

9 PM Current Affairs Weekly Compilation

For UPSC CSE mains examination



2nd Week

June. 2024

Features :

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

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GS Paper 2

Subject: Indian Polity

Topic- Indian Constitution—Historical Underpinnings, Evolution, Features, Amendments, Significant Provisions and Basic Structure.

Supreme Court rulings that affect the rights of individuals accused of crimes

Context: The article discusses two Supreme Court rulings that affect the rights of individuals accused of crimes. One ruling is about the necessity of custody before filing a charge sheet. The other is about informing the accused of the grounds of arrest in writing.

What are the Supreme Court rulings that affect the rights of individuals accused of crimes?

1. Custody Not Required Before Charge Sheet Filing:

The Supreme Court ruled that an accused does not always need to be in custody when a charge sheet is filed, provided they are cooperating and not likely to abscond. This directive alleviates unnecessary detentions, easing the burden on both investigating agencies and the accused.

For example: In **Siddharth v. State of Uttar Pradesh (2021)**, the Court highlighted that **Section 170 of the CrPC** does not mandate custody for filing charge sheets.

2. Mandatory Written Grounds of Arrest:

The Court emphasized that informing the accused in writing about the grounds of arrest is a **constitutional right under Article 22**.

Examples:

- a) In **Pankaj Bansal v. Union of India (2023)**, the Court reiterated that the reasons for arrest must be documented in writing to uphold due process and transparency, further aligning with constitutional mandates.
- b) In **Prabir Purkayastha v. State (NCT of Delhi)**, the Court reaffirmed the same principle, applying it equally under the UAPA, emphasizing the necessity for detailed, personalized grounds of arrest.

What are the implications of these judgements?

1. **Reduced Need for Custody:** The SC ruling on custody before filing a charge sheet, as outlined in **Siddharth v. State of Uttar Pradesh (2021)**, reduces unnecessary detentions, easing the burden on investigating officers and courts.
2. The mandate to provide written grounds of arrest **enhances transparency and protects constitutional rights** under Article 22 of the Constitution. The SC emphasized that written grounds help the accused seek legal counsel and bail, **ensuring fair legal proceedings under Section 50(1) of the CrPC**.
3. **Extension to Special Statutes:** The directive to provide written grounds of arrest, initially highlighted in cases involving Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), is set to influence procedures under the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) as well.

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

First Past the Post (FPTP) Vs Proportional Representation Vs MMPR System: Which one is best?

Context: The ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA) secured a majority by winning 293 seats with 43.3% of the national vote share. However, the opposition INDIA bloc, despite garnering 41.6% of votes, could win only 234 seats. In this context, the article discusses the potential benefits and challenges of adopting a Proportional Representation (PR) system in India's electoral democracy.

What is FPTP system and what are the issues associated with it?

At present, India is following First Past the Post (FPTP) system. It has few basic flaws, like, it often results in a significant mismatch between the percentage of votes received by political parties and their representation in legislative bodies. For example, Congress historically winning 75% of seats with 45-47% vote share, and NDA securing 64 out of 66 seats in three states with around 55% vote share. However, it also has many advantages like, this system is simple and feasible in a large country like India. It also provides greater stability to the executive by ensuring a majority for the ruling party/coalition.

What is Proportional Representation (PR) System?

In the Proportional Representation (PR) system, a party is allocated legislative seats based on their overall vote share, nationally. One such system is 'party list PR', in this system, voters vote for the party and not individual candidates.

Advantages of PR System: Every party, getting a percentage of vote from the voters, will get representation in the Parliament.

Issues associated with PR System: PR systems can potentially lead to fragmented legislatures and unstable governments, as no single party or alliance may secure an outright majority.

It also has a potential to formations of political parties based on the religion, caste, language, region, leading to division within the country.

What is Mixed Member Proportional Representation (MMPR) system?

This system addresses the flaws of PR and FPTP systems. It uses the mix of both these systems. For example, Germany, follows the MMPR system. In their Bundestag (like India's Lok Sabha), there are 598 seats. They fill 299 seats (50%) from constituencies under the FPTP system and rest of the seats are allocated as per the PR system. Similar system is followed by South Africa, the Netherlands, Belgium and Spain.

Significance of the MMPR system

- 1) Stability:** By adopting MMPR, India can achieve a balance between the stability offered by the FPTP system and the fair representation ensured by proportional representation.
- 2) Representation to smaller states:** This system can potentially mitigate feelings of disenchantment among smaller states and regions that may lose out under a purely population-based seat allocation.
- 3) Law commission recommendation:** in its 170th report, 'Reform of the electoral laws' (1999), recommended the introduction of the MMPR system on an experimental basis.

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

On Special Category Status for Andhra

News: The demand for Special Category Status (SCS) for Andhra Pradesh has resurfaced in the political discourse, especially after the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. This issue has reignited the debate whether the state qualifies for special category or not.

Read more – [Special Category Status – Explained Pointwise](#)

What is the Criteria for Special Category Status?

The SCS was created in 1969, on the recommendation of 5th Finance commission, to support states with significant socio-economic disadvantages and geographical challenges. There are 5 factors that are considered for granting SCS:

- 1) Majority tribal population,
- 2) Low population density,
- 3) Hilly terrain and international borders,
- 4) Socio-economic and industrial backwardness, and
- 5) Inadequate state finances

Current SCS States: Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura, and Uttarakhand.

What are the arguments in favour of granting a SCS to AP?

First, Andhra Pradesh continues to face a revenue deficit and increasing debt. Development projects and the new capital at Amaravati are stalled.

Second, 15th Finance Commission chairman has stated in his book that 14th Finance Commission never stopped SCS status. It is only up to the central government to take a call on this matter.

What are the arguments against providing an SCS to AP?

Andhra Pradesh does not qualify for the SCS, as per norms.

Tax Devolution and Grants: The 14th Finance Commission increased tax devolution to 42% and introduced revenue deficit grants, which Andhra Pradesh received. The 14th Finance Commission equated SCS with the general category status, nullifying SCS for new states.

Special Package (SP): In place of SCS, the NDA government offered Andhra Pradesh an SP, which included full funding for the Polavaram irrigation project, tax concessions, and special assistance.

No Mention in reorganization Act: The Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, which split the state into Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, came into effect on June 2, 2014. It did not mention SCS for Andhra Pradesh.

Subject: Governance

Topic- Government Policies and Interventions for Development in various sectors and Issues arising out of their Design and Implementation.

Digital Competition Bill: Its core needs strengthening

News: The Ministry of Corporate Affairs recently concluded public consultations on the draft Digital Competition Bill (DCB) and the findings of the Committee on Digital Competition Law (CDCL).

