

9 PM Current Affairs Weekly Compilation

For UPSC CSE mains examination



4th 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 History

Contributions of Ahilya Bai Holkar

Context- The article celebrates the 300th birth anniversary of Maratha queen Ahilya Bai Holkar, a great administrator, visionary, and spiritually inclined figure.

It emphasizes the frequently neglected roles of courageous women in shaping the India we see today, as the historical glorification of men often hides their stories.

Who was Ahilya Bai Holkar?

Introduction- She was born in 1725 to a shepherd family in Ahmednagar, Maharashtra. She endeavored to establish herself as a leader in her own right, not merely known as Khande Rao Holkar's wife. Her 30-year reign brought peace and financial stability to her kingdom.

Leadership and Governance- Breaking patriarchal norms, she took over as monarch after her husband's death, displaying exceptional leadership skills. Recognizing societal constraints on her as a woman and widow, she appointed Tukoji Holkar, a trusted soldier, as the commander of her army.

What were the contributions of Ahilya Bai Holkar?

1) Spiritual and Architectural Contributions-

A) She resurrected and renovated jyotirlingas across the country as a tribute to Lord Shiva, including at Somnath, Varanasi, Trambak, Gaya, Pushkar, Vrindavan, Nathdwara, Haridwar, Badrinath, and Kedarnath.

B) She installed idols in secret shrines under temples, providing additional security to protect against attacks and iconoclasm.

2) **Civilizational Contribution-** She defied Mughal rule and united her subjects with a shared cultural identity, regardless of their social or religious backgrounds.

3) **Promotion of Crafts and Economic Development-** She promoted the traditional Maheshwari sari weave, empowering women through skill development. The production of Maheshwari saris increased state revenue and provided a steady income source for weavers.

4) **Environmental Protection-** She also made efforts to develop Indore, conserve forests and animals, and foster trade and commerce in her kingdom.

5) **Promoted Inclusive Governance-** Ahilya Bai's reign was akin to true Ram Rajya, with flourishing farmers, restored faiths, and inclusivity. She mainstreamed the Bhil and Gond castes, an important but less talked about achievement.

Read more- [Rani Chennamma](#)

What is the legacy of Ahilya Bai?

Ahilya Bai's legacy extends beyond her contribution to temple renovation, encompassing overall governance that brought social harmony and a blueprint for Ram Rajya in modern times. Her impact cannot be overlooked, as she provided a model for samajik samrasta (social harmony) through inclusive and effective rules. While celebrated regionally, Ahilya Bai's national recognition is limited due to gender bias, despite commanding respect from contemporaries and later historians and intellectuals.

Subject: Indian Society

Topic- Role of Women and Women's Organization

Enhanced Participation of Women in Politics

Context- The article emphasizes how ordinary women in political parties, often ignored, play an important role in shaping India's politics and making democracy stronger.

Before 2009, men were mainly in charge of reaching out to male voters during campaigns. However, since then, due to quota elections and better grassroots organization, women campaign workers have started reaching out to both men and women more equally.

What is the significance of ordinary women party worker in deepening India's grassroots democracy?

Over the last three decades, since the 73rd amendment for panchayat and municipal elections, women have not only contested but also won these elections.

- 1) Women party workers at the grassroots level, often called "party women," are leading the way in connecting women voters to political parties. They are heavily involved in activities at polling booths and during campaigns.
- 2) Grassroots organizing efforts by ordinary women party workers have led to more equal reach to both men and women during voter mobilization.
- 3) They have strengthened local party organizations, ending the era when women's wings were led exclusively by elites. Today's women's wings include district heads, ward leaders, booth-level managers, and panna pramukhs (polling booth managers), indicating a more granular and robust organization.

Read more- [Women Empowerment- Economic Political and Social](#)

What is the impact of this enhanced participation of women in India politics?

- 1) India has witnessed a remarkable phenomenon where women's electoral turnout has not only matched but surpassed that of men.
- 2) It allows women to secure party tickets before elections because it's usually simpler for women to take credit for rallying other women. This leads to their greater representation in assemblies and Parliament.
- 3) It has led to the growing list of distributive promises and welfare schemes targeted at women voters. For ex- recent passing of the women's reservation bill in Parliament.
- 4) It has prompted parties to make targeted electoral offers to woo women voters. This is a direct result of the labor of women's party workers.

What is the role of women party workers beyond elections?

- 1) Women party workers organize numerous events, ranging from planting drives to dharnas and seva abhiyans (service campaigns), mobilizing women from various social groups like Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and Anganwadi workers.
- 2) They keep women engaged in politics between election cycles, contributing to the increased participation of women in protests. For ex-recent farmers' protests.

The growing participation of women raises questions about whether it makes India's democracy stronger or weaker. However, it is evident that women's political agency is indispensable to India's democratic future.

Subject: Geography

Topic- Important Geophysical phenomena such as earthquakes, Tsunami, Volcanic activity, cyclone etc.

The landslide risk in India

Context: The article discusses the devastation caused by cyclone Remal in West Bengal and the Northeast of India, highlighting the significant damage and fatalities, particularly from landslides. It emphasizes the need for better disaster preparedness and the development of early warning systems to manage and mitigate the risks associated with natural disasters like landslides.

For detailed information on **National Landslide Susceptibility Map** [read this article here](#)

How severe is the landslide risk in India?

- 1. Extensive Risk Area:** Approximately 13% of India's landmass, spanning over 15 states and four Union Territories, is vulnerable to landslides, highlighting the widespread nature of the risk.
- 2. Concentration in the Northeast:** The Northeastern region alone accounts for 42% of the landslide-prone area, emphasizing its significant vulnerability due to its mostly hilly terrain.
- 3. Historical Data:** Between 2015 and 2022, the Northeast recorded 378 major landslide events, representing 10% of all major landslides in India. Additionally, Kerala experienced the highest number of landslides in the country with 2,239 incidents, most of which occurred after the 2018 floods.

What are the reasons for landslides?

- 1. Heavy Rainfall:** Most landslides in India are caused by heavy rainfall. Sustained heavy rain over several days can trigger land displacement, as seen during Cyclone Remal in the Northeast.
- 2. Earthquakes:** Earthquakes are another major trigger for landslides, particularly in hilly regions. The Northeastern region is prone to both earthquakes and landslides.
- 3. Human Activities:** Unregulated construction, infrastructure development, and certain agricultural practices increase landslide risks. The lack of building regulations in hilly areas exacerbates the problem.
- 4. Geological Factors:** The hilly terrain itself, especially in regions like the Northeast, is inherently prone to landslides due to its geological characteristics.

What efforts are being made to manage landslide risks?

- 1. National Strategy:** The National Landslide Risk Management Strategy, finalized in 2019, focuses on vulnerability mapping, early warning systems, and mountain zone regulations.
- 2. Early Warning Systems:** Early warning systems, based on rainfall forecasts, are being trialed in Nagaland, Sikkim, Uttarakhand, and Kerala. These systems predict potential landslides by combining rainfall data with soil and terrain information.
- 3. Institutional Involvement:** Organizations like the Central Building Research Institute (CBRI) and IIT Roorkee are involved in setting up these warning systems.
- 4. Ongoing Projects:** CBRI and IIT Roorkee are installing early warning systems at locations in Sikkim, Uttarakhand, and Kerala. IIT Mandi is also working on these systems.

How effective are the early warning systems?

- 1. Current Status:** Early warning systems are still in trial phases at a few locations, such as Nagaland, Sikkim, Uttarakhand, and Kerala.
- 2. Rainfall-Based Predictions:** These systems use rainfall forecasts combined with soil and terrain data to predict landslides effectively.
- 3. Successful Trials:** The system set up in Nagaland to protect the state's legislative Assembly shows positive results.
- 4. Reliability:** Reliable rainfall predictions are available a day in advance, and warnings are issued if the forecast exceeds the threshold for land movement.
- 5. Challenges:** Earthquake-triggered landslides cannot be predicted, as earthquakes themselves are unpredictable

GS Paper 2

Subject: Indian Polity

Topic- Indian Constitution- historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.

Issues associated with Calcutta High Court's judgement on reservation policies in India

Context: The article discusses how reservation policies in India, particularly for Muslim backward castes, face scrutiny despite constitutional provisions. It highlights judicial trends, political decisions, and the complexities surrounding inclusion in backward caste lists, focusing on a recent High Court judgment in West Bengal.

For detailed information on the **Mandal case and Reservation in India** [read this article here](#)

What is the Supreme court's stance on reservation policies?

In **Indira Sawhney (1992)**, the Supreme Court introduced the "creamy layer" exclusion.

M R Balaji (1963) set a 50% upper limit on reservations.

B N Tiwari (1964) struck down the "carry forward" rule.

Courts emphasize "efficiency" and often favor general candidates.

How did the Calcutta High court respond to Muslim reservations?

The Calcutta High Court struck down the inclusion of some Muslim backward castes in the reservation list.

The decision criticized the West Bengal State Backward Class Commission's recommendations.

The court highlighted that inclusion was made by executive orders without consulting the BC Commission.

It noted the recommendations lacked an in-depth empirical survey.

The court found the "inadequacy of representation" in state services was not fully examined.

What are the issues with the Calcutta High court response to Muslim reservations, as per the author of the source article?

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The court ignored the precedent set by **Indira Sawhney**, which allowed reservations by executive order. It dismissed the Sachar Committee's findings due to outdated data, while the Mandal Commission used even older data from the 1931 Census.

The High Court criticized a 5% population survey by the BC Commission, although the Mandal Commission surveyed only two villages and one block in 405 of 406 districts.

