissions were greater than the annual emissions of 20 individual countries.

**Massive Emission Volumes:** The conflict in Gaza resulted in about 280,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO<sub>2</sub>e) in just two months. The researchers estimate the reconstruction of Gaza will create another 30 million tCO<sub>2</sub>e of emissions.

### What actions have been taken regarding environmental damage from wars?

**UN Resolution:** The United Nations General Assembly adopted the Protection of the Environment in Relation to Armed Conflicts (PERAC) resolution in 2022, aiming to mitigate environmental damage from wars.

**Geneva Convention Protocol:** An additional protocol to the Geneva Convention prohibits causing "widespread, long-term and severe damage to the natural environment" during armed conflicts.

**Post-Conflict Accountability:** After the First Gulf War, Iraq was forced to pay for environmental damages caused by burning Kuwait's oil wells and polluting the Gulf, demonstrating a precedent for holding aggressors accountable for environmental harm.

### What should be done?

**Make War Polluters Pay:** Implementing policies that require those responsible for war-related environmental damage to compensate for their actions could deter such activities. This includes creating a global fund to address and mitigate the impacts.

**Reform the United Nations:** Reforming the UN, especially the Security Council, is necessary to prevent veto powers from prolonging conflicts, thus minimizing associated environmental impacts.

## Climate Change and Electoral Politics in India

**Context-**The article highlights the lack of attention given to climate change by the major political parties in their electoral campaigns and manifestos for the 2024 general elections in India.

This absence is significant, given the vulnerability of India to the impacts of climate change that includes rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and severe air pollution.

### What is the reason behind the omission of climate change discourse from electoral agendas in India?

- 1) **A Calculated Omission-** To incorporate effective climate measures into their political plans, they must recognize the trade-offs between quick industrial expansion and environmental preservation. This could lead to alienating influential industrial groups and upsetting the economic balance, which heavily depends on fossil fuels and industries with high emissions.
- 2) **Vague Climate Policies and Lack of Commitment-** They have vague and non-committal nature of climate policies mentioned in the party manifestos. For ex- the main opposition party's manifesto has a chapter on 'Environment Protection and Climate Change Authority,' proposing a 'Green New Deal Investment Program' without clear directives or commitments to specific reductions in carbon emissions.

### What are some of the initiatives undertaken by the Indian government and the court to address the climate change issue?

- 1) India's climate policy efforts are directed by the National Action Plan on Climate Change that includes various policy documents, sector-specific strategies, and legislation.
- 2) The government has introduced the National Electricity Plan 2023, the National Green Hydrogen Mission, and the Energy Conservation (Amendment) Act, 2022. These documents and laws are instrumental in molding the energy sector's framework.
- 3) There is a positive development in climate jurisprudence in India. The Supreme Court in **M.K. Ranjitsinh and Others vs Union of India** recognized the people's right to be free from the adverse effects of climate change under Articles 21 and 14 of the Indian Constitution

### What are the issues with these initiatives?

- 1) Indian leaders haven't committed to stopping coal use, and the policies are decided by top officials without considering what citizens want.
- 2) Climate Action Tracker Rating- The Climate Action Tracker, made by Climate Analytics, says India's plans for 2030 are highly Insufficient in its policies and actions tracking.

Read more- [Role of political parties in addressing climate issues](#)

### What should be the way forward?

- 1) Media and civil society should play important role in driving a narrative that places environmental sustainability at the heart of India's development agenda.
- 2) The informed and growing middle class needs to demand a more proactive and dedicated approach from their leaders regarding climate change.
- 3) Politicians need to rethink their approach to connect electoral politics with climate policy, prioritizing the long-term benefits for both the environment and society over short-term economic gains.
- 4) States or regions facing the greatest vulnerability should create strategies to lower India's projection to levels below those from before factories, aiming for a 2-degree reduction.

## Subject: Internal Security

### Topic- Various Security Forces and Agencies and their Mandate.

#### New military posts like Vice CDS and Deputy CDS are proposed

**Context:** The article discusses India's plan to restructure its military into integrated theatre commands (ITC) and the appointment of new high-ranking positions to support this change. It highlights the role and challenges faced by the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) since its inception and the need for improved jointness among the armed forces.

#### What is the current plan for restructuring the Indian military?

The Indian military plans to create Integrated Theatre Commands (ITC). They will appoint a Vice Chief of Defence Staff (VCDS) and a Deputy Chief of Defence Staff (DCDS). The CDS role, created in August 2019, aims to improve jointness among the armed forces. General Bipin Rawat was the first CDS, succeeded by Lt Gen Anil Chauhan in October 2022. The Maritime Theatre Command may be based in Coimbatore, though Karwar was initially preferred. The goal is to enhance combat efficiency and address security threats from China, Pakistan, and terrorism.

#### Why was the CDS position created and what are its roles?

There has been a lack of cooperation among the three-armed forces. The Indian government addressed this by announcing the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) in August 2019. The CDS has three main roles:

1. Four-star general and first among equals with the other service chiefs.
2. Secretary to the Government of India in the Ministry of Defence.
3. Principal Adviser to the Defence Minister on inter-service issues.

For detailed information on **CDS (Chief of Defence Staff)** [read this article here](#)

#### Why are new posts being proposed?

**Enhance Jointness:** New posts like Vice CDS and Deputy CDS are proposed to improve jointness among the armed forces and enhance composite combat capability.

**Support CDS:** They aim to support the CDS in managing his extensive responsibilities, which include being a four-star general, government secretary, and principal adviser to the Defence Minister.

**Improve Efficiency:** The goal is to streamline inter-service cooperation and improve overall combat efficiency.

#### What are the concerns?

**Rank Hierarchy:** Having multiple four-star officers (Vice CDS and theatre commanders) could disrupt the rank hierarchy and affect the command structure.

**Overload on CDS:** The existing responsibilities of the CDS might lead to overload; thus, delegating the bureaucratic role to the Vice CDS could be beneficial.

**Location Choice:** The proposed location for the Maritime Theatre Command in Coimbatore, instead of the previously considered Karwar, raises questions about the strategic use of existing infrastructure.

**Time-Consuming Process:** The Defence Minister has noted that creating theatre commands is a complex and time-consuming process, requiring consensus among different services.