The CDCL highlighted the necessity of a robust framework to support the rapid growth of India's digital ecosystem. It recommended introducing ex-ante measures through the DCB to complement the existing ex-post framework under the Competition Act.

What are the key provisions of draft Digital Competition Bill (DCB)?

Stages in the process

1. Identification of core digital services (CDS).
2. Designation of Systemically Significant Digital Enterprises (SSDE) for each CDS.
3. Mandatory ex-ante compliance obligations for an SSDE.
4. Penalties for non-compliance by an SSDE.

Identification of CDS

The CDCL suggests pre-identifying certain digital services prone to market concentration based on the Competition Commission of India's (CCI) experience and global practices.

Nine digital services, including online search engines and video-sharing platforms, have been identified as CDS.

For more details about the bill – [Click Here](#)

What are the concerns related to the bill?

Identification of CDS: Unlike the EU's Digital Markets Act (DMA), the DCB lacks clear guidelines on identifying CDS, raising concerns about fairness and transparency.

The DCB needs a systematic approach for updating the CDS list, with the CCI better positioned to propose amendments based on its dealings with anti-competitive practices.

Double Penalty: The proposed ex-ante regime under the DCB could lead to a double penalty for SSDEs, as it would operate alongside the existing ex-post regime under the Competition Act. The CDCL suggests rationalizing penalties to avoid disproportionate punishments for the same conduct under both regimes. This should be codified in the statute for clarity.

What should be done?

Strengthening the DCB: The government should refine the DCB based on public feedback, ensuring it clearly defines the framework within which the CCI operates. Building a robust ex-ante regime requires addressing concerns about certainty and fairness.

Enhancing CCI's Technical Capacity: The CCI should enhance its technical capacity and establish a Digital Markets and Data Unit to effectively implement the DCB while maintaining its ex-post responsibilities.

Challenges faced by Indian companies, due to amendment in the foreign investment rules

Context: The article discusses challenges faced by Indian companies, especially startups, due to a 2019 amendment in the foreign investment rules which require (PN3 Requirement) government approval for investments from countries bordering India.

For details information on **What is PN3 guidelines** [read this article here](#)

What are the Challenges with the Current Foreign Investment Rules?

- 1.Unclear Definition:** The term 'beneficial owner' is not defined, leading to confusion. This has led to conservative interpretations by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- 2.Impact on FOCCs:** FOCCs face restrictions similar to those imposed on non-residents. This has caused issues with downstream investments, as seen in 2023 when many FOCCs received notices from the RBI regarding their compliance.
- 3.Approval Delays:** The government approval process is slow and has a high rejection rate. For example, proposals worth ₹50,000 crore are pending, withdrawn, or rejected, with 201 applications rejected in the past three years.
- 4.High Penalties:** Fines for non-compliance can be up to three times the investment, risking insolvency for startups. These companies often receive investments beyond their revenue, making fines particularly damaging.

What should be done?

- 1. Indemnity Challenge:** Indian companies should require foreign investors to provide representations backed by indemnities about their compliance with the PN3 Requirement. This could reduce the risk for Indian companies but may discourage foreign investment due to potential liabilities.
- 2. Beneficial Owners:** Clearly define 'beneficial owners' to include specific ownership thresholds, ranging from 10% to 25%. Include control tests that consider rights overboard meetings, veto powers, and operational matters. For example, Foreign Owned or Controlled Companies (FOCCs) faced RBI notices about investments due to ambiguous definitions.
- 3. Consultation Mechanism:** Introduce a time-bound consultation process with regulatory authorities to clarify control-conferring clauses in investment agreements. This mechanism would help resolve ambiguities like Indian competition law. For Example, Industry practices and legal advice on beneficial ownership have become conservative due to the RBI's strict interpretations.

Topic- Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Education, Human Resources

Issues and trends in India's higher education system

Context: The article discusses the issues and trends in India's higher education system, focusing on the mismatch between student aspirations and available courses, leading to exclusion. It highlights the growing preference for empirically oriented social science courses and calls for improvements in teaching and course content to enhance quality.

For detailed information on **issue with higher education** [read this article here](#)

What is the current status of higher education?

- 1. Mismatch in Demand and Supply:** There's a significant imbalance between student aspirations and available higher education seats, leading to exclusions due to competition, financial constraints, and limited regional offerings.
- 2. Enrollment Growth:** According to the AISHE report, undergraduate enrollment increased by 4.1% from 2017-18 to 2021-22, with postgraduate enrollment up by 5.9%. Specifically, the Bachelor of Arts (BA) program saw a 15% rise in enrollment, often becoming a default option for many excluded students.

Why are students excluded from higher education?

- 1. Excessive Competition:** Top institutions have strict selection processes. For example, multiple filtering rounds in premier colleges limit opportunities.
- 2. Financial Constraints:** Private institutions have high fees, often unregulated, making them inaccessible. Public colleges also charge more due to reduced government funding.
- 3. Regional Disparities:** Some regions lack diverse courses. For instance, BA programs see a 15% increase, showing many students settle for generic options. This leads to a mismatch between student aspirations and available courses, affecting overall educational quality.

What trends are emerging in social sciences?

- 1. Increased Demand for Empirical Courses:** There's a growing preference for social science courses that focus on empirical analysis, like economics. This trend is driven by the higher employability of graduates from these courses compared to those from traditional subjects like anthropology or sociology.
- 2. Specialization and Policy Skills:** Courses that offer specialized policy intervention skills are becoming more popular, reflecting a shift towards problem-solving approaches similar to those in engineering.
- 3. Rise of Private Universities:** Private institutions are drawing students to less demanded courses by offering high-quality education, making subjects like sociology and political science more attractive to the affluent segment.

What should be done?

- 1. Increase Course Offerings:** Address the demand-supply mismatch by expanding the number and variety of courses, especially in less represented regions.
 - 2. Enhance Teaching Quality:** Prioritize improving teaching methods and course content.
 - 3. Reduce Financial Barriers:** Make education more affordable to decrease financial exclusion. Private institutions' high fees create significant access issues.
 - 4. Promote Balanced Development:** Encourage balanced growth in both public and private universities to ensure equal opportunities across different social science disciplines.
- Enhance the overall educational experience** to meet the needs of a changing society and economy.

Rising issue of Metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD)

Context: The article discusses the theme for International Fatty Liver Day, "Act Now, Screen Today" It highlights the rising issue of non-alcoholic fatty liver disease, now called Metabolic dysfunction-associated

steatotic liver disease (MASLD). It emphasizes the importance of early screening and personalized health checks to detect and manage liver disease before it progresses to severe stages.