The court did not equally scrutinize non-Muslim castes' inclusion.

It overlooked that many Muslim BC castes were already recognized by the Mandal Commission and central government.

The court failed to appreciate that some Muslim castes are SC converts, whose backwardness was recognized by the Supreme Court in **Jarnail Singh (2018)**.

Reasons Behind Judicial Pendency

Context- The article explores the debate surrounding the work hours of judges and the issue of pending cases in India's judicial system. It highlights the misconception that longer court sessions and reduced vacations for judges would significantly alleviate the backlog of cases.

According to the India Justice Report, as of June 2020, a case remained pending in subordinate courts for three years and in high courts for five years on average.

What is the current status of judicial vacancies in India?

No state has filled its complete quota of judges, whether in the high courts or the numerous lower courts. On average, high courts have a vacancy rate of 30%, but it can reach nearly 50%. Subordinate courts have an average vacancy rate of 22%. However, Bihar and Meghalaya have vacancy rates exceeding 30%, persisting for over three years.

What are the factors that lead to high judicial pendency?

- 1) **Lack of Judges-** India has only 15 judges per 10 lakh population, far below the Law Commission's 1987 recommendation of 50 judges per 10 lakh population.
- 2) **Lack of Basic Infrastructure-** There's a shortage of courtrooms, and many existing ones aren't ideal. Nationally, there's a lack of support staff, averaging 26%.
- 3) **Legal Expertise and Ineffective Communication-** Varying levels of skill and knowledge among both lawyers and judges result in continuous procedural delays. Additionally, when there's a mismatch in language skills, clarity of arguments, and final decisions, it increases the number of appeals.
- 4) **Lack of Legal Ethics and Culture-** A culture within the legal profession that is permissive and potentially collusive enables the proliferation of unfounded applications, continuous adjournments, and meritless appeals. Lawyers employ tactics to deliberately prolong the trials.
- 5) **Obstacles to Technological Integration in Court-** Adoption of technology in courts is hindered by inconsistent access to electricity, uneven internet bandwidth, and resistance from users.
- 6) **Challenges in Judicial Reform Initiatives** -Efforts such as mandatory mediation, Lok Adalats, specialized courts, and prioritizing specific cases have been implemented. However, they face similar structural deficiencies.

Read more- [The challenges of criminal justice system in India](#)

What should be the way forward?

Solutions require collaboration between state and central governments. A few solutions are as follows-

- 1) Government litigation currently constitutes approximately 50% of the caseload in courts. Thus, steps are needed to rationalize and trim this.
- 2) There is a need to evaluate the potential financial and time consequences of every newly introduced legislation at the pre-legislative stage, and they should be put in the public domain. This may result in better-crafted legislation and reduce the unnecessary burden on the courts.

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- 3) Obsolete laws and procedures should be revised or removed to decrease the number of legal cases.
- 4) There is a need to appoint long-term court managers who can relieve judges of many routine tasks and help in designing systems for maximum efficiency.
- 5) There is a compelling need to establish more rigorous criteria at the initial stage before individuals are appointed as judges, irrespective of whether it is for higher or lower courts.
- 6) The India Justice Report estimates that the overall per capita spending on judiciary stands at less than Rs 150. Thus, the government should enhance budgetary allocation to improve the access and quality of justice delivery.

Challenges to Liberalism

Context- The article highlights the importance of updating and broadening the concept of Indian liberalism. It should address criticisms while staying true to its basic principles of freedom, dignity, and fair representation. These values are deeply ingrained in Indian traditions.

Why is there a decline in liberal values across the globe?

- 1) Populist and authoritarian leaders are gaining ground globally. This marks a clear decline in liberal democracy from its peak after the Cold War, now existing in only 34 countries.
- 2) More and more people are losing faith in liberal democracy and values. They're leaning towards other options like authoritarianism or military rule instead. An example is a Pew survey where 85% of people in India showed a preference for these alternatives.

Read more- [Secularism in India](#)

What are the criticisms of liberal ideology?

1) Attacks on Liberalism from the Left -

A) Liberalism is seen as an elitist ideology that favors the interests of a small, privileged group over the needs of the majority. They argue that liberalism's emphasis on individualism has increased economic inequality and the divide between the rich and poor in society.

B) Liberals are criticized for furthering corporate interests and marginalization of the disadvantaged.

2) Attacks on Liberalism from the Right-

A) The right sees liberalism's focus on individual freedom as a threat to values that are centered around community, identity, and tradition.

B) They dismiss liberalism in India as a Western colonial import with no connection to traditional values and way of living.

Why is there a need to reform and expand the idea of Indian liberalism?

1) It is important to address issues such as the rise of undemocratic options, loss of faith in equal democracy, restrictions on personal freedoms, weakening of institutions, and the acceptance of prejudiced and narrow-minded viewpoints

2) It is important to bust the myth that liberalism is an imported concept. Contrary to being a Western import, key liberal values like individual liberty, freedom, social justice, and societal harmony have been deeply ingrained in Indian society since ancient times.

3) Liberal values are present in Indian cultural traditions and historical governing systems. These values are also expressed by influential figures like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Vivekananda, M.G. Ranade, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Gurudev Tagore, and B.R. Ambedkar.

What should be the way forward?

- 1) There is a need to engage with ideas of tradition and identity in a more comprehensive and sustained manner by recognizing oppression and discrimination and addressing feelings of marginalization.
- 2) There should be a balance between free enterprise and a commitment to social justice and welfare and a focus on equitable distribution of resources.
- 3) There is a need to usher in an era of political reform and revival of representative institutions to address centralization of power, lack of trust in institutions and prevent government's overreach.
- 4) Liberals should come together by agreeing on common ground instead of arguing over differences. This unity is crucial to address serious threats to democracy.

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

The challenges of criminal justice system in India

Context: The article discusses a series of crimes against women in Hassan, Karnataka, involving MP Prajwal Revanna. It highlights police and political failures, delayed action, and the difficulties in apprehending the accused who fled to Germany.

How did the authorities respond in this case?

Initial Inaction: Despite finding evidence like pen drives with videos of the crimes strewn in public places, local police did not act promptly, allowing Prajwal Revanna to flee the country.

Delayed Legal Actions: It was only after Revanna escaped to Germany that the police lodged the first case, formed a Special Investigation Team (SIT), and recorded statements from survivors.

Lookout Circular Issued: After Revanna had already left, a lookout circular (LOC) was finally issued, and his father, HD Revanna, was arrested and then released on bail.

For detailed information on lookout circular (LOC) read this article here

Interpol Involvement: A Blue Corner Notice was issued by Interpol to gather more information about Revanna, rather than a Red Corner Notice which would have sought his arrest.

What does this case reveal about the political and judicial system?

Political Influence: Prajwal Revanna, a member of a powerful political family, faced delayed legal actions, illustrating how political connections can influence law enforcement decisions.

Administrative Delays: The lookout circular, which is an administrative tool issued by the immigration authorities, was not issued until after Revanna had already left the country.

Judicial Delays: The judicial system showed delays in more proactive measures, such as issuing restraining orders or moving quickly with the prosecution once evidence became public.

Election Concerns: The support of Revanna's candidacy by major political parties, despite the allegations, suggests that electoral prospects may have been prioritized over swift and impartial justice.

What are the broader implications for society?

Erosion of Trust in Law Enforcement: The delay in police action despite having clear evidence, such as videos, undermines public trust in law enforcement's ability to protect citizens and uphold justice.

Impact on Women's Safety: The case highlights persistent vulnerabilities in the protection of women,

especially when influential individuals are involved, leading to potential underreporting of similar crimes. **Political Accountability:** The involvement of political figures in criminal cases and their continued electoral support illustrates a lack of accountability, affecting public perception of political integrity. **Need for Judicial Reforms:** The delayed responses and administrative inaction call for urgent judicial and procedural reforms to ensure swift and unbiased justice.

Should doctors, like lawyers, be excluded from the Consumer Protection Act?

Context: The article discusses whether doctors should be excluded from the Consumer Protection Act like lawyers, after a Supreme Court ruling. It highlights differing opinions on whether patients should use the Act to address medical issues, exploring the pros and cons of including medical services under consumer law.

For detailed information on **Consumer Protection Act** [read this article here](#)

What did the Supreme Court say about advocates and the Consumer Protection Act?

The Supreme Court ruled that advocates cannot be held liable under the Consumer Protection Act for deficiencies in service.

This decision prompts a reconsideration of including other professionals like doctors under the same act. Previously, in 1995, the Supreme Court had included medical professionals under the Act in the landmark Indian Medical Association v. V.P. Shantha case.

The Court now suggests re-examining the definition of 'services' under the Act, particularly how it applies to the medical profession, indicating a possible shift in how professional services are treated under consumer law.

The issue will be placed before a larger Bench.

What are the arguments for keeping doctors under the Consumer Protection Act?

Consumer Protection for Patients: The Consumer Protection Act provides a necessary legal framework for patients to seek redress against medical malpractice, as highlighted in the Indian Medical Association v. V.P. Shantha case.

Accountability and Transparency: Including doctors ensures accountability and transparency in medical services, as medical practice inherently involves a contract of service with patients.

Accessible Legal Recourse: The Act offers an accessible and quicker route for grievances, compared to the lengthy processes in civil or criminal courts.

Prevent Malpractice: It acts as a deterrent against negligence and malpractice, protecting patient rights and ensuring higher standards of care.

Efficient Redressal Mechanism: The Consumer Disputes Redressal Commissions provide an effective and specific forum for addressing medical complaints.

