

9 PM Current Affairs Monthly Compilation

For UPSC CSE mains examination



September
2024

Features :

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

INDEX

Strategies to address income inequality	5
Prohibition of Child Marriage (Himachal Pradesh Amendment) Bill, 2024	6
Severe humanitarian crisis in Sudan	7
India's role in its neighboring countries' political developments	8
Issue of long judicial delays in India.....	9
The upcoming Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC)	10
Singapore holds great significance for India.....	11
India's role in shaping global AI governance	12
Global inequality is rising.....	14
Challenges in Implementing the PM-ABHIM and HRHME Initiatives.....	14
Partnerships with Africa can help secure India's Critical Mineral Mission.....	15
"Development Compact" Proposed by India	16
India's challenges in dealing with China and neighboring countries.....	18
Traditional corporate strategies and governance are insufficient to handle AI's complexities and uncertainties.....	19
New scheme to help farmers move away from paddy cultivation	20
State of R&D Spending in India	21
Concerns related to the Disaster Management (Amendment) Bill, 2024	22
Monsoon Affected Agricultural Policies	23
Indian agriculture can drive growth and create jobs	24
World Bank's growth forecast for India	25
Technological progress affected labour income	26
Challenges of high debt-GDP ratios	27
Impact of Tourism and urbanization on Kashmir's environment	28
Significance of India's PM recent visit to Brunei and Singapore	29
India's Push for Local Manufacturing: Balancing Chinese Dominance and Domestic Growth.....	30
Role of Citizen Stack.....	32
Success of the Swachh Bharat Mission.....	33
India's potential role in peace diplomacy for Ukraine.....	34
Growing threat of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) due to antibiotic misuse and pollution	36
Ovarian cancer, known as a "silent killer"	37
On ANI Vs Wikipedia Case	38
India's efforts to eliminate sickle cell disease by 2047.....	40
China's extreme decentralization has led to overcapacity and wasteful investment	41

9 PM Compilation September 2024

Current Economic Divide Between Indian States	42
Factor contributed to India's economic growth	44
Supreme Court of India Moves to Curb Extra-Legal Demolitions.....	45
Dissolution of Standing Committee on Statistics (SCoS)	46
Whether India should introduce a Universal Basic Income (UBI)	48
Free AI-powered primary-care physician for every Indian.....	49
Drowning is a major issue in India	51
The struggles of transgender individuals	52
Issues in India's infrastructure projects	53
India's Mission Mausam.....	54
Concerns about manpower shortages in Indian Railways	55
Judicial view on Arvind Kejriwal's arrest	57
Challenges faced by the Urban Policy Framework in India	57
Benefits of District Mineral Foundations (DMFs)	59
Modi 3.0 Prioritizes Agriculture and Rural Development for Economic Growth	60
India's use of competitive bidding in the electricity sector	61
Implications of digital campaigning by political parties	62
Climate Justice for future generations.....	63
Issues with Project Cheetah.....	65
Constitution allows the central government to intervene in state affairs during emergencies	66
Concerns with India's surrogacy laws.....	68
Women in Indian medicine	69
Issues with the death sentence in India	70
India's economic growth shaped by its demographics	72
Biden influenced the India-US relationship	73
Extension of the Ayushman Bharat scheme	75
Concern with One Nation, One Election.....	76
Concern with One Nation, One Election.....	78
Bangladesh seeking Sheikh Hasina's extradition	79
Opposition-ruled States asking for a higher share of taxes	81
Fourth Quad summit.....	82
Concerns related to India's new criminal laws.....	84
Malaysian PM Anwar Ibrahim's praise of India's role in the Global South	85
Challenges in the Russia-Ukraine war	86
Debates on whether children should be banned from social media	88

9 PM Compilation September 2024

US Federal Reserve cut interest rates	89
Courts are prioritizing Article 21's protection of life and liberty	90
The dangers of combining cyber and physical attacks.....	91
Boosting India's Dairy Sector with White Revolution 2.0	93
India demanding a renegotiation of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT)	94
Impact of U.S. Federal Reserve interest rate cut on emerging economies.....	95
India Need a National Security Strategy (NSS).....	96
Concerns about using GST data for GDP estimates.....	98
New Threats are Emerging in Aviation Safety	99
Thalinomics Vs Cost of Healthy Diet (CoHD) for measuring nutrition needs	100
Importance of the Joint Commanders' Conference (JCC).....	101
Future of the GST compensation cess	103
Movement against patriarchy in Kerala.....	104
Challenges in India's "Neighbourhood First" policy in 2024.....	105
Importance of India's investment in metro rail systems.....	107
Legal Framework in India Regarding Defence Exports.....	108
Risks of Increasing Chinese FDI in India	110
Benefits of the National Credit Framework (NCrF).....	111
India needs to adopt cross-border insolvency laws.....	113
Supreme Court rule about accessing child sexual material.....	114
India's technology diplomacy.....	115
Main pollution issues in India	117
Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)	118
Issue with China's Export Restrictions	119
Issues with Climate Predictions.....	121
Contrasting trends in job growth and unemployment.....	122
Current State of India-US Relations	123
Concerns About the Police encounter in Thane	124
India's legal provisions for handling FDI and international trade on national security grounds	125
Indian Oil Companies' Dividend Income Stuck in Russia	126
Supreme Court of India warned judges against making biased or sexist comments.....	127
Challenges and opportunities facing the Self-Respect Movement today	128
Russia shifts its trade focus from Europe to Asia.....	130
Technological Solutions Alone Are Not Enough to Address Land Governance Challenges in India	131
Challenges in disciplining constitutional court judges	133

9 PM Compilation September 2024

Importance of vigilant drug regulation	134
Global governance challenges highlighted by the Summit of the Future	135
Need to revise international carbon finance standards	137
Causes of Food Loss and Waste (FLW) in India	138
Reasons for Ghee Adulterated in India	139
Reasons for the shortage of donated cadavers in India	140

Strategies to address income inequality

Source: The post strategies to address income inequality has been created, based on the article “**Take on the challenge of rising income inequality**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 4th August 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS paper1 – Poverty and Developmental issues

Context: The article talks about strategies to address income inequality. It suggests progressive taxation, better education, fair labor laws, infrastructure investment, and encouraging the super-rich to contribute. It also highlights local development, decentralization, and the importance of inclusivity and sustainability.

For detailed information on **Income and Wealth Inequality in India** [read this article here](#)

What are the strategies to address income inequality?

1. **Progressive Taxation:** Implement progressive tax systems where the wealthy pay a higher rate, reallocating resources to fund essential public services that benefit the less privileged.
2. **Education and Skill Development:** Increase access to quality education and lifelong learning opportunities to enhance employability and income prospects.
3. **Fair Labor Laws:** Enforce labor laws that guarantee minimum wages, safe working conditions, and rights to collective bargaining to protect workers from exploitation.
4. **Investment in Infrastructure:** Focus on building infrastructure that supports environmental sustainability and economic inclusivity, reducing regional disparities.
5. **Philanthropy of the Super Rich:** Encourage the wealthy to donate a portion of their wealth to public causes, inspired by initiatives like the Giving Pledge, which has seen over 235 billionaires pledge \$600 billion.

Why is decentralisation important for India?

1. Decentralisation promotes local employment and prosperity by focusing on local needs, talent, and resources.
2. India has 800 districts, each with unique climate, resources, and capabilities, which can develop into 800 production hubs.
3. These districts can use digital platforms for supply chains, logistics, and markets, promoting growth across the country.
4. Banks should prioritize small loans to SMEs, encouraging local innovations and production.
5. Decentralisation aligns with the Gandhian model of development, emphasizing local production and self-sufficiency for a sustainable and inclusive economic future.

How Can Future Jobs Be Created?

- In an AI-dominated world, jobs will still come from sectors like food, education, health services, tourism, and manufacturing.
- India's young talent can meet global workforce demands, but a new economic model focused on decentralisation and inclusivity is needed for sustained growth.

Question for practice:

Examine how decentralization and progressive taxation can help address income inequality in India.

Prohibition of Child Marriage (Himachal Pradesh Amendment) Bill, 2024

Source: The post prohibition of child marriage (Himachal Pradesh Amendment) Bill, 2024 been created, based on the article “**Why has H.P. raised the marriageable age for women?**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 5th August 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS paper1- society- child marriage

Context: The article discusses a new Himachal Pradesh Bill that raises the minimum marriageable age for women from 18 to 21. It aims to promote gender equality and women’s welfare. The Bill requires the President’s approval due to conflicting national laws.

For detailed information on **Raising the legal age of marriage for women** [read this article here](#)

What are the Key Provisions of this Bill?

- **Redefining “Child”:** The Bill redefines a “child” as anyone under 21, regardless of gender.
- **Extended Petition Period:** It increases the time for filing annulment petitions to five years, up from two, allowing individuals more time to contest marriages entered into as minors.

What are the Reasons for Passing this Bill?

1. **Gender Equality:** The Bill removes the distinction between men and women by setting a uniform marriageable age of 21.
2. **Women’s Welfare:** The government sees the Bill as a progressive step to empower women and improve their health by reducing early pregnancies and motherhood.
3. **Education and Opportunities:** By delaying marriage, the Bill aims to prevent early marriages that obstruct girls’ education and future potential.

What are the Implications of this Bill?

1. **Legal Implications:** The Bill introduces a conflicting marriageable age with the national law (Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006), which defines the minimum marriage age for women as 18. Since marriage laws fall under the Concurrent List (Entry 5), this discrepancy requires the President’s assent (Article 254) to give the state law precedence over the central law within Himachal Pradesh.
2. **Concerns:** Critics argue that raising the age could lead to increased criminal prosecutions, especially involving parental control over daughters’ marriage choices. Historical data shows that child marriage laws have often been used by parents against eloping daughters, raising concerns about how the new law might intensify such cases.
3. Previous bodies like the 2008 Law Commission and the National Human Rights Commission in 2018 recommended a uniform marriageable age of 18 for both men and women, diverging from this Bill’s approach.

Question for practice:

Examine the implications of the Himachal Pradesh Bill raising the marriageable age for women to 21 in relation to the national law.

Severe humanitarian crisis in Sudan

Source: The post severe humanitarian crisis in Sudan has been created, based on the article “A crisis in WANA that no one talks about” published in “The Hindu” on 2nd August 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 2- international relation- Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India’s interests

Context: The article discusses the severe humanitarian crisis in Sudan due to a conflict between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Force (RSF). It highlights the devastating impact on the population, foreign involvement, and India’s interests in Sudan.

For detailed information on **Sudan conflict** [read this article here](#)

What is the Current Situation in Sudan?

1. In 2023, Sudan experienced a violent conflict between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF), led by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, and the Rapid Support Force (RSF), led by General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo.
2. This conflict resulted in approximately 150,000 deaths and displaced nearly 10 million people, a fifth of the country’s population.
3. This situation is worse than the crisis in Gaza, with Sudan now facing potential famine and epidemics like cholera.

What is the History of Conflict in Sudan?

1. Sudan has a history of conflict and misgovernance since its independence in 1956, including 15 military coups and two civil wars.
2. The RSF, originally known as the Janjaweed militia, has been involved in long-term conflict in Darfur, leading to over 200,000 deaths and displacing two million people.
3. The current crisis began after the military ousted dictator Omar Hassan al-Bashir in 2019, with subsequent failed attempts at creating a stable civilian-military government.

What is the Role of Foreign Interests?

1. Foreign countries have taken sides in Sudan’s conflict for strategic and financial reasons.
2. Egypt and Iran support the SAF, while the UAE and Russia’s Wagner group back the RSF.
3. Sudan’s resources, such as crude oil, gold, and fertile land, have drawn foreign interest.
4. Despite international efforts, including from Saudi Arabia and the U.S., to mediate a ceasefire, the conflict continues.

What are India’s Interests in Sudan?

- India has significant stakes in Sudan. In 2022-23, India’s direct trade with Sudan was \$2,034 million, mostly in India’s favor.
- India also made its first major investment abroad in Sudan, worth nearly \$2.3 billion. Additionally, India has committed nearly \$700 million in lines of credit to Sudan.
- The ongoing conflict threatens these interests and could revive Islamic militancy, posing further risks to India

Question for practice:

Discuss the impact of the Sudan conflict on India’s economic and strategic interests in the region.

India's role in its neighboring countries' political developments

Source: The post India's role in its neighboring countries' political developments has been created, based on the article "India's neighbourhood watch, past and present" published in "The Hindu" on 2nd August 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 2- international relation- India and its neighbourhood- relations.

Context: The article discusses India's role in its neighboring countries' political developments, the challenges it faces due to recent upheavals, and the need for India to maintain consistent engagement with these nations to protect its interests.

For detailed information on **India's relationship with its neighboring countries** [read this article here](#)

What was India's role in promoting democracy in its neighborhood between 2008-2010?

1. Between 2008-2010, India played a pivotal role in supporting democratic transitions in its neighborhood.
2. In Bangladesh, India supported the 2008 elections, which brought Sheikh Hasina to power, and contributed to a stable partnership for 15 years.
3. India's sustained engagement in Sri Lanka contributed to the defeat of the LTTE in 2009, strengthening ties with a unified Sri Lanka.
4. In the Maldives, India backed the first multi-party elections in 2008, leading to Mohamed Nasheed's presidency.
5. India extended significant development assistance, including a \$1 billion line of credit to Bangladesh and rebuilding efforts in Sri Lanka.

What has changed in India's neighborhood by 2024?

1. **Bangladesh:** In August 2024, Sheikh Hasina's government collapsed due to democratic deficits, an economic downturn, and violent suppression of protests. This ended a 15-year partnership with India.
2. **Sri Lanka:** In 2022, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa fled amidst mass protests. Sri Lanka's economy and democracy were severely impacted, despite India's \$4 billion bailout.
3. **Maldives:** In 2024, President Mohamed Muizzu won unexpectedly, highlighting India's lack of engagement with him earlier.
4. **Myanmar:** In 2021, the military took over again, reversing democratic gains. The situation is worsening, with the conflict spilling over into India's northeast.
5. **Afghanistan:** The Taliban captured power in 2021, turning the clock back after two decades.
6. **Pakistan:** In 2022, the civilian government was toppled, seen as a move by the military.

How has India responded to these changes?

1. India's responses have varied. In Sri Lanka, India provided a \$4 billion bailout package during its economic crisis.
2. Despite initial missteps, India is now engaging with the new Maldivian government. India has cautiously interacted with the Taliban to protect its interests in Afghanistan.
3. However, India faces challenges in Myanmar, where it must balance its relationship with the military and the Opposition.
4. In Bangladesh, India needs to rebuild ties with various political parties.

What is India's strategy moving forward?

- a) India needs more sustained engagement with its neighbors. In Myanmar and Bangladesh, India must support forces that keep democratic spaces open. In Myanmar, this includes working with ethnic groups. In Bangladesh, India should build new understandings with different political parties.

9 PM Compilation September 2024

- b) Developmental support remains a key tool for fostering closer relations with these nations, as shown by past successes in Afghanistan, where even the Taliban avoided attacking Indian projects due to their benefits for the people.
- c) **Adapting to Change:** India should remain flexible, as shown by its engagement with the new Maldivian government after the unexpected election results in 2024.

Question for practice:

Examine how India's strategy of promoting democracy in its neighborhood has evolved in response to political upheavals between 2008 and 2024.

Issue of long judicial delays in India

Source: The post issue of long judicial delays in India has been created, based on the article "**Express View on judicial delays: Time for reform**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 3rd August 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Polity- Judiciary

Context: The article discusses the issue of long judicial delays in India, highlighted by President Droupadi Murmu. It emphasizes the need for reforms to address these delays, which strain citizens, by balancing the speed of justice with maintaining its integrity.

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

What Did President Droupadi Murmu Say About Judicial Delays?

1. President Droupadi Murmu discussed the problem of judicial delays at a **National Conference of the District Judiciary**.
2. She called it the "**Black Coat Syndrome**," referring to the financial and mental strain that people, especially the poor, face when dealing with prolonged court cases.
3. She questioned how long a case should take, mentioning examples of cases taking decades.

What are the Reasons for Judicial Delays?

1. **Prolonged Case Durations:** Cases can take decades to resolve, like the 32-year delay in the Ajmer POCSO case.
2. **Litigation Fatigue:** People withdraw cases due to repeated court appearances, as seen in the Delhi High Court case.
3. **Overburdened System:** According to the **National Judicial Data Grid**, over five crore cases are pending at different levels of the judicial system.
4. **Shortage of Judges:** India has only 15 judges per 10 lakh people, far below the 50 judges per 10 lakh people recommended by the Law Commission in 1987.
5. **Lack of Support Staff:** Insufficient staff hampers timely court functions.
6. **Ineffective Reforms:** Measures like e-filing and Lok Adalats have not significantly reduced delays.

What Steps Have Been Taken to Address This Issue?

1. **Addition of Courtrooms:** More courtrooms have been added to manage the increasing caseload, but the impact has been minimal.
2. **Updated E-filing System:** An updated e-filing system has been introduced to streamline case filings, yet delays persist.
3. **Pre-litigation Dispute Resolution:** Strategies like Lok Adalats have been used to resolve disputes before they reach the courts.

What Should be Done?

- A long-term plan is needed to address judicial delays without compromising the integrity of the justice system.
- The Chief Justice of India (CJI) outlined a three-stage plan to tackle this issue.
- The demand for faster justice has increased, especially after recent cases of violence against women.
- However, any reforms must balance the need for speed with ensuring justice is properly served.

Question for practice:

Discuss the reasons for judicial delays in India and the steps that have been taken to address these issues.

The upcoming Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC)

Source: The post the upcoming Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) has been created, based on the article “Dealings at a China-Africa forum that India must track” published in “The Hindu” on 3rd August 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- international relations- Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India’s interests

Context: The article discusses the upcoming Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) and Africa’s need for better strategic planning and negotiation. It highlights African priorities, including trade, agriculture, and debt issues. It also suggests lessons India can learn from Africa’s approach to China for its own engagement with the continent.

For detailed information on **A new chapter in India-Africa ties** [read this article here](#)

What is the Current Context of FOCAC 2024?

1. The ninth Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) is set for September 4-6, 2024, in Beijing.
2. African nations are dealing with high inflation, currency depreciation, and a heavy debt burden.
3. Geopolitical challenges include the Israel-Hamas and Russia-Ukraine wars, and Houthi attacks on commercial shipping in the Mediterranean.
4. African leaders feel “summit fatigue” after recent Africa+1 summits with Türkiye, Russia, South Korea, and the U.S.
5. Adopting the Banjul format (15 countries plus the African Union Commission) is suggested for better management.
6. The effectiveness of FOCAC depends on Africa’s ability to set the agenda and take ownership of its strategic planning.

What are the Priorities for Africa at FOCAC 2024?

1. **Trade Expansion:** Africa aims to increase exports to China. As of July 2024, China-Africa trade reached \$167 billion, with African exports at \$69 billion. However, most exports are raw materials.
2. **Agricultural Development:** Africa needs to build a sustainable agriculture sector. China and India can help with crops, fertilizers, and tools suited for African conditions. Processing agricultural products locally is also crucial.
3. **Green Energy and Industrialization:** Africa seeks to establish refining and processing hubs. Zimbabwe, for example, requires Chinese companies to refine lithium locally. However, electricity shortages and environmental issues are challenges.
4. **Debt Management:** Addressing debt sustainability is key. China accounts for 12% of Africa’s public and private debt. African countries need transparency and better negotiation strategies.

5. **Strategic Engagement:** Africa must develop a coherent strategy and harmonize positions before the FOCAC summit to drive the agenda effectively.

What is China's Role in African Debt?

1. China's loans to African governments and institutions totaled \$170 billion between 2000-2022.
2. Chinese lenders hold 12% of Africa's public and private debt, making them a significant but not the main creditor.
3. A 2022 AidData study shows half of Chinese loans to sub-Saharan Africa are not disclosed in sovereign debt records, raising concerns about transparency.
4. China is unlikely to forgive large debts but may write off small, interest-free loans.
5. Despite the disputed narrative of "debt trap diplomacy," some Chinese lending practices require closer scrutiny.

What Lessons Can India Learn from Africa's Engagement with China?

- **Continuity in Engagement:** India should maintain regular dialogues with Africa, similar to how FOCAC is a recurring event. The last India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS) was in 2015, so IAFS-IV should be held soon to maintain momentum.
- **Industrial Support:** India can help integrate African economies into global value chains by investing in agriculture, pharmaceuticals, and manufacturing. Indian companies should focus on farm mechanization, food processing, and cold storage to create jobs and reduce food wastage.
- **Innovative Financing:** Africa's caution about new loans post-COVID-19 underlines the need for innovative financing methods. India could employ mechanisms like public-private partnerships and blended finance to assist African projects without increasing debt burdens.
- **Digital Tools for Connectivity:** Using digital technologies like UPI, which have been successful in Mauritius, can enhance financial transactions and connectivity between India and African nations, potentially extending to more countries in Africa.

Question for practice:

Examine how Africa's strategic priorities at FOCAC 2024 reflect its current economic and geopolitical challenges.

Singapore holds great significance for India

Source: The post Singapore holds great significance for India has been created, based on the article "PM Modi in Singapore: A partner in India's growth story" published in "Indian Express" on 4th August 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS paper2-international relations-Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests

Context: The article discusses the strong and growing relationship between India and Singapore. It highlights high-level meetings, expanding areas of cooperation like digitalization and healthcare, and Singapore's key role in trade and investment. The article also notes the historical and strategic dimensions of their partnership.

For detailed information on **India and Singapore are strengthening their economic and trade relationships** [read this article here](#)

How significant is Singapore for India?

1. **Prime Trade and Investment Partner:** Singapore is India's largest trading partner within the ASEAN group and ranks sixth globally. This emphasizes its critical role in India's international trade dynamics.

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2. **Top Source of FDI:** Singapore stands as the primary source of foreign direct investment (FDI) into India, highlighting its significance in fueling India's economic sectors.
3. **Cultural and Educational Ties:** Singapore houses the most significant number of IIT and IIM alumni outside India, demonstrating deep educational and professional connections that foster continuous intellectual and cultural exchange.
4. **Strategic Regional Influence:** Through initiatives like India's "Look East" and "Act East" policies, Singapore has facilitated India's deeper engagement with ASEAN. This strategic partnership helps India address regional challenges, especially with issues related to Myanmar, acting as a bridge between South and Southeast Asia.
5. **Defense and Maritime Collaboration:** The defense and maritime relationships have grown, influenced by regional security dynamics, including the rise of China. This has led to both countries facing new strategic challenges and opportunities in the Indo-Pacific, stressing the importance of their partnership in regional stability and security frameworks like QUAD.

How Do Economic Realities Affect the Partnership?

- The relationship is also shaped by economic realities, including potential shifts like Chinese FDI into India.
- Singapore's success as a trading and investment hub offers lessons for India, highlighting the need for regulatory improvements to fully leverage this partnership.

Question for practice:

Discuss how Singapore's role as a prime trade and investment partner contributes to strengthening its relationship with India.

India's role in shaping global AI governance

Source: The post India's role in shaping global AI governance has been created, based on the article "A discourse on AI governance that India must shape" published in "The Hindu" on 4th August 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS paper 3- Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.

Context: The article discusses India's role in shaping global AI governance at the upcoming UN Summit of the Future. It highlights geopolitical tensions between the U.S. and China, and India's opportunity to advocate for equitable AI access and representation for the Global South.

For detailed information on **Regulation of AI** [read this article here](#)

What is the Summit of the Future?

1. The Summit of the Future (September 2024) will gather world leaders to discuss the Global Digital Compact (GDC) under the United Nations.
2. The GDC aims to address the digital divide, advance Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and create an inclusive digital environment.
3. It also focuses on strengthening international governance for AI to align with human rights and values.

How is AI governance shaping geopolitical contestation?

The UN General Assembly adopted two AI-related resolutions led by the U.S. and China.

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- The U.S.-led resolution on “**Safe, Secure, and Trustworthy AI for Sustainable Development**” promotes a harmonized approach to AI governance, focusing on ethics, data protection, and transparency. It aims to assert U.S. dominance in AI development.
- China’s resolution on “**Enhancing Cooperation on Capacity Building of AI**” emphasizes equitable AI development, bridging the digital divide, and creating an open business environment. China wants to become a key player in global AI standards.

How is India involved in these discussions?

1. **Active Participation in Global Forums:** India is actively engaged in global platforms like the UN, G-20, and Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI), where it emphasizes equitable AI access and governance for developing countries.
2. **Historical Legacy in Negotiations:** India has a strong history of advocating for the Global South, such as its role in integrating the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR) in climate negotiations.
3. **Advocacy for Fair AI Governance:** India has raised concerns about equitable access to AI resources, including data, infrastructure, and knowledge-sharing mechanisms.
4. **Recent Achievements:** India’s leadership in the G-20 New Delhi Leaders Declaration and GPAI emphasized fair AI benefits and risk mitigation.
5. **Inclusive Global AI Governance:** India is pushing for an AI governance model that includes marginalized voices from the Global South, focusing on fairness, human rights, and diverse global perspectives.

What should India advocate for at the Summit?

- India should push for fair access to AI technology, support for building AI capacities in developing countries, and the creation of inclusive governance structures that consider the perspectives of the Global South.
- This includes ensuring that AI governance respects human rights and is aligned with international standards to be truly inclusive and equitable.

What are the challenges in global AI governance?

1. The US and China are shaping the AI governance discourse, potentially sidelining the specific needs of the Global South.
2. There is a significant resource gap between developed and developing countries, which affects their ability to advance in AI.
3. India’s role is crucial in ensuring that new global policies consider these disparities and do not deepen existing inequalities.

Question for practice:

Examine how India’s advocacy for equitable AI governance at the Summit of the Future addresses the needs of the Global South in the context of geopolitical tensions between the U.S. and China.

Global inequality is rising

Source: The post **global inequality is rising** has been created, based on the article “**Latest ILO study links AI to dip in labour income**” published in “**The Hindu**” on **5th August 2024**.

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 2 – Governance – Inclusive growth and issues arising from it.

Context: The article explains that global inequality is rising as labour income stagnates. AI and automation reduce labour’s share of income despite higher productivity. The ILO urges stronger policies to distribute technological benefits fairly and address inequality by 2030.

For detailed information on Status of Inequality in India read this article here

Why is Income Inequality a Concern?

Reduced Labour Income Share: AI and automation have boosted productivity but reduced the share of income earned by workers. From 2019 to 2022, the global labour income share fell by 0.6 percentage points.

Pandemic Influence: The COVID-19 pandemic caused 40% of this reduction, particularly from 2020 to 2022.

Technological Innovation: Over the past two decades, technological advancements have improved output, but these innovations have also lowered the share of labour income across 36 countries, as per the ILO study.

Policy Response Needed: Without strong policies to distribute technological benefits fairly, AI could further lower labour’s income share, worsening inequality.

ILO’s Call for Action: The ILO urges equitable distribution through policies like freedom of association and collective bargaining to counteract these negative impacts.

What Should be Done?

Accelerate Progress on SDGs: With the 2030 deadline approaching, slow progress on Sustainable Development Goals, especially reducing inequalities, needs urgent attention.

The ILO calls for policies that promote fair distribution of economic gains. These include freedom of association, collective bargaining, and effective labour administration to achieve inclusive growth.

Question for practice:

Discuss how AI and automation have contributed to rising global income inequality and what are ILO’s Policy recommendations to address this issue?

Challenges in Implementing the PM-ABHIM and HRHME Initiatives

Source: The post challenges in implementing the PM-ABHIM and HRHME initiatives has been created, based on the article “**Gap between allocations for health, outcomes in States**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 5th August 2024

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

Context: The article discusses challenges in utilizing Union Budget allocations for health initiatives like PM-ABHIM and HRHME. Issues include low fund utilization, faculty shortages, and the need for states to manage recurring costs. Effective outcomes depend on addressing these fiscal and structural challenges.