For detailed information on **Global Hepatitis Report 2024** [read this article here](#)

What is the current status of fatty liver disease in India?

- 1. Prevalence:** MASLD affects 25-30% of people globally. In India, 38.6% of adults and 36% of obese children have fatty liver.
- 2. Linked Conditions:** High rates of MASLD are found in those with diabetes (55.5%-59.7%), obesity (64.6%-95%), and severe metabolic syndrome (73%).

What is Metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD)?

Definition: Metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD) is a reclassified name for non-alcoholic fatty liver disease. It is linked to metabolic health, cardiac health, and cancer risk.

Reasons

- a) MASLD is closely associated with metabolic syndrome, including obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, and abnormal cholesterol levels.
- b) High carbohydrate intake, especially refined carbs and sugars, leads to high insulin levels.
- c) Persistent high insulin levels cause insulin resistance, converting excess glucose into fatty acids stored in the liver.

What should be done?

- 1. Prioritize Early Screening:** Early detection through comprehensive health screenings is crucial to prevent advanced liver disease.
- 2. Incorporate Advanced Testing:** Use tools like vibration-controlled transient elastography for early detection of liver fibrosis, as it non-invasively measures liver stiffness, crucial for managing liver health effectively.
- 3. Customize Health Checks:** Personalize screening frequency and tests based on individual risk factors such as family history and lifestyle, recognizing the diversity in non-communicable disease presentation.
- 4. Promote Lifestyle Adjustments:** Encourage dietary modifications, regular physical activity, and effective weight management to mitigate liver disease risks, considering the high prevalence of MASLD in obese individuals (64.6%-95%).
- 5. Educate on the Importance of Screening:** Increase awareness that early stages of liver disease often present no symptoms, emphasizing the importance of regular health checks for early intervention.

Subject: International Relations

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

Successes and challenges in the India-U.S. relationship

Context: The article discusses the ups and downs in the relationship between India and the U.S. over the past year since Prime Minister Modi's visit to the U.S. It highlights the good progress in strategic areas but also points out disagreements and slow progress in some aspects, like multilateral cooperation and sensitive political issues.

For detailed information on **Recent Development in India-US Relations** [read this article here](#)

What has been successful in India-U.S. relations?

Strategic Trust and Agreements: Over the past decade, India and the U.S. have solidified their strategic trust, finalizing foundational agreements that enhance military cooperation and interoperability.

Military and Security Collaboration: The two countries have conducted numerous joint military exercises and coordinated maritime operations, demonstrating growing strategic alignment.

Reduction of Past Irritants: Historical issues such as concerns over Jammu and Kashmir and the relationship dynamics with Pakistan (de-hyphenation) have been effectively managed, smoothing bilateral relations.

Shared Global Perspectives: The collaboration extends to global platforms like the Quad, where both countries, along with Japan and Australia, address shared concerns about China's aggressive stance in the Indo-Pacific region.

Expanding Dialogues: India and the U.S. have expanded their dialogues to cover a wide range of areas, including climate change, green energy, critical and emerging technologies, and outer space, fostering comprehensive strategic ties.

What challenges remain in the India-U.S. relationship?

Differences over Russia's actions: The U.S. and India disagree on how to handle Russia's invasion of Ukraine. While the U.S. emphasizes international law and humanitarian issues, India considers the impact on global south countries, like disruptions in food and energy supplies.

Delayed high-level meetings: Logistical issues and the U.S.'s internal politics, such as the cancellation of planned visits by key U.S. officials due to the Gaza crisis and other scheduling conflicts, have slowed down cooperation within the Quad and other strategic initiatives.

Tensions over diplomatic comments: Critical comments from the U.S. State Department about India's state of democracy and religious freedom, along with U.S. Ambassador Eric Garcetti's remarks on Manipur and human rights, led to a diplomatic spat. In response, India summoned a senior U.S. diplomat.

Alleged assassination plot: The discovery of an alleged plot involving Indian security officials targeting a U.S. citizen has added a layer of distrust and complicated the bilateral relationship.

Way forward -India and the U.S. should focus on resolving diplomatic tensions by addressing concerns over democracy and alleged plots. They must also prioritize high-level meetings and strategic cooperation, like the initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET) review, to maintain momentum in their relationship,

despite internal and external challenges.

Issue with Meloni's Privatization Plan

Context: The article discusses Italy's hosting of the G7 summit, Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's Africa-centered development plan, and the contradiction in her government's privatization strategy. It criticizes the short-term approach, lack of innovation, and failure to honour Mattei's legacy.

For detailed information on **Significance of G7 summit** [read this article here](#)

What is the Mattei Plan?

- 1. The Mattei Plan** is an ambitious development initiative unveiled by Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, focusing on partnerships with African nations.
- 2. Named after Enrico Mattei**, the founder of Italian oil giant Eni, the plan draws inspiration from Mattei's 1950s policies, which disrupted the oil industry by offering more equitable profit-sharing agreements to developing countries.
- 3. Key Objectives:** The plan targets international development with a focus on energy, growth, and immigration.
- 4. Historical Context:** In the past, Mattei enabled developing economies to retain 75% of oil profits, contrasting with the less favorable terms from other oil companies.
- 5. Recent Unveiling:** This initiative was introduced at the Italy-Africa Summit earlier this year, reflecting a continuation of Italy's engagement with Africa.

What is the Issue with Meloni's Privatization Plan?

- 1. Focus on Short-Term Debt Reduction:** Giorgia Meloni's privatization plan aims to reduce Italy's public debt by selling shares of state-owned enterprises, like Eni, valued at €20 billion (\$21 billion). This strategy emphasizes immediate debt relief over sustainable economic growth.
- 2. Reduction in Research and Development:** Historical data shows that privatization leads to decreased investment in innovation. For example, after privatizing, Telecom Italia reduced its R&D spending from 2% of its revenues to just 0.4%.
- 3. Economic Short-Termism:** The plan reflects a broader trend of prioritizing short-term financial outcomes at the expense of long-term industrial strategy and economic health.

What are the Broader Implications of these Policies?

- 1. Impact on Industrial Strategy:** The lack of a coherent, mission-oriented industrial strategy hinders the development of sustainable industries and technological capabilities, as seen in the decline of strategic sectors post-privatization in the 1990s.
- 2. Global Trend of Austerity:** The adherence to outdated fiscal rules that prioritize asset sales over industrial innovation aligns with a broader global trend criticized by the IMF for not effectively reducing debt-to-GDP ratios and stifling economic growth.
- 3. Undermining Private Capital Influx:** The criticism of Meloni's plan suggests it misses the opportunity to use public investment as a tool to attract private capital, a mechanism known to stimulate economic growth when public investments are increased.