For detailed information on **National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC)** [read this article here](#)

What challenges do doctors face under the Consumer Protection Act?

Lengthy Legal Proceedings: Doctors face long and exhausting legal battles that can extend up to 10 years to prove their innocence, draining their spirit and resources.

Frivolous Litigation: Some patients misuse the Act to avoid paying fees or out of dissatisfaction, leading to baseless lawsuits against healthcare providers.

Increased Medical Costs: To safeguard against potential lawsuits, doctors often order numerous medical tests unnecessarily, inflating the cost of medical procedures.

Documentation Burden: The requirement for meticulous record-keeping and documentation to defend against claims adds additional administrative burdens on medical practitioners, impacting their primary focus on patient care.

What should be done?

1. A thorough review of the inclusion of professionals like doctors under the Consumer Protection Act should be conducted, as suggested by the recent Supreme Court decision.
2. Introduce an ombudsman or independent authority specifically for handling medical complaints, which could streamline processes and provide expert evaluation.
3. Doctors should maintain clear communication about risks and treatment outcomes to minimize misunderstandings and disputes.
4. Incorporate mediation into the grievance process to resolve issues amicably before they escalate to formal litigation.

Status of menstrual hygiene in Indian prisons

Context: The article discusses the poor conditions of menstrual hygiene for women in Indian prisons. It highlights the lack of proper sanitary products and facilities, and the government's efforts to address these issues, including the new National Menstrual Hygiene Policy that recognizes prisoners' needs but lacks a detailed plan for improvement.

For detailed information on **Menstrual hygiene policy** [read this article here](#)

What is the current status of menstrual hygiene in Indian prisons?

Number of Women in Prisons: As reported by the National Crime Records Bureau, there are 23,772 women in Indian prisons, with 77% being of reproductive age and likely menstruators.

Lack of Resources: Despite the 2016 Model Prison Manual's recommendations, many prisons do not provide adequate water, washroom facilities, or quality sanitary products.

Case Study Findings: A 2023 study in a Maharashtra prison highlighted severe deficiencies:

Approximately 50 women were forced to share just two toilets.

Inadequate water supply led to unsanitary conditions and increased health risks, such as urinary infections.

Dependence on Donations: Prisons often rely on NGOs for sanitary napkins, which sometimes results in the distribution of substandard products.

What efforts have been made to improve conditions?

Menstrual Hygiene Scheme: This scheme involves distributing free or subsidized sanitary napkins to young women, aimed at improving access to menstrual hygiene products across various demographics.

Drafting of National Menstrual Hygiene Policy in 2023: This new policy recognizes menstruation as a natural process and emphasizes the need for equitable access to menstrual hygiene. It specifically includes prisoners as a target group, acknowledging their compromised access to hygiene facilities.

Inclusion in Policy Discussions: The National Menstrual Hygiene Policy aims to address disparities and barriers that prevent certain groups, including female prisoners, from accessing necessary menstrual hygiene resources, although it lacks a detailed action plan for implementation in prisons.

What should be done?

Implement the Model Prison Manual 2016: Ensure all states adhere to its guidelines for providing adequate water and sanitation facilities to manage menstrual hygiene effectively.

Develop Comprehensive Strategies: Collaborate between public health authorities and prison administrations to create a detailed action plan for improving menstrual hygiene in prisons.

Increase Research: Conduct more empirical studies to understand the specific needs and conditions related to menstrual hygiene in prisons, as highlighted by the 2023 study in Maharashtra.

Address Policy Gaps: Update the National Menstrual Hygiene Policy to include specific, actionable steps for improving conditions in prisons, involving the Ministry of Home Affairs as a key stakeholder.

Integrating Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) into India's healthcare system

Context: The article discusses how health insurance and healthcare provision are merging into managed care organizations (MCOs) in India, similar to the U.S., and explores whether this model can help extend universal health care in India.

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

What is the current trend in Indian health policy?

1. Indian health policy is increasingly integrating health insurance and healthcare services under one roof, similar to managed care organizations (MCOs) seen in the United States.
2. This approach aims to control costs and improve health outcomes. For example, a large healthcare chain in South India recently started offering comprehensive health insurance alongside its healthcare services.

How did MCOs develop in the U.S.?

1. Managed Care Organizations in the U.S. began as a response to rising healthcare costs in the 1970s.
2. They combine insurance and healthcare provision, focus on preventative care, and aim to control costs with a fixed premium for enrollees.

What are the challenges and prospects for MCOs in India?

Challenges for MCOs in India

Target Market Limitations: Indian health insurance primarily targets the urban, wealthier population, which limits the broader applicability necessary for effective MCOs.

Lack of Standard Protocols: There is a widespread absence of accepted clinical protocols in outpatient practices, which complicates the integration and standardization essential for MCOs.

Unsustainable Operations: High operational costs and unaffordable premiums are common, making it difficult for MCOs to sustain themselves financially without significant systemic changes.

Prospects for MCOs in India

Outpatient Care Potential: With a nearly \$26 billion market for outpatient consultations, there is substantial scope for MCOs to reduce healthcare costs through comprehensive outpatient care.

Government Support: Initiatives like the Ayushman Bharat Mission provide a framework within which MCOs could potentially thrive, especially if similar incentives are extended to include MCOs under schemes like PMJAY.

What does the NITI Aayog report suggest?

Outpatient Care Scheme: The NITI Aayog's 2021 report endorses an outpatient care insurance scheme based on a subscription model.

Cost Savings: This model is projected to generate cost savings by better integrating care services.

Consolidation of Practices: It promotes the consolidation of dispersed healthcare practices and streamlining management protocols.

Preventive Care Focus: The scheme aims to embed a much-needed preventive care focus within the private sector, suggesting a sustainable solution to outpatient care issues over the long term.

How could MCOs fit into broader health initiatives?

Pilot Basis Integration: MCOs could be integrated into broader health initiatives starting on a small scale and on a pilot basis to assess effectiveness.

Support from Ayushman Bharat Mission: The Ayushman Bharat Mission incentivizes the establishment of hospitals in underserved areas. Similar incentives could be extended to MCOs, allowing them to serve beneficiaries of the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) and a private clientele.

Expanding Coverage: As the self-paying client base grows, MCOs could increase awareness and reach, potentially expanding demand for managed care and contributing to the broad objectives of universal health coverage.

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.

Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in India

Context-The article highlights the issues with the PM-JANMAN Housing Scheme. The PM-JANMAN aims to provide essential services to PVTGs, including safe housing, clean drinking water, and sanitation through 11 critical interventions.

What are the PVTGs in India?

There are 75 groups identified as PVTGs across different states, comprising around 14.6 lakh households. These tribes reside in remote, inaccessible areas and rely on pre-agricultural methods for their livelihood.

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Identification-They are characterized by low literacy rates, economic backwardness, and stagnant populations.

What are some of the government initiatives for welfare of PVTGs?

1) **PVTG Development Mission**- The Government of India announced the Pradhan Mantri PVTG Development Mission in 2023-24 to improve their socio-economic conditions.

2) **The Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM-JANMAN)**-

A) It was launched in November 2023 with a budget of ₹24,000 crore. The scheme aims to reach 4.90 lakh PVTG households by 2026, with each household entitled to receive ₹2.39 lakh in three installments.

Read more- [PM launches ₹24,000-crore project for development of vulnerable tribal groups](#)

B) The government has given a mobile app called 'Awaas+' to block/panchayat-level officials to register PVTG households for the PM JANMAN Housing scheme. The app collects beneficiary data in 3 main areas.

What are the issues with the PM-JANMAN Housing Scheme?

1) **Enrollment challenge**-PVTGs and frontline officials encounter difficulties when utilizing a mobile app to enroll in the 'Housing scheme,' the largest Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) initiative under PM-JANMAN.

2) **Inclusion & Accessibility Challenge**-Collecting data (registering) for Direct Benefit Transfers (DBTs) is vital for providing entitlements to citizens. However, in Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Odisha, there are challenges for PVTGs and frontline officials in ensuring inclusivity and accessibility during this process.

What are the challenges in using the Mobile App?

1) Differences in the count of inhabited villages between the app and MGNREGA job cards cause confusion among both beneficiaries and officials.

2) The app requires names as per Aadhaar but does not provide guidance for those without Aadhaar.

3) The app does not capture explicit information about PVTGs, resulting in non-PVTGs registrations.

4) The geo-tagging option is causing chaos due to network issues.

5) The cumbersome process of selecting banks and their branches introduces unnecessary complexity.

6) The omission of India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) from the list of banks, despite the government's emphasis on its role in financial inclusion.

What should be the way forward?

1) There is a need to streamline the registration process, updating the mobile app, and incorporating IPPB as an option to facilitate greater participation of PVTGs in the scheme.

2) Proactive measures should be undertaken to reinstate deleted job cards and community engagement initiatives involving gram sabhas to improve the scheme's effectiveness.

PM-JANMAN presents an opportunity to revolutionize the lives of PVTGs and facilitate their access to the advantages of India's developmental journey.

Status of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) individuals in India

Context: The article discusses the challenges faced by Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) people in India due to societal and systemic ableism. It highlights the lack of sign language use and accessibility in education, employment, and public information.

What is the current status of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) individuals in India?

1. In India, there are significant discrepancies in the count of hearing-impaired individuals: the 2011 Census reported five million, the National Association of the Deaf counts 18 million, and the World Health Organization estimates nearly 63 million.
2. Despite these numbers, only 5% of deaf children are in school, and deaf adults struggle to secure employment.
3. The education system heavily relies on oralism, which focuses on teaching deaf people to use their voices and lip-read rather than communicating through sign language.