For detailed information on **India’s healthcare system on right track** [read this article here](#)

What are the Central Health Initiatives?

1. **Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM):** Focuses on building health and wellness centers (AB-HWCs), block-level public health units (BPHUs), integrated district public health laboratories (IDPHLs), and critical care hospital blocks (CCHBs) in each district. It aims to prepare India for future health emergencies.

For detailed information on **PM ABHIM** [read this article here](#)

2. **Human Resources for Health and Medical Education (HRHME):** Aims to expand medical personnel by establishing new medical, nursing, and paramedical colleges. It also seeks to increase seats in existing institutions and upgrade district hospitals by linking them with newly established medical colleges.

What are the Challenges in Implementing These Initiatives?

1. **Low Fund Utilization:** PM-ABHIM used only 29% of its budget in 2022-23, and the Revised Estimate for 2023-24 was around 50%. HRHME saw a similar low utilization, with only about a quarter of the allocated funds used in both 2022-23 and 2023-24.
2. **Complex Funding Structures:** PM-ABHIM relies on the 15th Finance Commission's health grants for 60% of its resources, but only 45% of these grants were used from 2021-24 due to complex execution and hurdles in the States.
3. **Integration of Health Labs:** States struggled to integrate public health labs from different vertical programs, slowing down the implementation of the Integrated District Public Health Laboratories (IDPHLs) under PM-ABHIM.
4. **Construction Delays:** Rigid procedures and overlapping funding from different sources delayed construction projects like Block Public Health Units (BPHUs) and Critical Care Hospital Blocks (CCHBs).
5. **Faculty Shortages:** Over 40% of teaching faculty positions were vacant in newly created AIIMS, and in Uttar Pradesh, 30% of faculty positions were unfilled in government medical colleges.
6. **State Recurring Costs:** States will bear the recurring costs of maintaining health infrastructure beyond 2025, increasing their financial burden, as central support for human resources under PM-ABHIM ends in 2025-26.

Question for practice:

Examine the challenges in implementing the Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM) and Human Resources for Health and Medical Education (HRHME) as discussed in the article.

Partnerships with Africa can help secure India's Critical Mineral Mission

Source: The post partnerships with Africa can help secure India's critical mineral mission has been created, based on the article "Africa can make India's 'critical mineral mission' shine" published in "The Hindu" on 6th August 2024.

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS paper2-international relations-Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests

Context: The article discusses India's Critical Mineral Mission, which aims to increase domestic production, recycle minerals, and secure mineral resources from overseas. It highlights India's partnerships with Africa and the challenges posed by China's dominance in the mineral supply chain.

For detailed information on **Critical Mineral Mission of India** [read this article here](#)

What is India's Critical Mineral Mission?

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1. Launched in the Union Budget 2024-25 to secure critical minerals essential for India's economy.
2. Focuses on three key areas: expanding domestic production, prioritizing recycling, and acquiring overseas assets.
3. The amendment to the Mines and Minerals Act (1957) allowed private sector participation by removing six minerals from the atomic list.
4. KABIL (Khanij Bidesh India Limited) signed a lithium mining agreement with Argentina in January 2024, securing five blocks in the Catamarca province.
5. However, India's capacity for mineral exploration and processing is still developing. It also lacks manufacturing expertise in battery components, requiring upskilling of its workforce.

How can Africa be a part of India's supply chain?

1. **Abundant Mineral Reserves:** Africa holds 30% of the world's known critical mineral reserves, making it essential for India's supply chain.
2. **Strong Trade Relations:** India's trade with Africa totaled \$98 billion in 2022-23, with \$43 billion from mining and minerals, showing established ties.
3. **Energy Investments:** India imports 34 million tonnes of oil from Africa, accounting for 15% of its total demand. India is also investing \$2 billion in African solar projects.
4. **Strategic Projects:** India has signed agreements with Zambia and Zimbabwe to collaborate on geological mapping, mineral exploration, and capacity building.
5. **Value Addition Focus:** African nations are shifting towards value addition, creating opportunities for India to support local mineral processing and industrialization efforts.

What role does China play?

1. China dominates the global critical mineral value chain, creating economic and security risks for India.
2. China has early acquisition of assets and advanced processing and manufacturing capabilities, which gives it significant influence.
3. Chinese mining companies have a large presence in cobalt mining in the Democratic Republic of Congo.
4. China recently signed a \$7 billion "minerals-for-infrastructure" deal with the Democratic Republic of Congo, further strengthening its position.
5. This control over resources poses challenges for India as it competes for access to critical minerals needed for its own economic and energy needs.

How is India responding to these challenges?

- India is leveraging its construction and infrastructure expertise in Africa, having completed projects in 43 countries. This includes hospitals, transmission lines, and railway lines.
- India also trains African professionals through programs like the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation, helping to build a skilled workforce for mining and energy sectors.

Question for practice:

Evaluate how India's partnerships with Africa can help secure critical minerals and reduce its dependence on China's mineral supply chain dominance.

"Development Compact" Proposed by India

Source: The post "Development Compact" Proposed by India has been created, based on the article "**India offers an alternate development path for Global South nations**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 6th August 2024.

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

Context: The article discusses Prime Minister Modi's "Development Compact" for the Global South, focusing on cooperation in areas like technology, finance, health, and sustainability. It highlights India's role in promoting development, sharing experiences, and addressing global challenges through mutual collaboration.

For detailed information on **India and Global South** [read this article here](#)

What is the "Development Compact" Proposed by India?

1. Prime Minister Narendra Modi introduced a "Development Compact" during the Third Voice of Global South Summit (VoGSS) to improve cooperation among Global South countries.
2. This compact focuses on five key areas: capacity building, technology sharing, trade development, grants, and concessional finance.
3. If implemented effectively, it could redefine how these nations engage with each other and address common challenges.

Why is the significance of "Development Compact"?

1. Developing countries are struggling with severe debt, with a public debt of \$29 trillion in 2023 (UNCTAD).
2. Net interest payments on public debt for developing countries reached \$847 billion.
3. 54 developing countries spend over 10% of their revenues on interest payments alone.
4. The OECD countries have failed to meet their commitment of 0.7% of GNP as ODA, affecting aid.
5. Climate finance commitments of \$100 billion have not been fulfilled, increasing vulnerability.
6. The Global South requires alternative paths to sustainable growth, addressing debt, aid gaps, and policy space squeezed by global finance.

What New Hope Does the VoGSS Provide?

1. The collapse of the Washington consensus brought new opportunities to discuss alternative development paths.
2. The VoGSS platform, under the theme "Empowering Global South for Sustainable Future," focuses on exchanging development insights and crafting policies that reflect the unique needs and experiences of the Global South.
3. India urged the Global South to address global uncertainty, vulnerability, terrorism, and secessionist movements affecting their democracies, using this platform for collective action.

What Development Initiatives Has India Introduced?

India has shared several initiatives that could be adapted by other Global South nations:

1. **Sustainability:** Promoting Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE), advancing SDGs, and increasing the use of renewable energy.
2. **Health Security:** Launching concepts like "One World One Health," and aiding other nations by building healthcare facilities.
3. **Disaster Response:** Acting as a first responder in crises, showcasing efforts in places like Papua New Guinea and Ukraine.
4. **Financial Inclusion:** Enhancing connectivity through UPI and Digital Public Infrastructure, with agreements already in place with 12 countries.
5. **Education and Skills:** Strengthening educational links and capacity building, highlighted by the launch of the Global South Centre of Excellence, DAKSHIN.
6. **Other Announcement Made:** India announced funding for capacity building and trade policy training amounting to \$3.5 million. A Social Impact Fund was also established with an initial \$25 million to support various initiatives, adding to the approximately \$7.5 billion that India annually extends to partner countries in the Global South.

Question for practice:

Examine how India's "Development Compact" aims to address the challenges faced by the Global South and promote sustainable growth.

India's challenges in dealing with China and neighboring countries

Source: The post India's challenges in dealing with China and neighboring countries has been created, based on the article "**Aggressive China and neighbourhood woes: India is at a strategic crossroads**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 7th August 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS paper2- International relation- India and its neighbourhood- relations.

Context: The article discusses India's challenges in dealing with China and neighboring countries. It highlights India's need for better statecraft and strategic planning. Key concerns include a large trade deficit, reliance on defense imports, and improving nuclear deterrence. Strategic alliances and partnerships are crucial for India's security and growth.

For detailed information on **India's neighbourhood dilemmas** [read this article here](#)

What is the current India-China situation?

1. India and China are in a prolonged military standoff at the Himalayan border, with no resolution after the 31st diplomatic Working Mechanism on India-China Border Affairs meeting in August 2024.
2. China continues to strengthen its military positions in Ladakh and construct "border defense" villages across the Arunachal Pradesh border, signaling its strategic moves.
3. Beyond the border, China has been building influence in South Asia, notably by supporting Pakistan economically and militarily and through projects like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).
4. In 2012, the Maldives canceled an Indian airport contract in favor of a Chinese firm, leading to anti-India sentiment and the "India Out" campaign.
5. Similarly, Bangladesh's government, under Sheikh Hasina, which was friendly to India, recently fell due to a misunderstanding of local sentiment.

For detailed information on **India's Strategic Challenges in the Face of China's Rise** [read this article here](#)

Why is India seen as a "big brother" by its neighbors?

1. **Perception of Dominance:** India's self-image as a "Vishwaguru" is seen as overbearing by its neighbors, leading to the perception of India as a "big brother" or "bully."
2. **Political Missteps:** In Bangladesh, India misread public sentiment, contributing to the fall of the India-friendly Sheikh Hasina government in August 2023.
3. **Provocative Domestic Politics:** Divisive and unchecked political rhetoric aimed at the Indian electorate is perceived negatively in neighboring countries, impacting relationships with countries like Nepal and Sri Lanka.
4. **Regional Relationships:** India's prickly ties with its neighbors amplify its image as a dominant and interfering power.

What are India's concerns in its security environment?

1. **Trade Deficit with China:** India's trade deficit with China is \$85 billion, making it heavily reliant on Chinese imports, including electronics, machinery, and rare-earth materials. This limits India's strategic flexibility in managing its relations with China.

2. **Defense Import Dependency:** India's reliance on defense imports from Russia, Ukraine, and Israel restricts its strategic autonomy. The ongoing conflicts in these nations raise concerns over future supply disruptions. The Atmanirbhar initiative faces delays in reducing this dependency.
3. **Nuclear Deterrence:** Both China and Pakistan have advanced their nuclear capabilities. China has increased its warhead numbers and accuracy, while Pakistan moved from "credible minimum deterrence" to "full-spectrum deterrence." India must update its nuclear strategy to counter these growing threats.

How should India balance its strategic interests?

1. India needs strategic alliances to protect itself from threats.
2. Forming **strategic alliances** with like-minded nations can help India bridge technology gaps and secure its economy, military, and strategic autonomy.
3. Realpolitik requires India to prioritize its national interests and adapt its partnerships accordingly.

Question for practice:

Examine the factors contributing to India's perception as a "big brother" by its neighboring countries.

Traditional corporate strategies and governance are insufficient to handle AI's complexities and uncertainties

Source: The post traditional corporate strategies and governance are insufficient to handle AI's complexities and uncertainties has been created, based on the article "**Why there is a need to reimagine corporate governance in the AI age**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 2nd August 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.

Context: The article discusses how traditional corporate strategies and governance are inadequate for addressing the complexities and uncertainties introduced by rapid technological advancements and other global disruptions. It emphasizes the need for evolving corporate mindsets and diversifying board compositions to effectively manage future challenges.

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

What Are the Current Challenges in Corporate Governance?

1. **Inadequate Responses to Technological Risks:** Boards still rely on outdated frameworks to address AI-related crises, which can be misleading. For example, AI-enabled bypass of internal financial controls and AI-generated content altering marketing campaigns.
2. **Mismatch Between Governance and Technology:** The current governance processes, like 360-degree evaluations, often become mere formalities, failing to keep up with the demands of exponential technological change.
3. **Lack of Diversity:** Indian boards are mainly composed of older individuals with similar experiences, leading to homogenized thinking. This limits "out of the box" alternatives needed for navigating modern challenges.

How Are Corporate Responses Inadequate?

1. The article suggests that corporate governance is still rooted in pre-AI era thinking.
2. The conventional questions asked at the workshop didn't align with the unpredictable nature of AI and other disruptive technologies.

3. Shell used scenario planning in the 1970s to predict oil price surges. However, today's disruptions, like AI, require a new approach because past trends are no longer reliable indicators of the future.

What Should be Done?

1. **Update Governance Processes:** Traditional methods like 360-degree evaluations must evolve to address the rapid pace of technological change, as shown by AI's impact on marketing and financial controls.
2. **Diversify Boards:** Indian boards should include younger and more diverse members to foster innovative thinking and address emerging risks.
3. **Reevaluate Corporate Vocabulary:** Concepts like "vision" and "strategy" need reassessment to ensure they are relevant in the face of technological disruptions.
4. **Promote Broad-Based Discussions:** Solutions should be developed through inclusive internal discussions, not just relying on narrow expert opinions.

Question for practice:

Discuss how the evolving technological landscape necessitates changes in traditional corporate governance and board composition.

New scheme to help farmers move away from paddy cultivation

Source: The post new scheme to help farmers move away from paddy cultivation has been created, based on the article "How to help Haryana and Punjab move away from paddy to less water-guzzling crops" published in "Indian Express" on 2nd August 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 3– Major Crops – Cropping Patterns in various parts of the country.

Context: The article discusses a new scheme by the Centre and Punjab government to encourage farmers to shift from water-intensive paddy to less water-demanding crops. It suggests increasing incentives and ensuring reliable procurement for alternative crops to ensure success.

For detailed information on **Shift in Cropping Patterns** [read this article here](#)

What is the New Scheme Introduced by the Centre and Punjab Government?

1. The Centre and Punjab government have launched a new scheme to help farmers move away from paddy cultivation.
2. This scheme offers an incentive of Rs 17,500 per hectare to farmers who switch to less water-demanding crops during the kharif season.
3. The scheme covers up to five hectares per beneficiary and is funded in a 60:40 ratio between the Centre and the Punjab government, with a total cost of Rs 289.87 crore for 2024-25.

What are the Benefits of Moving Away from Paddy?

1. **Water Conservation:** Paddy requires 20-25 irrigations, whereas pulses, oilseeds, and millets need less than four irrigations. This shift can help conserve groundwater, crucial since 87% of Punjab's 153 blocks are over-exploited.
2. **Environmental Protection:** Paddy emits 5 tonnes of CO₂ per hectare, contributing to climate change. Reducing paddy cultivation can lower greenhouse gas emissions.
3. **Pollution Reduction:** Shifting from paddy can decrease stubble burning, a major pollution source.
4. **Economic Stability:** Diversification could earn farmers up to four carbon credits per hectare, opening carbon market opportunities.

What are the Challenges in Implementation?

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1. **Inadequate Incentives:** The current incentive of Rs 17,500 per hectare is insufficient when compared to the subsidy of Rs 38,973 per hectare that paddy farmers receive, making paddy far more profitable.
2. **Short-term Policy Duration:** The uncertainty whether the Rs 17,500 incentive is for a year or more poses a risk. Longer-term incentives are needed for sustainable change.
3. **Lack of Guaranteed Procurement:** Unlike paddy, there's no assured procurement for alternative crops like pulses and oilseeds, increasing market risks for farmers switching crops.

What Should be Done?

1. Ensure assured procurement of alternative crops like pulses and oilseeds at MSP by NAFED, reducing market risks for farmers.
2. Redirect the savings from reduced subsidies on power, canal water, and fertilisers to fund this transition, potentially freeing up Rs 13,150 crore by reducing paddy procurement costs.
3. Encourage a market-oriented, cluster-based approach for high-value horticulture crops, engaging Farmer Producer Organisations in export-focused initiatives, especially in West Asia.

Question for practice:

Examine the key challenges and potential solutions in the implementation of the new scheme by the Centre and Punjab government to encourage farmers to shift from paddy cultivation to less water-demanding crops.

State of R&D Spending in India

Source: The post State of R&D Spending in India has been created, based on the article “**R&D: Why the private sector falls behind**” published in “**Business Standard**” on 3rd August 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3-Science and Technology

Context: The article discusses India's need for more research and development (R&D) spending. It highlights that India's current R&D spending is low compared to other countries, partly due to limited competition in domestic markets and a lack of incentives for businesses.

For detailed information on **Issues with India's R&D expenditure** [read this article here](#)

What is the Current State of R&D Spending in India?

1. India spends only 0.65% of its GDP on research and development (R&D), significantly lower than countries like South Korea (4.8%) and China (2.4%).
2. The government contributes over 60% of total R&D expenditure, focusing on defense, space, agriculture, and nuclear research.
3. The private sector's share in R&D has declined from 45% in 2012-13 to 40% in 2020-21.

What Factors Affect R&D Investment?

1. **Competitive Forces:** Countries with higher exposure to global competition tend to invest more in R&D. For example, South Korea and Taiwan have high R&D spending because their firms face intense global competition.
2. **Economic Structure:** Resource-rich countries like Indonesia and Mexico spend less on R&D (0.28% and 0.3% of GDP, respectively), showing that R&D investment is influenced by the underlying economic structure.

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3. **Government Incentives:** Though India offers R&D tax deductions, the benefits are limited. Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) struggle with protecting intellectual property due to court delays.

Why Does India Need More R&D?

- India needs to invest more in research and development (R&D) to progress faster and more effectively.
- Innovation will play a key role if incomes are to quadruple in the next two to three decades while addressing inclusion and sustainability challenges.

Why Is India's R&D Spending Low?

1. A key reason is India's low per capita income, which generally correlates with lower R&D investment.
2. Limited competition in domestic markets reduces the need for firms to invest in R&D.
3. High profit-earning ratios in India reduce the incentive for businesses to invest in uncertain R&D.
4. Cultural sentiment among Indian businessmen often favors short-term gains over long-term, uncertain R&D investments.
5. Protective market policies, such as high tariffs, lower the competitive pressure on firms, reducing their incentive for R&D.

What Could Drive More R&D in India?

1. **Increase Competitive Forces:** More competition in domestic markets can push firms to innovate. High tariffs and non-tariff barriers currently protect firms, reducing their need to invest in R&D.
2. **Encourage Global Market Participation:** Firms that compete globally are more likely to invest in R&D. For example, South Korea and Taiwan have higher R&D spending due to their global market presence.
3. **Reduce Market Protection:** Reducing domestic market protection can compel firms to invest in R&D to stay competitive, as seen in other countries with higher R&D spending.

Question for practice:

Examine why India's current R&D spending is lower compared to countries like South Korea and China.

Concerns related to the Disaster Management (Amendment) Bill, 2024

Source: The post concerns related to the Disaster Management (Amendment) Bill, 2024 has been created, based on the article "**The Disaster Management (Amendment) Bill is knotty**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 3rd August 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Disaster Management

Context: The article discusses the centralization concerns in the proposed Disaster Management (Amendment) Bill, 2024. It criticizes the restricted definition of "disaster," excluding heatwaves, and highlights the need for better financial preparedness and cooperative federalism in disaster management.

For detailed information on **Disaster Management (Amendment) Bill, 2024** [read this article here](#)

What Does the Disaster Management (Amendment) Bill, 2024 Propose?

1. The Disaster Management (Amendment) Bill, 2024, was introduced on August 1, 2024, in the Lok Sabha.
2. The Bill aims to centralize disaster management further, building on the existing Disaster Management Act, 2005.

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3. It gives statutory status to pre-existing bodies like the National Crisis Management Committee and a High-Level Committee.
4. The Bill complicates disaster response chains by adding more centralized layers, which could delay action.
5. It introduces an Urban Disaster Management Authority for state capitals and cities with municipal corporations.
6. However, the Bill lacks provisions for adequate financial support to these new authorities, creating potential issues.
7. The amendment also removes specific purposes for using the National Disaster Response Fund, which could delay funding in severe disasters, as seen in past delays with Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

What are the concerns related to the Disaster Management (Amendment) Bill, 2024?

Increased Centralization: The Bill further centralizes disaster management by giving statutory status to pre-existing committees like the National Crisis Management Committee, complicating response procedures. Centralized decision-making can delay disaster relief, as seen when Tamil Nadu faced delays in receiving funds from the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF).

Restricted Definition of Disaster: The Bill does not include heatwaves as a recognized disaster, despite India experiencing 536 heatwave days, the highest in 14 years, and 10,635 heat-related deaths from 2013 to 2022.

Financial Imbalances: The Bill lacks provisions for financial devolution, forcing states to depend on the central government for disaster relief funds, undermining the spirit of cooperative federalism.

Question for practice:

Evaluate the impact of the restricted definition of “disaster” in the Disaster Management (Amendment) Bill, 2024, particularly regarding the exclusion of heatwaves.

Monsoon Affected Agricultural Policies

Source: The post monsoon affected agricultural policies has been created, based on the article “**Express View on export ban on food commodities: Monsoon comfort**” published in “**Indian Express**” on 3rd August 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Agriculture-issues of buffer stocks and food security

Context: The article discusses how India’s good monsoon has led to the government easing restrictions on ethanol production and rice usage. However, it suggests that the government should also lift export bans on rice, sugar, onions, and pulses to avoid surplus problems and support farmers.

For detailed information on **Factors affecting food production and its price outlook** [read this article here](#)

How Has the Monsoon Affected Agricultural Policies?

The monsoon in India has been favorable this year, with rainfall 7.5% above the long-term average. July and August saw surpluses of 9% and 15.3%, respectively. This abundance has allowed the government to reverse certain restrictions that were set to control inflation.

What Restrictions Have Been Lifted?

1. **Ethanol Production:** The government lifted the ban on sugar mills producing ethanol directly from cane juice, syrup, or “B-heavy” molasses on August 29. This ban was imposed in December 2023.
2. **Rice Usage:** Mills and distilleries are now allowed to use up to 2.3 million tonnes of rice from the Food Corporation of India’s stocks for ethanol production. This was previously restricted since July 2023.

3. The Minister for Consumer Affairs and Food, Pralhad Joshi, mentioned that the government is considering relaxing the ban on white non-basmati rice exports, in place from July 2023.

What Is the Potential Impact of Not Lifting Export Bans?

1. **Surplus Issues:** Not lifting export bans could lead to surplus problems, as evidenced by the record 45.5 million tonnes of rice in public warehouses as of August 1, potentially causing market glut and price crashes.
2. **Farmers' Losses:** With high levels of production expected due to increased planting and favorable monsoon, farmers might face significant losses due to low market prices if export restrictions are maintained.
3. **Economic Inefficiency:** Continuation of export bans on commodities like rice, sugar, onions, and pulses contradicts the potential high yields anticipated from October-November, leading to wasted resources and economic inefficiency.

What is the government's challenge with trade policy?

- **Bias Towards Consumers:** The policy often favors consumer interests, leading to price controls and export bans when supply is low.
- **Cobweb Model:** This results in a cyclical problem of low supply with high prices, followed by high supply with low prices.

Question for practice:

Examine how a favorable monsoon season has influenced the Indian government's agricultural policies and export restrictions.

Indian agriculture can drive growth and create jobs

Source: The post Indian agriculture can drive growth and create jobs has been created, based on the article "How agriculture can be an engine for growth" published in "Indian Express" on 4th August 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS paper3- Agriculture

Context: The article argues that Indian agriculture can drive growth and create jobs if ecological, technological, and institutional challenges are addressed. It highlights the need for irrigation, soil regeneration, crop diversity, and group farming to improve productivity and farmer incomes.

For detailed information on **India's initiatives for agriculture towards 2047 targets** [read this article here](#)

What Challenges Does Indian Agriculture Face?

1. **Low Productivity:** Despite a 4% growth rate, agriculture only contributes 18% to GDP while employing 46% of workers. This imbalance highlights inefficiencies.
2. **Groundwater Over-extraction:** Only half of India's cropped area is irrigated, mainly using groundwater, leading to alarming water table declines. Punjab's shift from canal irrigation to groundwater after introducing free electricity in 1997 worsened the situation.
3. **Soil Degradation:** Around 37% of India's geo-area is degraded due to waterlogging, salinity, chemical contamination, and nutrient depletion.
4. **Inefficient Water Use:** Micro-irrigation covers less than 10% of crop areas. However, it has proven successful, increasing fruit and vegetable yields by up to 52% in several states.
5. **Small Farm Sizes:** Most farmers operate on small plots (86% with two hectares or less), limiting their ability to use machines efficiently or achieve economies of scale.

What Should be Done?

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1. **Expand irrigation:** Only 50% of India's cropped area is irrigated. Groundwater over-extraction is a problem. Use rainwater harvesting and micro-irrigation to boost productivity, as seen in Gujarat's 9.6% annual agricultural growth.
2. **Improve water efficiency:** Micro-irrigation, especially drip irrigation, can reduce water usage. A 2014 government study found that drip irrigation increased fruit and vegetable yields by 48% and farmer incomes by 48%.
3. **Diversify crops:** Shifting from cereal monocultures to diverse crops (poultry, fruits, vegetables) can revive soils, cut costs, raise yields, and increase profits. It aligns with changing dietary patterns and improves environmental sustainability.
4. **Regenerate soils:** 37% of India's land is degraded. Shifting to diverse crops and agro-ecological farming can improve soil health and increase productivity.
5. **Promote group farming:** Kerala's all-women group farming initiatives show success. Group farms have 1.8 times higher output per hectare and 1.6 times higher net returns compared to individual farms.
6. **Use technology:** Cell phones and drones can enhance farming by increasing yields and enabling pest control and monitoring, with a study showing a 4% yield increase through mobile-based information.

Question for practice:

Discuss how addressing ecological, technological, and institutional challenges in Indian agriculture can improve productivity and farmer incomes.

World Bank's growth forecast for India

Source: The post World Bank's growth forecast for India has been created, based on the article "Trading up: World Bank's growth prognosis for India moots some policy shifts" published in "The Hindu" on 5th August 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS paper 3 – Indian Economy -growth, development and employment

Context: The article discusses India's revised GDP growth forecast for 2024-25, now at 7%, and highlights the World Bank's concerns. It emphasizes the need for job creation, boosting trade, and addressing barriers to exports, investments, and foreign trade agreements.

For detailed information on **World Bank Raises India's Economic Growth Forecast** [read this article here](#)

What is the World Bank's growth forecast for India?

1. **2024-25 Growth Forecast:** The World Bank raised India's GDP growth forecast to **7%**, up from its earlier estimate of **6.6%**. This is in line with the projections of the International Monetary Fund and the Asian Development Bank but slightly lower than the **7.2%** predicted by the Reserve Bank of India and Fitch Ratings.
2. **Global Economic Context:** Despite a weak global economy, with global growth expected to remain at **2.6%**, India's economy is projected to perform strongly.
3. **Sectoral Growth:** Private consumption is expected to rise by **5.7%**, and the agricultural sector is predicted to grow by **4.1%**, which could help balance out a moderation in industrial growth.
4. **Challenges for Non-Farm Jobs:** While the **Production Linked Incentive schemes** support manufacturing, they may not generate enough jobs for India's young workforce. The Bank urges a rethink of strategies to create more non-farm employment opportunities.

5. **India's Trade Strategy:** India's global trade share does not reflect its economic size. The World Bank recommends reducing tariffs, non-tariff barriers, and foreign direct investment curbs. It also calls for revisiting India's stance on multilateral trade agreements like the **RCEP** to boost trade.

Question for practice:

Discuss the World Bank's revised GDP growth forecast for India in 2024-25 and the challenges highlighted in relation to job creation and trade.