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

Significance of diplomatic resolution of India US trade dispute

News: Recently, a decade old trade dispute between India and the U.S. was resolved at the World Trade Organization (WTO). This dispute originated in 2012 when the U.S. challenged India's import restrictions on poultry products, imposed due to concerns over avian influenza.

What was the issue?

In this dispute, US alleged that India deviated from internationally recognized standards, by not providing scientific justification for restrictions.

Both the WTO panel and the Appellate Body ruled in favor of the U.S., stating that India's measures were inconsistent with WTO rules.

It required India to modify its measures. However, compliance issues prolonged the dispute until a recent diplomatic breakthrough led to its resolution.

The dispute was resolved diplomatically, leading to withdrawal of claims by both countries, from WTO.

As part of the settlement, India agreed to reduce tariffs on certain U.S. products like cranberries, blueberries, frozen turkey, and premium frozen duck meat.

What is the significance of this diplomatic resolution between India and US?

It showcases the effectiveness of bilateral negotiations in resolving trade disputes. The resolution of this dispute represents a major diplomatic achievement, particularly given its long duration and complexity.

WTO rules encourage countries to resolve disputes amicably, with litigation only to be pursued as a last resort.

The significance of diplomatic solutions increases, especially in the absence of a functional WTO Appellate Body.

By this agreement, India is able to avoid a \$450 million annual claim from the U.S., awarded by WTO to it. It showcases the ability of major trading partners to navigate complex domestic compulsions and find common ground, even on the most sensitive trade matters.

This milestone reinforces the growing significance of the India-U.S. partnership, particularly in the context of the recently launched Indo-Pacific Economic Framework.

Topic- Important International Institutions, agencies and fora - their Structure, Mandate.

Significance of upcoming G7 summit

News: After the beginning of his 3rd term, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's first international trip will be to attend the G7 summit in Fasano, Italy. This visit is crucial for revitalizing India's relations with Western nations, particularly the US and Europe.

The G7 summit, celebrating its 50th anniversary, occurs amidst growing global tensions, particularly between

the Western countries and the Sino-Russian alliance. Following the G7, Modi will also attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit in Kazakhstan to engage with Chinese and Russian leaders.

What is significance of upcoming global events like G7 for India?

- 1. Strengthening ties with west:** In the recent years, India has strengthened India's relationships with Western nations. The G7 summit provides an opportunity to further these ties amidst new global challenges.
 - 2. Electoral Validation:** Present government's re-election, with a reduced mandate, holds importance for Western democracies, alleviating some concerns about India's democratic trajectory.
 - 3. Enhanced Multilateral Engagement:** Active participation in forums like the G7 and SCO can help India address global issues such as climate change, trade, and security.
- Food and energy Security:** India will also have much interest in the discussion on food and energy security, a major item on the G7 agenda in Italy. In

What are the challenges and Opportunities for Indian Diplomacy

- 1. Navigating Global Tensions:** The G7 summit highlights the growing rift between Western countries and the Sino-Russian alliance, presenting diplomatic challenges for India. India must adeptly navigate these tensions to maintain its strategic interests.
- 2. Engagement with Adversaries:** PM Modi's participation in the SCO summit will involve direct engagement with Chinese and Russian leaders. Balancing these relationships while strengthening ties with the West is crucial.
- 3) Strategic Autonomy:** India needs to pursue a policy of strategic autonomy, maintaining independent relations with countries like Russia and China.

What should be done?

Balancing Act: India should strike a balance between relationships with competing global powers, avoiding over-reliance on any single bloc.

Domestic Reforms and Global Image: Addressing domestic concerns regarding democracy and human rights can enhance India's global standing and credibility.

GS Paper 3

Subject: Indian Economy

Topic- -mobilisation of resources, growth, development and employment

The risks associated with this rapid credit expansion

Context: The article discusses how rapid growth in lending in India is leading to financial instability. It warns that excessive borrowing, particularly by households, is creating a risky economic situation that could lead to a financial crisis similar to those experienced in other countries.

For detailed information on **Issues with credit system in India** [read this article here](#)

What is the current state of credit growth in India?

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1. India is experiencing rapid credit growth, particularly in the household sector, which is rising at an annual rate of 25% to 30%.
2. In 2023, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) praised India's financial sector for robust bank lending and low non-performing assets.
3. A review by the National Council of Applied Economic Research in March 2024 noted a 20% increase in bank lending from the previous year, with a significant rise in personal loans.
4. The surge in lending is primarily directed towards consumer spending rather than productive investments, contributing to economic vulnerabilities.

What are the risks associated with this rapid credit expansion?

1. **Financial Instability:** Rapid credit growth historically leads to financial crises. Previous booms ended when new loans couldn't cover old debts.
2. **Unsecured Borrowing:** Almost a quarter of household loans are unsecured, increasing financial system stress. Credit card debt surged from 20 million cards in 2011 to 100 million in 2024.
3. **Economic Contraction:** High debt burdens reduce household spending, leading to economic slowdown. Indian households' debt-service-to-income ratio is 12%, one of the highest globally.
4. **Inefficient Lending:** Financial institutions focus on consumer loans instead of productive investments. This can lead to economic downturns when consumer spending slows.
5. **Job Shortage:** The ongoing job crisis will worsen, pushing more people back to agriculture, reflecting deeper economic regression and increasing inequality.

What should be done?

1. **Improve financial regulation:** Strengthening oversight is necessary to prevent rogue behavior among financial institutions. The rise in unsecured loans, approaching a quarter of household loans, indicates a poorly regulated financial sector. Fintech companies have led the charge in offering high-interest loans to households, contributing to financial stress.
2. **Weaken the rupee:** A weaker exchange rate can boost exports, helping to cushion the economic downturn. Historical data shows that rapid credit growth and an overvalued exchange rate are a lethal combination.
3. **Focus on job creation:** Address the deep-rooted jobs deficit to ensure sustainable economic growth. Current policies have led to more workers returning to agriculture, highlighting the urgent need for job-rich growth.

How India should review and improve its trade policies to boost exports

Context: The article discusses how India should review and improve its trade policies to boost exports. It highlights the need to reduce high tariffs, join trade agreements, invest in human capital, and diversify export destinations to achieve sustainable growth and competitiveness.

For detailed information on **Boost to India's Export** [read this article here](#)

What is the Current State of India's Trade?