How does the government address deafness?

1. **National Programme for Prevention and Control of Deafness:** The government launched this program to prevent and treat hearing impairment through medical interventions. However, it mainly focuses on screening and hearing aids without addressing the broader quality of life or integrating Indian Sign Language (ISL).
2. **Lack of Official Recognition for ISL:** Despite setting up the ISL Research and Training Centre in 2015, ISL is not recognized as an official language in India. This lack of recognition limits accessibility in education and public communication.
3. **National Education Policy 2020:** This policy recommends the teaching of ISL across schools. Despite this recommendation, the use of ISL remains sparse, especially in schools for the deaf, which predominantly use oralism (teaching deaf individuals to speak and lip-read rather than sign).

What are the challenges in everyday life for DHH individuals?

1. **Educational Barriers:** Only 5% of deaf children are enrolled in school, facing challenges with an oralist education system that emphasizes speaking and lip-reading over sign language.
2. **Employment Difficulties:** Deaf individuals often struggle to find jobs, with limited opportunities primarily in roles like housekeeping and data entry. Protests in 2020 highlighted recruitment biases favoring those with less than 40% hearing impairment.
3. **Accessibility Issues in Public Information:** Public transport announcements, TV shows, and directions in public facilities lack sign language interpretation, making daily navigation and information access extremely challenging for the DHH community.

What should be done?

1. **Official Recognition of ISL:** Recognize Indian Sign Language as an official language to enhance accessibility in education, media, and public communications.
2. **Integration of ISL in Education:** Implement the National Education Policy 2020's recommendation to standardize ISL teaching across all schools, ensuring both hearing and DHH students can learn it.
3. **Improve Media Accessibility:** Extend efforts like Doordarshan's weekly news segment in ISL across more channels and include ISL interpretation or subtitles for all public broadcasts and media content.
4. **Accessible Healthcare:** Increase the number of ISL interpreters in hospitals and integrate sign language

training into healthcare professional education.

Challenges faced by transgender people in India

Context: The article discusses the challenges faced by transgender people in India, including discrimination in education and employment. It highlights the need for improved policies and support systems to promote inclusion and respect for transgender individuals in society.

For detailed information on **transgender** read [Article 1](#), [Article 2](#)

What challenges do transgender people face in India?

Workplace Discrimination: Transgender individuals often face ridicule and exclusion at work. For example, a transwoman working at a global lifestyle brand was ridiculed by co-workers and customers.

Education Barriers: The literacy rate among transgender people is significantly lower than the national average. Many drop out due to bullying and harassment, leading to depression and anxiety.

Job Insecurity: Employers may hire transgender individuals for performative diversity but fail to provide long-term job security. A transgender employee at a pathology lab was dismissed without documented reasons after initial media praise.

Health and Safety Risks: Some transgender people turn to prostitution due to job discrimination, increasing their vulnerability to sexually transmitted diseases.

How does discrimination affect their life?

Mental Health: Transgender individuals are nearly four times more likely to suffer from depression and anxiety compared to cisgender individuals. Bullying and harassment in schools contribute significantly to these mental health issues.

Educational Attainment: The literacy rate among transgender people is much lower than the national average. Hostile school environments force many to drop out, thwarting their academic goals.

Employment Stability: Discrimination leads to job insecurity. For example, a transgender employee at a pathology lab was dismissed without proper cause after initial media praise.

Economic Vulnerability: Job discrimination pushes some transgender people into prostitution, increasing their risk of sexually transmitted diseases and further marginalizing them.

What can be done to improve their situation?

Specialized Education: Establish vocational schools specifically for transgender individuals to provide them with tailored training and guidance.

Curricular Integration: Include transgender-related topics in academic curricula to raise awareness and understanding.

Respectful Practices: Enforce the use of chosen names and pronouns, provide gender-neutral facilities, and ensure confidentiality in all institutions.

Legal and Policy Reforms: Strengthen legal protections for transgender individuals and ensure that educational and employment policies are inclusive.

Community Involvement: Seek input from the transgender community when designing policies and laws to ensure they address the community's actual needs and concerns effectively.

Subject: International Relations

Topic- Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Resurgence of Nuclear Factors in Global Politics

Context- The article emphasizes that nuclear factors have regained prominence in the strategic calculations of major powers and significant regional arenas such as Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. The UN cautioned that increasing tensions between the US and Europe, as well as Russia and China, are leading the world toward a possible nuclear conflict.

What factors are prompting a reassessment of nuclear deterrence globally?

- 1) **Nuclear Dynamics in Europe-** The war in Ukraine and Russia's nuclear actions are making the West reconsider how deterrence works. They're considering ideas like making NATO's nuclear and conventional forces stronger, increasing cooperation between France and Britain, and creating a separate European deterrent led by France.
- 2) **Nuclear Dynamics in Asia -**
 - A) China's assertiveness and the fear of American isolationism under a potential second Trump term are nudging Beijing's Asian neighbours to reconsider their atomic abstinence.
 - B) Japan and South Korea are discussing ways to enhance the protection provided by the American nuclear umbrella. However, if Trump wins the November election, the discussion about having their own nuclear weapons may become more serious in Northeast Asia.
- 3) **Nuclear Dynamics in Middle East-** Concerns about Iran developing nuclear weapons are making Arab countries more interested in increasing their own atomic capabilities. Reports suggest that civil nuclear technology cooperation is included in the security agreement being discussed between Saudi Arabia and the US.

What are the emerging challenges to traditional nuclear deterrence?

- 1) The rise of AI and robotic weapons is raising questions about the dangers of automating nuclear decision-making and its consequences for strategic stability between major powers.
- 2) The US has voiced concern that China and Russia might rely on algorithms to decide when to deploy nuclear weapons.
- 3) There are concerns in the US that Russia plans to deploy anti-satellite nuclear weapons to undermine Washington's dominance in outer space.

What are the issues with India's traditional ideas of nuclear deterrence?

1) Pakistan's Nuclear Challenge for India-

- A) Ignoring Pakistan's nuclear threat would be imprudent. As Pakistan's overall strength diminishes compared to India's, India should understand that Rawalpindi will intensify its nuclear weapons program as a last resort against the perceived dominance of India in the region.
- B) Pakistan has a longstanding focus on developing nuclear weapons and currently holds an advantage over India in terms of both the size and sophistication of its arsenal. Its ongoing strategic partnership with China indicates the potential to maintain this advantage against India.

Read more- [India's nuclear doctrine after 25 years of Pokhran](#)

- 2) **China's Growing Nuclear Arsenal-** China's nuclear threat is growing as Beijing is expanding its nuclear arsenal. Western estimates suggest that by 2030, China could have around 1,000 nuclear weapons, and by 2035, this number could increase to 1,500.

What should be the way forward for India?

- 1) It's crucial to focus on building defenses against China's growing nuclear weapons. This should be a priority for the nation, which means developing nuclear and missile capabilities with clear intent.
- 2) The next Indian government must order a comprehensive review of the changing global nuclear dynamic and regional atomic challenges and find ways to modernize India's atomic arsenal and doctrine.
- 3) The review must also explore ways to accelerate India's civilian nuclear energy programme.
- 4) India should completely revamp the legal and institutional structures that govern its atomic energy advancement

GS Paper 3

Subject: Indian Economy

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

Can gold replace financial assets?

Context-The article discusses the limitations of gold as a primary reserve asset. The international gold prices have surged by over 30% in the past two years, driven by increased demand.

Why have international gold prices reached record highs recently?

- 1) Generally, it is believed that low-interest rates should cause gold prices to remain low because gold does not generate cash flow. However, prices have increased despite the rise in global interest rates.
- 2) Gold prices have risen despite a relatively strong US dollar, which is usually inversely related to gold prices.
- 3) The major reason for increasing gold prices is sustained buying by central banks. Central banks accumulated 290 tonnes of gold in Q1 2024, a record for the first quarter, led by China, India, and Turkey.

Why are central banks buying significant amounts of gold?

- 1) Gold has historically been an important component of central bank reserves, and many central banks are now buying gold for diversification purposes.
- 2) Some are also seeking to reduce their dependence on US treasuries due to geopolitical tensions and the risk of asset seizure. This was evidenced by the freezing of Russia's reserves by Western countries after the Ukraine invasion
- 3) Gold, when physically stored within a country, poses no such risk of asset seizure and is free from any default concerns.

Read more- [Gold drives trade deficit to new high](#)

What are the limitations of gold as a primary reserve asset?

- 1) Gold is at best a diversifier and unlikely to be a major driver against the US dollar's dominance for large central banks. For ex- about 60% of global forex reserves and over 80% of global trade are still denominated in US dollars.
- 2) Increasing gold's position in large central bank reserves can push prices and increase investment risk due to its limited supply.
- 3) The limited supply of gold suggests that even slight changes in demand can result in significant price fluctuations. When considering this factor alongside its emotional value and the potential market effects of major central banks selling their reserves, it indicates that gold is likely to maintain a minor role in the global economy during periods of geopolitical and financial instability.

4) Large transactions involving gold can disrupt central banks' efforts to maintain currency stability and smooth capital flows, as they require liquid forex reserves for this purpose.

Issue with Indian household savings

Context: The article discusses a decline in the amount of money Indian households save after paying their debts. It argues that this isn't just a change in where people put their money but a sign of deeper economic issues, like increasing debt and slower income growth.

For detailed information on **Status of household savings in India** [read this article here](#)

What is the main issue with Indian household savings?