Technological progress affected labour income

Source: The post technological progress affected labour income has been created, based on the article "**Income inequality: More jobs and higher taxes can counter the effects of automation**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 6th August 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS paper3- Economy-growth, development and employment.

Context: The article explains that technological advances, like automation and AI, have reduced the share of income going to workers. This has worsened income inequality, especially during the pandemic, and suggests solutions like universal basic income or inheritance tax to address these issues.

For detailed information on **Income and Wealth Inequality in India** [read this article here](#)

How has technological progress affected labour income?

1. Technological advancements such as automation and artificial intelligence have significantly impacted labor income globally.
2. Data from the ILO's World Employment and Social Outlook study indicates a 1.6% decline in the global labor income share from 2004 to 2024.
3. This decrease translates to \$2.4 trillion in lost wages, calculated at constant purchasing power parity.
4. The most notable drop occurred during the pandemic years (2019-2022), accounting for almost 40% of the total decline.
5. In 2024, 28.2% of young women globally are not in employment, education, or training, compared to 13.1% of young men. This gender disparity is significant in developing countries, where job creation struggles to keep pace with growing working-age populations.

What is the situation in India?

- In India, 83% of the unemployed are youth, according to an ILO report.
- The government has encouraged private sector investment in labour-intensive employment to address rising unemployment and inequality, even as labour productivity increases.

What Should be Done?

1. Universal basic income (UBI) has been suggested as a solution to rising inequality.
2. Though rejected in Switzerland in 2016 and proposed by Andrew Yang in the US and Rahul Gandhi in India, it remains a potential tool to address income disparities.
3. An inheritance tax in developing countries like India could also help reduce wealth inequality.

Question for practice:

Discuss how technological advancements like automation and AI have contributed to income inequality in India and explore potential solutions such as universal basic income or inheritance tax.

Challenges of high debt-GDP ratios

Source: The post challenges of high debt-GDP ratios has been created, based on the article “Stick to fiscal deficit as the norm for fiscal prudence” published in “The Hindu” on 7th August 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS paper3- Economy-mobilisation of resources

Context: The article discusses how high government fiscal deficits can lead to large debt burdens, impacting economic stability. It highlights India’s current fiscal challenges and the need for stricter deficit limits to avoid long-term fiscal imprudence and ensure sustainable economic growth.

For detailed information on **India’s debt burden** [read this article here](#)

What is the Current Fiscal Situation in India?

1. The fiscal deficit for 2024-25 is projected at 4.9% of GDP, targeted to reduce to 4.5% in 2025-26.
2. The government debt-GDP ratio is estimated at 54% by 2025-26.
3. Interest payments take up a significant portion of government revenue, with 38.4% of revenue spent on interest from 2021-22 to 2023-24.
4. Household financial savings have dropped to 5.3% of GDP in 2022-23, compared to 7.6% in the previous four years.

What challenges arise from high debt-GDP ratios?

1. **Increased Interest Payments:** A high debt-GDP ratio leads to rising interest payments. From 2021-22 to 2023-24, India’s central government’s interest payments averaged 38.4% of its revenue after tax devolution and grants.
2. **Limited Resources for Development:** As more revenue is spent on interest, less is available for developmental expenses. This hampers essential government spending.
3. **Crowding Out Private Investment:** A high government deficit leaves a limited investible surplus for the private sector. In 2022-23, household financial savings fell to 5.3% of GDP, fully absorbed by the government’s 7.5% fiscal deficit.
4. **International Comparisons:** Countries like Japan and the USA manage higher debt-GDP ratios but have lower interest payments to revenue ratios. Japan’s interest payments were just 5.5%, compared to India’s 49% during 2015-2019.
5. **Asymmetric Debt Adjustment:** Post-COVID, India’s debt-GDP ratio rose sharply but has been slow to return to pre-pandemic levels.

What Should be Done?

1. India needs a clear roadmap to reduce its fiscal deficit to 3% of GDP to manage its debt more effectively and free up resources for private investment.
2. This approach is crucial, especially given the lower household savings rate of 5.3% of GDP in 2022-23, compared to 7.6% before the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. Sticking to a stricter fiscal deficit limit would help stabilize the economy and foster healthier investment levels.
4. The Twelfth Finance Commission suggested balancing household savings and foreign capital to support a 6% fiscal deficit, but current deficits exceed this, limiting private investment opportunities.

Question for practice:

Examine how India’s high fiscal deficit and debt-GDP ratio impact private investment and economic stability.

Impact of Tourism and urbanization on Kashmir's environment

Source: The post **Impact of Tourism and urbanization on Kashmir's environment** has been created, based on the article "A tourism policy ill-suited for Jammu and Kashmir" published in "The Hindu" on 7th August 2024.

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS paper 3 – Ecology, and environment

Context: The article discusses how tourism and urbanization are harming Kashmir's environment. It highlights the impact of overcrowding, poor waste management, and climate change on the region. It calls for a sustainable tourism model to protect Kashmir's fragile ecosystem and support locals.

For detailed information on **Challenges faced by towns in the Indian Himalayan Range** [read this article here](#)

How is tourism affecting Kashmir's environment?

1. Over 4 crore tourists have visited since the introduction of the new tourism policy in 2020, including 1.2 million tourists in the first half of 2024.
2. Increased tourism has led to deforestation, waste accumulation, and unregulated construction, harming the environment, especially in areas like Pahalgam and the Trikuta ranges.
3. Poor waste management is increasing pollution in waterbodies, further degrading the ecosystem.
4. The tourism boom has resulted in a rise in construction, disrupting wildlife habitats and increasing soil erosion.
5. Groundwater is being depleted at an alarming rate due to higher demand from the growing tourist infrastructure.
6. Unchecked tourism was a key factor in the 2014 catastrophic floods, which caused widespread destruction and displaced thousands of people in Kashmir.
7. Rising demand for water and electricity strains local resources, depleting groundwater and requiring more hydroelectric projects.

How is climate change worsening the situation?

1. Climate change is causing glaciers in Kashmir to deplete rapidly, leading to water shortages in the region.
2. The Valley faces an agricultural drought due to below-average rainfall and erratic weather patterns.
3. Rivers and streams have less water, impacting irrigation and threatening crop yields, which may cause food shortages.
4. This water scarcity worsens economic conditions for farmers.

What natural disasters does the region face?

1. Kashmir is prone to natural disasters like floods, earthquakes, landslides, and avalanches.
2. The region lies in a seismically active zone, making it vulnerable to earthquakes.
3. The catastrophic floods of 2014 affected around 5 million people, causing economic losses of ₹5,400 crore-₹5,700 crore.
4. Flash floods in 2022, caused by a cloudburst near Amarnath, killed 16 people and left 40 missing.
5. Construction activities for tourism in fragile areas often trigger landslides, as seen in the Wayanad landslide in Kerala, where over 200 lives were lost.

What Should be Done?

- To protect Kashmir, a sustainable tourism model is needed. This includes promoting eco-friendly practices like reducing waste, conserving water, and involving local communities in tourism decisions.

9 PM Compilation September 2024

- Infrastructure should be built to withstand extreme weather, and tourism offerings should be diversified to avoid overcrowding during peak seasons.

Question for practice:

Examine how tourism and climate change are contributing to environmental degradation in Kashmir and suggest sustainable solutions to mitigate their impact.

Significance of India's PM recent visit to Brunei and Singapore

Source: The post significance of India's PM recent visit to Brunei and Singapore has been created, based on the article "**Periodic reset: India needs to engage with ASEAN consistently on trade and security**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 9th September 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS paper2-international relations-Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests

Context: The article discusses Prime Minister Modi's recent visit to Brunei and Singapore, emphasizing India's renewed focus on its "Act East" policy. It highlights India's trade and strategic goals with ASEAN countries, stressing the need for stronger partnerships and regional engagement.

For detailed information on **India-ASEAN Relations- Cooperation and Challenges** [read this article here](#)

What is the Significance of Prime Minister Modi's Recent Visits to Brunei and Singapore?

- 1. Reviving "Act East" Policy:** Prime Minister Modi's visit to Brunei and Singapore emphasizes India's commitment to strengthening ties with Southeast Asia, which aligns with the "Act East" policy initiated in 2014.
- 2. Strategic and Defense Discussions:** In Brunei, Modi's discussions on defense and geo-strategic issues signal a push to enhance security cooperation. Renewing space collaboration with the hosting of an ISRO station in Brunei underscores this effort.
- 3. Economic Partnerships:** Modi's focus in Singapore on the semiconductor industry aims to leverage Singapore's capabilities to boost India's technological infrastructure. This partnership could mitigate risks associated with U.S.-China tensions and enhance India's production capabilities.

What Are the Challenges and Expectations?

A. Challenges

- 1. Declining Trade with Brunei:** India's trade with Brunei has declined, especially since India increased its oil imports from Russia in 2022.
- 2. Lack of Strategic Partnership:** India and Brunei do not have a strategic partnership, even though both nations discussed defense and geo-strategic issues.
- 3. India's Exit from RCEP:** India's withdrawal from the ASEAN-led RCEP in 2019 has hindered its engagement with the region, excluding it from a large regional trade agreement.

B. Expectations

1. Renewed Space Cooperation: India and Brunei renewed their space cooperation with ISRO's presence in Brunei.

2. Improved Semiconductor Ties: Singapore and India are expected to enhance semiconductor cooperation to offset growing costs and de-risk from U.S.-China tensions.

3. Updated Trade Agreements: India is expected to update its trade agreements, like the 2009 AITIGA and the 2005 CECA with Singapore, to strengthen economic ties.

Question for practice:

Discuss the significance of Prime Minister Modi's recent visits to Brunei and Singapore in relation to India's "Act East" policy and regional cooperation.

India's Push for Local Manufacturing: Balancing Chinese Dominance and Domestic Growth

Source: The post India's push for local manufacturing: balancing Chinese dominance and domestic growth has been created, based on the article **"With or without Chinese companies is the question"** published in **"The Hindu"** on 9th August 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- International Relations- India and its Neighborhood.

Context: The article discusses India's efforts to become a global manufacturing hub through the "Make in India" project and PLI scheme. It highlights Chinese smartphone companies' dominance in India and challenges in reducing their influence while developing local manufacturing expertise.

For detailed information on **Trade Relationship Between India and China** [read this article here](#)

What is the government's plan for transforming India into a manufacturing hub?

1. The government launched the 'Make in India' project in 2014, aiming to turn India into a global manufacturing hub.
2. The Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme was later introduced to attract both domestic and foreign investments.
3. The Bharatiya Janata Party's 2024 election manifesto highlighted its focus on manufacturing across sectors.
4. In the Union Budget 2024-25, ₹6,125 crore was allocated to the PLI scheme for large-scale electronics manufacturing, an increase from ₹4,499.04 crore in the 2023-24 Budget.
5. Additionally, ₹1,148 crore was allocated to research and development in the electronics and IT sectors.

For detailed information on **India Struggling to become a Global Manufacturing Hub** [read this article here](#)

How have Chinese smartphone companies benefited from 'Make in India'?

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1. Chinese smartphone companies, such as those with a market share of over 50%, have been major beneficiaries of the 'Make in India' project.
2. They have effectively capitalized on India's large Android smartphone user base, which held a 70% market share in 2023.
3. These companies have expanded their production with support from Indian governments, employed effective marketing strategies, and penetrated non-metropolitan regions.

How has India responded to Chinese dominance in the smartphone sector?

1. India has sought to 'Indianise' the operations of Chinese smartphone companies after the Galwan Valley incident in 2020.
2. This includes involving Indian equity partners, appointing Indian executives, and expanding exports from India.
3. Indian companies like Tata Electronics have also begun contract manufacturing smartphones, signaling increased local involvement.

What Challenges Remain?

- 1. Infrastructure Deficits:** India lacks the necessary infrastructure to support large-scale manufacturing, such as uninterrupted power and water supply, which are critical for production continuity.
- 2. Supply Chain Limitations:** The absence of a robust local supplier network and ancillary industries hampers the capability to manufacture all smartphone components domestically.
- 3. Technology Sharing Hesitance:** Chinese companies are reluctant to share technology without clear agreements on their equity participation, affecting the development of local expertise.
- 4. Workforce Conditions:** Better working and living conditions for the workforce are required to sustain manufacturing growth and attract skilled labor.

What Should be Done?

- 1. Increase Funding for Local R&D:** Raise allocations beyond the 2024-25 budget increase to ₹1,148 crore to foster innovation in local electronics and IT industries, which saw a rise from ₹600 crore in the previous fiscal year.
- 2. Promote Indian Equity and Management:** Encourage the induction of Indian stakeholders and executives into foreign companies operating in India to foster better local control and benefits.
- 3. Balance Chinese Investments with Local Growth:** While the government seeks to limit Chinese involvement, the Economic Survey suggests promoting Chinese Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). New Delhi must balance developing home-grown industries with the need for continued Chinese investments to achieve its manufacturing goals.

Question for practice:

Discuss the challenges that India faces in reducing Chinese dominance in its smartphone manufacturing sector while enhancing local expertise.

Role of Citizen Stack

Source: The post role of Citizen Stack has been created, based on the article “**What we mean by good digital public infrastructure**” published in “**Indian Express**” on 9th August 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Economy (financial inclusion) and GS paper 2-Governance- e-governance

Context: The article discusses India's success in achieving financial inclusion through digital public infrastructure (DPI). It highlights the role of Citizen Stack, a regulatory body ensuring secure, reliable DPIs, based on five guiding principles for maintaining trust and integrity.

For detailed information on **Digital Public Infrastructure** [read this article here](#)

What is India's Achievement in Financial Inclusion?

- 1. Rapid Progress:** India has achieved over 80% financial inclusion in just six years, significantly impacting over a billion people.
- 2. Global Recognition:** This success was highlighted at the G20 summit in New Delhi in 2023, showcasing it as a model for the Global South.
- 3. Digital Framework:** The foundation of this achievement is the India Stack, a comprehensive digital infrastructure that has proven its efficacy and security at a massive scale.

What is the Role of Citizen Stack?

1. Citizen Stack is based on the success of India Stack, which has already served over a billion people.
- 2. It acts as a regulatory body, not a manufacturer of DPIs.**
3. Citizen Stack certifies and authenticates DPIs, ensuring they meet high standards of security, scalability, and inclusivity.
- 4. It follows five guiding principles**, including privacy protection and interoperability.
5. The platform ensures that digital public infrastructure serves the public good, following India's model of digital and financial inclusion seen at the 2023 G20 summit.
- 6. Standard of Excellence:** Citizen Stack sets a global benchmark for DPIs, ensuring public benefit, not corporate exploitation.

What Defines a Good DPI?

A good DPI harmonizes technology with societal needs, focusing on security, scalability, and inclusivity. Citizen Stack has set five guiding principles, or sutras, to define what makes a DPI beneficial:

1. **Maintain citizens' relationship with the market and the state** – Ensure digital infrastructure is free from distortions.
2. **Safeguard citizen empowerment and privacy** – Use a consent-based system for data sharing.
3. **Prevent monopolies** – Ensure interoperability to avoid monopoly lock-in.
4. **Techno-legal regulation** – Combine technology and law for ethical governance of tech.
5. **Public-private innovation** – Encourage collaboration without corporate dominance.

Question for practice:

Evaluate the role of Citizen Stack in ensuring the security and inclusivity of Digital Public Infrastructure in India.

Success of the Swachh Bharat Mission

Source: The post success of the Swachh Bharat Mission has been created, based on the article “**Learning from the success of the Swachh Bharat Mission**” published in “**Indian Express**” on 9th August 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Governance-Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes

Context: The article highlights the success of India's Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) in reducing infant deaths by improving sanitation. It notes that SBM and the Jal Jeevan Mission, aimed at providing safe drinking water, contribute to better health outcomes. Some government schemes have been successful, while others are still developing.

For detailed information on **Swachh Bharat Mission** read [Article 1](#), [Article 2](#)

What Has the Swachh Bharat Mission Achieved?

1. The Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), initiated by the Narendra Modi government in October 2014, has led to the construction of approximately 11 crore individual household latrines.
2. This significant effort has reduced infant deaths by 60,000-70,000 annually, as open defecation—a source of disease through water and food contamination—has been curtailed.
3. The National Family Health Survey (NFHS) data indicates a drop in households without toilets from 55% in 2005-06 to 19% in 2019-21.
4. Improved sanitation under SBM has not only decreased infant mortality rates but also holds the potential to reduce stunting (low height-for-age) and wasting (low weight-for-height) in children. These conditions are often caused by diseases like diarrhea, cholera, and typhoid, which are linked to contaminated food and water.

What Role Does the Jal Jeevan Mission Play?

1. Alongside SBM, the Jal Jeevan Mission aims to provide safe drinking water to all rural households by 2024 through tap connections.

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2. The *Nature* study found that in districts where toilet access is over 30%, there is a significant reduction in infant and child mortality.

3. The integration of these programs is crucial as improved sanitation and access to clean water together significantly lower the rates of infant and under-five mortality.

What Are the Broader Impacts of Government Schemes?

1. The government's approach to implementing large-scale programs like SBM and Jan Dhan (universal bank accounts) has seen mixed success.

2. While SBM has been effective in improving sanitation and reducing disease transmission, other initiatives like the **Soil Health Card** have not met expectations.

3. The effectiveness of these schemes largely depends on sustained efforts and the ability to meet and exceed initial targets.

Question for practice:

Evaluate the effectiveness of the Swachh Bharat Mission and Jal Jeevan Mission in improving sanitation, providing safe drinking water, and reducing disease-related mortality in India.

India's potential role in peace diplomacy for Ukraine

Source: The post India's potential role in peace diplomacy for Ukraine has been created, based on the article "C Raja Mohan writes: India's role in peacemaking in Ukraine" published in "Indian Express" on 11th September 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper-2- Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Context: The article discusses India's potential role in peace diplomacy for Ukraine. It highlights the complex situation involving Russia, Ukraine, the US, and Europe. India supports peace but must be aware of its limitations in influencing the outcome of this conflict.

For detailed **information on India's role in Russia-Ukraine Crisis** [read this article here](#)

What is India's Role in Ukraine Peace Talks?

1. India supports peace in Ukraine and has advocated for dialogue since Russia's invasion in February 2022.
2. Russia welcomes India's involvement, as noted by President Putin's openness to diplomacy from India, Brazil, and China.
3. External Affairs Minister Jaishankar and National Security Adviser Doval have engaged in European and Russian discussions.
4. Hungary's peace efforts, led by Prime Minister Orban, have briefed Indian leadership on their initiatives.

5. However, peace in Ukraine depends on a new agreement between Russia and the US, with India's role remaining supportive but limited.

What Recent Moves Have Been Made Towards Peace?

1. Global South Diplomacy: Russia's President Vladimir Putin welcomed peace diplomacy from Brazil, China, and India. Ukraine's President Zelenskyy also supports involvement from Global South nations.

2. Upcoming Peace Conference: German Chancellor Olaf Scholz emphasized the need for a peace conference in November, suggesting Russia's participation. This would be a step forward, as Russia was excluded from a previous conference in June.

3. Hungarian Peace Initiative: Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban met key actors like Putin, Xi Jinping, and Trump to push for peace. He reported that the US, China, and the EU have the capacity to influence the war dynamics.

4. Indian Diplomacy: India's External Affairs Minister Jaishankar visited Europe, National Security Adviser Doval traveled to Moscow, and Prime Minister Modi consulted with Quad leaders, showing India's growing engagement.

What Challenges Are Faced in Achieving Peace?

1. US-Russia Tensions: Peace depends on a new security order between the US and Russia, as they shaped European security after World War II and in 1991.

2. Upcoming US Elections: Both Putin and Zelenskyy are watching the US elections, as it will influence peace efforts.

3. EU Division: The European Union is split on how to handle the war, with some supporting Ukraine and others, like Hungary, pushing for peace talks.

4. Continued Fighting: As winter nears, both Russia and Ukraine are still fighting to gain territory before peace talks.

How Could the War Impact India?

1. Geopolitical Realignment: The war may lead to a reorganization of Europe's political landscape. This could affect India's international relations as new global and regional orders emerge.

2. Economic Consequences: The conflict has already put pressure on India's economy. Restoring peace would help India accelerate economic growth, essential for its development.

3. Security Challenges: India's security policies are impacted by the instability in Europe. Peace between Russia and the West would help India focus on ensuring security in Asia.

4. Diplomatic Role: India's active participation in peace diplomacy, as seen in its dialogue with Hungary and Europe, enhances its global influence.

Question for practice:

Discuss the challenges faced in achieving peace in the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Growing threat of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) due to antibiotic misuse and pollution

Source: The post growing threat of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) due to antibiotic misuse and pollution has been created, based on the article “**What is anti-microbial resistance (AMR) and why is it a grave threat?**” published in “**Indian Express**” on 11th August 2024.

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 2 - Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health

Context: The article discusses the growing threat of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) due to antibiotic misuse and pollution. It emphasizes the need for better hygiene, vaccinations, proper antibiotic use, and stricter regulations on pharmaceutical waste to prevent drug-resistant infections globally. Ahead of the United Nations conference on September 26, the WHO published its first guidance on antibiotic pollution, emphasizing its global threat.

For detailed information on **Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) in India** read [Article1](#), [Article2](#)

What is Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)?

AMR is when a pathogen survives despite the use of antimicrobial drugs. It occurs due to the misuse or overuse of antibiotics. This creates superbugs, which are resistant to medicines. These superbugs spread in hospitals, water, and sewers.

Why is AMR a Concern?

1. AMR makes common infections harder to treat, leading to complications. For example, urinary tract infections now often require hospitalization. In hospitals, AMR leads to longer stays and more expensive treatments.
2. Overuse of antibiotics, like Norfloxacin for diarrhea, has rendered them ineffective.
3. AMR can spread through water, sewers, and hospitals, worsening healthcare outcomes.

Why is AMR Increasing in India?

1. **Individuals:** Many Indians use antibiotics without medical advice. Antibiotics are used even for viral infections like the flu, which doesn't need them. This increases resistance.
2. **Doctors:** Many doctors prescribe broad-spectrum antibiotics unnecessarily. A survey showed that 71.9% of patients in hospitals were given antibiotics, with 55% prescribed not for treatment but for prevention.
3. **Pharma Companies:** Antibiotic pollution from manufacturing sites contributes to AMR. WHO released guidelines on managing pharmaceutical waste to reduce pollution.

Which Pathogens are Most Resistant in India?

1. **E. coli:** Resistance to carbapenem, a strong antibiotic, dropped from 81.4% in 2017 to 62.7% in 2023.

2. Klebsiella pneumoniae: Susceptibility to carbapenem medicines reduced from 58.5% to 35.6% and 48% to 37.6% from 2017 to 2023.

3. Acinetobacter baumannii: Its resistance to carbapenems was 88% in 2023, showing a high level of resistance.

What Measures Can Be Taken to Combat AMR?

1. Prevention: Improving hygiene and encouraging vaccinations, like the pneumococcal and flu vaccines, can reduce infections.

2. Education: Doctors should prescribe antibiotics only when necessary and use diagnostic tests to confirm infections.

3.Regulation: Pharmaceutical waste management should be improved to prevent the spread of resistant bacteria from manufacturing facilities.

Question for practice:

Examine the reasons why antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is increasing in India.

Ovarian cancer, known as a "silent killer"

Source: The post ovarian cancer, known as a "silent killer" has been created, based on the article "Understanding ovarian cancer: its causes, symptoms, and screening methods" published in "The Hindu" on 11th August 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health

Context: The article discusses ovarian cancer, its vague symptoms, risk factors, and challenges in early detection. It highlights genetic links, lifestyle risks, and the lack of reliable screening tests. Raising awareness can improve early diagnosis, treatment, and survival outcomes.

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

Why is ovarian cancer dangerous and hard to detect?

1. Ovarian cancer is often called a "silent killer" because its **symptoms are vague and mimic common ailments.**

2. Symptoms include bloating, pelvic pain, loss of appetite, feeling full quickly, and frequent urination. These symptoms are often mistaken for less serious conditions. Because of the overlap with common conditions, **ovarian cancer is often diagnosed late**, leading to a poor prognosis and high mortality.

3. A 2004 study showed that women with malignant ovarian cancer experienced these symptoms 20 to 30 times per month, much more severely than those without the disease.

4. In 2022, India reported 47,333 new ovarian cancer cases and 32,978 deaths, highlighting its severity.

5. Unlike breast or cervical cancer, there is **no reliable screening test for ovarian cancer**. The **CA125 blood test is not recommended for average-risk women due to its limited accuracy**. It may cause false positives and unnecessary treatments.

6. There are **two main subtypes: type I and type II**. Type I tumors are less common and usually detected early with a better prognosis. Type II tumors are more common, aggressive, and diagnosed late, contributing to most ovarian cancer deaths.

How do genetics and lifestyle factors influence ovarian cancer risk?

1. Genetics: Ovarian cancer is highly heritable, with 65-85% of hereditary cases linked to BRCA1 and BRCA2 gene mutations. Women with BRCA1 mutations have up to a 50% risk, while BRCA2 mutations pose a 15% risk.

2. Genetic Testing: Genetic testing allows for personalized risk management, including tailored clinical surveillance, chemoprevention, and prophylactic surgeries, which help reduce ovarian cancer risk in high-risk women.

3. Endometriosis: Women with endometriosis, a condition where tissue similar to the lining of the uterus grows outside it, have a slightly increased risk of developing specific types of ovarian cancer, such as endometrioid and clear-cell cancers. However, this risk is generally low, and drastic measures like removing the ovaries and fallopian tubes (bilateral salpingo-oophorectomy) are not usually recommended solely to prevent ovarian cancer in these cases.

4. Lifestyle Factors: Use of talcum powder and chemical hair products like dyes and relaxers may increase ovarian cancer risk. Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) also raises the risk, even with less than five years of use. More research is needed to confirm these links, especially regarding modern talcum powders and hair products.

What Should be Done?

1. Awareness of ovarian cancer's risk factors, symptoms, and genetic links can lead to earlier detection and better treatment.

2. Personalized risk management and genetic counseling can reduce the likelihood of developing the disease.

Question for practice:

Discuss why ovarian cancer is considered dangerous and challenging to detect, and how genetics and lifestyle factors influence the risk of developing the disease.

On ANI Vs Wikipedia Case

Source: The post **On ANI Vs Wikipedia Case** has been created, based on the article "**On ANI's defamation suit against Wikipedia**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 11th August 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 2- Governance- Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

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Context: The article discusses ANI's lawsuit against Wikipedia for defamation due to claims of spreading government propaganda. It details the Delhi High Court's actions, Wikipedia's stance on neutrality, previous censorship issues, and global challenges faced by Wikipedia.

Why did ANI sue Wikipedia?

1. Defamatory Description: Asian News International (ANI) sued Wikipedia due to being described as a source of government propaganda. Wikipedia's page on ANI claimed the news agency served as a propaganda tool for the central government.

2. Specific Allegations: ANI was accused of distributing materials from fake news websites and misreporting events, based on sources like The Diplomat, EU DisinfoLab, and The Caravan magazine.

3. Edit War: Wikipedia's ANI page faced continuous edits by users after new reports scrutinized ANI's credibility in 2020. This led to a long "edit war."

4. Lawsuit: ANI found these claims defamatory and demanded ₹2 crore in damages, filing a lawsuit against Wikipedia's parent organization, the Wikimedia Foundation, in the Delhi High Court.

What has the Delhi High Court ordered?

1. On August 20, 2023, the Delhi High Court, under Justice Navin Chawla, ordered Wikimedia Foundation to provide details of three users who edited the ANI page on Wikipedia.

2. Wikimedia was instructed to serve a summons to these users to appear in the case.

3. ANI filed a contempt application, leading to the judge threatening to block Wikipedia in India if Wikimedia didn't comply.