1. **Global Share:** India's contribution to global merchandise exports was only 1.8% in 2023.
2. **Comparison with Other Countries:** This is significantly lower than the shares of the US and China, which

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stood at 8.5% and 14.2% respectively.

3. Export Decline: In the fiscal year 2023-24, India's merchandise exports witnessed a decrease of 3.09%.

4. Services Sector: India is the seventh-largest exporter of services globally, showing resilience amid global economic fluctuations. Despite strengths, the growth rate of services exports fell to a three-year low of 4.9% in 2023-24.

Why Is Trade Important for India's Growth?

- 1. Boosts Aggregate Demand:** International trade drives aggregate demand, essential for rapid growth.
- 2. Reduces Dependence on Foreign Savings:** Higher exports decrease reliance on foreign savings.
- 3. Job Creation:** Expanding exports generates jobs for India's growing workforce.

What Are the Current Challenges in India's Trade Policy?

- 1. High Tariffs:** High tariffs reduce the competitiveness of domestic manufacturers, especially affecting small and medium enterprises.
- 2. Lack of Major Trade Agreements:** India is not part of significant trade agreements like the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), limiting its integration into global value chains.
- 3. Dependence on Chinese Imports:** Despite avoiding RCEP, India has not reduced its reliance on Chinese imports.
- 4. Regulatory Challenges:** New measures like the European Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism could restrict Indian exports further.

What should be done?

- 1. Address Climate Concerns:** Prepare for regulations like the European Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism to avoid restrictions on exports.
- 2. Invest in Human Capital:** Services exports rely on skilled workers. Significant investment in education, training, and research is needed. India saw a 60% increase in global capability centers from 2015-16 to 2022-23.
- 3. Diversify Export Destinations:** Reduce reliance on the US and Canada, which account for over half of India's services exports, to mitigate economic risks.

High food price despite slight decrease in inflation

Context: The article discusses how food prices in India, especially for vegetables and pulses, remained high last month despite a slight overall decrease in inflation. Prices for items like tomatoes, onions, and potatoes increased significantly both at retail and wholesale levels.

For detailed information on **Inflation in India- Reasons and Solutions** [read this article here](#)

What Is the Current Status of Retail Inflation?

Retail inflation eased to a 12-month low of 4.75% in May.

Food price inflation remains high at 8.69%, driven by vegetables and pulses.

Vegetable inflation stayed above 27% for six months, reaching 27.3% in May.

Prices for tomatoes, onions, and potatoes increased by 1.5%, 0.5%, and 15.1% respectively.

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Cereal prices rose, with rice up 13%, wheat 5.7%, and wheat flour 4.7% year-on-year. Pulse prices, including gram dal, tur, urad, and moong, increased by 17%, 27%, 13%, and 8.5% respectively.

What are the concerns related to inflation in India?

- 1. Urban Areas Hit Harder:** Urban consumers are experiencing higher food inflation, with a recent high of 8.83% in cities and towns.
- 2. Impact of Weather on Prices:** The India Meteorological Department noted a rainfall deficit of 12% since the start of June, which could influence future food prices, despite predictions of an 'above normal' monsoon.

The RBI Keeps interest rates unchanged

Context: The article discusses the Reserve Bank of India's decision to keep interest rates unchanged due to stable economic growth but persistent inflation. It also explores the influence of recent election results on monetary policy, despite official claims of central bank independence from politics.

For detailed information on **Monetary Policy Committee** [read this article here](#)

What was the decision of the RBI's Monetary Policy Committee?

1. The RBI's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) decided to keep interest rates unchanged for the eighth time.
2. The decision was influenced by strong GDP growth, estimated at 8.2% for 2023-24.
3. Inflation concerns persist, preventing a rate cut.
4. Two MPC members, Ashima Goyal and Jayanth Varma, called for a 25 basis points cut, but were outvoted.
5. The RBI focuses on withdrawing liquidity to stabilize inflation and support sustainable economic growth.

For detailed information on **Factors influencing RBI's monetary policy stand** [read this article here](#)

What challenges does the RBI face with fiscal policy?

- 1. Conflict of Roles:** RBI manages both monetary policy and government debt, which can conflict. For example, monetary policy might demand higher interest rates, while the government seeks to borrow at lower rates.
- 2. Fiscal Dominance:** Post-COVID-19, RBI kept interest rates low longer than warranted to support government borrowing. The RBI intervened to keep 10-year government securities yields below 6%, calling it a "public good."
- 3. Political Influence:** The recent Lok Sabha elections left the BJP without a majority, making it reliant on coalition partners. This political scenario could pressure the government to increase spending, affecting fiscal consolidation goals.

What are the future prospects for India's economy according to the RBI?

1. The RBI projects GDP growth for 2024-25 at 7.2%, higher than the previous 7% estimate.
2. Inflation remains a concern, as it hasn't stabilized at the 4% target.
3. The MPC has kept interest rates unchanged for the eighth consecutive time.
4. Governor Shaktikanta Das emphasizes that "sustained price stability" is crucial for high growth.

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

The container ship Dali crashed into the Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore, USA

Context: The article discusses a major accident where a ship called Dali hit a bridge in Baltimore, USA, causing deaths and massive damage. The ship was managed by an Indian company, and its crew was mostly Indian. There are concerns about the crew's actions leading to the accident.

What happened with the ship Dali?

1. On March 26, 2024, the container ship Dali collided with the Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore, USA.
2. The crash was one of the most high-profile maritime accidents in the U.S. since the Exxon Valdez oil spill in 1989.
3. The crash resulted in at least six fatalities and extensive damage worth millions of dollars.
4. The ship was managed by Synergy Maritime Group, a company with significant Indian leadership and operations.
5. Insurance experts predict the accident might lead to a record insurance payout, potentially surpassing the \$1.5 billion paid for the Costa Concordia disaster.
6. Early investigations suggested crew errors related to two onboard blackouts might have contributed to the crash.

What are the implications of this accident for India?

1. Indian seafarer **remittances contribute 15%** of India's foreign direct investment annually.
2. Synergy Maritime Group, managing the Dali, employs thousands of Indian seafarers. Concerns arise over potential negligence, which could harm the reputation of Indian seafarers. **Negative perceptions could impact employment opportunities** for Indian seafarers globally.
3. The involvement of Indian seafarers in the Dali accident brings attention to their training and certification processes, which are usually rigorous to ensure competent ship operations. The final report **may influence the global perception of Indian seafarers' competence and certification.**

What actions did the Indian government take?