Decline in Net Financial Savings: The main issue is the significant decline in household net financial savings to GDP, which fell by 2.5 percentage points during 2022-23. This shows households are saving less in financial forms like bank deposits or stocks.

Increase in Household Debt: Alongside the decrease in savings, there was a rise in the household borrowing to GDP ratio by 2 percentage points, indicating that households are taking on more debt.

Mismatched Compensation: Although there was a slight increase in physical savings (up by 0.3 percentage points), it did not offset the reduction in financial savings, leading to an overall drop in the household savings to GDP ratio by 1.7 percentage points.

How does the government interpret this trend?

Shift in Savings Composition: The government, represented by the Chief Economic Advisor (CEA), interprets the trend as a shift in savings from financial assets to physical investments, suggesting households are not actually saving less but changing where they save.

Increase in Total Savings: Despite the decline in net financial savings, the CEA points out that the nominal value of total household savings has increased, indicating growth in the overall savings pool during 2022-23.

What are the signs of structural economic shifts?

Increased Debt and Interest Payments: Post-COVID, there has been a noticeable increase in the household debt-income ratio and interest payments, indicating higher financial stress among households.

Fisher Dynamics at Play: The scenario described aligns with Fisher dynamics, where rising interest rates combined with slower income growth lead to growing household debt relative to income. This dynamic is confirmed by the average growth rate of household disposable income being consistently lower than the average lending rate from 2019-20 to 2022-23.

Historical Comparison: The current period contrasts with earlier periods, like 2003-04 to 2007-08, when household income growth generally outpaced the lending rate. This shift suggests a structural change in the economy's functioning.

What challenges does the Indian economy face?

Growing Debt Burden: The gap between lending rates and income growth is increasing. This raises the debt-income ratio, leading to higher interest payments for households.

Reduced Consumption: Higher debt prompts households to cut back on spending. The consumption to GDP ratio dropped in 2023-24, showing this trend.

Policy Adjustments Needed: These issues highlight the need for policies that boost household income. This would help close the gap between interest rates and income growth and stabilize demand.

Factors influence the RBI's decision on rate cuts

Contest: The article discusses the Reserve Bank of India's decisions to adjust interest rates in response to inflation trends and external influences like U.S. Federal Reserve policies. It questions whether future rate decisions will be based on domestic inflation, specifically food prices, or external economic pressures.

For detailed information on **Inflation In India** [read this article here](#)

For detailed information on **RBI's approach to controlling inflation** read [Article 1](#), [Article 2](#)

What is the current inflation situation in India?

- 1. Current Inflation Rate:** As of April, the consumer price index (CPI) in India stood at 4.83%.
- 2. Core Inflation:** Core inflation, which excludes volatile food and fuel prices, is at a multi-year low of 3.2%, indicating subdued underlying demand.
- 3. Food Inflation:** Despite lower core inflation, food inflation remains high at 8.7%. This reflects significant price increases across several food groups.
- 4. RBI's Inflation Forecast:** The Reserve Bank of India forecasts that inflation will average around 4.5% in the fourth quarter of the fiscal year 2024-25, based on current trends and expected conditions.

What is the global context of interest rates?

- 1. US Federal Reserve:** Initially, there were expectations of three rate cuts in 2023, but recent inflation data and Fed commentary suggest only one cut might occur. The Fed aims to keep rates higher for longer.
- 2. European Central Bank (ECB):** The ECB plans to cut rates this summer, emphasizing a data-dependent approach that is independent of the Fed's decisions.
- 3. Bank of England:** Similar to the ECB, the Bank of England is likely to reduce rates soon, focusing on domestic growth and inflation dynamics.
- 4. Influence on RBI:** These international trends raise questions about whether the RBI will align its policies more with global changes or domestic economic conditions.

How did external factors influence the RBI's decision?

- 1. Interest Rate Differential:** The RBI's decision to raise rates in May 2022 might have been influenced by the need to maintain the interest rate differential with the U.S., following a significant rate hike by the U.S. Federal Reserve on the same day.
- 2. Exchange Rate Stability:** By adjusting interest rates, the RBI likely aimed to stabilize the exchange rate and prevent the rupee's depreciation.
- 3. Global Economic Trends:** The global context, especially the U.S. Fed's actions, appears to have played a role in the RBI's decision-making, reflecting concerns over external economic pressures and their potential impacts on India.

1 What will be the RBI's decision on rate cuts?

- 1. Inflation Projections:** With the RBI projecting inflation to average around 4.5% by the fourth quarter of 2024-25, and core inflation currently at a low of 3.2%, there might be room for monetary easing if trends hold.
- 2. Food Price Expectations:** An above-normal monsoon is expected, which could moderate food prices and help align headline inflation with RBI targets, supporting the case for rate cuts.
- 3. Interest Rate Comparison:** The current repo rate is 6.5%; with projected inflation at 4.5%, this suggests a real rate of 2%, which might be adjusted downwards to stimulate economic growth, according to external member Jayanth Varma's views on aligning inflation to the target.

Negative impacts of Minimum wage laws on workers

Context: The article argues that minimum wage laws can harm the very workers they aim to protect by reducing employment opportunities for less skilled individuals. It suggests that allowing market forces to dictate wages and increasing competition for workers is a more effective way to support them.

For detailed information on **Issues with the minimum wage in India** [read this article here](#)

How does Minimum Wage impact employment?

- 1. Negative Employment Effects:** According to a 2006 study and a subsequent review in 2022, there's a consistent pattern of negative employment effects associated with increase of minimum wage. These studies particularly highlight stronger dis-employment effects for less skilled groups.
 - 2. Findings from Randomized Control Trials (RCTs):** An RCT examining the impact of minimum wages found that while wages of already hired workers increased, there were notable reductions in hiring and hours worked. The trials also noted that firms shifted towards hiring more productive workers, adversely affecting the less productive ones.
- For example,** if the minimum wage of domestic help and security guards increases significantly (e.g., ₹1 lakh per month). It would lead most households, except the super-rich, to reduce or eliminate these positions, impacting employment adversely in these sectors.

How have labor laws affected employment in countries like China and India?

- 1. China's Employment Shift:** Over 30 years, China transitioned 35% of its workforce from agriculture to manufacturing and services, significantly boosting economic growth and development.
- 2. India's Slower Progress:** In contrast, India moved only 13% of its workforce into similar sectors in the same timeframe. This slower shift is partially attributed to restrictive labor laws, including mandates for minimum wages that exceed market wages.
- 3. Comparison with Bangladesh:** In contrast to India, in Bangladesh, more women have moved from agriculture to factory jobs, helping secure their economic independence. This is implied to be due to the more flexible labor policy in Bangladesh.

What should be done?

- 1. Encourage Market-Determined Wages:** Allow wages to be set by market forces rather than government mandates to increase employment opportunities, especially for less skilled workers.
- 2. Increase Competition for Labor:** Create more competition among employers for workers' time and effort, which can drive up wages naturally and improve job availability.
- 3. Focus on Worker Choice:** Prioritize policies that maximize worker choice and mobility, which have been

effective in countries that have transitioned from low to higher income levels.

4. Reduce Regulatory Burdens: Lighten labor laws that restrict employment growth, such as those that set minimum wages above the market rate, to stimulate job creation in manufacturing and other key sectors.

S&P Global Ratings improved India's economic outlook to "positive."

Context: The article discusses S&P Global Ratings improving India's economic outlook to "positive" due to stable politics and good growth. It keeps India's credit rating stable. It talks about future government tasks like enhancing tax systems to maintain economic growth.

Why did S&P Global Ratings improve India's outlook?

1. S&P Global Ratings improved India's outlook from "stable" to "positive." This is the first outlook change since 2014.
2. The change was driven by political stability, economic reforms, and long-term growth prospects.
3. India's economy grew over 7% last year and is expected to grow by 8%.
4. S&P expects continued growth momentum. Increased government spending on infrastructure is also seen as a driver for sustained economic development.
5. Despite fiscal consolidation efforts, the fiscal position remains a concern.

What are the fiscal challenges?

1. **Fiscal Deficit:** The fiscal deficit is projected to drop from 7.9% of GDP to 6.8% by 2027-28, but this remains high.
2. **Debt Levels:** The debt-to-GDP ratio will stay elevated, not falling below 80% by 2027-28.
3. **Government Spending:** Post-pandemic growth has been driven by government capital expenditure, which may be challenging to maintain alongside fiscal consolidation goals.

What should the next government focus on?

1. **Investment Promotion:** The next government should push for investment to maintain growth momentum.
2. **Fiscal Deficit Reduction:** Focus on reducing the fiscal deficit from 5.1% closer to the target of 4.5%.
3. **Revenue Collection:** Improve the GST system by rationalizing rates and slabs to boost revenue.
4. **Tax Reforms:** Reassess direct tax reforms and enhance tax administration.
5. **Utilize RBI Surplus:** Use the higher-than-expected surplus transfer from the RBI to ease fiscal pressure.
6. **Sustainable Growth:** Balance between sustaining government capital expenditure and achieving fiscal consolidation goals.

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

Role of India in contemporary international trade

Context-The article highlights the current climate of global trade and compares it with the Cold War era. The recent moves by central banks to increase gold reserves, attempts by China and India to internationalize their

currencies, and US tariff hikes on Chinese products are deepening fragmentation in international trade and raising costs.

According to the IMF's Gita Gopinath, the fragmentation is much smaller than during the Cold War. However, the two emerging blocs are now led by the US and China.

What challenges does India face in global trade integration?

India, a former leader of the Non-Aligned Movement, faces the dilemma of positioning itself between the US and China blocs.