4. The court directed an "authorized representative" from Wikimedia to be present at the next hearing on October 25, 2023.

Has Wikipedia faced similar issues in other countries?

1. Wikipedia has faced similar issues in other countries, including Russia and Germany.

2. In Russia, editors have been arrested since the country's invasion of Ukraine, facing intimidation for their work on Wikipedia.

3. In 2019, a German court ordered Wikipedia to remove content about academic Alex Waibel, showing legal challenges in Germany.

4. Wikipedia also routinely faces lawsuits in the U.S., but most cases are dismissed due to strong protections for web platforms.

5. In China, Wikipedia has been blocked for years, highlighting censorship issues in restrictive environments.

6. Russia developed a forked version, Ruwiki, complying with its narratives.

Question for practice:

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Examine the reasons why ANI sued Wikipedia and the actions taken by the Delhi High Court in response to the lawsuit.

India's efforts to eliminate sickle cell disease by 2047

Source: The post India's efforts to eliminate sickle cell disease by 2047 has been created, based on the article “**India’s sickle cell challenge**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 12th September 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Governance- Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health

Context: The article discusses India's efforts to eliminate sickle cell disease by 2047 through the National Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission. It covers the challenges of treating the disease, including stigma and lack of access to medications, and suggests ways to improve detection and care.

For detailed information on **Sickle Cell Disease** read [Article 1](#), [Article 2](#)

What is Sickle Cell Disease?

Sickle cell disease is a genetic condition that changes the shape of red blood cells. Healthy red blood cells are disc-shaped, but in this disease, they become sickle or crescent-shaped. This causes serious health issues, such as pain, organ damage, and reduced lifespan.

What is the Impact of Sickle Cell Disease in India?

1. India has the world’s second-largest burden of sickle cell disease, with over a million people affected.
2. The disease is concentrated in tribal belts in states like Odisha, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra.
3. Many affected people do not receive proper treatment, with only 18% getting consistent care.
4. Stigma, mistrust of public health systems, and reliance on traditional healers are key barriers to proper diagnosis and treatment.

What Steps Has the Government Taken?

1. In 2023, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the **National Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission** to eliminate the disease by 2047.
2. The government began **large-scale screening programs** to identify patients.
3. **Hydroxyurea**, an essential medicine for sickle cell treatment, was added to the **national essential medicines list**, improving accessibility.

What Should be Done?

1. **Reducing Stigma:** Public awareness campaigns can help reduce stigma and encourage people to seek medical help. Examples like the polio and HIV campaigns can serve as models.

2. Increased Screening: Early detection through newborn screening can help. This is a low-cost strategy with high benefits, especially in areas where sickle cell disease is common.

3. Better Access to Medicines: Medicines should be made available at health centers close to patients, and adherence support should be provided.

4. Vaccinations: Ensuring all patients get proper vaccinations can improve their quality of life by reducing infections.

5. Improving Tribal Healthcare: Address unique challenges in tribal regions by improving trust and funding in healthcare systems.

6. Research and Philanthropy: More research is needed to understand the disease in India, and philanthropic efforts can help drive solutions.

Question for practice:

Examine the key challenges and government initiatives in addressing sickle cell disease in India.

China's extreme decentralization has led to overcapacity and wasteful investment

Source: The post China's extreme decentralization has led to overcapacity and wasteful investment has been created, based on the article "**Perils of decentralisation with Chinese characteristics**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 12th August 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 2 - International Relations - Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests

Context: The article explains how China's extreme decentralization, once key to its economic growth, has now led to problems like overcapacity and wasteful investment. Centralized control under Xi Jinping hasn't fixed these issues, causing China's economy to struggle globally.

For detailed information on **Macroeconomic differences between India and China** [read this article here](#)

What Led to China's Economic Challenges?

1. Decentralization and Overcapacity: China's economic model allowed local governments to control 51% of spending, pushing them to prioritize industrial growth over public services. This led to structural overcapacity, where more goods were produced than needed, causing inefficiency and waste.

2. Central Control and Investment Issues: Under Xi Jinping, China tightened central control, leading to narrow directives that focused on sectors like semiconductors without considering market demand. This approach resulted in a lot of wasted investment—approximately \$6.9 trillion between 2009 and 2013.

3. Failed localization efforts: Despite pouring funds into semiconductors through the "Big Fund," China has not mastered advanced chip production.

How Did China's Policies Impact Its Global Economic Position?

1. Shift in Economic Strategy: China tried to replace Western markets with domestic demand and new international markets through the Belt and Road Initiative. However, this shift failed because the domestic and BRI markets weren't strong enough to sustain the demand needed.

2. Geopolitical Challenges: Global perceptions of China worsened due to its aggressive foreign policies and security concerns over Chinese technology, especially in sectors like electric vehicles and telecom equipment. This resulted in declining international acceptance and economic partnerships.

What Are the Consequences of These Economic Strategies?

1. Industrial Losses and Economic Decline: By June 2024, 30% of Chinese industrial firms were reporting losses, the worst since the late 1990s Asian financial crisis. China's focus on self-reliance in key industries has not yielded the expected technological advances, further straining its economic viability.

2. Future Outlook: China faces significant challenges. Without changing its approach to international relations and economic policies, it risks continued economic decline despite potential short-term gains in exports in some sectors.

Question for practice:

Discuss how China's decentralization and subsequent central control under Xi Jinping have contributed to its current economic challenges.

Current Economic Divide Between Indian States

Source: The post current economic divide between Indian states has been created, based on the article "**Why inequality between South and West India, and North and East could grow – and the dangers that carries**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 12th August 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 3 – Indian Economy - Growth, and development

Context: The article discusses the growing income gap between richer southern and western states and poorer northern, central, and eastern states in India. It questions whether economic convergence is possible, given structural challenges and the current advantages of wealthier regions.

For detailed information on **Economic divide among India's States** [read this article here](#)

What is the Current Economic Divide Between Indian States?

1. In 2023-24, Andhra Pradesh's average income was about four times higher than Bihar's.
2. By the end of the decade, this gap could rise to four-and-a-half times if growth trends continue.
3. The five southern states (Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana) account for 37% of all factories in India and a significant share of exports.
4. These states also contribute 33% of formal sector employment.

5. Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, despite lower wages, fail to attract companies due to a lack of infrastructure and workforce.
6. Noida and Ghaziabad, near Delhi, account for 46% of all formal jobs in Uttar Pradesh due to proximity to infrastructure.

Why Are Southern and Western States Growing Faster?

1. Southern and western states benefit from historical policies and market forces, fostering sectors like IT and manufacturing.
2. Key exporting districts and global capability centers are mostly in cities like Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Chennai, Mumbai, and Pune.
3. Apple's manufacturing ecosystem, including Foxconn, is largely based in these regions.
4. Of the five semiconductor projects approved by the Centre, four are in Gujarat.
5. Infrastructure, skilled workforce, and financial networks allow these regions to maintain higher growth rates than northern and eastern states.

What Challenges Do Northern and Eastern States Face?

1. **Lower Wages:** Despite lower wages, they aren't attractive enough for companies to relocate.
2. **Lack of Industrial Base:** These regions lack agglomeration effects seen in southern and western states, which have a manufacturing and services base.
3. **Skilled Workforce Shortage:** Northern and eastern states have a shortage of skilled workers, limiting economic growth.
4. **Few Economic Hubs:** Cities like Noida and Ghaziabad, which account for 46% of formal jobs in UP, benefit due to proximity to Delhi, but this is an exception.
5. **Weaker Infrastructure:** Unlike southern regions, infrastructure is less developed, hindering growth.

What Are the Potential Long-Term Effects?

1. The continued economic disparity might lead to increased migration from poorer to richer states, placing strain on infrastructure in wealthier areas.
2. This could result in increased local demands for job reservations.
3. Governments might resort to populist fiscal measures rather than addressing structural economic challenges.

Can Structural Transformation Happen?

Though addressing structural challenges in poorer regions is difficult, long-term government interventions, especially when the same party governs at both the Centre and state levels, could help reduce these inequalities. However, this will require sustained efforts over time.

Question for practice:

Examine the factors contributing to the faster economic growth of southern and western states in India compared to northern and eastern states.

Factor contributed to India's economic growth

Source: The post factor contributed to India's economic growth has been created, based on the article "**Making India a start-up nation**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 12th August 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 3 - Economy- growth, development, and employment

Context: The article discusses India's economic growth driven by digital payments, affordable data, and the startup boom. It highlights the need for integrating education, entrepreneurship, and employment to sustain growth and create jobs, with a focus on innovation and academia-industry collaboration.

For detailed information on **India's Economic Growth and challenges** [read this article here](#)

What is India's Current Economic Position?

1. India's estimated nominal GDP in 2024 is \$3.9 trillion.
2. India took 60 years to reach \$1 trillion GDP, seven years to reach \$2 trillion, and five years to reach \$3 trillion in 2019.
3. In 2022, India became the fifth-largest economy, surpassing the UK.
4. In FY23, startups and corporates contributed \$140 billion to the economy, 4% of GDP.

What are the factors contributed to India's economic growth?

1. **UPI and Digital Payments:** The government's introduction of UPI expanded digital payments to crores of people, boosting financial inclusion.
2. **Telecom Revolution:** Affordable data, driven by telecom companies, made the internet accessible to over 80 crore people, fueling digital businesses and startups.
3. **Pandemic and E-commerce:** The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated e-commerce and startups, contributing to economic growth.
4. **Startup Ecosystem:** India has over 1.4 lakh DPIIT-registered startups, creating 15.5 lakh direct jobs since 2017, with one unicorn added every 20 days.

What Should be Done?

1. **Promote Entrepreneurship Among Graduates:** If 5% of Indian students chose entrepreneurship, it could lead to 5 lakh new entrepreneurs annually, with 50,000 startups surviving, creating 5.5 lakh direct jobs each year.

2. Increase R&D Spending: India's R&D investment is only 0.7% of GDP, compared to 3.4% in the US. Increased investment, especially in HEIs, can drive innovation and job creation.

3. Improve Academia-Industry Linkage: The US tech transfer model contributed \$1 trillion to industry output in 20 years. India should replicate this model to enhance economic growth.

4. Measure HEI Success by Entrepreneurship: Instead of focusing solely on job placements, HEIs should also prioritize creating student-led entrepreneurial ventures. Institutions like IITs and IIMs support the startup ecosystem, with around 1 crore graduates entering the workforce annually.

Question for practice:

Discuss the factors that have contributed to India's economic growth and the steps that can be taken to sustain it

Supreme Court of India Moves to Curb Extra-Legal Demolitions

Source: The post Supreme Court of India Moves to Curb Extra-Legal Demolitions has been created, based on the article "Putting the brakes on 'bulldozer justice'" published in "The Hindu" on 13th September 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability.

Context: The article discusses the Supreme Court of India's decision to create nationwide guidelines for demolitions carried out without due process. It highlights issues like targeted demolitions, lack of legal recourse, and the need for a structured, fair approach to ensure proper procedures and rehabilitation for affected individuals.

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

What is the issue with extra-legal demolitions in India?

1. The Supreme Court of India is working on guidelines to address the problem of buildings being demolished without following legal procedures.
2. These demolitions often target vulnerable groups and result in the loss of homes without offering any alternative solutions or compensation. Examples include widespread demolitions in Delhi's Jahangirpuri and following communal riots in Nuh, Haryana, and Khargone, Madhya Pradesh.

Why are these demolitions a concern?

1. These demolitions are concerning because they bypass the legal processes outlined by the Supreme Court and High Courts in past judgments.
2. They are typically justified under municipal laws but ignore the due process required by law, thus violating fundamental rights and constitutional values.

What solutions are being considered?

The solutions being considered by the Supreme Court to address illegal demolitions include:

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- 1. Pre-Demolition Guidelines:** Authorities must justify the need for demolition, providing detailed notices and allowing affected persons time to respond. This process aims to protect human rights and ensure public good.
- 2. Controlled Demolition Process:** Demolitions should minimize physical force, avoid heavy machinery like bulldozers, and be supervised by non-involved government officials.
- 3. Post-Demolition Measures:** There should be provisions for adequate rehabilitation and compensation. A swift grievance redress mechanism is proposed to allow affected persons to challenge demolition decisions and seek remedies.
- 4. Fixing Accountability:** Officials responsible for illegal demolitions should be held personally accountable to prevent misuse of power, overriding "good faith" clauses in municipal laws that shield them from action.

Question for practice:

Discuss the concerns raised by the Supreme Court of India regarding extra-legal demolitions and the solutions being considered to address them.

Dissolution of Standing Committee on Statistics (SCoS)

Source: The post dissolution of Standing Committee on Statistics (SCoS) has been created, based on the article "What does dissolution of SCoS entail?" published in "The Hindu" on 13th August 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Indian Economy and issues relating to planning

Context: The article discusses the government's dissolution of the 14-member Standing Committee on Statistics (SCoS) due to overlapping responsibilities with another committee. It highlights the urgency of conducting the delayed census and the limitations of using administrative data for policymaking.

For detailed information on **Standing Committee on Statistics (SCoS)** [read this article here](#)

Why was the Standing Committee on Statistics (SCoS) dissolved?

- 1. Overlapping roles:** The Standing Committee on Statistics (SCoS) was dissolved due to its overlapping role with the Steering Committee for National Sample Surveys.
- 2. Explanation from Geeta Singh Rathore:** Geeta Singh Rathore, Director-General of the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), explained the duplication of responsibilities as the reason for dismantling SCoS.
- 3. Similar Functions by Steering Committee:** The Steering Committee, led by Rajeeva Laxman Karandikar, already handled similar tasks, such as reviewing survey methodologies and tabulating data.
- 4. Pronab Sen's statement:** Dr. Pronab Sen former head of SCoS, stated members were not given a clear explanation for the dissolution.
- 5. Concerns over the census:** Members had also raised concerns over the delay in conducting the national census, a key data source for policymakers.

What were the key responsibilities of the SCoS?

1. The SCoS advised the government on survey methodologies such as sampling designs and survey instruments.
2. It played a role in finalizing tabulation plans for surveys and addressing issues related to survey results and methodology.
3. It also guided pilot surveys, identified data gaps, and provided technical support to agencies at central and state levels for conducting surveys.

What is the role of the new Steering Committee?

1. The new Steering Committee has 17 members and one non-member secretary.
2. Its main role is to advise the government on survey methodology, including sampling designs and survey instruments.
3. It will review the results, methodologies, and sampling frameworks of all National Sample Surveys.
4. The Committee also finalizes the tabulation plans for surveys, ensuring accurate data.

Why is there pressure to conduct a new census?

- 1. Lack of Updated Data:** The last census was conducted in 2011, and the delay in the 2021 census due to COVID-19 has left policymakers relying on outdated data.
- 2. Impact on Schemes:** Absence of fresh census data affects schemes like the National Food Security Act, leaving millions without necessary benefits.
- 3. Employment Data Concerns:** Opposition and policymakers have questioned the accuracy of employment and unemployment data.
- 4. Comprehensive Data Needs:** Census data provides state and sub-district level information on education and employment, which surveys like PLFS cannot cover.

What are the flaws in administrative data?

1. Administrative data, such as those from EPFO and ESIC, often reflect government intentions and have threshold-based limitations, especially in labor statistics.
2. This data can be manipulated, lacks analytical depth, and doesn't offer a full picture. In contrast, census data has universal coverage and provides more accurate and extensive information.

Question for practice:

Examine the reasons behind the dissolution of the Standing Committee on Statistics (SCoS) and its impact on the government's approach to data collection.

Whether India should introduce a Universal Basic Income (UBI)

Source: The post whether India should introduce a Universal Basic Income (UBI) has been created, based on the article “Is it time for India to introduce a Universal Basic Income?” published in “The Hindu” on 13th August 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3– Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment.

Context: The article discusses whether India should introduce a Universal Basic Income (UBI) due to jobless growth and rising inequality. Experts N.R. Bhanumurthy and Arun Kumar debate the feasibility and need for UBI in India, considering current social safety nets, employment policies, and economic challenges.

What is the current situation of unemployment in India?

1. Unemployment in India is a serious issue, especially among youth.
2. As per the ILO, 83% of India's unemployed population consists of young people.
3. Jobless growth is rising, where output increases but employment does not.
4. Automation and AI are reducing jobs, especially in industries like banking and retail.
5. E-commerce growth is replacing traditional retail jobs.

What is Universal Basic Income (UBI)?

It is a guaranteed regular cash transfer by the Government to all citizens irrespective of their income or financial condition. As a universal safety net, UBI will be applied to all individuals, irrespective of income and age. The Economic Survey (2016-17) had noted that the UBI has 3 components namely; **universality**, **unconditionality**, and **agency**. *Universal*: UBI will cover all citizens, *Unconditional*: UBI has no criteria to select the beneficiaries, *Agency*: Providing support in the form of cash transfers to respect, not dictate, recipients' choices.

For detailed information on **Universal Basic Income** [read this article here](#)

Why is UBI being considered in India?

1. Experts believe the lack of demand in the market is stunting growth. As unemployment rises, people have less income, leading to reduced demand for goods and services. This creates a cycle where growth slows further.
2. UBI could provide a solution by putting money in people's hands, which would increase demand and support economic growth.

What are the challenges in implementing UBI?

1. One major challenge is whether UBI would provide dignity to people without jobs.
2. Critics argue that paying people without work could lead to social division and political consequences.
3. Instead, they believe generating employment is essential for societal well-being and personal dignity.

What are the government's current efforts?

1. The government has increased capital investments, focusing on sectors like railways, highways, and power. These sectors, however, are capital-intensive and do not generate many jobs.
2. Labour-intensive sectors, like education, health, and rural development, have faced budget cuts in real terms.
3. The Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, a rural housing scheme, has created employment opportunities with a multiplier effect on sectors like steel, cement, and electrical components.
4. Despite investments, critics argue that more focus is needed on employment-generating sectors to address rising unemployment effectively.

What Should be Done?

1. **Focus on Social Safety Nets:** Strengthen and universalize social safety nets across all states before implementing UBI. Current schemes like cash transfers for farmers and women are examples of semi-UBI in India.
2. **Invest in Labour-Intensive Sectors:** Redirect funds from capital-intensive projects to sectors like education, health, and rural development, which generate more employment.
3. **Upgrade Workforce Skills:** Address the mismatch between skills demanded by industries like AI and automation and the skills supplied. This will prepare workers for the new job market.
4. **Raise Direct Tax Revenue:** Increase the direct tax-to-GDP ratio, currently at 6.25%, to fund UBI.

Question for practice:

Evaluate whether implementing Universal Basic Income (UBI) in India would effectively address the challenges of unemployment and rising inequality, considering the current government efforts and economic conditions.

Free AI-powered primary-care physician for every Indian

Source: The post free AI-powered primary-care physician for every Indian has been created, based on the article "**Health care using AI is bold, but much caution first**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 13th August 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3 – Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.

Context: The article discusses the ambitious plan of providing a "free AI-powered primary-care physician for every Indian, available 24/7" in the next five years. It questions the feasibility, sustainability, and readiness of India to implement such a large-scale initiative. It also highlights the challenges like data privacy, infrastructure costs, and the limitations of AI in replicating human empathy and understanding in healthcare.

For detailed information on **Generative AI (Artificial Intelligence)** [read this article here](#)

What Are the Potential Challenges with AI in Primary Health Care?

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1. Impersonal Care: AI lacks empathy and personal understanding, making patients passive recipients of care. Health care requires human-centric approaches, which AI cannot provide.

2. Lack of Human Intelligence: AI is good at automating tasks but cannot match human intelligence in areas like reasoning, memory, and ethical decision-making. This is crucial in diagnosing complex health conditions.

3. Data Collection Challenges: AI models need vast personal data to improve accuracy, which conflicts with privacy concerns. For example, using Naegele's rule, with only 4% accuracy, shows how limited data leads to poor predictions.

4. High Costs: Establishing data infrastructure and maintaining AI models demands significant investments. Additionally, continuous updates are necessary due to changes in health trends.

5. Lack of Transparency: AI's "black box" nature, where decision-making processes are unclear, leads to mistrust. This is critical when a diagnosis or treatment plan must be understood.

What Are the Benefits of AI in Primary Health Care?

1. Efficiency in Specific Tasks: AI excels in managing hospital resources, predicting hospital kitchen supplies, and optimizing drug procurement.

2. Medical Imaging and Screening: AI's diffusion models can help screen medical images and histopathology slides efficiently, assisting in early diagnosis.

3. Enhancing Medical Education: Large Language Models (LLMs) and Large Multimodal Models (LMMs) simulate clinical scenarios and offer personalised learning, supporting medical training.

4. Improved Access to Knowledge: AI can provide quick access to vast medical information, helping healthcare professionals stay updated.

5. Predictive Analytics: AI can predict specific patterns, for instance, in hospital resource needs, leading to better management.

6. Error Reduction: AI can potentially reduce human errors in repetitive tasks, improving overall healthcare service delivery.

Why Is AI Governance Important?

Effective governance is necessary to ensure AI is developed and used ethically, respecting patient rights and privacy. The lack of specific AI legislation in India, similar to the European Union's Artificial Intelligence Act, poses a risk to implementing AI responsibly in health care settings.

Question for practice:

Examine the potential challenges and benefits of implementing AI in primary health care in India.

Drowning is a major issue in India

Source: The post drowning is a major issue in India has been created, based on the article “**Why does drowning not figure as a health crisis in India?**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 13th August 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Governance-Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health

Context: The article discusses how drowning is a major issue in India, causing over 38,000 deaths annually. Despite this, drowning is not treated as a public health crisis. Experts urge greater attention, prevention efforts, and community-led initiatives to reduce drowning deaths.

What is the Scale of the Drowning Problem in India?

1. In India, at least 38,000 people die from drowning each year, which experts believe is an underestimation.
2. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), in 2022, more than 70% of drowning deaths in India were due to accidental falls into water bodies.
3. Around 3,000 of these deaths were children under 14 years old, mostly boys.
4. However, many deaths, including those caused by flooding, are not accurately recorded as drowning incidents.
5. Globally, drowning has caused over 2.5 million deaths in the last decade, primarily in low and middle-income countries.

What are the government's efforts to prevent drowning?

1. In December 2023, the Union Ministry of Health introduced the Strategic Framework for Drowning Prevention.
2. A National Strategy for the Prevention of Unintentional Injury was also launched, but experts believe that India still has much progress to make.

What Should be Done?

- 1. Increase Public Awareness:** Experts emphasize that changing public perception of drowning, like how smoking went from being seen as glamorous to harmful, is key. Drowning needs to be recognized as a serious public health issue to receive more attention and resources.
- 2. Provide Safe Spaces:** Following Bangladesh's example, create safe play areas, install barricades, and put up signage around water bodies.
- 3. Promote Swimming Lessons:** Swimming education, like in West Bengal's Sundarbans, can save children from drowning in controlled environments.
- 4. Accurate Data Collection:** Improve data reporting on drowning deaths, including flooding incidents.

Question for practice:

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Discuss the scale of the drowning problem in India and the measures that can be taken to prevent it.

The struggles of transgender individuals

Source: The post the struggles of transgender individuals has been created, based on the article “**Being ‘trans’ is being human**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 14th September 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Governance- mechanisms, laws, institutions and bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

Context: The article discusses the struggles of transgender individuals facing violence and denial of rights. It shows how questioning their existence is harmful, like past human rights issues. The focus is on affirming transgender identities as real and deserving of equality.

For detailed information on **Challenges faced by transgender people in India** [read this article here](#)

What Are the Challenges Faced by Transgender Individuals?

- 1. Family Rejection:** Many transgender teenagers, especially from rural and working-class communities, face brutalization and eviction by their families.
- 2. Violence and Persecution:** Transgender persons often endure violence and persecution on the streets, surviving harsh conditions and even suicide attempts.
- 3. Social Discrimination:** The ongoing debate about transgender rights often treats their existence as a “question”, like past issues like racial segregation and women’s suffrage. This creates an environment of hostility and exclusion.
- 4. Legal and Policy Challenges:** In 2022-23, a bill in the U.S. Congress sought to prohibit schools and libraries from keeping materials on sexual orientation or gender identity, showing how legislation can further marginalize transgender persons.

How Is Transgender Rights Debate Similar to Historical Civil Rights Issues?

1. Historical civil rights debates, like the "woman question" or "segregation question," treated human rights as problems to be debated, much like transgender rights today.
2. Bathroom segregation once targeted Black men, just as today's bathroom bills target transwomen.
3. In 1940, Nazi Olympic officials required women athletes to prove their sex, similar to modern efforts to deny trans identities.
4. Far-right and gender-critical groups frame transgender rights as a debate, justifying exclusion, similar to historical justifications for denying civil rights to marginalized groups.
5. Past civil rights movements faced similar accusations of being unreasonable or violent.

How Do Philosophical Views on Gender and Sexuality Influence This Issue?

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1. **Simone de Beauvoir** challenged the idea that gender is purely biological, stating that "one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman." She argued that the sexed body does not determine **gendered consciousness**, emphasizing that our understanding of the body is shaped by social experiences.
2. **J.K. Rowling's gender-critical view** defines women by biological traits, like producing large gametes, contrasting with de Beauvoir's approach.
3. This debate mirrors past struggles, such as the racial and gender segregation questions, where "scientific detachment" was used to deny marginalized groups' rights and humanity.

What Does This Debate Say About Society?

1. Society's character is questioned when it decides how to treat marginalized groups like transgender individuals.
2. Dehumanizing transgender people by questioning their "realness" fragments the concept of an integral human self, revealing a flawed societal character.

Question for practice:

Examine the challenges faced by transgender individuals in society.

Issues in India's infrastructure projects

Source: The post issues in India's infrastructure projects has been created, based on the article "**The shock of crumbling infrastructure and the solution**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 14th August 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- infrastructure

Context: The article highlights issues in India's infrastructure projects, such as delays, cost overruns, and quality control problems. It emphasizes the need for better project management and modern tools to improve efficiency and avoid failures in future developments.

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

What is the state of India's infrastructure sector?

1. India's infrastructure sector is vital for economic growth.
2. The government is committed to improving it with initiatives like the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan, National Logistics Policy, and the Smart Cities Mission.
3. In Budget 2024, capital expenditure was increased to ₹11.11 lakh crore (3.4% of GDP).

What are the issues in India's infrastructure projects?

1. Time Delays and Cost Overruns: India's infrastructure projects often face significant time delays and cost overruns. According to a Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation report from December 2023, 431 projects had a combined cost overrun of ₹4.82 lakh crore.

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2. Percentage of Delayed Projects: The report also noted that 36% of the projects were delayed between 25 to 60 months, contributing to extended timelines and increased costs.

3. Project Management Gaps: Many projects suffer from poor planning and execution, particularly those managed by local urban bodies, which lack adequate capacity and expertise. This inefficiency leads to additional government expenditures and crowds out funding for more deserving projects.

4. Quality Issues: The repeated collapses of under-construction bridges in Bihar highlight severe quality control issues, emphasizing the need for improved project management and oversight practices.

What Should be Done?

1. Adopt Advanced Project Management Tools: Implement modern management techniques involving real-time data to handle projects efficiently. This aligns with practices in countries like the UK and China, which focus on data-driven approaches for better project execution.

2. Enhance Training and Skills: Establish a professional agency for project management education, similar to the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India. This can develop a workforce skilled in efficient project oversight and execution.

3. Integrate Departments via PM Gati Shakti: Use the GIS-based ERP portal from the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan to coordinate all government departments, ensuring timely and organized project progress.

4. Apply a Program Management Approach: Emulate the systematic coordination used in the Shendra-Bidkin Industrial Corridor project, which managed multiple packages simultaneously to prevent delays and cost overruns.