1. **Impleaded as a Substantially Interested State:** The Indian government took swift action by impleading India as a Substantially Interested State under the Casualty Investigation Code of the International Maritime Organization. This allowed India to be directly involved in the investigation of the Dali accident.
2. **Participation in the Investigation:** Indian shipping officials were included as part of the on-site investigation team. This involvement ensured that India could monitor the investigative process closely.
3. **Review and Comment on the Final Report:** Before the release of the final report, Indian officials will have the opportunity to review and contest any findings that could potentially damage the reputation of Indian seafarers.

What did the U.S. government do?

1. **Presidential Praise:** U.S. President Joe Biden publicly praised the Indian seafarers on the Dali for their quick response in alerting the authorities after losing control of the ship, which helped mitigate further damage by enabling the immediate shutdown of the bridge.
2. **Reducing Tensions:** Biden's commendation was intended to counteract any potential anti-Indian

sentiments that might arise from the incident, reflecting a diplomatic effort to maintain good bilateral relations.

Solutions for better energy management

Context: The article discusses the problem of too many separate departments in the Indian government handling energy policies, which leads to inefficient and conflicting actions. It suggests merging departments, creating a single Ministry of Energy, and establishing groups to better coordinate efforts on climate transition.

For detailed information on **Challenges in India's current energy policy** [read this article here](#)

What is the current problem with government departments in India?

- 1. Multiple Departments with Conflicting Goals:** India's energy sector is fragmented across multiple departments with conflicting objectives. For instance, the Ministry of Coal promotes coal usage, whereas the Ministry of Renewable Energy advocates for reduced coal dependence. This misalignment affects coherent policy formulation.
- 2. Policy Incoherence:** The lack of a unified approach causes policy incoherence, complicating both domestic governance and international relations concerning energy transition and environmental commitments.

What are the proposed solutions for better energy management?

- 1. Rethink Departments:** Merge similar departments like the Ministry of Coal and the Department of Atomic Energy into two departments—one for carbon-based fuels and one for carbon-free fuels. This can streamline operations and reduce redundancy.
- 2. Unified Ministry of Energy:** Create a single Ministry of Energy that includes all energy-related departments. This ministry would have multiple departments headed by secretary-rank officers, led by one minister and one energy secretary. Although it simplifies the structure, some departmental issues may persist.
- 3. Group of Ministers for Climate Transition:** Form a Group of Ministers (GoM) to coordinate climate policies. This group should be chaired by the Finance Minister, supported by a technical secretariat composed of research organizations, to ensure informed decision-making.
- 4. Rethink Regulators:** Reevaluate the structure and role of regulators, who currently wield significant power by combining executive, legislative, and judicial functions. This is crucial for effective energy transition management.
- 5. Unified Parliamentary Standing Committee:** Establish a single Parliamentary Standing Committee on Energy Transition to consolidate the efforts of multiple committees. This committee should be supported by a group of research organizations to enhance its effectiveness and coherence.

How do other countries manage their energy policies?

Germany: The Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK) oversees energy transition policies.

France: The Ministry for the Ecological Transition focuses on climate change and energy policies.

Spain: The Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge handles energy transition.

Uruguay: Energy transition falls within the Ministry of Industry, Energy, and Mining.

Indonesia: The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources manages energy transition.

United States: John Podesta serves as the "climate czar," coordinating energy and climate policies.

Subject: Science & Technology

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

Recommendations for development of Artificial general intelligence in India

News: Artificial General Intelligence (AGI) is poised to revolutionize various sectors and potentially alter the global balance of power. This technology promises vast benefits but also poses significant risks.

Historically, technological advancements have been key to global dominance. The British Empire leveraged naval technology and the industrial revolution to establish its supremacy. Similarly, control over AGI could dictate future global power dynamics.

In 2017, Russian President Vladimir Putin highlighted the transformative potential of AI, predicting that the leader in AI technology would rule the world.

In March 2024, the Indian Cabinet approved the 'India AI Mission' with a funding of over ₹10,000 crore across five years. This initiative aims to develop AI infrastructure accessible to startups, academia, and industry, positioning India as a significant player in the global AI race.

What is Artificial General Intelligence (AGI)?

AGI refers to an AI system that can match or surpass human cognitive abilities to understand, learn, and apply knowledge across a wide range of tasks. It can reason, learn from experience, and solve novel problems.

AGI, unlike current AI systems which are designed for specific tasks, will possess general intelligence comparable to human cognitive abilities.

AGI can itself extend its abilities to solve any problem, including those it has not been specifically programmed for.

Read More – [Artificial General Intelligence](#)

Applications of AGI

In healthcare, AGI could monitor health metrics in real-time, predict potential issues, and provide customized care.

In urban management, it could optimize energy use and minimize waste.

AGI could also address **global challenges like climate change** through advanced predictive modelling.

What are the risks and challenges of AGI?

The development of AGI carries risks, including misuse in surveillance, autonomous weaponry, and significant economic disruptions.

AGI could radically transform job markets and economic structures.

Human nature tends to under-prepare for rare but catastrophic risks, which are not immediate. This tendency is known as the availability heuristic. Policymakers must proactively safeguard against AGI's potential threats.

What should India do to prepare for AGI Race?

Dedicated AI Department: India should establish a central authority for coordinating AI-related activities, akin to the urgency once applied to nuclear capabilities and space research. This department should set standards, guidelines, and drive AI policies aligned with national interests.

Data Democratization: To stimulate AI development, India should liberate and democratize access to vast datasets across public and private sectors. This approach will encourage robust AI models tailored to India's unique demographic and socio-economic landscape.

Strategic AI Ecosystem: Focus on developing an AI ecosystem for defense, drone technology, and cybersecurity. Support the creation of companies in these fields, similar to the US government's backing of Palantir and Israel's support of Elbit Systems.

AI Skilling Initiative: Launch a comprehensive initiative to train 50 million people in AI usage skills, with a focus on data literacy, AI ethics, and applications in various sectors. Additionally, it should aim to train 1 million individuals in advanced AI development skills.

Educational Partnerships: Forge partnerships with universities and technical institutes to integrate AI-focused curricula, launch specialized degree programs, and promote continuing education. Collaborate with online platforms to provide scalable access to courses and industry for practical training.

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

India's efforts to boost its space industry by involving private companies

Context: The article discusses how the retirement of NASA's Space Shuttle led to growth in the U.S. private space sector and compares it to India's current efforts to boost its space industry by involving private companies in producing rockets like the LVM3.

For detailed information on **Indian Space Policy 2023 and its significance** [read this article here](#)

What happened when NASA retired the Space Shuttle?