- 1) India is not able to reduce its dependency on Chinese imports despite attempts such as the production-linked incentive scheme. India's economy is closely linked to Chinese imports, with a huge trade deficit of \$85.08 billion in 2023-24.
- 2) India did not join the RCEP trade agreement, marginalizing itself from the largest trading arrangement in Asia and limiting its ability to influence trade rules and norms.
- 3) India has its own focus areas in international trade, as seen in initiatives like the Chabahar port agreement with Iran, despite facing threats of sanctions from the United States.
- 4) India's lack of deeper integration with the global economy limits its ability to play a connector role compared to countries like Singapore.
- 5) India has tried to make the rupee acceptable for international payments but remains dollar-dependent due to the lack of a significant alternative system. The rupee trade system faced challenges, as Russia did not want it.

Read more- [India-China Trade: Status and Concerns](#)

What are the steps taken by China to reduce its dependence on dollars?

- 1) China is trying to diversify its currency reserves and reduce dependence on the US dollar by internationalizing the Yuan.
- 2) It has established the China International Payments System (CIPS) as an alternative to SWIFT. However, it still relies on a memorandum of understanding with SWIFT.
- 3) According to experts, if the Yuan lacks full convertibility in the capital account, it will find it difficult to challenge the dominance of the US dollar.

India underperforms its tourism potential

Context- The article highlights India's 39th ranking in the World Economic Forum's latest biannual Travel and Tourism Development Index (TTDI), which indicates a below-par performance in a high-potential business opportunity. The industry accounts for about 6 percent of GDP and provides just 80 million direct and indirect jobs.

What are the findings of the index?

1) India's Recovery and Positive Aspects in the TTDI- Despite the ranking not being strictly comparable to the 2019 study due to changes in index parameters, several data subsets suggest that India has recovered since the pandemic.

A) India is among the top 10 countries in three resource criteria: natural (sixth), cultural (ninth), and non-leisure (ninth).

B) The country also ranks 18th for price competitiveness, 26th for competitive air transport, and 25th for ground and port infrastructure.

2) India has the largest travel and tourism sector in South Asia and is ranked as the top lower-middle-income economy in the study, which covered 119 nations.

Read more-[Tourism Sector in India](#)

What are the challenges faced by the tourism sector?

- 1) **Critical Enabling Gap** -There are key enabling gaps, such as internet connectivity, health and hygiene and environmental sustainability etc.
- 2) **India's Share and China's Impact**- In 2021, India received 1.54% of international tourist arrivals, with a considerable portion being non-resident Indians. Despite China's extended lockdown in 2021, India doesn't seem to have gained much, given that China ranks eighth in the latest TTD.
- 3) **Lack of Quality Infrastructure in Tourism**- In India, besides metro rail in two cities, public transportation like inter-city buses and trains isn't as good as Indian airports and air travel. Unlike in the West, where people of all classes use public transport, rich and upper-middle-class Indians usually avoid it. This lowers India's price competitiveness and affects tourism performance.

The government aims to boost GDP by \$1 trillion by 2047 through tourism, aiming to make India a key tourism spot, as outlined in the Dharamshala Declaration at last year's G20 meetings. Starting with improving cleanliness and livability for all citizens would be a good initial step.

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

Issues with rail safety

Context: The article discusses cases where train pilots in India faced unfair disciplinary actions, despite following safety rules, often because railway management prioritized punctuality or appearances over safety. It highlights systemic issues like inadequate training and poor management decisions that compromise rail safety.

For detailed information on the **Issue of Indian railway safety** [read this article here](#)

What are the issues with rail safety?

Prioritizing Punctuality Over Safety: A pilot was disciplined for not exceeding the 15 km/h speed limit to minimize delays, despite following safety rules.

Inadequate Securing of Trains: On February 25, 2024, an unmanned train traveled over 70 kilometers, due to insufficient time given to pilots for stabilizing it properly.

Distractions Allegation: The railway minister claimed a train collision on October 29, 2023, was due to pilots watching a cricket match, but no evidence supported this.

High Vacancy Rates: Nearly 10% of loco pilot positions are vacant, leading to overworked staff and breaches of duty hour rules.

Insufficient Rest and Continuous Night Working: Pilots face inadequate rest at home stations and continuous night shifts, compromising their alertness and safety.

Subject: Agriculture

Topic- Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and minimum support prices; Public Distribution System objectives, functioning, limitations, revamping; issues of buffer stocks and food security, Technology Missions; Economics of Animal-Rearing

Issues associated with India's agricultural imports

Context: The article discusses the Reserve Bank of India's efforts to manage inflation and support economic growth. It highlights changes in India's agricultural imports, particularly the significant decrease in edible oil costs and the challenges related to pulse imports.

For detailed information on **Challenges facing agriculture exports from India** [read this article here](#)

What change has been observed in India's agricultural imports?

Overall Decline in Agricultural Imports: India's agricultural imports witnessed a notable decrease of 8%, falling from \$35.7 billion in the fiscal year 2022-23 to \$32.8 billion in 2023-24.

Significant Reduction in Edible Oil Imports: The value of edible oil imports plummeted by 28.5%, dropping from \$20.8 billion to \$14.9 billion in one year. This decline was primarily driven by a decrease in global palm oil prices.

Stable Volume of Edible Oil Imports: Despite the drop in value, the quantity of edible oil imports remained stable at around 15-16 million metric tonnes.

Increase in Pulse Imports: Contrary to the overall trend -agriculture-Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and minimum support prices; Public Distribution System objectives, functioning, limitations, revamping; issues of buffer stocks and food security d, the import of pulses doubled from \$1.9 billion in 2022-23 to \$3.7 billion in 2023-24, reflecting an increased domestic demand and insufficient production.

Slower Growth in Agricultural Imports: The Average Annual Growth Rate (AAGR) of agricultural imports during the 10 years of the present government (2014-15 to 2023-24) was 9%, which is a slowdown compared to the 14% AAGR during the GR during the previous government (2004-05 to 2013-14).

What issues are associated with India's agricultural imports?

Impact on Farmers: Import policies that favor consumers, such as the zero import duty on pulses to lower prices, can adversely affect local farmers by undermining their profitability and incentive to produce.

Inflation Concerns: Despite efforts to manage import costs, certain commodities like pulses have seen significant inflation. In April 2024, the inflation rate for pulses was 17%, and for tur, it was 31%.

Dependency on Imports for Key Commodities: India imports a large portion of its edible oil consumption, roughly 55 to 60%, highlighting a dependency that could be problematic if global supply chains are disrupted.

Fluctuating Import Volumes and Prices: The volume of edible oil imports remained stable even as their value decreased significantly by 28.5%, demonstrating how international market prices directly influence India's import costs.

How can India achieve self-reliance in edible oils?

National Edible Oil Mission-Oil Palm (NEOM-OP): The Indian government is promoting the domestic cultivation of palm oil through this mission. It aims to expand palm oil production on approximately 2 million hectares identified as suitable for this crop.

Increase Area Under Oilseed Cultivation: Achieving self-sufficiency in traditional oilseeds like mustard, groundnuts, and soybeans would require expanding the cultivation area by 35 to 40 million hectares, which presents a significant challenge.

Import Policy Alignment with MSP: Ensuring that the landed price of imported edible oils does not fall below the minimum support prices (MSP) of domestic oilseeds can protect local farmers and encourage domestic production.

What should be the focus of trade policies?

Calibrated Import Duty Changes: Trade policies should avoid sudden shifts, such as the abrupt reduction to zero import duty on pulses. A more gradual approach would help stabilize market prices and farmer incomes.

Protecting Domestic Producers: Ensuring that the landed prices of imports, such as pulses and edible oils, do not fall below the minimum support prices (MSP) is crucial. This protects local farmers from being undercut by cheaper imports.

Large-Scale Procurement at MSP: If domestic prices fall below MSP, organizations like NAFED should undertake large-scale procurement to support domestic producers and build buffer stocks, preventing farmer losses and encouraging continued production.

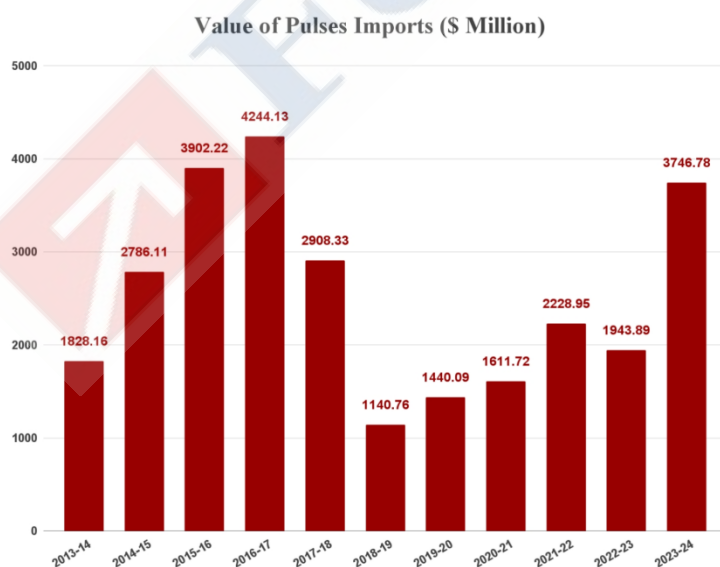
For detailed information on NAFED [read this article here](#)

Inflation in Pulse Prices in India

Context-The article highlights the issues of increased inflation in price of Pulses in India. Pulse prices faced higher inflation of 16.84% in April 2024, nearly twice that of cereals, affecting households more as pulses are not substantially distributed through the public distribution system.