Question for practice:

Examine the key issues in India's infrastructure projects and suggest potential solutions for improving project management and execution.

India's Mission Mausam

Source: The post India's Mission Mausam has been created, based on the article "**Weather gods: Attempts at controlling the weather are still in the realm of uncertainty**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 14th August 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3-Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life

Context: The article discusses India's Mission Mausam, which aims to improve weather forecasting by upgrading instruments. It also explores new research in cloud simulation and weather modification, with the goal of reducing lightning strikes and better controlling rainfall.

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

What is Mission Mausam?

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1. **Mission Mausam** is a ₹2,000 crore initiative by the Union Cabinet to upgrade India's weather forecasting system.
2. It aims to enhance the capabilities of organizations like the India Meteorological Department, National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting, and the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology.
3. By 2026, it plans to install 60 weather radars, 15 wind profilers, and 15 radiosondes.
4. A key innovation is a proposed cloud-simulation chamber to model rain clouds and test weather interventions.
5. It also explores reducing lightning strikes, which are the leading cause of natural deaths in India.

How Does This Differ from the National Monsoon Mission?

1. While the National Monsoon Mission, started in 2012, developed models for better monsoon forecasting using intensive computing, Mission Mausam aims to extend capabilities beyond just monsoons.
2. It plans to enhance daily and seasonal forecasts and develop specific models for heatwaves and cold waves.

Why is This Research Important?

1. The research aims to reduce lightning strikes, which are the leading cause of natural deaths in India, surpassing floods and landslides.
2. Advanced instruments like weather radars and wind profilers will improve monitoring of wind, humidity, and temperature.
3. Experiments such as cloud seeding could help control rainfall, which is crucial for agriculture.
4. Climate change adds complexity to weather patterns, making fundamental research essential to predict and mitigate its effects.
5. Weather modification experiments, while uncertain, offer hope for controlling dangerous weather phenomena like lightning, as seen in experiments in other countries.

Question for practice:

Discuss how Mission Mausam aims to improve weather forecasting and mitigate the effects of dangerous weather phenomena like lightning.

Concerns about manpower shortages in Indian Railways

Source: The post concerns about manpower shortages in Indian Railways has been created, based on the article "**Railway Board Chairman flags shortage of manpower**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 14th August 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Infrastructures

Context: The article discusses how **Satish Kumar, the new Chairman of the Railway Board**, raised concerns about manpower shortages in Indian Railways. He urged for more staff due to increased infrastructure, rising train numbers, safety concerns, and expanded railway assets.

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

What Has Led to the Need for More Manpower?

1. Increased Infrastructure: The Indian Railways has seen significant growth in infrastructure, including new lines, trains, and assets, requiring more manpower for safe and efficient operation.

2. Rise in Capital Expenditure: Railways' capital expenditure increased from ₹1.48 lakh crore in 2019-20 to ₹2.62 lakh crore in 2023-24, expanding assets and the need for additional staff.

3. Growth in Locomotives: The number of locomotives increased by 59.86%, from 11,739 in 2019 to 15,564 in 2024.

4. Passenger Amenities: The number of escalators grew from 656 to 1,436, and lifts increased by 196% over five years. Additionally, 63,456 km of railway route has been electrified, up from 35,488 km.

5. Financial Improvements: From 2019-20 to 2023-24, passenger earnings rose by 40%, and freight loading increased by 31.4%, indicating significant revenue growth for the Railways.

What safety concerns are associated with staff shortages?

1. There have been several major accidents in the last two years, raising safety concerns.
2. Trade unions have long demanded the filling of vacancies, especially in safety-related jobs.
3. Satish Kumar stressed that outsourcing tasks like track and locomotive maintenance is not feasible for ensuring safety.

What Should be Done?

1. Urgently recruit additional manpower to ensure the safe operation of trains due to the rapid growth of railway infrastructure.
2. The Ministry of Railways should be granted the authority to create non-gazetted posts, especially in safety-related categories.
3. Outsourcing critical tasks like track, locomotive, and signalling maintenance is not viable due to safety concerns.

Question for practice:

Discuss the factors that have contributed to the need for more manpower in Indian Railways.

Judicial view on Arvind Kejriwal's arrest

Source: The post judicial view on Arvind Kejriwal's arrest has been created, based on the article "**Arvind Kejriwal's bail: From Supreme Court, a limited relief**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 14th August 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- judiciary

Context: The article discusses Justice Ujjal Bhuyan's judgment granting bail to Arvind Kejriwal and criticizing the CBI's illegal arrest. It highlights judicial reluctance to defend civil rights, procedural misuse, and the need for clearer self-incrimination protections under Article 20(3).

For detailed information on **The Need for a Bail Law** [read this article here](#)

What is the Judicial view on Arvind Kejriwal's arrest?

- 1. Justice Ujjal Bhuyan:** Found Kejriwal's arrest by the CBI illegal, stating it aimed to prevent his bail in the Enforcement Directorate (ED) case. He criticized the CBI for using procedural technicalities as punishment.
- 2. Justice Surya Kant:** Agreed that Kejriwal should be granted bail but accepted the CBI's reasons for his arrest without deeper scrutiny.
- 3. CBI's Justification:** The CBI claimed Kejriwal's arrest was due to his "evasive replies" and lack of cooperation. Justice Bhuyan dismissed this reasoning, emphasizing that such grounds violate Article 20(3) on self-incrimination rights.
- 4. Delhi High Court:** Criticized by Justice Bhuyan for unnecessarily directing Kejriwal to seek bail from the trial court again, despite hearing detailed arguments earlier.

What Broader Issues Does the Judgment Highlight?

- 1. Denial of Bail in High-Profile Cases:** Courts tend to deny bail in high-profile cases without legal justification. Justice Bhuyan highlighted this problem, urging courts to protect personal liberty.
- 2. Right Against Self-Incrimination:** The judgment questions the limited interpretation of Article 20(3) in the *Kathi Kalu Oghad* case (1961), which restricted self-incrimination rights during pre-trial investigations.
- 3. Judiciary's Reluctance to Challenge the Government:** Justice Bhuyan pointed out a growing trend where courts, especially in high-profile cases, avoid challenging the government, potentially compromising civil rights.

Question for practice:

Examine how Justice Ujjal Bhuyan's judgment on Arvind Kejriwal's arrest addresses the misuse of procedural technicalities and the right against self-incrimination under Article 20(3).

Challenges faced by the Urban Policy Framework in India

Source: The post challenges faced by the Urban Policy Framework in India has been created, based on the article "**Realising the rural-urban continuum**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 16th September 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 1 – Society – Urbanization

Context: The article discusses how India's growing urban areas need better infrastructure and governance. It highlights financial and policy challenges, urging a shift from viewing problems as rural or urban and instead addressing them as part of a connected urban-rural continuum.

For detailed information on **Challenges faced by Urban Local Bodies in India** [read this article here](#)

What is the Current Urban Policy Framework in India?

1. The urban policy framework in India is highly centralized, limiting financial autonomy for local bodies.
2. Programs like AMRUT focus on urban areas for infrastructure projects like sewage treatment but exclude smaller towns and urban villages. This oversight affects a significant part of the population not living in major cities.
3. Solid waste management is handled separately under the Swachh Bharat Mission, which aims to keep urban and rural India clean but operates without unified management for urban and adjacent rural areas.

What Are the Challenges faced by the Urban Policy Framework in India?

- 1. Centralized Finances:** There is excessive centralization, reducing financial autonomy for local bodies. The 13th Finance Commission mentioned that local bodies are being “asphyxiated” due to financial constraints.
- 2. Tied Grants:** Grants are increasingly tied to centrally sponsored schemes, limiting local flexibility. For example, towns risk losing grants if there is no connection between property tax increases and State Goods and Services Tax.
- 3. Overlook the Urban-Rural Continuum:** Programs like AMRUT and Swachh Bharat Mission focus on urban infrastructure but overlook the urban-rural continuum.
- 4. Governance Challenges:** District Planning Committees, intended to coordinate between rural and urban local bodies, are now subordinate to district bureaucracies, weakening their role.

What Should be Done?

- 1. Empower District Planning Committees:** The 73rd and 74th Amendments need to be revisited. District Planning Committees must be strengthened to reduce bureaucratic control and improve local governance.
- 2. Collaborative Waste Management:** Solid and liquid waste management should be planned at the district or regional level, integrating both urban and rural areas for efficiency.
- 3. Learn from Kerala:** In Kerala, public pressure led to the cancellation of a landfill site. This was possible due to integrated governance where both rural and urban bodies fall under one ministry, unlike other states.

Question for practice:

Examine the challenges faced by the urban policy framework in India and suggest measures to improve governance and infrastructure development.

Benefits of District Mineral Foundations (DMFs)

Source: The post benefits of District Mineral Foundations (DMFs) has been created, based on the article “A human touch to India’s mineral ecosystem” published in “The Hindu” on 16th September is 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Governance-Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes

Context: The article discusses the success of District Mineral Foundations (DMFs), which use funds from mining companies for local development. Over 10 years, DMFs have transformed mining areas by funding projects that improve livelihoods and promote community welfare across India.

For detailed information on **District Mineral Foundation Funds** [read this article here](#)

What Is District Mineral Foundations (DMFs)?

1. District Mineral Foundations (DMFs) were created by the Indian government under the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 2015.
2. DMFs receive payments from mining companies, contributing almost ₹1 lakh crore over ten years.
3. They focus on decentralised, community-centric development in mining-affected districts, funding around three lakh projects across 645 districts in 23 states. Examples include empowering women in Odisha through self-help groups and helping youth in Madhya Pradesh learn drone technology.

What Are the Benefits of District Mineral Foundations (DMFs)?

1. **Decentralised Development:** DMFs have collected nearly ₹1 lakh crore, funding local projects in mining-affected districts, improving infrastructure, healthcare, and education.
2. **Empowering Communities:** In Odisha, DMFs support self-help groups, helping women become artisans and entrepreneurs, boosting local economies.
3. **Skill Development:** In Madhya Pradesh, DMFs help youth master drone technology, leading to better job opportunities.
4. **National DMF Portal:** The portal digitises DMF administration, enhancing transparency, efficiency, and oversight of operations across India.
5. **Innovation:** DMFs involve local stakeholders, ensuring efficient implementation of projects and including elected and non-elected members for inclusivity.
6. **Aligning with Government Schemes:** DMFs are designed to align with central and state government schemes, particularly in "aspirational districts," to support broader national goals like the Sustainable Development Goals. This integration helps amplify the impact of government initiatives at the local level.
7. **Supporting Local Needs:** DMFs have funded three lakh projects across 645 districts in 23 states, improving socio-economic and human development indicators.

What Is the Future Direction for DMFs?

1. **The future direction of DMFs** focuses on standardizing best practices while retaining the unique local context and knowledge in each district.
2. District administrations are encouraged to **align DMF activities** with central and state government schemes, particularly in aspirational districts, as part of **Pradhan Mantri Khanij Kshetra Kalyan Yojana (PMKKKY)**.
3. Projects will focus on **improving livelihoods of forest dwellers**, supporting rural athletes, and developing **sports infrastructure**.
4. With the launch of the **National Critical Minerals Mission**, DMFs will further complement the broader mining landscape by focusing on local welfare.
5. DMFs operate under the philosophy of "**Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas Sabka Vishwas Sabka Prayas**," ensuring inclusive governance and development for all

Question for practice:

Evaluate how District Mineral Foundations (DMFs) contribute to local community development and align with government schemes in mining-affected areas.

Modi 3.0 Prioritizes Agriculture and Rural Development for Economic Growth

Source: The post Modi 3.0 prioritizes agriculture and Rural Development for Economic Growth has been created, based on the article "**Ashok Gulati writes: Giving farms their due**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 16th September is 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3-Agriculture

Context: The article discusses the Modi government's policies in its third term, focusing on agriculture and rural development. It highlights schemes like PM-KISAN, agricultural digitalization, rural housing, and roads to boost the economy, especially benefiting farmers and rural areas.

What Has Modi 3.0 Prioritized in Agriculture and Rural Development?

Agricultural Initiatives: Modi 3.0, under the leadership of Shivraj Singh Chouhan, has continued the PM-KISAN scheme, committing Rs 20,000 crore to provide Rs 6,000 yearly to eligible agricultural households. Despite expectations for an inflation adjustment, the amount remains unchanged. Additionally, the government approved seven new schemes related to agriculture, with a budget of Rs 14,000 crore. These include:

1. Digitalization of agriculture (e.g., land records and farmer identity cards)
2. Crop science for food and nutrition security
3. Horticulture for nutrition and profitability
4. Livestock health and production

5. Natural resource management for climate resilience
6. Agriculture education for skilled Human Resources
7. Expansion of Krishi Vigyan Kendras for farmer outreach

Why is digitalization of agriculture important?

Digitalization involves identifying farmers, particularly distinguishing owner-operators from tenants. Current data shows only 17% tenancy, but micro-surveys suggest it could be 25-30%. Tenant farmers often borrow at high interest rates, making agriculture unprofitable. Digitalization will enable better access to institutional credit and government benefits like PM-KISAN.

How can data triangulation improve agriculture?

Linking various data sets, such as soil health cards and fertilizer purchases, can lead to savings and more efficient public spending. For example, a rice farmer may not need free rice under the Public Distribution System (PDS). Investments in digitalization could yield returns over 10 times the initial cost, benefiting the agricultural sector.

What are the rural development plans?

The government has committed to building 20 million houses in rural areas, which will create jobs and improve living conditions for the poor. The PM-Gram Sadak Yojana will invest Rs 75,000 crore in rural roads, boosting agriculture, reducing poverty, and increasing access to markets.

Question for practice:

Discuss how digitalization of agriculture is expected to benefit farmers and improve public spending according to the Modi 3.0 policies.

India's use of competitive bidding in the electricity sector

Source: The post India's use of competitive bidding in the electricity sector has been created, based on the article "**Governments should encourage more players in the power sector, not less**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 16th September is 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Infrastructures (Energy)

Context: The article discusses how competitive bidding in India's electricity sector has lowered costs, increased investments, and boosted renewable energy. However, recent composite tenders combining coal and solar threaten competition by excluding smaller players and stalling innovation.

For detailed information on **Solutions to Address Power Sector Concerns** [read this article here](#)

What Has Competitive Bidding Achieved in India's Electricity Sector?

1. Significant Tariff Reductions: Solar power tariffs plummeted from Rs 15 per kWh in 2010 to Rs 2.80 per kWh by 2018, demonstrating the effectiveness of competitive bidding in lowering costs.

2. Increased Private Sector Investment: This approach attracted considerable private investment, adding approximately 27 GW of solar capacity.

3. Expansion in Wind Energy: In the wind sector, tariffs decreased sharply from Rs 5.30 per kWh to Rs 2.50 per kWh within just two years, showcasing rapid cost reductions akin to those seen in solar power.

4. Enhanced Market Competition: The competitive environment fostered by bidding has encouraged both larger and smaller players to participate, driving further innovations and investments in the sector.

What Are the Current Challenges with Composite Bidding?

1. Recently, some states have issued composite bids requiring suppliers to provide both coal and solar power, which could require massive investments—up to Rs 52,000 crore in some cases.

2. Coal projects take 6-7 years to become operational, while solar only takes 1.5-2 years, leading to different delivery timelines.

3. Concentrating large capacity in one or two tenders reduces competition and innovation potential, especially in solar.

4. This approach may restrict smaller players from participating and could slow down the reduction of tariffs and innovation in the sector, especially in solar power where technology and market conditions evolve rapidly.

What Should be Done?

1. Separate Coal and Solar Bids: Avoid composite bids that combine coal and solar projects, which hinder competition and innovation, especially as solar technology evolves rapidly.

2. Implement an Annual Procurement Calendar: Distribution utilities should establish a calendar for capacity acquisition to give investors clear timelines and certainty, promoting consistent market participation and investment.

3. Foster Smaller Player Inclusion: Structure tenders to allow smaller players to compete effectively, preventing market dominance by a few large firms and encouraging innovation.

Question for practice:

Discuss how competitive bidding has impacted tariffs and investment in India's electricity sector.

Implications of digital campaigning by political parties

Source: This post **Implications of digital campaigning by political parties** has been created based on the article **Democratic engagement with a digital plug-in**, published in **Indian Express on 16th September 2024**.

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 2 – Governance – Electoral Reforms

News: The article highlights how digital platforms and targeted advertising are reshaping democratic processes, particularly in Indian elections.

9 PM Compilation September 2024

The use of digital platforms by political parties and third-party campaigners to shape public opinion, potentially distorting democratic discourse is at all-time high. There is a transition from traditional to digital campaigning.

During 2023 Karnataka Assembly election, BJP allocated 52% (₹7,800 lakh) and Congress 55% (₹4,900 lakh) of their propaganda budgets to digital advertisements.

During the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, the BJP spent over ₹68 crore on 89,000 Google ads in just 44 days, while the Congress spent over ₹33 crore on 2,900 ads.

As per the Lokniti-CSDS survey, Third-party campaigners spent over ₹2,260 lakh in 90 days leading up to June 29, 2024, on Meta platforms. It also indicates funding by political parties

The 'Leave.EU' campaign in the UK Brexit referendum used targeted digital content to influence voters.

Why political parties are using digital platforms?

Micro-targeting capabilities: Parties can now target specific audiences down to the panchayat level. For instance, the BJP micro-targeted over 1,700 pin codes in a single advertisement, demonstrating the precision of digital influence.

Increasing Importance of money power: The shift towards digital campaigning marks a transformative change in the democratic process, where financial resources translate directly into targeted influence.

What are the Implications?

Economic disparity: Wealthier parties can dominate the digital landscape, creating an uneven playing field.

Content manipulation: Third-party campaigners often use inflammatory rhetoric and derogatory language in their advertisements. They ensure anonymity in who is funding them.

Platform-specific strategies: Different content strategies across platforms (e.g., Google vs. Meta) highlight the need for uniform regulatory frameworks.

What should be done?

Expenditure regulation: Need for 'segmented caps' on party expenditure to ensure balanced allocation across various campaign categories.

Content oversight: Strict expenditure reporting requirements for third-party campaigners and independent audits of their content after each election cycle.

Harmonised regulatory frameworks: Uniform standards across all digital platforms to tackle problematic content and ensure accountability.

Climate Justice for future generations

Source: The post **Climate Justice for future generations** has been created, based on the article "**Rights of future generations must guide climate debate**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 17th September is 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 3 – Environment – Climate Change

Context: The article discusses the upcoming 2024 UN Summit, focusing on future generations' rights, climate justice, and the need to protect the planet. It highlights legal debates on responsibilities towards future generations and calls for sustainable, equitable global actions.

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For detailed information on **Climate Justice** [read this article here](#)

What is the Summit of the Future?

1. The Summit of the Future is scheduled for September 22-23, 2024, at the United Nations in New York.
2. It aims to find ways to solve global problems like conflict, climate change, pandemics, pollution, income inequality, and discrimination.
3. The main theme is protecting the rights of future generations to a safe and secure world.

What Are the Legal Debates Around Future Generations' Rights?

1. Stephen Humphreys' Argument: He argues that the focus on future generations is unclear and diverts attention from immediate obligations toward present generations. He believes governments prioritize current generations, sometimes following environmentally harmful paths to ensure higher living standards.

2. Wewerinke-Singh's Counter: She and her co-authors argue that future generations' rights have the potential to reshape international law, based on justice and solidarity. They refer to the wisdom of indigenous groups, where responsibility toward future generations is considered a sacred duty, extending four to seven generations ahead.

3. Maastricht Principles: These principles emphasize that human rights apply to all generations, without time limits. They link sustainable development and climate justice to the rights of future generations, stating that these rights must consider our dependence on and responsibility to the Earth.

How Have Courts Addressed Environmental and Future Generations' Rights?

1. Courts in various countries have recognized the importance of protecting the environment for future generations.
2. Colombia's court ordered the government to create an "intergenerational pact" to safeguard the Amazon.
3. The Supreme Court of Pakistan banned cement plants in fragile zones, emphasizing the need for climate justice to protect future generations.
4. India's National Green Tribunal upheld intergenerational equity in environmental protection.
5. Kenya's High Court mandated the preservation of natural resources for future generations.
6. South Africa's High Court stressed considering long-term pollution impacts on future generations.

Why is Earth's 'Overshoot Day' Important?

1. Earth's '**Overshoot Day**' marks when humanity's resource consumption exceeds Earth's ability to renew them in a year.
2. In **1970**, Overshoot Day was on **December 30**; by **2024**, it had moved to **August 1**, showing a concerning trend.

3. This shift highlights overuse of natural resources, risking future generations' ability to live sustainably.

4. **Eight** out of **nine planetary boundaries** needed for Earth's survival have already been breached.

5. If this continues, future generations may inherit a planet unable to support life, reinforcing the need for urgent global action to protect Earth's resources.

Question for practice:

Discuss the legal debates around the rights of future generations and how courts have addressed environmental protection in this context.

Issues with Project Cheetah

Source: The post Issues with Project Cheetah has been created, based on the article "**What is the current status of the introduction of African cheetahs?**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 17th September 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- ecology, and environment-conservation

Context: The article discusses India's plan to reintroduce African cheetahs to restore ecosystems and conserve the species. However, many cheetahs have died due to captivity and health issues, raising concerns about the project's long-term success and habitat suitability.

For detailed information on **Project Cheetah** [read this article here](#)

What is Project Cheetah?

1. Project Cheetah is India's effort to introduce African cheetahs into its ecosystems.
2. It aims to conserve the species and restore savanna habitats.
3. The Cheetah Action Plan (CAP) mentions that this project also seeks to help Iran conserve the Asiatic cheetah and expand its distribution.
4. Cheetahs are intended to be a flagship species to promote ecosystem restoration and eco-tourism. 5. The project is expected to take 15 to 40 years to reach its goals.
6. An expert committee led by Rajesh Gopal, under the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) and the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC), oversees the project.
7. The Wildlife Institute of India provides technical support, and the Madhya Pradesh Forest Department handles field implementation.

Where are the Cheetahs Located?

1. The cheetahs are mainly located in **Kuno National Park**, Madhya Pradesh, chosen due to its habitat suitability and prey base.

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2. Despite this, most cheetahs have been in **captivity** for nearly 12 months, not released into the wild as planned.

3. **Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary** has an 80 sq. km fenced area where cheetahs were to be released by early 2024, now delayed to late 2024 or early 2025.

4. A **captive breeding facility** is being built in **Banni grasslands, Gujarat**, where some cheetahs will be housed.

5. **Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary** in Madhya Pradesh is another potential release site.

Will Project Cheetah succeed?

1. The CAP outlines short- and long-term goals.

2. In the short term, it aimed for a 50% survival rate, successful reproduction, and economic benefits through eco-tourism. These targets are not being met due to extended captivity.

3. Long-term success depends on cheetahs establishing stable populations and improving ecosystem health. The project will require consistent management for at least 25 years.

What are the Issues with Project Cheetah?

1. **Extended Captivity:** The cheetahs have been kept in captivity for nearly 12 months, which makes them unfit for release, against the intended timeline of 1-2 months.

2. **High Mortality Rates:** Several cheetahs died due to health issues like kidney disease, heart failure, and heatstroke. Three cubs died from heatstroke, and another from drowning.

3. **Mismanagement:** Cheetah deaths occurred due to improper selection and management. For example, a female died from injuries after being introduced to a male coalition.

4. **Unsuitable Habitat:** There are concerns about whether India has enough suitable habitat (4,000 to 8,000 sq. km) to support a viable free-ranging population of cheetahs.

5. **Missed Targets:** Short-term goals like a 50% survival rate and successful reproduction are not being met due to prolonged captivity and management issues.

Question for practice:

Examine the challenges faced by Project Cheetah in achieving its short-term goals, including extended captivity and high mortality rates.

Constitution allows the central government to intervene in state affairs during emergencies

Source: The post Constitution allows the central government to intervene in state affairs during emergencies has been created, based on the article “**How do emergency provisions impact Centre-State relations?**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 17th September is 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 2 - Indian Polity - Issues related to federal structure

Context: The article explains India's federal system and how the Constitution allows the central government to intervene in state affairs during emergencies. It highlights the situation in Manipur, where despite severe violence, central intervention under Article 356 has not yet occurred.

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

What is India's Federal Structure?

India is a federation with two levels of government: the Centre and the States. The Constitution's Seventh Schedule distributes power between these levels. Maintaining law and order is primarily the responsibility of State governments.

What are emergency provisions?

1. Emergency provisions are outlined in Part XVIII of the Indian Constitution.
2. Articles 355 and 356 are key provisions dealing with the Centre's role in State governance.
3. **Article 355** imposes a duty on the Centre to protect States from external aggression and internal disturbance.
4. **Article 356** allows the imposition of the President's rule if a state government cannot function according to the Constitution.
5. This provision has been misused in the past to remove elected governments for political reasons.

What has the judiciary ruled on Articles 355 and 356?

1. **Article 356** was often misused to remove State governments for political reasons, leading to its controversial application.
2. In the **S.R. Bommai case (1994)**, the Supreme Court restricted the misuse of Article 356, ruling that it should be invoked only in cases of a constitutional breakdown, not merely due to law-and-order issues.
3. The Court also established that the imposition of the President's rule is subject to **judicial review**, preventing arbitrary use.
4. **Article 355** was initially narrowly interpreted in the **State of Rajasthan vs Union of India (1977)**, linking it to Article 356's justification.
5. Later rulings, such as **Naga People's Movement (1998)** and **Sarbananda Sonowal (2005)**, broadened the scope of Article 355, allowing more comprehensive actions to protect States and ensure their governance aligns with the Constitution.

What recommendations have been made?

Use of Article 356 as Last Resort: The Sarkaria Commission (1987), National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (2002), and the Punchhi Commission (2010) recommend that Article 356 be used only in cases of extreme urgency and as a last resort.

Article 355 Duties and Powers: These commissions recommend that Article 355 not only imposes a duty on the Union to protect States but also grants it the authority to take necessary actions to fulfill this duty.

Question for practice:

Discuss the role of Articles 355 and 356 in India's federal structure and how the judiciary has limited their misuse.

Concerns with India's surrogacy laws

Source: The post concerns with India's surrogacy laws has been created, based on the article "Why Supreme Court must look into compensation for surrogates" published in "Indian Express" on 17th September 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Context: The article discusses concerns over India's surrogacy laws, particularly the prohibition on payments to surrogates. It highlights debates about fair compensation for surrogate mothers, contrasting it with existing practices, and anticipates the Supreme Court's review of these issues.

For detailed information on **the debates around the Surrogacy Act** [read this article here](#)

How Have Surrogacy Arrangements Changed Over Time?

1. Earlier, payment to surrogates was common in private healthcare, with surrogacy seen as part of infertility treatment.
2. The 2016 Surrogacy Bill, now the **Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021**, banned commercial surrogacy, allowing only altruistic surrogacy.
3. The **Assisted Reproductive Technologies (Regulation) Act, 2021** also regulates fertility treatments, further limiting payments to surrogates.
4. Surrogates can now only receive medical expense coverage and insurance, not compensation for their labor.

What are the key concerns with India's surrogacy laws?

- 1. Ban on Payments:** The Surrogacy (Regulation) Act prohibits payments to surrogates, limiting compensation to medical expenses and insurance, which may not fully address exploitation concerns.
- 2. Commercial to Altruistic Shift:** Earlier, surrogates were paid, but now they can only provide "help." This shift has made it harder for people to find surrogates, and some arrangements have gone underground, leading to illegal activities.
- 3. Exploitation Risks:** Poor women may still be exploited despite the ban on payments, as intermediaries can take advantage of their vulnerable situation without regulated compensation.