- 1. End of the Space Shuttle Program:** NASA retired the Space Shuttle in 2011, which had been used for 30 years to carry astronauts and satellites and to help build the International Space Station (ISS).
- 2. Lack of Immediate Replacement:** Initially, there was no direct substitute for the Space Shuttle, causing NASA to rely on Russia's Soyuz spacecraft for transporting astronauts to the ISS.
- 3. Rise of Private Sector:** The retirement opened opportunities for private companies like SpaceX. This shift resulted in the development of the Crew Dragon spacecraft, which launched from US soil in 2020, ending a nine-year gap in US crewed space launches.
- 4. Cost Reductions and Innovation:** The transition allowed NASA to focus on more ambitious missions and fostered innovation in the private sector, significantly reducing launch costs by 95% and enhancing spacecraft capabilities.

What is India doing in space?

1. Similar to the U.S., India is shifting some space responsibilities from its government space agency, ISRO, to private companies.
2. This includes making rockets like the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV), Small Satellite Launch Vehicle

(SSLV), and Launch Vehicle Mark-III (LVM3).

3. The goal is to make ISRO focus on more advanced projects like human spaceflight and a new generation of launch vehicles.

What impact could this have for India?

1. Enhancing Launch Capabilities: By involving private companies, ISRO aims to increase its annual production of LVM3 rockets from two to six. This increase is intended to meet the rising global demand for launch services.

2. Cost Reduction: By involving the private sector, India aims to reduce the costs associated with space missions, similar to how the U.S. reduced launch costs by 95% during the post-Space Shuttle era through innovations like reusable spacecraft.

3. Boost in Innovation: The transfer of LVM3 production to private companies is expected to spur innovation, leading to upgrades in rocket technology and making the space industry more competitive globally.

Subject: Environment

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

ITLOS advisory on marine pollution

Context: The article discusses the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) advisory opinion. It includes outlining states' obligations under UNCLOS to mitigate climate change, specifically by addressing marine pollution from greenhouse gas emissions. This opinion emphasizes the importance of taking necessary measures based on the best available science.

About COSIS:

1. Small Island States on Climate Change and International Law (COSIS) was established on the eve of COP 26 to develop international law on climate change.
2. COSIS membership is open to all members of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS).
3. The mandate of the Commission shall be to promote and contribute to the definition, implementation, and progressive development of rules and principles of international law concerning climate change.

What is the significance of the ITLOS advisory?

1. New Finding

ITLOS accepted a request from the Commission of Small Island States on Climate Change and International Law (COSIS).

ITLOS confirmed that human-released carbon dioxide is a pollutant under UNCLOS. This aligns with scientific findings that oceans absorb about a quarter of CO₂ emissions, causing acidification and temperature rise.

2. Legal Implication

ITLOS's opinion emphasized countries' obligations under Article 194(1) of UNCLOS to prevent marine pollution from greenhouse gases.

Measures should be based on the best available science and international agreements like the Paris Agreement.

For detailed information on **United Nations convention of the sea (UNCLOS)** [read this article here](#)

3. Standard for State Obligation

ITLOS described the obligations as due diligence but with a high standard due to serious risks. States must gradually reduce GHG emissions; immediate cessation is not required.

4. Collective Interest

The Opinion supports the principle that climate change is a collective interest, not just a bilateral issue. This approach adds a new chapter to international environmental law.

5. Other

The opinion's political significance is notable, despite lacking legal force.

The Netherlands Supreme Court's Urgenda case shows the need for concrete emission reduction targets, like reducing emissions by 25% below 1990 levels by 2020.

The ITLOS advisory opinion gains more attention due to upcoming ICJ proceedings on states' climate change obligations.

For detailed information on **international courts and climate change** [read this article here](#)

What are the limitations of the ITLOS opinion?

1. Lack of Concrete Methodology: ITLOS did not provide a clear method to assess state actions, unlike the detailed targets set in the Urgenda judgment by the Netherlands Supreme Court.

2. Equity Considerations: The opinion states measures depend on states' capabilities and available means, emphasizing fairness but potentially limiting strict action.

3. Advisory Nature: The opinion is advisory and not legally binding, limiting its direct influence on state actions but retaining political significance.

Subject: Internal Security

Topic- Security Challenges and their Management in Border Areas - Linkages of Organized Crime with Terrorism.

Implications of terror attack in Raesi

News: The Raesi attack on a bus full of pilgrims in Jammu & Kashmir (J&K), resulting in nine deaths and 33 injuries, underscores the persistent threat of Pakistan-sponsored terrorism in the region.

This incident occurred during a period of national celebration in India, highlighting the ongoing strategy of terrorist groups to exploit significant national events to convey their messages. The attack, claimed by The Resistance Front (a front for Lashkar-e-Taiba), signifies a renewed effort by Pakistan to destabilize J&K and challenge India's sovereignty.

India's security apparatus must adapt to the evolving tactics of terrorist groups. The focus should be on preventing future attacks and ensuring the safety of civilians, especially during major events.

What are the implications of the Reasi Attack?

1. Symbolic Timing:

The attack coincided with India's democratic celebrations, including the inauguration of the NDA government and the presence of a strong opposition, reflecting the terrorists' strategy to undermine such occasions. It conveys Pakistan's ongoing commitment to its "war by a thousand cuts" strategy in J&K.

2. Message of Persistence:

The attack is intended to show that despite a reduction in the strength of terrorist groups, Pakistan remains invested in its J&K strategy. It aims to prevent the perception that the J&K issue has been resolved in favor of India.

What should be done?

Strengthening Local Governance:

Conducting assembly polls in J&K should not be delayed as it symbolizes India's clear intent and commitment to democratic processes.

Empowering local governance can help address the root causes of unrest and reduce the appeal of extremist ideologies.

Comprehensive Counter-Terrorism Strategy:

Developing a comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy that includes military, political, and socio-economic dimensions.

Engaging local communities in counter-terrorism efforts and promoting development and integration of J&K into the national mainstream.

Enhanced Security Measures:

Redoubling security efforts, particularly in vulnerable areas and during significant national events, is crucial. This includes better intelligence, surveillance, and quick response mechanisms to thwart potential attacks.

Diplomatic Pressure:

India must continue to apply diplomatic pressure on Pakistan to curb its support for terrorist activities. Engaging international allies and organizations to hold Pakistan accountable for its actions in J&K is essential.

Topic - Various Security forces and agencies and their mandate

Different view on India's new carrier IAC-2

Context: The article discusses the Indian Navy's progress towards acquiring a third aircraft carrier. Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL) will soon start constructing the Vikrant-class IAC-2. This new carrier aims to maintain naval capabilities and avoid losing shipbuilding expertise.