What are the reasons for rising pulse prices in India?

1) The El Niño-induced irregular monsoon and winter rains caused a decline in domestic pulse production from 27.30 million tonnes in 2021-22 to 23.44 million tonnes in 2023-24.



2) Chickpea (chana) and pigeon pea (arhar/tur) saw the highest inflation due to sharp output falls from 13.54 million tonnes to 12.16 million tonnes and 4.22 million tonnes to 3.34 million tonnes, respectively, between 2021-22 and 2023-24.

3) Poor crops in major pulse-growing states like Karnataka, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana, owing to deficient rainfall and reduced sowing area, resulted in limited supplies and higher prices.

Read more- [Inflation Management in India](#)

What are the implications of price rise of pulses?

- 1) **Surge in Pulse Imports**-India's pulse imports has reached at \$3.75 billion in 2023-24, the highest since the record levels of 2015-16 and 2016-17, totaling 4.54 million tonnes.
- 2) **A Reversal of Self-Sufficiency** - Imports are rising again after the country became more self-sufficient in producing pulses from 2015-16 to 2021-22, when domestic production increased from 16.32 million tonnes to 27.30 million tonnes.
- 3) **Increasing Imports of Cheaper Substitutes**- Imports of cheaper substitutes like yellow/white peas from Canada, Australia, and Russia are likely to increase further, as they replace more expensive pulses like chickpeas and pigeon peas in household consumption and restaurant menu.

For ex- imports of red lentils (masoor) from Australia and Canada touched a record 1.7 million tonnes in 2023-24, while yellow/white pea imports surged from near-zero to 1.2 million tonnes

What steps are taken by the government to address the price rise of pulses?

- 1) The government phased out tariffs and quantitative restrictions on pulse imports to control inflation.
- 2) The government has lifted annual quotas on pigeon pea, black gram, and green gram in 2021, reduced duties on red lentils, and removed curbs on yellow/white peas and desi chickpeas in 2023 and 2024.

Way forward-The government has already permitted duty-free imports of major pulses like pigeon pea, black gram, red lentils, and desi chickpeas until March 31, 2025, and may need to extend the same for yellow/white peas beyond October 31, 2024.

Future pulse prices will mainly rely on the upcoming southwest monsoon. Climate models suggest a shift from El Niño to a "neutral" phase, and perhaps even La Niña, which brings good rainfall to the subcontinent.

Rapid growth of aquaculture in India.

Context: The article discusses the rapid growth of aquaculture in India, highlighting the significant increase in fish farming production and the expansion into new regions. It also mentions government initiatives aimed at enhancing productivity and exports, as well as the integration of modern technologies and mixed farming practices to boost efficiency and profitability in the sector.

For detailed information on **Aquaculture Bill** [read this article here](#)

What is the status of Aquaculture in India?

Aquaculture in India has seen a dramatic **80% increase in production over the last decade**.

Now, India is a leading producer of farmed fish, nearly matching China's output, with over 13.1 million tonnes produced in 2022-23.

Shrimp farming, especially, has boomed, with many new farms in states like Odisha and Andhra Pradesh focusing on export markets.

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

How has aquaculture growth been supported by the government?

Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMM-SY): Launched in 2020, the scheme aims to boost the productivity of aquaculture farms from around 3 tonnes per hectare to over 5 tonnes. It also envisages doubling the export of aquaculture products. The program aims to generate 5.5 million additional jobs and facilitate the formation of over 2,000 fish farmers' producer organizations.

Agencies involved to enhance the efficiency and profitability: Agencies like the Small Farmers' Agri-

business Consortium (SFAC), National Agriculture Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (Nafed), National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC), and National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) are involved.

What innovations are being adopted in fish farming?

Composite Fish Culture: Introduced in the late 1960s and early 1970s, it involves stocking multiple fish species in the same water body. Popular species include Rohu, Catla, and Mrigal, along with Silver Carp and Grass Carp.

Vertical Fish Culture: This method allows higher stocking densities and multiple harvesting. It maximizes production and profitability.

IoT-Based Monitoring: Progressive entrepreneurs use Internet of Things (IoT) devices to monitor water quality, especially aeration and feed availability. This can ramp up productivity to 7-10 tonnes per hectare.

Integrated Farming Practices: Farmers integrate fisheries with crop farming, dairy, poultry, piggery, and duck rearing. Paddy-cum-fish culture, where fish are stocked in paddy fields, is also gaining popularity.

Shrimp Aquaculture Expansion: Saline lands with brackish groundwater are utilized for shrimp farming, with Haryana already bringing nearly 500 hectares under shrimp farming.

Subject: Science & Technology

Topic- Achievements of Indians in Science & Technology; Indigenization of Technology and Developing New Technology.

Significance of Open Access for Scientific Research

Context- The article discusses the difficulties in research infrastructure and resource access in India. It suggests moving towards Open Access publishing and making India self-reliant in scientific publishing to ensure long-term access and cost-effectiveness.

India has made impressive growth in science, matching its booming economy. India is now the third-largest contributor to global research and ranks eleventh in research quality, as per the Nature Index.

Despite an increase in the number of universities from 760 to 1,113 between 2014 and 2021, many lack essential resources such as instrumental access, sophisticated labs, and access to scientific literature.

What initiatives have been undertaken to address shortfall in research infrastructure and resources in India?

1) **I-STEM-** This initiative aims to bridge the gap by cataloging all publicly funded research facilities across the nation, ensuring their availability to researchers based on need.

2) **One Nation, One Subscription (ONOS)-** This proposes a centralized subscription model to scientific journals, making them universally accessible to all publicly funded institutions in India. Currently, institutions in India spend an estimated ₹1,500 crore annually to access journals and databases, but the benefits are reaped by only a few top institutes.

What are the issues with the ONOS model?

1) High Subscription fees-

A) More articles are now accessible for free online through Open Access (OA). An analysis of Web of Science publications reveals that the global proportion of OA articles rose from 38% in 2018 to 50% in 2022.

B) Major funding sources like the U.S. and European Union are pushing for OA, with the U.S. mandating

immediate open accessibility of all publicly funded research articles by 2025. These raise questions about the need and effectiveness of paying for content that is becoming more freely available.

2) **Dominance of Publishers**- A small number of big publishers from the global north control the academic publishing market. They can impose tough conditions, which makes it hard to negotiate for ONOS.

3) **Limited Impact of ONOS**- ONOS doesn't significantly improve global access to Indian research; instead, it mainly benefits Indian researchers by granting access to journals owned by major publishing companies.

4) **Lack of Publisher Responsibility**- Even if you pay for subscriptions, there's no guarantee of continuous access because publishers haven't committed to preserving the content they profit from in the long term. **For instance**, when a chemistry journal distributed worldwide by Elsevier stopped in December 2023, over 17,000 research papers vanished, except in Japan.

Read more- [Recent Concerns with India's Science Management in 2024](#)

What should be the way forward?

1) **Green Open Access** - Green Open Access involves archiving articles authored by Indian researchers and funded by taxpayer money in publicly funded OA repositories. This practice ensures that research outputs are freely accessible to everyone globally, without relying on costly subscription models.

2) **Self-Reliance in Scientific Publishing** - India should strengthen its own journal system without burdening authors or readers with payments.

3) **Global Leadership**-By leveraging its capabilities in digital technology, India should lead the global south in creating and sharing low-cost, high-quality scientific publishing infrastructure.

Subject: Environment

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

Impacts of stray cattle on agriculture and wildlife

Context: The article discusses the impact of stray cattle on agriculture and wildlife in Uttar Pradesh. It highlights the challenges farmers face, such as damaged crops and deadly fences, and the potential disease risks to wildlife. It also explores proposed solutions and political implications.

What are the impacts of stray cattle on agriculture and wildlife in Uttar Pradesh?

Crop Damage: Over a million stray cattle in Uttar Pradesh are decimating harvests, significantly impacting farm-based livelihoods. Farmers resort to installing harmful barriers like razor-wire and high-voltage electric fences to protect their crops.

Wildlife Disruption: In the biodiverse Terai areas, such as Pilibhit and Lakhimpur Kheri, stray cattle interfere with the natural habitats of endangered species including tigers and rhinoceros. The presence of cattle and the fences installed to deter them disrupt crucial wildlife corridors, hindering species' movement and survival.

Disease Transmission: Stray cattle pose a risk of spreading diseases like bovine tuberculosis and lumpy skin disease to wildlife, with multiple recent cases of the latter reported in the Terai region.

What are the reasons behind Increasing Stray Cattle Population?

- 1) Religious beliefs have led to ban on use of certain cattle for Meat.
- 2) Buffaloes are preferred more as farm animals, over cows. High-yielding buffalo breeds, are so far exempt from bans on trade and slaughter.
- 3) Cattle rearing has become costly due to the increasing cost of Inputs.
- 4) Communities that used to be pastoral once, have become agrarian over the decades.

What solutions do farmers suggest?

Building Cow Shelters: Farmers suggest constructing cow shelters to accommodate stray cattle. They propose these shelters could even be located within protected areas, offering a dual solution to manage stray cattle and potentially reduce crop raiding by other wildlife.

Government Responsibility: The sentiment among the farmers is that the government should take responsibility for the stray cattle. They believe that like crop-raiding wildlife, stray cattle should be managed by the government within its protected reserves.

Subject: Internal Security

Topic- Various Security Forces and Agencies and their Mandate.