4. Underground Surrogacy: Since the ban, illegal surrogacy arrangements have been reported, with surrogacy rackets being busted.

What did the Parliamentary Committee recommend?

The **Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health and Family Welfare**, in its **102nd Report of the Rajya Sabha**, made the following recommendations for the 2016 Surrogacy Bill:

- 1. Reasonable Compensation:** Surrogates should receive “reasonable compensation” beyond medical expenses and insurance.
- 2. Regulated Compensation:** Compensation should be regulated by appropriate bodies, not determined by the bargaining power of the parties involved.
- 3. Comprehensive Coverage:** Compensation should include lost wages during pregnancy, medical screenings, and psychological counseling for the surrogate.
- 4. Additional Support:** Compensation should also cover childcare for the surrogate’s own children, dietary supplements, maternity clothing, and post-delivery care.

Question for practice:

Examine the concerns and recommendations regarding the shift from commercial to altruistic surrogacy in India's Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021.

Women in Indian medicine

Source: The post women in Indian medicine has been created, based on the article “**Express View on women outnumbering men in medicine: Whole numbers, dark truths**” published in “**Indian Express**” on 17th September is 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health

Context: The article discusses the rise in the number of women studying and working in medicine in India. However, it highlights ongoing challenges like sexism, lack of facilities, and security issues, calling for improvements as more women join the medical field.

What is the historical context of women in Indian medicine?

1. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, few women in India studied medicine.
2. Early female doctors like Anandi Bai Joshi, Kadambini Ganguly, and Haimabati Sen were rare and seen as exceptions.
3. The situation has improved in recent decades, with more women pursuing medical education.

4. According to the All-India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE), the number of women enrolled in medical colleges rose significantly. In 2011-12, there were 88 women for every 100 men; by 2019-20, this increased to 110 women per 100 men.

What are the challenges women face in the medical profession?

- 1. Sexism:** Women in medicine face sexism in both the classroom and workplace.
- 2. Lack of facilities:** Many hospitals lack basic facilities like separate changing rooms and washrooms for women.
- 3. Security issues:** There are inadequate security measures for women working late-night shifts. The R G Kar incident in Kolkata highlights the dangers women face.
- 4. Workplace bias:** The medical system is built on a masculine model, making it harder for women.

What can be done to improve the situation for women doctors?

More women in leadership roles can help address these issues. The focus should be on improving workplace safety and eliminating sexism, so women don't have to worry about late-night shifts or other security risks.

Question for practice:

Discuss the challenges faced by women in the medical profession in India and the potential solutions to improve their situation.

Issues with the death sentence in India

Source: The post issues with the death sentence in India has been created, based on the article “**The continuing distribution of the death penalty**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 18th September 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2 – Governance – Criminal Justice System in India

Context: The article discusses the death penalty in India, particularly in cases of sexual violence against women and children. It questions its effectiveness, highlighting societal, legal, and systemic issues. It suggests focusing on victim-centered reforms, education, and addressing underlying causes of violence.

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

What is the recent law passed in West Bengal?

1. West Bengal passed the **Aparajita Woman and Child (West Bengal Criminal Laws Amendment) Bill, 2024**. It introduces the death penalty for rape.
2. This law was made after the brutal rape and murder of a doctor in Kolkata. The bill seeks to amend the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act.
3. The West Bengal Assembly passed it unanimously, but the State Governor referred it to the President of India.

What is the current situation of rape cases in India?

1. In 2022, India recorded 31,516 rapes, averaging nearly four every hour, according to the National Crime Records Bureau.
2. Rajasthan had the highest number of rape cases with 5,399, followed by Uttar Pradesh (3,690) and Madhya Pradesh (3,029).
3. There were also 248 cases of murder linked to rape or gang rape.

What is the global situation regarding the death penalty?

1. By the end of 2023, 144 countries had abolished the death penalty in law or practice.
2. 112 countries have completely abolished the death penalty for all crimes.
3. However, 55 countries still retain the death penalty in law and practice.
4. In South Asia, Bhutan and Nepal have abolished the death penalty, while the Maldives and Sri Lanka are abolitionists in practice.
5. India, along with Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, still retains it.
6. In 2023, India recorded 120 death sentences, though no executions took place, and 561 individuals were on death row.

What are the issues with the death sentence in India?

1. Many prisoners on death row in India face long delays, poor prison conditions, and mental health issues.
2. Most death row prisoners are from marginalized communities, and some even commit suicide due to harsh conditions.

How does society react to sexual violence?

1. Society often reacts to sexual violence with anger, grief, and shock, leading to calls for the death penalty.
2. Many label rapists as monsters ("rakshas," "haivaan," "wehshi darinda"), creating an "othering" that separates them from society.
3. The public focuses on family, community, and national honor rather than the victim's autonomy.
4. Daily violence against women, both in public spaces and within homes, often goes overlooked and is met with political and legal tolerance.
5. There is a troubling trend of people searching online for videos of the victims, indicating a voyeuristic and sensationalist approach to such incidents.

What Should be Done?

1. Instead of focusing on harsh punishments, India should address the root causes of violence against women and children.
2. There should be reforms in the criminal justice system, including support for rape survivors and their families.
3. Education and public awareness about gender equality are important.
4. Need for an abolitionist feminist movement to reject the death penalty and promote structural changes in society, such as better education and healthcare.

Question for practice:

Examine the effectiveness of the death penalty in addressing sexual violence in India, considering societal, legal, and systemic issues.

India's economic growth shaped by its demographics

Source: The post India's economic growth shaped by its demographics has been created, based on the article "Demographic advantage, Indian economy's sweet spot" published in "The Hindu" on 18th September is 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Economy-growth, development, and employment

Context: The article discusses India's economic growth and demographic advantages, emphasizing the need for ongoing reforms, skill development, and labor-intensive sector focus. It highlights the importance of addressing labor laws, boosting manufacturing, and managing AI's impact on employment.

For detailed information on **India's Demographic Dividend** [read this article here](#)

How is India's economic growth shaped by its demographics?

1. India's economic growth is driven by its young population, with a median age of 28 years and 63% in the working-age group.
2. Growth is led by the services sector rather than manufacturing, reducing labor intensity.
3. Only 4.4% of young workers are formally skilled, highlighting a significant skills gap.

What are the Challenges with Labour and Employment?

- 1. Low Labour Force Participation Rate:** In 2022, the participation rate was only 55.2%, according to the International Labour Organization (ILO).
- 2. Capital-Intensive Growth:** Technological advancements have led to a higher capital-to-labour ratio. Economist Arvind Panagariya noted that capital-led growth isn't ideal for India, given its abundance of labor.
- 3. Hesitancy in Labor-Intensive Sectors:** Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and large businesses avoid labor-intensive sectors due to the high compliance burden imposed by outdated labor laws.

4. Delay in Implementing Labour Codes: The new labor codes approved by Parliament have not been implemented, creating uncertainty for investors.

5. Agriculture Employment Imbalance: 45% of the workforce is in agriculture, contributing only 18% to GDP, while other sectors like tourism and logistics remain underutilized for job creation.

What is the Impact of AI and Machine Learning?

1. AI and Machine Learning (ML) are transforming industries, especially by replacing repetitive, low-skill tasks.
2. The global AI market is projected to grow nearly nine times, reaching \$826.73 billion by 2030, according to Statista.
3. India has the second largest AI talent pool in the world.
4. However, there is a 51% gap between AI demand and supply, which is expected to widen, as per NASSCOM.
5. While AI/ML pose risks to certain jobs, they also offer opportunities. The key is creating appropriate regulations and training to harness AI effectively.

What Should be Done?

1. Continue advancing reforms to sustain and accelerate growth, with a focus on improving productivity and market efficiency.
2. Promote labor-intensive sectors like toys, apparel, tourism, and logistics, aligning with labor-led growth to capitalize on India's abundant workforce and create more job opportunities.
3. Shift reform implementation efforts to the state level, where further progress in production can be made through better coordination between the Centre and States.
4. Strengthen public-private partnerships to close the skills gap, ensuring industry-led training and promoting lifelong skilling as a flexible process.
5. Adopt a holistic strategy encompassing reforms, continuous skilling, and sector development to fully harness India's demographic dividend for long-term global competitiveness.

Question for practice:

Examine how India's demographic advantage influences its economic growth and what challenges need to be addressed to fully harness this potential.

Biden influenced the India-US relationship

Source: The post Biden influenced the India-US relationship has been created, based on the article “C Raja Mohan writes: Joe Biden and India-US story” published in “Indian Express” on 18th September 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2-international relation-Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests

Context: The article discusses Prime Minister Modi's meeting with President Biden in Wilmington, Delaware, Biden's hometown. It highlights how Biden strengthened the India-US partnership, focusing on technology, defense, and regional security, continuing policies from the Trump administration to address China.

For detailed information on **Successes and challenges in the India -U.S. relationship** [read this article here](#)

How has Biden influenced the India-US relationship?

- 1. Continued Strategic Policies:** Biden maintained key policies from Trump, prioritizing India in the US's Asia strategy. This included downgrading Pakistan's role and focusing on China as a challenger.
- 2. Quad Elevation:** Biden elevated the Quad to summit-level meetings, emphasizing cooperation among India, Japan, Australia, and the US on regional security.
- 3. Technology Cooperation:** In January 2023, the iCET initiative was launched to enhance cooperation on emerging technologies, like semiconductors and jet engines.
- 4. Economic Strategy:** Biden upheld Trump-era tariffs on China, aiming to de-risk the US-China relationship and strengthen supply chains involving India.
- 5. Defense Cooperation:** The US emerged as a key destination for India's defense exports, reflecting deepening military ties.
- 6. Regional Stability:** Biden expanded cooperation with India in areas like cybersecurity, maritime security, disaster relief, and telecommunications through the Quad, aligning with India's non-military approach to the forum.

What challenges and developments have shaped the partnership?

- 1. AUKUS Partnership:** Biden announced the AUKUS partnership with the UK and Australia, focusing on transferring nuclear propulsion technology to Australia, highlighting deeper cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region.
- 2. Afghanistan Withdrawal:** Biden's decision to withdraw US troops from Afghanistan reduced reliance on Pakistan, ending its long primacy in US South Asia policy.
- 3. China Challenge:** Biden continued Trump's tariffs on Chinese imports, reflecting a commitment to de-risking economic relations with China.
- 4. Russia and Ukraine Conflict:** Despite tensions, India and the US maintained strong relations during the Russian invasion of Ukraine.
- 5. Quad Cooperation:** The Quad partnership expanded in areas like maritime security and telecommunications.

Way forward

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Despite challenges like the Russian invasion of Ukraine and political differences over Bangladesh, India and the US have maintained strong ties. Both countries have worked to ensure stability and growth in their partnership over the last four years.

Question for practice:

Discuss how Biden's administration has continued and expanded strategic policies to strengthen the India-US partnership.

Extension of the Ayushman Bharat scheme

Source: The post extension of the Ayushman Bharat scheme has been created, based on the article “**Why extending national health insurance scheme to elderly is not enough**” published in “**Indian Express**” on 18th September is 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Governance-Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes

Context: The article discusses the government's extension of the Ayushman Bharat scheme to cover older adults above 70 years. However, it argues that this is insufficient to fully protect against high healthcare costs, highlighting the need for better public healthcare infrastructure.

For detailed information on **Expansion of the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY)** [read this article here](#)

What is the new extension of the Ayushman Bharat scheme?

1. The government extended the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) to cover older adults above 70 years.
2. A Rs 5 lakh top-up is provided for those not covered by other public health insurance schemes.
3. It aims to benefit 4.5 crore families, addressing the healthcare needs of the elderly.
4. Only 20% of people above 60 years have health insurance, leaving many vulnerable.
5. The budget allocated is Rs 3,437 crore, but estimates suggest Rs 14,282 crore is required to cover 5.6 crore households, with an average hospitalisation cost of Rs 32,804 per person.

How does healthcare impact older adults in India?

1. India's ageing population is increasing rapidly, with life expectancy at 70 years, but healthy life years are only 63.5.
2. Non-communicable diseases, disabilities, and bedridden conditions are prevalent among those aged 70-80 and 80-plus.
3. Only 20% of people above 60 have health insurance, leaving the elderly highly vulnerable to healthcare costs.

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4. Out-of-pocket spending for inpatient care is twice as high for the elderly compared to younger people.
5. Nearly half of Indian households seeking hospitalisation experience catastrophic healthcare expenditures (CHE), with 15% falling into impoverishment.
6. The financial burden is worsened by high premiums for private health insurance for older adults.
7. The nucleation of families and rising economic dependency increase the vulnerability of older adults, making access to affordable healthcare critical for this population group.

What are the concerns related to the extension of the Ayushman Bharat scheme?

- 1. Inadequate Budget Allocation:** The government allocated Rs 3,437 crore, but Rs 14,282 crore is required to cover 5.6 crore eligible households, with an average hospitalisation cost of Rs 32,804 per person.
- 2. Limited Coverage:** AB-PMJAY covers secondary and tertiary care but excludes outpatient services, which account for 46% of healthcare spending and are critical for preventive care.
- 3. Public Healthcare Spending:** India's public healthcare spending has remained stagnant between 0.9% to 1.35% of GDP, limiting the healthcare system's ability to support ageing populations.
- 4. Long-term Care:** The scheme doesn't cover long-term and palliative care, crucial for elderly patients with chronic diseases.

Question for practice:

Evaluate whether the extension of the Ayushman Bharat scheme adequately addresses the healthcare needs of India's ageing population.

Concern with One Nation, One Election

Source: The post concern with One Nation, One Election has been created, based on the article “**Manoj Jha writes: One Nation, One Election undermines the voter — and Indian democracy**” published in “**Indian Express**” on 19th September 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Salient Features of the Representation of People's Act.

Context: The article argues against the One Nation, One Election idea. It says this plan will harm democracy by concentrating power. It criticizes the government for undermining democratic processes and warns about the negative consequences of synchronized elections.

For detailed information on **Need for One Nation Many Election** [read this article here](#)

What are the Proposed Benefits of One Nation, One Election?

- 1. Cost Saving:** Supporters argue that synchronized elections will save public funds. Reducing frequent elections might lower administrative and logistical costs.

2. Avoiding Model Code of Conduct Delays: The Model Code of Conduct (MCC) slows down governance. If elections are held together, the government can avoid frequent interruptions due to MCC restrictions.

3. Improved Efficiency: Clustering elections together could result in a smoother election process. The article suggests organizing elections in fewer days could solve current inefficiencies, rather than overhauling the system entirely.

4. Political Stability: Simultaneous elections could lead to more political stability by reducing election cycles and allowing governments to focus on governance instead of constant campaigning.

For detailed information on **One Nation One Election** [read this article here](#)

What is the Concern with One Nation, One Election?

1. Concentration of Power: One Nation, One Election can concentrate power with the ruling party, potentially undermining democratic balance.

2. Electoral Bonds: The use of electoral bonds enabled large corporate funding, which skewed elections in favor of the ruling party, contributing to an unfair advantage.

3. Reduced Accountability: Simultaneous elections may lower government accountability, reducing the incentive to engage with citizens between elections and weakening responsiveness.

4. Dominant National Parties: National parties are likely to benefit more from synchronized elections, leaving states potentially stuck with unpopular governments.

5. Costs and Spending: While cost-saving is a key argument, addressing excessive election spending through regulation is a better solution, rather than cutting down on the frequency of elections.

What Does the Election Commission and Supreme Court's Role Look Like?

1. The Election Commission (EC) has been criticized for inefficiency in managing elections.

2. It claims the Supreme Court has been slow in addressing critical issues like the misuse of agencies and defection cases.

3. Both institutions have been accused of not doing enough to protect democracy, allowing dominant parties to take advantage.

What Should Be Done?

1. Strengthen Electoral Reforms: Instead of pushing for One Nation, One Election, focus on modernizing the Model Code of Conduct (MCC). The Election Commission should plan polling more efficiently, as recent elections stretched over a month.

2. Regulate Election Spending: Rather than cutting corners, address excessive spending during elections. The Election Commission should enforce existing legal spending limits and improve oversight.

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3. Cluster State Elections: The Election Commission should group state elections, allowing governance to continue smoothly without constant election disruptions.

4. Enhance Accountability: Ensure governments remain responsive to voters between elections. Continuous engagement and deliberation should be prioritized over simply focusing on election cycles.

5. Avoid Centralizing Power: Ensure that holding synchronized elections does not concentrate power with dominant national parties, risking the suppression of regional voices and democracy.

Question for practice:

Discuss the potential drawbacks of implementing One Nation, One Election and how it could impact democratic processes.

Concern with One Nation, One Election

Source: The post concern with One Nation, One Election has been created, based on the article “**Drowning: a neglected public health crisis**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 19th September 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Governance-Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health

Concern: The article highlights the tragic and preventable drowning deaths, particularly among children. It calls for global action on drowning prevention, especially in low-income countries, through safety plans, swimming lessons, and low-cost solutions like barriers and daycare.

For detailed information on **Drowning is a major issue in India** [read this article here](#)

How Serious is the Drowning Problem?

1. Drowning is a major global health issue, claiming 2,36,000 lives annually.
2. Children are highly vulnerable, with 82,000 deaths occurring among those aged 1 to 14.
3. WHO data shows drowning deaths are severely under-reported, especially in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).
4. In Bangladesh, 43% of child deaths are due to drowning, with most under five years old drowning within 20 metres of their homes.
5. Drowning deaths are often uncounted during floods or water transport accidents, making the actual toll much higher.

Why is Drowning Neglected?

1. According to WHO, 2,36,000 people drown annually, yet drowning lacks the same attention as other public health issues like malaria and malnutrition.

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2. Statistics fail to capture deaths from natural disasters, water transport accidents, and refugees, leading to data gaps.
3. 75% of deaths during floods are due to drowning, but these are not added to global drowning statistics.
4. Drowning disproportionately affects low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), where 90% of drowning deaths occur, further highlighting inequity.

What Global Actions Have Been Taken?

1. **WHO Report (2014):** The first global report on drowning prevention was published, highlighting the seriousness of the issue.
2. **Drowning Prevention Day:** A WHO-led global event observed annually to raise awareness about drowning as a major cause of death.
3. **UN Resolution (2021):** The UN General Assembly called for worldwide action to prevent drowning.
4. **Australia's Approach:** Focuses on coastal safety with surf lifesavers and lifeguards.
5. **Vietnam's Efforts:** Introduced a national swimming curriculum for children, reducing drowning deaths.
6. **Bangladesh's "Anchal" Model:** Community-based daycare centres reduced drowning deaths by 88% among children under four.
7. **India's Involvement:** Released the 'Strategic Framework for Drowning Prevention' in December 2023.

What Needs to be Done?

1. Drowning should be viewed through the lens of social inequity, not just as accidental deaths.
2. For future prevention include implementing rapid response plans, setting up strategic barriers near water bodies, providing daycare for preschool children, teaching basic swimming skills, and ensuring the availability of safe water transport and flotation devices.

Question for practice:

Discuss the global actions taken to address the issue of drowning and how various countries, including India, are implementing prevention strategies.

Bangladesh seeking Sheikh Hasina's extradition

Source: The post Bangladesh seeking Sheikh Hasina's extradition has been created, based on the article "Can Sheikh Hasina be extradited?" published in "The Hindu" on 19th September 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2-international relations-India and its neighbourhood- relations.

Context: The article discusses Bangladesh's plans to seek the extradition of former leader Sheikh Hasina from India, citing a bilateral treaty. It highlights the legal and political challenges, while emphasizing the strong trade and diplomatic relations between the two countries.

For detailed information on **Sheikh Hasina's Exit and India Bangladesh Relations** [read this article here](#)

Why is Bangladesh seeking Sheikh Hasina's extradition?

- 1. Legal Charges:** Hasina faces multiple criminal charges, including murder, torture, abduction, crimes against humanity, and genocide. These charges were filed following her departure to India.
- 2. Judicial Process:** The International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) in Bangladesh aims to continue legal proceedings against her.
- 3. Extradition Treaty:** The extradition treaty between India and Bangladesh, signed in 2013 and amended in 2016, facilitates the extradition process for crimes punishable by a year or more, covering the charges against Hasina.
- 4. Past Precedents:** The treaty has previously enabled the extradition of individuals, such as two convicts in the 1975 assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Hasina's father.

What does the extradition treaty between India and Bangladesh say?

- 1. India and Bangladesh signed an extradition treaty in 2013**, and it was **amended in 2016** to ease the process of exchanging fugitives wanted by both nations.
- The treaty mandates that **extradition can occur if the crime is punishable by at least one year of imprisonment.**
- The treaty is based on the **principle of dual criminality**, meaning the crime must be punishable in both countries.
- Crimes like **murder, terrorism, and kidnapping** are excluded from being considered "political" under the treaty, making extradition easier for these offenses.
- Article 10** allows extradition to proceed with just an arrest warrant from a competent court, without the need for further concrete evidence.
- The treaty facilitated the **extradition of Anup Chetia**, leader of the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), from Bangladesh to India.

Can India refuse Sheikh Hasina's extradition?

- India can refuse Sheikh Hasina's extradition based on two grounds: political nature of the offense or charges made in bad faith.
- Article 6 of the treaty excludes crimes like murder, terrorism, and kidnapping from being classified as political.

3. Article 8 allows refusal if the charges are not made in good faith or if there's concern about political persecution or unfair trials.
4. Several charges against Sheikh Hasina, such as murder and enforced disappearance, do not qualify as political offenses.
5. Concerns are supported by reports of ministers being arrested by bystanders in Bangladesh.
6. India could use this argument to deny extradition, citing potential issues with justice in Bangladesh.

What are the possible effects of this extradition?

1. Extradition may not significantly affect India-Bangladesh relations.
2. Bangladesh is India's largest trade partner in South Asia, with trade worth \$15.9 billion in 2022-23.
3. The final decision on extradition will depend more on diplomatic negotiations and political considerations.

Question for practice:

Examine the legal and political factors that could influence India's decision on whether to extradite Sheikh Hasina to Bangladesh, based on the provisions of the extradition treaty between the two countries.

Opposition-ruled States asking for a higher share of taxes

Source: The post opposition-ruled States asking for a higher share of taxes has been created, based on the article “**A fair share: Finance Commission must address the concerns of high-performing States**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 19th September 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Polity- issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein.

Context: The article discusses opposition-ruled States asking for a higher share of taxes from 41% to 50%. They also want limits on cesses and surcharges. It highlights how GST limits States' tax autonomy, especially affecting industrialized regions needing specific developmental support.

For detailed information on **Allocation of Funds between The Centre and States** [read this article here](#)

What are the Demands of Opposition-Ruled States?

- 1. Increase in Tax Devolution:** They demand a raise in the States' share of the divisible tax pool from the current 41% (recommended by the Fifteenth Finance Commission) to 50%.
- 2. Limit on Cesses and Surcharges:** They seek a cap on the Centre's collection of cesses and surcharges, which are used for specific projects but fall outside the tax-sharing mechanism.
- 3. Funding for Key State Projects:** States are concerned about insufficient allocations for crucial projects, such as Bengaluru's Suburban Rail Project, Kerala's Vizhinjam Port, and the second phase of the Chennai Metro.

4. Greater Flexibility for Handling Natural Disasters: States want more financial autonomy to address challenges like the flooding in Tamil Nadu, heavy rains in Gujarat, and the Wayanad landslide in Kerala.

How Has the Fifteenth Finance Commission Affected Wealthier States?

1. The Fifteenth Finance Commission allocates 45% weightage to State Gross Domestic Product differences, prioritizing poorer regions.
2. This reduces the funds for wealthier States like Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu, which are major tax contributors.
3. These States require funds for capital and social expenditures tailored to their economic and industrial needs.
4. Limited devolution restricts these States from addressing their unique development, climate, and industrial challenges, hindering their economic progress.

Why Is There a Call for Change?

1. The current tax-sharing system, along with the GST framework, restricts States' ability to raise their own funds.
2. High-performing States are struggling to meet their economic and social needs due to limited devolution.
3. Additionally, neither the GST nor the Finance Commission considers the cost of managing natural disasters.
4. Need for changes in the tax devolution system to give more power to the States and support truly federal governance.

Question for practice:

Examine how the demands of opposition-ruled States for increased tax devolution and limits on cesses and surcharges reflect their concerns about financial autonomy and regional development.

Fourth Quad summit

Source: The post fourth Quad summit has been created, based on the article “**In Wilmington, juxtaposing immediacy with legacy**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 19th September 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2-international relations-Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests

Context: The article discusses the upcoming Quad summit in the U.S. on September 21, 2024. It focuses on regional security, maritime laws, economic cooperation, and strengthening ties among Quad members. Key issues include Indo-Pacific security, leadership changes, and technology initiatives.

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

What is the significance of the upcoming Quad summit?

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1. The fourth Quad summit will be held on September 21, 2024, in Wilmington, Delaware, marking continued evolution since the first in-person summit in 2021.
2. Leadership changes in the U.S. and Japan add urgency. U.S. President Biden will not seek re-election, and Japan's Prime Minister Kishida faces political challenges.
3. India deferred hosting this summit to allow the U.S. to manage its busy election cycle, especially after Biden's recent G-20 visit to India.
4. The summit aims to strengthen the Quad's maritime domain awareness (MDA) with India playing a key role through the Information Fusion Centre-Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR).
5. The Quad will assess progress on initiatives such as the Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA) and Open-Radio Access Network (RAN) in Palau.
6. The summit is crucial due to increasing regional security threats, including China's assertive actions and conflicts like the Russia-Ukraine war. The Quad aims to enhance security and economic resilience by diversifying regional supply chains away from China.

For detailed information on **Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA)** [read this article here](#)

How is India contributing to regional security?

1. India plays a central role in regional security through the **Information Fusion Centre-Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR)**.
2. The **IFC-IOR** hosts **12 International Liaison Officers**, enhancing real-time maritime information sharing.
3. India's involvement supports maintaining a **free and open Indo-Pacific**, focusing on **freedom of navigation** and a **rules-based maritime order**.
4. The **Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA)**, expanded in 2024, reflects India's efforts to integrate the Indian Ocean into regional security initiatives.
5. India is committed to enhancing maritime security and promoting accountability for violations of **international maritime norms**.

How does the Quad align with global governance?

1. The Quad aligns with global governance by focusing on issues such as security, technology, and sustainable development.
2. The upcoming Quad summit precedes the **UN Summit of the Future**, where similar global concerns will be addressed.
3. The Quad's **Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA)** and its emphasis on a rules-based maritime order reflect global efforts toward peace and stability.

4. Key initiatives like the **Open-RAN project in Palau** and the **space-based climate warning system in Mauritius** showcase how the Quad contributes to international cooperation on critical issues like technology and climate change.

Question for practice:

Discuss the significance of the upcoming Quad summit in the U.S. on September 21, 2024, in terms of regional security and economic cooperation.

Concerns related to India's new criminal laws

Source: The post concerns related to India's new criminal laws has been created, based on the article "**New criminal codes, same old challenges of the justice system**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 20th September is 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2-governance-Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Context: The article discusses concerns about India's new criminal laws. It highlights the challenges of speeding up trials, providing bail, improving forensic capabilities, and addressing the shortage of judges and police officers. Training and infrastructure improvements are urgently needed for success.

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

What Changes Are Made to India's criminal laws?

1. New Codes Introduced: The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam (BSA) replace the IPC, CrPC, and Evidence Act to suit modern needs.

2. Faster Trials: Judgments must be delivered within 45 days post-trial, and charges framed within 60 days. Yet, with 5.1 crore cases pending and an average of 2,474 cases per judge in 2024, system readiness is questionable.

3. Bail Reforms: First-time offenders can apply for bail after serving a third of their sentence, instead of half, addressing the rise in undertrial prisoners, which increased from 3.7 lakh in 2020 to 4.2 lakh in 2022.