For detailed information on **Significance of aircraft carrier** [read this article here](#)

Why India needs new aircraft carrier?

- 1. Strategic Deployment:** Fulfill the Navy's requirement for one carrier for each seaboard and one in reserve, supporting INS Vikramaditya and INS Vikrant.
- 2. Avoid High Costs of Skill Revival:** Learn from the costly revival of submarine-building expertise at Mazagaon Dock Shipbuilders after a 10-year gap (1995- 2025), which was necessary due to the unresolved corruption scandal with German submarines.
- 3. Counter A2/AD Threats:** Address the increasing anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) capabilities developed by China and Pakistan, which pose significant threats to carrier operations.
- 4. Indigenisation of Shipbuilding:** The IAC-2 will have more local content and upgrades compared to IAC-1 Vikrant, promoting self-reliance and strengthening India's domestic shipbuilding industry.

What are the different views on India's new aircraft carrier?

- 1. High-Cost Concern:** The new carrier's estimated cost of around \$5-6 billion is seen as a major financial burden.
- 2. Operational Efficacy:** The carrier's operational effectiveness is questioned due to the advanced anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) capabilities of China and Pakistan.
- 3. Alternative Strategies:** The Navy is divided on whether to pursue a 'sea denial' strategy using submarines or a 'sea control' approach with carrier battle groups. Submarines are seen as cheaper and less vulnerable.
- 4. Resource Allocation:** Critics argue that resources should instead address shortages in critical areas like submarines, corvettes, mine-sweepers, destroyers, frigates, naval utility helicopters, UAVs, and other ordnance.
- 5. Air Force Perspective:** The Indian Air Force (IAF) believes land-based fighters like the Jaguar IM and Su-30MKI, equipped with advanced maritime strike capabilities, offer a more cost-effective and secure solution than carriers.

India's response to China's PLA reforms

Context: The article discusses China's military reforms, focusing on the PLA's Western Theater Command (WTC). It highlights the WTC's combat training, air superiority efforts, and transportation capabilities in harsh terrains. India needs to assess and counter these developments.

What is the China's PLA recent reforms?

- 1. Joint Network-Centric Force:** Since 2015, China's PLA has been focusing on integrating its services, arms, and systems into a joint, network-centric force tailored for the Information Age. This includes training and operational strategies that reflect modern warfare technologies and tactics.

2. Combat Training and Simulations: The PLA heavily invests in realistic combat training and simulations to improve their readiness. For instance, in August 2018, an anti-aircraft artillery unit from the Xinjiang Military District conducted a live-fire exercise in the Tian Shan mountains to test and refine their integrated combat capabilities.

3. Air Superiority and Transportation: Building air superiority is a central focus, demonstrated by their continued development of air defense systems and the introduction of advanced aircraft like the Xi'an Y-20 "Kunpeng." This aircraft enhances their capability to quickly transport essential supplies to troops stationed in remote high-altitude areas.

How is India Responding?

1. Integrated Theatre Commands (ITCs): India is working towards creating ITCs to promote joint military culture, not service-specific culture. This is seen as a response to the PLA's jointness efforts.

2. Defense Minister's Priority: Rajnath Singh, re-appointed as defense minister, prioritizes military modernization and ITCs creation. He acknowledges that theaterization in some countries has taken over two decades, indicating a long-term approach for India.

3. Chief of Defence Staff's Role: General Anil Chauhan positions ITCs as essential for India's combat preparedness, mirroring the PLA's jointness efforts.

4. Air Defence Investments: India invests in Very Short-Range Air Defence Systems (VSHORADS) and Man-Portable Air Defence Systems (MANPADS) to bolster its Army Air Defence capabilities.

5. Aerial Superiority: As of 2020, Indian fighter jets outnumber Chinese jets 250 to 157, underscoring India's emphasis on aerial dominance.

For detailed information on **India's Defence Modernisation** read [Article 1](#), [Article 2](#)

Subject: Disaster Management

Topic- Disaster and Disaster Management.

Arguments for and against recognizing heatwaves as a disaster under India's Disaster Management Act

Context: The article discusses the debate over classifying heatwaves as a recognized disaster under India's Disaster Management Act. This change would allow states to use specific disaster funds for heatwave management. Currently, heatwaves aren't included, leading to funding and resource challenges for states.

For detailed information on **Disaster Management Act 2005** [read this article here](#)

What are Notified Disasters?

1. Notified disasters are specific disasters recognized under the Disaster Management (DM) Act, 2005. The DM Act was created after the 1999 Odisha super-cyclone and the 2004 tsunami.
2. It defines disasters as events causing substantial loss of life, property, or environmental damage beyond the community's coping capacity.
3. Recognized disasters allow states to use the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) and State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF). In 2023-24, only two states drew money from the NDRF.

For detailed information on **National Disaster Response Fund** [read this article here](#)

What are the arguments for recognizing heatwaves as a disaster under India's Disaster Management Act?

- 1. Increasing Frequency and Severity:** Over the last 15 years, heatwaves have become more severe and frequent, posing greater risks to public health and safety. The rising number of heat-related illnesses and deaths, especially among those who work outdoors, underscores the need for heatwaves to be recognized as disasters.
- 2. Improved Disaster Response Funding:** Recognition would allow states to use funds from the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) and potentially the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) for heatwave management, including financing Heat Action Plans (HAPs). These plans involve creating shaded spaces, ensuring water availability, and adjusting work and school schedules to mitigate heatwave impacts.

For detailed information on **Heat Action Plan** [read this article here](#)

What are the arguments against recognizing heatwaves as a disaster under India's Disaster Management Act?

- 1. Financial Constraints:** Recognizing heatwaves as a national disaster could significantly increase financial burdens. The 15th Finance Commission expressed that the existing list of notified disasters covers the needs of the states to a large extent, suggesting that the financial implications of adding heatwaves could be substantial.
- 2. Compensation Costs:** Official recognition would require the government to compensate for heatwave-related fatalities and injuries. This year alone, more than 500 heat-related deaths have been reported, and official recognition could lead to higher compensation costs.
- 3. Attribution Challenges:** Determining if a death was directly caused by a heatwave is complex, as heat often exacerbates pre-existing conditions rather than being the sole cause, making direct attribution difficult.
- 4. Existing Provisions for Local Disasters:** The enabling provision by the preceding Finance Commission allows states to use up to 10% of their State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) for local disasters like heatwaves. States such as Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, and Kerala have already designated heatwaves as local disasters, utilizing this provision for management and relief, which may reduce the urgency for national recognition.