Integrated theatre commands

Context-The article highlights the significance of integrated theatre commands for ensuring cohesiveness in the functioning of the armed forces. The Indian Armed Forces are finetuning the final draft for the creation of integrated theatre commands.

What are the Integrated Theatre Commands?

Objective-This ambitious defence reform aims to integrate the Indian Army, Navy, and Air Force to operate jointly in specific adversary-based theatres with defined military goals during conflicts or wars.

Global practice-All most major militaries in the world have including USA, China and France have the theatre command set up.

Creation of DMA-The government initiated this reform in 2019 by creating the post of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) and setting up the Department of Military Affairs (DMA) to oversee the transition.

A detailed article on Integrated Theatre Commands in India can be [read here](#).

What is the significance of Integrated theatre commands?

- 1) **Rationalizing manpower and resources-**Currently, the three services operate individually under their respective operational commands. With theatre commands, their personnel, assets, infrastructure, and logistics would be integrated to operate cohesively towards defined military goals in specific theatres.
- 2) **Streamlining Command Structure** -The theatre commands will streamline the existing command structure by transforming three service command headquarters into theatre command headquarters. Additionally, the Andaman and Nicobar Command may be incorporated into one of the theatre commands.
- 3) **Unique Structure of India's Theatre Commands** -Indias theatre commands would not follow any global military order and would be based on India's unique security situation.

What are the proposed theatre commands and headquarters?

Plans include making Mumbai the first common defence station for all three services and establishing more joint logistics nodes nationwide to enhance logistical integration, streamline supply chains, and facilitate officer postings across services.

Further, the latest draft envisions three adversary-based theatre commands:

- 1) Western Theatre Command facing Pakistan -proposed headquarters in Jaipur)
- 2) Northern Theatre Command facing China -proposed headquarters in Lucknow)
- 3) Maritime Theatre Command for threats in the Indian Ocean Region -proposed headquarters in Coimbatore, Karwar, or Thiruvananthapuram.

What are the proposed leadership structures for the theatre commands?

- 1) Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff (HQIDS) is likely to operate under the CDS.
- 2) Three theatre commanders who will be of rank of General or equivalent, will head the theatre commands.They would be responsible for operations.
- 3) Theatre commanders will report to a National Defence Committee, likely headed by the Defence Minister.
- 4) Plans are in place for the appointment of a Vice Chief of Defence Staff (Vice CDS) to oversee strategic planning, capability development, and procurement, along with a Deputy Chief of Defence Staff (Deputy CDS) to handle operations, intelligence, and asset allocation. The Deputy CDS is likely to be a Lieutenant General or equivalent.
- 5) Service Chiefs would be responsible for raising, training, and sustaining individual services.
- 6) Strategic Forces Command will continue independently.

Over the past five years, several drafts have been crafted to determine the optimal model for India's theatre commands. However, the government has yet to grant final approval for the plan's implementation.

Subject: Disaster Management

Topic- Disaster and disaster management.

Concerns related to fire safety in India

News: Two major fires occurred in India within 12 hours, causing several deaths, including newborns in a Delhi hospital and others at a Rajkot gaming center.

For detailed information on **the issue of Urban Fires in India** [read this article here](#)

What are the major concerns related to fire safety in India?

Inadequate Enforcement of Safety Norms: Despite detailed regulations in the **National Building Code**, enforcement is weak, resulting in facilities often operating without necessary fire safety clearances.

Infrequent Inspections: Municipal inspections of buildings for fire safety compliance are sporadic and ineffective, usually prompted only by incidents.

Inadequate Infrastructure: A FICCI-Pinkerton study highlights a deficiency, with urban India having less than 40% of the fire stations it needs.

Recurring Tragedies: Incidents like the fires at Uphaar Cinema in 1997, AMRI Hospital in 2011, Kamala Mills fire in 2017, and recent events in Delhi and Rajkot show a failure to learn from past tragedies and improve safety measures.

Lack of Emergency Preparedness: Audits show a systemic lack of preparedness, with a significant percentage of healthcare facilities lacking fire safety clearance.

What has been the response toward fire safety in India?

Legal Response

Court Involvement: The Gujarat High Court has taken suo motu cognizance of the Rajkot gaming center fire, demanding reports on the safety of gaming centers from municipalities in Rajkot, Surat, and Ahmedabad.

Investigations Initiated: Following the tragic fire in a Delhi hospital, the Delhi government launched an investigation to uncover the causes and potential lapses in fire safety protocols.

Government Action

Regulatory Framework: The National Building Code provides extensive guidelines on fire safety, but implementation and enforcement at the municipal level remain weak.

For detailed information on **Guidelines of National Building Code** [read this article here](#)

Safety Audits and Guidelines: The 2021 audit in Maharashtra found over 80% of hospitals without fire safety clearance, confirming widespread non-compliance. The Union Health Ministry and the National Disaster Management Authority issued new guidelines in March, particularly emphasizing fire safety in healthcare facilities.

Infrastructure Development: Acknowledging infrastructure deficiencies, the 15th Finance Commission recommended modernizing firefighting facilities to meet the demands of a rapidly urbanizing nation.

Conclusion-Repeated fire tragedies in India demonstrate a critical need for better fire safety practices and stricter enforcement to protect lives.

Disaster Management in India

Context-The article highlights the urgent need to upgrade and overhaul the disaster management system in the wake of rising frequency and intensity of natural disasters. This comes in the wake of recent cyclone Remal that caused devastation in the northeastern India.

What is the significance of National Disaster Management Authority in managing disasters in India?

Background-The creation of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) in 2005 was a timely decision, prompted by the 1999 Odisha super cyclone and the 2004 tsunami.

- 1) The NDMA has done commendable work in disaster mitigation, risk assessment and reduction, and post-disaster response, rescue, and relief.
- 2) After the creation of NDMA at the Centre, almost every state has created a disaster management agency, albeit with varying degrees of effectiveness.

What is the changing nature of disasters in India?

- 1) The nature of disasters that India faces has changed drastically in the last 20 years, with disasters becoming more frequent and intense due to climate change.
- 2) Events like heatwaves, which were not considered potential disasters earlier, have emerged as new threats.
- 3) The rise in multi-hazard disasters, where one event triggers another or a series of disasters, has been a concerning trend. For ex-the recent landslides in the Northeast, which claimed at least 30 lives, were a multi-hazard disaster, triggered by heavy rainfall caused by Cyclone Remal.

What should be the way forward?

- 1) **Upgrading Disaster Management-** Disaster management agencies need to be empowered and equipped with more resources. Capacity-building must be focused on dealing with the changing nature of disasters. Read more-[Heat Action Plan](#)
- 2) **Regulation of Construction Activities-** It is not possible to prevent natural occurrences like heavy rainfall, cyclones, or heatwaves. Nevertheless, the human-caused effects such as uncontrolled construction must be reduced.
- 3) **Building Disaster-Resilient Infrastructure-** India is currently constructing infrastructure for its future, and it's important to integrate disaster resilience into each of these projects. Additionally, existing infrastructure requires retrofitting.
- 4) **Global Leadership in Disaster-Resilient Infrastructure-** India established the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) to advance disaster-resistant infrastructure globally. However, India should develop appropriate models domestically first.

Impact of Heat Waves on Informal Workers

Context-The article highlights the severe impact of the intense heat wave in northern India, particularly on informal workers who constitute a significant portion of the urban workforce. Crowded urban areas worsen the heat island effect, putting informal workers at greater risk because of their unstable jobs, absence of safety nets, and existing socio-economic vulnerabilities.

What are Heat Action Plans (HAPs), and how effective are they?

Read more-[Heat Action Plan](#)

What are the impacts of severe heat waves on Informal Workers?

- 1) Working in extreme heat hurts the productivity and earnings of informal workers, whether they're inside or outside. Workers often suffer from heat-related illnesses like fatigue, dehydration, anxiety, and heat stroke. The absence of basic facilities like drinking water and shade at work sites makes these health risks worse.
- 2) Most informal workers don't have health insurance, so they pay for medical treatment, which reduces their already low income during hot months. They end up spending more on protective gear and transport, squeezing their profits.
- 3) Domestic workers face constant heat from stoves, while those working from home deal with cramped and hot living conditions.
- 4) Construction workers struggle under the scorching sun and in makeshift shelters. Street vendors lose money as their goods spoil quickly and they have fewer customers.
- 5) Women, who make up a big part of informal workers, must spend more time caring for family members due to food spoilage and other heat-related issues

What should be the way forward?

There are several policy recommendations such as-

- 1) There is a need to see heat waves as prolonged disasters not merely a conventional disaster event. Thus, instead of a temporary solution, Heat Action Plans (HAPs) should be integrated with bigger, long-term plans for urban planning and climate action.

This should also involve the NDMA collaborating with other organizations in urban areas, such as the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) and the Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE).

- 2) There should be incorporation of diverse groups of informal workers in urban settings and to provide clearer directives at the national level. These guidelines can assist states in expanding and adapting them according to their unique circumstances.
- 3) There is a need to explore the distinctions between indoor and outdoor work to develop comprehensive guidelines and interventions. This is important because indoor workers often encounter extreme heat as well.
- 4) It's important to involve worker communities and listen to their opinions when making action plans.

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5) Heat affects women workers more severely than men, so plans to address heat stress must take this into account.

6) There is a need to provide climate-resilient social protection, income protection, and compensation for income loss to workers.

7) There is a need to rethink labor laws and codes from the perspective of informal workers and climate change impacts.

Our cities and society often neglect informal workers. It's crucial to rethink urban planning, not only to offer amenities like water, shade, and resting spots during heat waves but also to enhance workers' rights in urban areas.