4. Forensic and Technology: Forensic investigations are mandatory for crimes with over seven years of punishment, and technology-based evidence requires careful handling to maintain integrity.

What are the concerns related to India's new criminal laws?

1. Trials must conclude within 45 days, but with 5.1 crore pending cases and 2,474 cases per judge (up from 2,391 in 2022), this is challenging.

2. BNSS allows first-time offenders to apply for bail after serving one-third of their sentence, but undertrial numbers rose from 3.7 lakh in 2020 to 4.2 lakh in 2022.

3. Vacancies in courts (21% in lower courts, 30% in high courts) and inadequate female police officers (80% in the constabulary) affect the justice system.

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4. Mandated forensic investigations face shortages of labs, trained professionals, and infrastructure, despite the Rs 2,254 crore National Forensic Infrastructure Enhancement Scheme.

5. Managing the integrity of electronic evidence and training judges for its proper evaluation is critical.

What Should be Done?

1. The implementation of these laws faces significant obstacles due to the lack of judges, inadequate police numbers, and underfunded forensic capabilities.

2. Comprehensive training and improvements in infrastructure are essential to ensure the new laws' success in creating a fair and efficient justice system.

Question for practice:

Examine the challenges and potential solutions for implementing India's new criminal laws.

Malaysian PM Anwar Ibrahim's praise of India's role in the Global South

Source: The post Malaysian PM Anwar Ibrahim's praise of India's role in the Global South has been created, based on the article "Acclamation for an Indian leadership that still endures" published in "The Hindu" on 20th September 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- International relations- Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Context: The article highlights Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim's praise of India's role in the Global South and his references to Indian leaders like Nehru, Gandhi, Tagore, and Vivekananda. It contrasts these figures with India's current right-wing ideologues.

What was the subject of Anwar Ibrahim's lecture?

1. The lecture by Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim was titled "Towards a Rising Global South: Leveraging on Malaysia-India Ties".

2. He emphasized the importance of **unity in the Global South** despite its diversity and differences.

3. Anwar highlighted that the rise of the Global South should not exclude the Global North but work **together as equals**.

4. He praised India's leadership, especially its **G20 Chairmanship** and **Voice of Global South Summits**, as examples of India's proactive role in shaping the **Global South agenda** with foresight and inclusivity.

What were Anwar's references to Indian cultural icons?

1. **Swami Vivekananda:** Anwar Ibrahim began his address by quoting Swami Vivekananda on the 'march of ideas' from India, accompanied by blessings and peace. He noted Vivekananda's role as Ramakrishna's chief disciple, a rare recognition from a foreign leader.

2. Mahatma Gandhi: He recalled Gandhi's quote, "Hate the sin and not the sinner," emphasizing its relevance in today's world. Anwar linked this quote to the widespread issue of hatred in society.

3. Rabindranath Tagore: Anwar concluded his speech by quoting Tagore, highlighting the importance of courage in confronting adversity rather than seeking safety. He admired Tagore's timeless message that resonates globally.

4. Jawaharlal Nehru: Anwar reflected on Nehru's commitment to justice, opportunity, and building an inclusive society, quoting his iconic "Tryst with Destiny" speech from 1947.

What was the argument about India's present leadership?

While India's current policies on digital technology are well-received internationally, the broader political and social philosophies of India's right-wing ideologues do not inspire as much admiration as those of Gandhi and Nehru.

Question for practice:

Evaluate Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim's view on India's role in the Global South and its leadership through historical and contemporary perspectives.

Challenges in the Russia-Ukraine war

Source: The post challenges in the Russia-Ukraine war has been created, based on the article "**India's place in Russia-Ukraine peace-making**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 20th September 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- International relations- Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Context: The article discusses India's potential role in mediating the Russia-Ukraine war. It highlights India's diplomatic efforts, its neutral position, and the challenges it faces in becoming a peacemaker between Russia and Ukraine amidst various global and internal issues.

For detailed information on **India's role in Russia-Ukraine Crisis** [read this article here](#)

What is India's role in the Russia-Ukraine war?

1. India is engaging diplomatically with both Russia and Ukraine, maintaining neutrality by abstaining from UN votes and avoiding Western sanctions.
2. Prime Minister Modi has visited both Moscow and Kyiv, while National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar are involved in discussions.
3. India's G-20 presidency prioritized global issues like energy and food security, not the war, appealing to the Global South.
4. Bilateral trade with Russia has increased six-fold, largely due to increased Russian oil imports.

5. India's neutral stance portrays it as an honest broker, similar to Jawaharlal Nehru's mediation efforts during the Cold War.

6. India seeks to develop a concrete peace proposal, leveraging its unique position between the Global North and South, and as a member of both the Quad and BRICS.

What are the current challenges in the Russia-Ukraine war?

1. Territorial Stalemate: Russian troops control about one-sixth of Ukrainian territory, while Ukraine holds the line outside these areas.

2. Potential Escalation: Ukraine seeks Western permission for long-range missiles like Storm Shadow and ATACM, aimed at striking deep into Russia.

3. Risk of Wider Conflict: Putin warned that NATO's involvement would escalate the conflict into a direct war.

4. International Dynamics: The U.S. election in November could affect Ukraine's support. A Donald Trump win may reduce U.S. aid, benefiting Russia's position.

What proposals exist for resolving the conflict?

1. Mutual Rejection of Proposals: Both Russia and Ukraine have rejected each other's proposals, particularly those involving territorial concessions.

2. Brazil-China Proposal: The joint proposal from Brazil and China, advocating de-escalation, was rejected by Ukraine.

3. Bürgenstock Communiqué: Russia dismissed this document, which focused on nuclear safety, humanitarian access, and prisoner exchanges, with India also distancing itself.

4. Hungary's Ceasefire Proposal: Hungary's ceasefire initiative was also declined by Ukraine.

What are the challenges India faces as a peacemaker?

1. Internal Conflicts: India is managing internal issues, such as the conflict in Manipur, which requires its resources and attention.

2. Global Conflicts: Civilian casualties from conflicts like Gaza and Sudan are higher than in the Russia-Ukraine war, raising questions about India's intervention priorities.

3. Inconsistent Foreign Policy: India promotes "dialogue and diplomacy" but has not opened talks with Pakistan, which challenges its consistency.

4. Global Legacy: India is a key player in both the West and East, the Global North and South. It is the only country that is a member of both the Quad and BRICS. Timing and balance will be critical in India's role as a peacemaker.

Question for practice:

Examine the challenges India faces in positioning itself as a peacemaker in the Russia-Ukraine war.

Debates on whether children should be banned from social media

Source: The post debates on whether children should be banned from social media has been created, based on the article “**Should children be barred from social media?**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 20th September 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Governance-mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

Context: The article discusses debates on whether children should be banned from social media. It covers challenges in enforcing age limits, the role of parents and schools, and the responsibilities of tech companies in creating safer online spaces for children.

For detailed information on **Needed, a new approach to data protection for minors** [read this article here](#)

What is the debate in Australia about social media age limits?

1. The debate in Australia about social media age limits has intensified due to children's increased online activity during the pandemic.
2. Parent groups are pushing for a ban on social media for children under 16, citing concerns about online harm.
3. Australia's Prime Minister is supporting this, possibly to gain political advantage before the 2025 federal election.
4. Critics argue that a ban might reduce pressure on tech companies to create safer online environments for children.
5. There is concern that tech companies, like Meta, may not prioritize child safety without stronger regulation, as seen in countries like the U.K. where regulations have driven positive platform changes.

How Effective Are Age Limits?

1. **Hard to enforce digitally:** Age limits are challenging to enforce as children often bypass restrictions. An example is South Korea's "Cinderella Law," where children used identity theft to access gaming platforms after midnight.
2. **India's Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023:** This law requires parental consent for children to access platforms collecting personal data. However, low digital literacy and linguistic diversity in India complicate implementation.
3. **Shared device usage:** A survey in India found that 80% of children help their parents navigate online platforms, making age-based restrictions difficult to manage.
4. **Low digital skills:** According to the NSSO (2021), only 40% of Indians knew how to copy or move files on a computer, making ID-based verification tough to implement, especially in less digitally literate populations.

What Role Do Parents and Schools Play?

9 PM Compilation September 2024

- 1. Parents feel overwhelmed:** Managing children's digital activities is difficult, especially with exaggerated media reports focusing on extreme harm cases, which skews perception.
- 2. Parents' involvement:** Research shows that when parents guide children online, it can maximize benefits and reduce risks.
- 3. Double standards:** Children notice when parents enforce stricter rules for them while not following the same themselves, affecting parenting effectiveness.
- 4. Schools' role in digital education:** In India, the growing focus on digital skills for employability contrasts with concerns about screen time, requiring a balanced curriculum.
- 5. Need for online safety education:** Indian school curricula should include lessons on online resilience, similar to physical safety lessons, as scattered initiatives are insufficient.

What Should Social Media Platforms Do?

1. A shift from just protecting children from harm to creating positive online environments.
2. The U.K.'s Age-Appropriate Design Code has led platforms like Meta and Google to improve settings for children's safety.
3. India lacks similar regulations, highlighting a need for more proactive measures by tech companies.

Question for practice:

Discuss the challenges of enforcing age limits on social media platforms and the role of parents, schools, and tech companies in ensuring children's online safety.

US Federal Reserve cut interest rates

Source: The post US Federal Reserve cut interest rates has been created, based on the article “**Why US Fed cut interest rates, how India could be impacted**” published in “**Indian Express**” on 20th September is 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Economy

Context: The article explains that the US Federal Reserve cut interest rates to support economic growth. This decision impacts global markets, including India. Lower US rates encourage investment in India, affect the rupee's value, and influence the Reserve Bank of India's policies.

For detailed information on **How Interest Rates in US impacts India** [read this article here](#)

Why did the Fed cut interest rates?

1. The Fed cut interest rates by 50 basis points to support economic growth as inflation moderated and unemployment increased.

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2. Earlier, the Fed had raised rates to 5.5% to control inflation caused by post-pandemic recovery and supply disruptions due to the Russia-Ukraine war.
3. Inflation peaked at 9%, but by July 2023, it began to decline towards the 2% target.
4. Rising unemployment, which reached 4.4%, indicated that the restrictive monetary policy was affecting jobs.
5. Fed Chair Jerome Powell acknowledged that earlier unemployment and inflation data could have led to rate cuts in July itself.

What is the Fed's plan moving forward?

1. The Fed plans to **gradually cut interest rates over the next few years** to stabilize the US economy.
2. They will cut by another 50 basis points in 2024, followed by 100 basis points in 2025, and another 50 basis points in 2026.
3. The goal is to achieve a "**soft-landing**"—reducing inflation without triggering a recession.
4. As inflation has moderated, the Fed aims **to balance growth and unemployment**.
5. Despite past concerns, the US economy continues growing and unemployment remains relatively low. However, future policies, such as tariffs by presidential candidates, could disrupt these projections.

How will India be affected?

1. India may attract more foreign investment as lower US rates encourage global investors to borrow in the US and invest in countries like India, boosting stocks, debt, and FDI.
2. A weaker US dollar could strengthen the rupee, benefiting importers but negatively affecting exporters.
3. The RBI is under pressure to cut interest rates but is unlikely to follow the Fed's lead due to differing inflation targets.
4. Repeated rate cuts in the US could lead to a stronger rupee, which helps importers by reducing costs but harms exporters by reducing their competitiveness.

Question for practice:

Examine how the US Federal Reserve's decision to cut interest rates impacts India's economy, including foreign investment, the rupee's value, and the Reserve Bank of India's policies.

Courts are prioritizing Article 21's protection of life and liberty

Source: The post courts are prioritizing Article 21's protection of life and liberty has been created, based on the article "**With recent decisions, Supreme Court has deepened constitutional idea of personal liberty**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 21st September is 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Polity- Constitution of India —historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.

Context: The article discusses recent Supreme Court decisions that emphasize the importance of personal liberty and the right to bail. It highlights how courts are prioritizing Article 21's protection of life and liberty over restrictive laws like UAPA and PMLA.

For detailed information on **Significance of due process of law** [read this article here](#)

What was the historical debate in the Constituent Assembly about Article 21?

1. K. M. Munshi, in the debate of the Constituent Assembly, argued that due process should protect life and liberty.
2. He believed that these rights should not depend solely on ordinary laws.
3. He received support from others like K T Shah, Bakshi Tek Chand, and Purnima Banerji.
4. This debate was crucial for shaping the right to life and personal liberty in the Constitution.

How are courts prioritizing Article 21's protection of life and liberty over restrictive laws like UAPA and PMLA?

1. The Supreme Court, in July, ruled that under strict laws like UAPA, a prolonged trial cannot justify keeping an accused in custody indefinitely.
2. In this case, Justices J B Pardiwala and Ujjal Bhuyan invoked Article 21 to affirm that life and liberty are sacrosanct, stating that no law can sanction permanent detention without trial.
3. Similarly, in a case under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), Justices B R Gavai and K V Viswanathan declared that the right to life and liberty is a higher constitutional right than statutory provisions.
4. Both decisions emphasized that due process and personal liberty cannot be overruled by strict bail provisions.
5. This judicial trend revives the pro-bail principle, asserting that bail should be the rule, not the exception.

Question for practice:

Examine how recent Supreme Court rulings have reinforced the protection of life and liberty under Article 21, particularly in cases involving restrictive laws like UAPA and PMLA.

The dangers of combining cyber and physical attacks

Source: The post the dangers of combining cyber and physical attacks has been created, based on the article "Pager attack in Lebanon: Can nations be allowed to cause violence and death using digital techniques?" published in "Indian Express" on 21st September is 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Security-cyber security

Context: The article discusses recent attacks in Lebanon where Hezbollah's pagers and radios exploded, killing and injuring many. It highlights the dangers of combining cyber and physical attacks, the complexity of supply chains, and the urgent need for international regulations against such threats.

For detailed information on **Cyber-attacks and Cyber Security in India** [read this article here](#)

What Happened in the Attacks?

1. On September 17, Hezbollah's pagers exploded across Lebanon, killing nine and injuring nearly 3,000 people, including fighters and Iran's envoy to Beirut.
2. The following day, attacks targeted handheld radios, cellphones, and laptops, causing 20 deaths and over 450 injuries.
3. The pagers, sourced from Gold Apollo, and radios from Icom had explosives planted near their batteries, remotely triggered.
4. These attacks, suspected to be by Israeli agencies, echo Israel's 2010 Stuxnet virus attack on Iran's nuclear program.

What Are the Broader Implications?

1. **Supply Chain Vulnerability:** The attacks show how digital devices sourced globally can be compromised. For example, pagers from Taiwan's Gold Apollo and radios from Japan's Icom were used. The complex technology supply chain across countries increases risks of hidden sabotage.
2. **Cyber-Physical Attacks:** These incidents combine cyber and physical attacks, where remotely triggered explosives caused massive harm. They highlight a worrying trend in modern warfare that targets digital infrastructure.
3. **Threat to Critical Infrastructure:** Similar methods could be used to disrupt emergency services or essential infrastructure, causing chaos and loss of life.

What Are the International Responses?

1. **UN-backed group** finalized the draft **UN Convention against Cybercrime** in August this year, aiming to curb cyber attacks globally.
2. The convention emphasizes that **nations should avoid launching cyber attacks** and prevent their soil from being used for such activities.
3. This effort follows the **2021 UN report** by the Group of Governmental Experts, calling for responsible behavior in cyberspace.

Question for practice:

Examine how the recent attacks in Lebanon highlight the vulnerabilities in global supply chains and the growing threat of cyber-physical attacks.

Boosting India's Dairy Sector with White Revolution 2.0

Source: The post boosting India's dairy sector with White Revolution 2.0 has been created, based on the article "A new White Revolution: Where India stands, where it aims to be" published in "Indian Express" on 21st September 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Agriculture and allied sector

Context: The article discusses "White Revolution 2.0," which aims to increase milk procurement by dairy cooperatives in India by 50% by 2028-29. The initiative focuses on expanding cooperatives, improving infrastructure, and empowering women, creating jobs in the dairy sector.

What is White Revolution 2.0?

White Revolution 2.0 is an initiative launched by the Indian government to boost milk procurement by dairy cooperatives by 50% over the next five years.

For detailed information on **White Revolution 2.0** [read this article here](#)

What is the government's plan for expansion?

1. The government, through the **National Dairy Development Board (NDDB)**, plans to set up 56,000 new dairy cooperative societies and strengthen 46,000 existing ones over the next five years. 2. This expansion will primarily focus on states like Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, and Andhra Pradesh.
2. A pilot project in Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, and Karnataka already showed promising results, with 79 new societies procuring 15,000 liters of milk daily from 2,500 farmers.
3. White Revolution 2.0 will be funded primarily through the **National Programme for Dairy Development (NPDD) 2.0**.
4. Financial assistance will be provided for setting up milk procurement systems, chilling facilities, and capacity-building initiatives. For example, Rs 40,000 will be provided to 1,000 **Multipurpose Primary Agricultural Credit Cooperative Societies (MPACS)** to improve dairy infrastructure.

What is the current state of milk production in India?

1. **India is the largest milk producer globally**, with production reaching 230.58 million tonnes in 2022-23, up from 17 million tonnes in 1951-52.
2. States like **Punjab have higher yields**, with exotic/crossbred animals producing 13.49 kg/day, compared to 6.30 kg/day in West Bengal.
3. The **national per capita availability of milk is 459 grams/day**, higher than the global average of 323 grams/day.

9 PM Compilation September 2024

4. Uttar Pradesh (15.72%), Rajasthan (14.44%), and Madhya Pradesh (8.73%) are the top milk-producing states.

5. While 63% of milk is marketed, about two-thirds is sold in the unorganised sector.

What challenges does the dairy sector face?

1. Low Milk Procurement by Cooperatives: Dairy cooperatives procure only 10% of India's total milk production, covering 22% of producer households. Most milk (around two-thirds) is handled by the unorganized sector.

2. Uneven Cooperative Coverage: Some states like Gujarat and Kerala have over 70% of villages covered, while others like West Bengal and Assam have less than 10% coverage.

3. Slowing Growth Rate: The annual growth rate of milk production declined from 6.47% in 2018-19 to 3.83% in 2022-23.

4. Low Animal Productivity: The average milk yield per animal is low, with exotic crossbred animals yielding 8.55 kg/day and indigenous animals yielding only 3.44 kg/day.

5. Infrastructure Gaps: Many areas lack proper milk procurement systems and chilling facilities, particularly in uncovered regions like Uttar Pradesh and Odisha.

How important is the dairy sector to India?

1. The **dairy sector contributes 40%** (Rs 11.16 lakh crore) of the total output from the agriculture, livestock, forestry, and fishing sector in 2022-23, **surpassing cereals**.

2. The sector **provides livelihoods to over 8.5 crore people**, the majority of whom are women, highlighting its role in women's employment, empowerment, and the improvement of rural livelihoods.

Question for practice:

Examine the challenges faced by the dairy sector in India and how White Revolution 2.0 aims to address them.

India demanding a renegotiation of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT)

Source: The post India demanding a renegotiation of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) has been created, based on the article "**Staunch the breach: India and Pakistan need to drop hard line stances on the Indus Waters Treaty**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 21st September is 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- International relations-India and its neighbourhood- relations.

Context: The article discusses India's demand to renegotiate the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty with Pakistan. Disputes over projects like Kishenganga and Ratle have strained the process, with Pakistan resisting talks. The treaty's future is now uncertain due to these tensions.

For detailed information on **Indus Water Treaty** [read this article here](#)

Why is India demanding a renegotiation of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT)?

- 1. Four notices from India:** India has escalated its demand for renegotiation of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), issuing four notices to Pakistan since January 2023.
- 2. Need for renegotiation:** India argues the 1960 treaty needs updating to address new issues like climate change and the demand for renewable energy and hydropower projects.
- 3. Disputes over Kishenganga and Ratle projects:** The current disputes have centered around the Kishenganga and Ratle hydropower projects, which Pakistan escalated to international arbitration in 2016.
- 4. World Bank's role in dispute resolution:** The World Bank allowed two parallel dispute resolution processes— a neutral expert review and a Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) hearing.
- 5. Tensions over dispute mechanisms:** Pakistan rejected the neutral expert's process, while India boycotted the PCA hearings at The Hague.
- 6. Past resolution examples:** The treaty successfully resolved previous disputes, such as the Baglihar Dam project in 2007 and India's dispute with Pakistan over the Neelum project in 2013. However, the current mechanism is now facing gridlock.

How has the treaty affected India-Pakistan relations?

1. The treaty used to be a model for cooperation, but since 2016, it mirrors the breakdown of the India-Pakistan relationship.
2. There is no political engagement, trade has stopped, and even the 2021 ceasefire agreement is under threat.
3. Indian Prime Minister Modi's statement, "blood and water cannot flow together" after the 2016 Uri attack, highlights this growing tension.

What is the future of the treaty?

The future of the Indus Waters Treaty is in doubt. India has stopped meetings of the Permanent Indus Commission until Pakistan agrees to renegotiation. There is hope that talks may resume at the SCO Heads of Government meeting in October 2024. The treaty must address new issues like climate change to remain relevant.

Question for practice:

Discuss why India is demanding a renegotiation of the Indus Waters Treaty with Pakistan.

Impact of U.S. Federal Reserve interest rate cut on emerging economies

Source: The post Impact of U.S. Federal Reserve interest rate cut on emerging economies has been created, based on the article "Pivot to watch: The U.S. Fed's rate reduction could spell relief for developing economies" published in "The Hindu" on 21st September 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Economy

Context: The article discusses the U.S. Federal Reserve cutting interest rates for the first time in four years. This aims to maintain a strong labor market and reduce inflation. The move is expected to impact emerging economies, especially in Africa and Latin America.

For detailed information on **US Federal Reserve cut interest rates** [read this article here](#)

Why did the Federal Reserve cut interest rates?

1. The Federal Reserve cut interest rates by half a percentage point, the first cut in over four years.
2. This aims to maintain strength in the labor market while reducing inflation to 2%.
3. Since early 2022, the Fed had raised rates to control the COVID-19-driven inflation surge.
4. Fed Chairman Jerome Powell emphasized that this recalibration will support moderate growth.
5. The rate cut comes with expectations of another quarter-point reduction in 2024.

How does the rate cut affect global economies?

1. Relief for Emerging Market Economies (EMEs): The U.S. Federal Reserve's rate cut will ease pressure on EMEs, which had suffered from a strong U.S. dollar. As the dollar strengthened, EMEs faced increased debt service costs and inflationary pressures.

2. Benefit for Economies in Africa and Latin America: The rate cut is especially helpful for African and Latin American countries, where high borrowing costs had hampered public investment in infrastructure and services.

3. Increased Capital Flows: According to an IMF blog post, the Fed's easing may encourage capital inflows into emerging and developing economies, boosting their financial stability.

What is the impact on India?

1. India's Chief Economic Adviser V. Anantha Nageswaran welcomed the rate cut. However, he said it would only have a limited impact because investors have already been showing interest in India for years.
2. Despite this, India may still see more foreign portfolio investments in its debt markets.

Question for practice:

Discuss how the U.S. Federal Reserve's interest rate cut impacts emerging market economies.

India Need a National Security Strategy (NSS)

Source: The post India need a National Security Strategy (NSS) has been created, based on the article "India needs a 'National Security Strategy'" published in "The Hindu" on 23rd September is 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Security challenges and their management

Context: The article discusses the need for India to develop a National Security Strategy. It emphasizes that such a strategy should prioritize economic and defence resources, address external threats like China, and maintain secrecy. It highlights the challenges of balancing defence and diplomacy.

For detailed information on **National Security Strategy of India** [read this article here](#)

Why Does India Need a National Security Strategy (NSS)?

- 1. External Threats:** India faces increasing challenges from a belligerent eastern neighbor, China, with whom it has an \$85 billion trade deficit and military inequalities, like fewer submarines and warships.
- 2. Global Instability:** Ongoing wars in Ukraine and Gaza are affecting global growth, which threatens India's economic ambitions of becoming a \$4 trillion economy.
- 3. Multi-alignment Strategy:** India's strategy of balancing relationships through alliances like the Quad and BRICS requires a coherent National Security Strategy to manage these diverse diplomatic and defence needs.
- 4. Economic Strength:** The economy is crucial to national security, with various ministries vying for limited resources. A National Security Strategy would help India prioritize and manage its defence and economic objectives effectively.

What Should Be Included in a National Security Strategy?

- 1. Defense and Economy Integration:** The National Security Strategy (NSS) should align defense needs with economic goals, recognizing the critical role the economy plays in security. For instance, defense budgeting should be transparent and prioritize investments in key areas like submarine and shipbuilding where India lags behind China significantly.
- 2. Multi-Alignment Foreign Policy:** The NSS should formalize India's multi-alignment strategy, which includes balancing relationships within groups like the Quad and BRICS. This strategy helps India manage its \$85 billion trade deficit with China while addressing security challenges.
- 3. Confidentiality:** The strategy should remain classified to protect national interests. Revealing vulnerabilities could compromise India's position against more powerful neighbors like China.
- 4. Strategic Resource Allocation:** The NSS should outline how resources are allocated across different sectors like defense, finance, and technology. It should prioritize investments in sectors crucial for national security, ensuring balanced growth and readiness.

How Does the U.S. and Other Countries Define National Security?

- 1. United States:** The U.S. defines national security as a union of values and national interests. The National Security Strategy (NSS) mentions "values" 29 times, emphasizing America's leadership role. It influences other documents like the National Defense Strategy and budgeting.
- 2. United Kingdom:** The U.K.'s 2021 Integrated Review focuses on global partnerships and maintaining its status as a European power, despite its limited military resources, such as insufficient aircraft for its carriers.

3. France: In 2022, France's NSS focused on nuclear deterrence due to the Ukraine war, aiming to assert European leadership, though it faced limited success.

Question for practice:

Examine how India's National Security Strategy (NSS) should address the economic and defence challenges posed by China.

Concerns about using GST data for GDP estimates

Source: The post concerns about using GST data for GDP estimates has been created, based on the article "On the pitfalls of estimating GDP" published in "The Hindu" on 23rd September 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Indian Economy – Issues relating to mobilization of resources.

Context: The article discusses concerns about using GST data for GDP estimates. It warns that untested data, like MCA-21, led to overestimation. The NSO must ensure proper testing of GST data before adopting it to avoid inaccuracies in future GDP calculations.

For detailed information on **India's GST system needs further reform** [read this article here](#)

What is the Main Concern About GDP Calculation?

1. The main concern is the accuracy of GDP estimates due to untested datasets.
2. The MCA-21 database, used since 2011-12, led to overestimation of industrial growth.
3. For example, in 2013-14, manufacturing growth was revised from (-)1.90% in the old series to (+)5.4% in the new series.
4. Comparisons between NAS (based on MCA-21) and ASI data from 2012-13 to 2019-20 showed significant discrepancies: GVA growth was 6.2% in NAS but only 3.2% in ASI.
5. The same issue occurred with GFCF growth, which was 4.5% in NAS and just 0.3% in ASI.
6. The NSO is considering using GST data for GDP estimation, but experts caution against hasty adoption without proper testing, as seen with MCA-21.

Why Was There a Change in Database Before?

1. The change in database occurred due to limitations in previous methods like the Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) and the RBI sample.
2. ASI missed value addition outside factory premises, while the RBI sample didn't cover the fast-growing Private Corporate Sector (PCS).
3. MCA-21 was introduced in the 2011-12 base year to capture corporate output more fully.
4. MCA-21, with its extensive corporate returns data, replaced the older methods to provide better coverage.

5. GST data is a large and up-to-date source that may replace the MCA-21 database for estimating value addition in the Private Corporate Sector (PCS), which contributes 38% of GDP. The proposed base year is 2020-21, and using GST data could be a significant change.

What Should be Done?

1. To avoid repeating the overestimation seen with MCA-21 data, the NSO should conduct pilot studies to verify if GST data is reliable.
2. Testing is essential to ensure accuracy in GDP estimates. Cross-validation with other datasets is also important to maintain the integrity of GDP figures.
3. NSO could consider reverting to the Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) for estimating GDP in the manufacturing sector, as it is now available with a shorter time lag.

Question for practice:

Examine the potential risks of using GST data for GDP estimation based on past issues with untested datasets like MCA-21.

New Threats are Emerging in Aviation Safety

Source: The post new threats are emerging in Aviation Safety has been created, based on the article “**Brace for the new threat to air passenger safety**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 23rd September is 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Security challenges and their management

Context: The article discusses new aviation safety risks from electronic devices like pagers and walkie-talkies, potentially triggered by external signals, citing incidents in West Asia. It highlights India's security vulnerabilities and urges stronger safety measures to prevent future threats.

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

What New Threats are Emerging in Aviation Safety?

1. Small electronic devices like pagers and walkie-talkies have been identified as potential threats, as seen in Lebanon. Explosions in these devices could be triggered by external signals.
2. In-flight explosions could cause cabin fires or damage to the aircraft's pressure system, leading to decompression and oxygen mask deployment, creating a dangerous situation for passengers.
3. Mobile phones left on during flights can interfere with aircraft systems. One such incident caused a crash when an incoming signal misdirected the autopilot.

What security loopholes exist in India?

1. VVIP Exemptions: In India, VVIPs are exempt from security checks. This includes people with questionable backgrounds, unlike other countries where exemptions are limited.

2. 1989 Rule Expansion: Initially, only five categories were exempt from security checks, but later, even State Governors were added.

3. Unchecked Baggage: Some VVIPs and officials bypass hand baggage checks, increasing the risk of dangerous items being smuggled onboard.

4. No Global Parity: India's broad exemption contrasts with tighter global norms.

What Should be Done?

1. Ban Wi-Fi on flights: To prevent external signals from triggering explosions in devices, as seen in Lebanon.

2. Introduce signal shields at airports: This would block dangerous signals, similar to safety measures introduced before 5G near airports.

3. Remove VVIP exemptions in India: VVIP baggage should not bypass security checks, preventing potential threats from being smuggled.

4. Enforce mobile phone flight rules: Keeping phones in flight mode prevents interference, as a crash occurred due to a live signal.

5. Ban risky devices on flights: Airlines should follow Beirut's example of banning pagers and walkie-talkies.

Question for practice:

Discuss the emerging threats to aviation safety posed by small electronic devices and the security loopholes in India that contribute to these risks.

Thalinomics Vs Cost of Healthy Diet (CoHD) for measuring nutrition needs

Source: This post is created based on the article Capturing the cost of healthy diets, published in The Hindu on 23rd Sep 2024.

UPSC Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – Social Issues – Issues related to Poverty and Hunger

Context: Even after improvements in poverty rates and income levels in India, India faces persistent nutritional challenges. The National Family Health Surveys (NFHS) in 2015-16 and 2019-21 reveal high rates of undernutrition among children and increasing anaemia among adults, alongside rising obesity prevalence in both rural and urban areas.

This triple burden of malnutrition (undernutrition, overnutrition, and micronutrient deficiencies) is exacerbated by many factors. Healthy nutritious diets are crucial for addressing India's triple burden of malnutrition.

What are the main barriers to Healthy Diets?

High cost of healthy diets, making them unaffordable for a significant portion of the population. As per the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2024 report, 55.6% of India's population (788 million people) could not afford a nutritionally adequate diet as of 2022.

Rising food prices, especially for nutritious items like vegetables, fruits, pulses, and eggs, coupled with stagnating or declining real wages, are making healthy diets increasingly expensive.

What are the limitations of Thalonomics approach?

The Economic Survey 2019-20 introduced 'Thalonomics' to calculate the cost of "typical" thalis based on the 2011 Food-Based Dietary Guidelines (FBDGs). However, the thali does not adequately reflect nutritional recommendations:

- a) It **accounts for only 61%** of the recommended daily food requirements in grams.
- b) It **covers only 65%** of the National Institute of Nutrition's (NIN) 2021 caloric recommendations.
- c) It **excludes nutrient-rich food** groups like green leafy vegetables, dairy, and nuts and seeds.

Thalonomics relies on outdated data from the 2011-12 National Sample Survey Consumer Expenditure Survey (NSS-CES).

The "typical" meals represented in Thalonomics may not account for India's dietary diversity and local food availability.

How does Cost of Healthy Diet (CoHD) function as an alternative?

The CoHD measures the minimum daily expenditure required to meet nutritional recommendations based on current FBDGs. It has the following advantages:

- a) **Uses readily available price data**, eliminating the need for reliance on expensive household consumption surveys.
- b) **Simple computations** that can be easily understood.
- c) Provides a **more accurate representation** of the cost of meeting nutritional requirements compared to the thali approach.

For example, an analysis comparing CoHD with vegetarian and non-vegetarian thalis over the period 2018-2023 shows that the CoHD was generally higher, particularly during the COVID-19 lockdowns, when supply disruptions led to a spike in the prices of perishables

The Thalonomics approach, though intuitive, fails to capture the real cost of nutritious diets and may underestimate it, especially in times of crisis. In contrast, the CoHD provides a more accurate reflection of the true cost of meeting nutritional needs. It accounts for the fluctuating costs of perishable foods, particularly during supply-side disruptions.

Question for Practice

'Despite falling poverty rates and rising incomes over the last decade or more, India has struggled to substantially improve its nutritional outcome'. Discuss.

Importance of the Joint Commanders' Conference (JCC)

Source: The post importance of the Joint Commanders' Conference (JCC) has been created, based on the article "Taking stock of India's military preparedness" published in "Indian Express" on 23rd September 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Security challenges and their management

Context: The article discusses the importance of the Joint Commanders' Conference (JCC) led by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. It highlights issues like military modernization, equipment shortages, manpower gaps, and the need for credible war preparedness, beyond just symbolic actions or events.

What is the Joint Commanders' Conference (JCC)?

1. The JCC is a new conference led by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. It brings top military commanders together to discuss national security.
2. The JCC aims to improve national security by having extended, focused discussions with military leaders. It focuses on issues like modernization, equipment needs, and readiness for war.

How does the JCC differ from the Combined Commanders' Conference (CCC)?

1. **Chairmanship:** The JCC is chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, while the CCC is chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
2. **Focus:** The JCC focuses on professional military matters, offering extended discussions on national security. The CCC tends to address broader global, regional, and strategic issues.
3. **Political Influence:** The CCC has seen increasing political overtones. For example, the 2023 CCC in Bhopal featured large posters of PM Modi and political figures, raising concerns of politicizing the military.
4. **Event Regularity:** The CCC was not held in 2019, 2020, or 2022, while the JCC aims to be more regular.

What are the major concerns?

1. **Military Modernization Delays:** A 2018 report showed 68% of the Army's equipment is outdated, with only 8% considered state-of-the-art.
2. **Shortage in Fighter Squadrons:** The Air Force operates only 32 fighter squadrons, while 42 are required. Navy lacks adequate aircraft for carriers.
3. **Manpower Deficiency:** There is a shortage of 1.55 lakh personnel in the armed forces, with the Army needing 1.36 lakh recruits.
4. **Impact of Agnipath Scheme:** The hurried implementation of the Agnipath scheme has disrupted recruitment patterns and requires a macro review.
5. **Financial Constraints:** The rupee's value dropped from Rs 62.33 to 83.47 per US dollar (since 2014), limiting the military's purchasing power.
6. **Dependence on Imports:** Despite "aatmanirbharata" efforts, India still heavily relies on imported military equipment.
7. **Geopolitical Threats:** The Galwan clash in 2020 and increased cross-border terrorism emphasize the need for better preparedness.

Question for practice:

Discuss the major concerns highlighted in the Joint Commanders' Conference (JCC) regarding India's military modernization and preparedness.

Future of the GST compensation cess

Source: The post future of the GST compensation cess has been created, based on the article “**Why a grand GST bargain with states is needed**” published in “**Indian Express**” on 23rd September 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper-Government budgeting

Context: The article discusses the future of the GST compensation cess, its potential continuation or transformation after March 2026, and how it might be used. It also addresses the possibility of bringing petroleum products under GST and compensating states for revenue losses.

For detailed information on **GST Compensation Cess** read [Article 1](#), [Article 2](#)

What is the GST Compensation Cess?

1. The GST compensation cess was created to compensate states for any revenue losses after the implementation of GST, based on a projected annual revenue growth of 14% from the 2015-16 levels.
2. It was funded by a cess on specific goods and was meant to last five years, but has been extended to March 2026 due to the financial strains of COVID-19.
3. From July 2017 to March 2023, the government transferred Rs 8.8 trillion to states, with Rs 6.1 trillion as grants and Rs 2.7 trillion as loans.
4. Ten major states, including Maharashtra and Karnataka, received nearly two-thirds of the total compensation. Some states, like Punjab, heavily rely on this compensation as a significant part of their revenue.

What are the Future Plans for the Compensation Cess?

1. The government aims to repay the Rs 2.7 trillion GST compensation loan by January 2026, two months before the compensation cess period ends.
2. A surplus of Rs 480 billion is expected after loan repayment and interest payments.
3. The GST Council has recommended studying the future of the cess beyond March 2026.
4. One option is transforming the cess into a “**green cess**” to finance environmental projects and India's energy transition goals for 2030.
5. The council will also decide how this new cess would be shared between the Centre and the states.

Will petroleum products come under GST?

1. Petroleum, oils, and lubricants (POL) are not currently under GST.

9 PM Compilation September 2024

2. Including them could help businesses by allowing them to claim input tax credits, thereby reducing costs.
3. However, this would also reduce the fiscal autonomy of states, which currently set their own tax rates on these products.
4. A significant negotiation would be necessary to include POL under GST, possibly using cess proceeds to compensate states for any losses.

Question for practice:

Examine the potential future uses of the GST Compensation Cess after March 2026 and how it might be transformed.

Movement against patriarchy in Kerala

Source: The post movement against patriarchy in Kerala has been created, based on the article "**Hema Committee report shows why ambit of social justice must be widened to include women**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 24th September is 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper1- Society

Context: The article discusses how a movement led by women in Kerala's film industry is challenging patriarchy. It highlights the need for gender justice and safer workplaces for women, emphasizing that governments must be pressured to take action on these issues.

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

What was the first social revolution in Kerala?

1. The first social revolution in Kerala happened in 1956. EMS Namboodiripad's government introduced land reforms that ended landlordism and feudalism. Agricultural laborers gained freedom to sell their labor.
2. Although it did not create a dynamic agricultural sector, it reduced the social distance between laborers and landlords.
3. However, patriarchy was left untouched, and men continued to dominate women in most aspects of life.

What sparked the current movement against patriarchy in Kerala?

1. The current movement against patriarchy in Kerala began in the film industry.
2. A group of women formed the Women's Collective in Cinema (WCC) to challenge misogyny.
3. WCC first addressed sexist dialogues in Malayalam films, spoken by top stars.
4. The movement gained momentum after a young actress was sexually assaulted.
5. WCC pressured the government to investigate women's working conditions in the film industry.

9 PM Compilation September 2024

6. This led to the formation of the Hema Committee, which revealed widespread discrimination and sexual exploitation of women.
7. Delays in publishing the report led to public pressure, forcing the government to release it after a Right to Information ruling.
8. The report triggered resignations in the Kerala Chalachitra Academy and the Association of Malayalam Movie Actors (AMMA).

Why must India update its labor laws for women?

1. India's labor laws are outdated, with rules like prohibiting night shifts for women and requiring spittoons.
2. Female workforce participation is low, even lower than in Saudi Arabia, due to unsafe workplaces.
3. Cases like the Abhaya case in Kolkata show that lack of basic infrastructure, such as separate toilets and secure rest areas, endangers women.
4. Women are disadvantaged across all caste groups, with lower health, education, and financial independence.
5. The Women's Collective in Cinema (WCC) in Kerala highlighted sexual exploitation in the film industry, showing the urgent need for safer workplaces for women.

Question for practice:

Can you please form one simple question which can be answered using the above article, start question with word.

Challenges in India's "Neighbourhood First" policy in 2024

Source: The post challenges in India's "Neighbourhood First" policy in 2024 has been created, based on the article "**Shyam Saran writes: Why political uncertainty in Sri Lanka may not mean it draws away from India**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 24th September 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- international relations-India and its neighbourhood- relations.

Context: The article discusses setbacks in India's "Neighbourhood First" policy. It highlights political instability in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Nepal, along with growing threats from Pakistan and Bangladesh. India must adapt to these challenges and strengthen regional economic and security ties.

For detailed information on **India's relationship with its neighboring countries** [read this article here](#)

What are the challenges in India's "Neighbourhood First" policy in 2024?

- 1. Pakistan's Cross-Border Terrorism:** Pakistan has reverted to escalating cross-border terrorism, posing a serious security threat to India.
- 2. Nepal's Political Instability:** Nepal has undergone another change in government, with K P Oli, known for worsening bilateral relations, returning as Prime Minister, creating diplomatic concerns for India.

3. Bangladesh's Political Crisis: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina fled to India amid widespread protests against her government. India faces public resentment for being perceived as complicit in her governance. Radical Islamic groups like Jamaat and Pakistani influence are reviving.

4. Sri Lanka's Political Shift: Anura Kumara Dissanayake's left-wing National People's Power (NPP) government may derail economic recovery. Indian investments like Adani's \$553 million container port project in Colombo face uncertainty.

5. Northeast Security Risks: Ethnic conflict in Manipur, Myanmar's civil war, and instability in Bangladesh could create a volatile security situation in India's Northeast.

How has Sri Lanka's political landscape changed?

1. Anura Kumara Dissanayake has been elected President of Sri Lanka, leading the National People's Power (NPP) party. This marks the first time that none of the mainstream political parties are in power. The NPP's left-wing Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) has historically been anti-India. Dissanayake's populist policies may derail Sri Lanka's economic recovery.

2. He plans to renegotiate IMF terms and review key private sector projects, including India's Adani group's solar project and container port project.

3. India is economically interdependent with Sri Lanka, contributing \$4 billion during Sri Lanka's 2022 crisis. The economic viability of Colombo port relies on Indian transshipment. While there are concerns about Dissanayake's policies, his balanced approach toward India and China offers some optimism for stable relations.

How is the situation in Bangladesh affecting India?

1. India has been criticized for supporting Sheikh Hasina's government without engaging with other political groups, such as the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) or Jamaat.

2. The political unrest in Bangladesh could lead to security threats in India's Northeast region, which is already facing ethnic conflict in Manipur and civil war in Myanmar.

What should India's approach be in dealing with its neighbors?

1. India needs a comprehensive strategy to handle its neighbors, focusing on both bilateral and regional relations.

2. Economic interdependence can be leveraged, as seen in India's role in Sri Lanka and the Maldives. India can also be the growth engine for the region and lead efforts on issues like climate change, beginning with its subcontinental neighbors.

3. Address regional security concerns in the Northeast, particularly with Bangladesh's instability, Pakistan's terrorism, and the Myanmar civil war.

4. India should avoid relying solely on ruling elites, as seen in Bangladesh with Sheikh Hasina. Engaging broader political groups can reduce anti-India sentiment.

Question for practice:

Examine the key challenges India faces in its "Neighbourhood First" policy in 2024 and how it should address these challenges to maintain regional stability and security.

Importance of India's investment in metro rail systems

Source: The post importance of India's investment in metro rail systems has been created, based on the article "How to enable transit oriented development" published in "The Hindu" on 24th September 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- infrastructure

Context: The article discusses the importance of India's investment in metro rail systems to improve urban mobility, job access, and economic growth. It highlights how Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) can help reduce congestion, enhance productivity, and support sustainable growth.

For detailed information on **Redefining Mobility: Transforming Land scape of Transport Sector** [read this article here](#)

How does public transportation benefit the economy?

1. India is investing ₹3 trillion (2022-2027) in metro rail projects to improve urban mobility and unlock economic potential. These investments aim to reduce congestion and pollution while creating jobs and boosting economic growth.
2. Studies show that investment in public transportation can generate economic returns 5-7 times the initial cost and create thousands of jobs.
3. The National Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Policy and Metro Rail Policy (2017) promote the development of sustainable, compact urban growth near transit systems.

How Does Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Impact Urban Areas?

1. TOD integrates land use and transport to promote dense, mixed-use neighborhoods and sustainable transport options like walking and cycling.
2. It aims to reduce congestion and the environmental impact of urban growth.
3. In Bengaluru, for example, TOD can address the city's significant traffic issues, which cost ₹38,000 crore annually, or 5% of the city's GDP.

What Are the Job Trends Near Metro Areas in Bengaluru?

1. A study by WRI India in Bengaluru found about 0.2 million registered enterprises employing around 4.6 million people, mostly in service industries.
2. Large enterprises, though only 2% of all businesses, provide 60% of the jobs.
3. Currently, 28% of jobs are within 500 meters of a metro station, but many are still too far for convenient access, highlighting the need for better pedestrian infrastructure and feeder services.

What Challenges Do Businesses Face in Locating Near Metro Stations?

- 1. Limited Property Availability:** In developed inner-city areas, large businesses struggle to find suitable properties, especially legally compliant Grade-A buildings.
- 2. Regulatory Barriers:** Development regulations, such as road widths, setbacks, and parking norms, hinder high-density redevelopment near metro stations.
- 3. High Property Prices:** Smaller businesses are deterred by elevated property prices near metro stations, unlike larger established ones.
- 4. Community Resistance:** Local communities often resist increased commercial activity near metro stations.

What Steps Can Enhance Job Densities Near Transit Stations?

- 1. Set job density targets:** Bengaluru's master plan revision can set targets for job growth near transit hubs, like Hong Kong, where 57% of jobs are within 500m of transit stations.
- 2. Encourage businesses:** Incentives such as additional development rights or tax subsidies can encourage companies to relocate near metro stations.
- 3. Improve infrastructure:** Redevelopment should address regulations on land use, setbacks, and parking.
- 4. Expand last-mile connectivity:** Invest in pedestrian infrastructure and feeder services, as 85% of Bengaluru's jobs are within 2km of metro stations.

Question for practice:

Discuss how Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) can help address traffic issues and promote job growth near metro stations in Bengaluru.

Legal Framework in India Regarding Defence Exports

Source: The post Legal Framework in India Regarding Defence Exports has been created, based on the article "India's defence exports and humanitarian law" published in "The Hindu" on 24th September 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2 -International Relations – Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Context: The article discusses a Supreme Court ruling rejecting a plea to stop defense exports to Israel, citing foreign policy limits. It highlights India's lack of laws assessing international humanitarian law compliance in arms exports, suggesting amendments to ensure responsible defense trading.

For detailed information on **India Defence Exports: A Strategic Imperative** [read this article here](#)

How Do Other Countries Handle Defence Exports?

1. Netherlands: A Dutch court blocked the export of F-35 fighter jet parts to Israel. This decision was based on a European Union regulation that prohibits military exports to countries at risk of violating International Humanitarian Law (IHL).

2. United Kingdom: The UK government reviewed Israel's compliance with IHL. It found a clear risk that certain arms exported to Israel would facilitate serious IHL violations. This review was conducted under the UK's **Export Control Act**.

3. Both countries enforce legal measures to ensure military exports align with international law, preventing potential violations of IHL.

What Is the Legal Framework in India Regarding Defence Exports?

1. India regulates defense exports through the Foreign Trade Act (FTA), 1992, and the Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDA) Act, 2005.

2. These laws allow the government to restrict exports for reasons like national security and international obligations.

How Does International Law Influence India's Defence Exports?

1. Arms Trade Treaty (ATT): The ATT prohibits exporting arms if there is knowledge they would be used to commit war crimes. India is not a signatory to the ATT, so it is not bound by its provisions. However, some ATT elements reflect customary international law.

2. Geneva Conventions: India is bound by Common Article 1 of the Geneva Conventions, requiring countries not to supply arms to nations likely to violate international humanitarian law (IHL).

3. Case Example: The International Court of Justice in *Nicaragua vs United States* highlighted the obligation to avoid supplying weapons if there is knowledge they may breach the Conventions.

4. Legal Gaps in India: India's current laws, like the Foreign Trade Act and Weapons of Mass Destruction Act, do not mandate IHL compliance checks for arms exports.

What Should India Do to Improve Its Defence Export Policies?

1. India should update its laws to include mandatory IHL compliance assessments for countries purchasing Indian defense goods.

2. The **Supreme Court** has previously incorporated **international law** into **domestic law** when gaps existed, such as in the **Vishakha vs State of Rajasthan** case, where international conventions on women's rights were used to address the absence of specific domestic laws on workplace harassment.

3. Similarly, in this defense export situation, the court could use **international humanitarian law** to fill gaps in Indian law regarding **arms export controls**, ensuring that India's exports comply with **international obligations**.

4. This approach shifts the issue from foreign policy to a legal matter, addressing India's international responsibilities.

Question for practice:

Examine how India's legal framework for defense exports differs from countries like the Netherlands and the United Kingdom in ensuring compliance with International Humanitarian Law (IHL).

Risks of Increasing Chinese FDI in India

Source: The post Risks of Increasing Chinese FDI in India has been created, based on the article “**Weighing in on business as usual with China**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 24th September is 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- International relations-Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Context: The article discusses India's delicate relationship with China, noting unresolved border tensions and China's demands. It questions allowing Chinese investments in India, citing economic risks, trade deficits, and concerns about security and dependency on Chinese supply chains.

For detailed information on **Impact of Chinese FDI on India's Manufacturing and Economy** [read this article here](#)

What is the Current State of India-China Border Tensions?

1. India's Minister of External Affairs, S. Jaishankar, stated that 75% of disengagement issues with China have been resolved.
2. However, the border remains heavily militarized, with no progress in critical areas like Depsang Plains and Demchok.
3. India insists peace along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) is necessary for normalizing relations.
4. Indian forces face challenges accessing at least 15 patrolling points in Ladakh.
5. Since the 2020 Ladakh transgressions, China has altered the status quo, and India is yet to restore earlier conditions along the LAC.

How is the Economic Relationship Between India and China Evolving?

1. India's 2024 Economic Survey suggests encouraging Chinese investments to integrate into global supply chains instead of relying on imports.
2. India's trade deficit with China increased to \$105 billion in 2023, up from \$64 billion in 2021.
3. India's exports to China fell from \$23 billion in 2021 to \$16 billion in 2023, highlighting worsening trade relations.
4. Chinese demands include equal treatment for their companies and resumption of normal relations, without addressing core border issues.

What are the Risks of Increasing Chinese FDI in India?

- 1. Dependency on China:** Indian industries remain dependent on Chinese imports, which increases vulnerability. China has a history of weaponizing such dependencies.
- 2. Low Value Investments:** Chinese investments may lead to low-value additions, hindering India's industrial development in key sectors.
- 3. No Reduction in Imports:** Experience from ASEAN shows that Chinese investments didn't reduce imports. ASEAN's imports from China rose from \$386 billion in 2021 to \$438 billion in 2023.
- 4. Strategic Sectors at Risk:** China may dominate crucial industries like electric vehicles and solar equipment, preventing India from building its own manufacturing capacities.
- 5. Security Concerns:** Increased Chinese investments in sensitive sectors could pose national security risks.

How Should India Approach Its Economic Ties with China?

1. India should be selective in allowing Chinese investments, focusing on sectors that align with its national security and industrial goals.
2. It's crucial for India to balance its economic ties with China while protecting its own strategic interests.

Question for practice:

Examine the risks and challenges India faces in increasing Chinese FDI while balancing its economic and strategic interests.

Benefits of the National Credit Framework (NCrF)

Source: The post benefits of the National Credit Framework (NCrF) has been created, based on the article "**The NCrF as a framework for well-rounded education**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 25th September 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Governance- Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Education.

Context: The article discusses the benefits of the National Credit Framework (NCrF) under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. It promotes flexibility in education, integrating vocational skills with academic knowledge, and emphasizes adapting higher education to meet India's evolving needs.

For detailed information on **National Credit Framework (NCrF)** read [Article 1](#), [Article 2](#)

What is the National Credit Framework (NCrF)?

A. National Credit Framework:

1. The National Credit Framework (NCrF) is part of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.
2. It provides a flexible system for accumulating and transferring credits across multidisciplinary education.

3. The NCrF is not a regulatory framework but rather an enabling one that aims to provide flexibility in education.

B. Benefits of NCrF

1. NCrF allows students to combine classroom learning with practical skills.
2. Credits can be earned through diverse activities such as research, handicrafts, yoga, and internships.
3. NCrF helps students gain skills relevant to modern job markets.
4. Higher education institutions (HEIs) that adopt the NCrF can bridge the gap between education and the evolving job market.
5. This system ensures that students are prepared for both employment and self-employment by combining knowledge with skill-based learning.

C. Resistance to NCrF

1. Critics believe higher education should focus solely on academic knowledge.
2. They oppose reforms that promote flexibility and skill-based education, seeing it as unsuitable for traditional educational methods.

D. Ultimate Goal of NCrF

1. NCrF aims to balance vocational training with academic knowledge.
2. It promotes continuous adaptation in higher education to meet India's evolving societal and technological needs.
3. By adopting NCrF, HEIs can prepare students for both employment and self-employment.

Why is flexibility in higher education important?

1. Flexibility in education democratizes learning and promotes social equity.
2. The NCrF supports this by allowing HEIs to balance vocational training and knowledge production. For instance, students in vocational training can have as much impact as those in academic research.
3. This flexible approach enables students to improve their social mobility.

Why is continuous adaptation essential for HEIs?

1. The NEP 2020 also proposes the concept of Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERU).
2. These institutions will serve as hubs for academic scholars and intellectuals.
3. However, the article stresses that many other HEIs should focus on vocational skills, not just academic pursuits, to ensure that students are employable.

Question for practice:

Discuss the benefits of the National Credit Framework (NCrF) in integrating vocational skills with academic knowledge under the NEP 2020.

India needs to adopt cross-border insolvency laws

Source: The post India needs to adopt cross-border insolvency laws has been created, based on the article “Navigating cross-border insolvency” published in “The Hindu” on 25th September 2024 **UPSC Syllabus**

Topic: GS Paper2- International relations- Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India’s interests.

Context: The article emphasizes the need for India to adopt cross-border insolvency laws, especially in trade agreements like FTAs and CEPAs, to support international trade. It argues that insolvency provisions should be integrated into such agreements for stronger trade relationships.

For detailed information on **Addressing cross border insolvency** [read this article here](#)

What Is UNCITRAL’s Model Law on Cross-Border Insolvency?

1. The UN Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) introduced a Model Law based on four key principles: access, recognition, cooperation, and coordination.
2. Since the 1990s, it has been promoting these laws, but only 60 countries have adopted them.
3. Despite the benefits of the Model Law, many countries have implemented it differently due to its non-binding nature. Some include exceptions based on public policy or reciprocity.

Why India needs to adopt cross-border insolvency laws?

- 1. Strengthening Trade:** Cross-border insolvency laws provide legal certainty, improving financial stability for companies operating internationally.
- 2. Model Law Recommendations:** UNCITRAL’s Model Law, recommended by the Bankruptcy Law Reform Committee, aims to enhance trade cooperation globally, but only 60 countries have adopted it.
- 3. India’s Current System:** India relies on bilateral agreements, which are seen as inadequate for cross-border insolvency cases. By including insolvency provisions in these agreements, India can strengthen its trade relationships and ensure better handling of financial risks.
- 4. Increasing Trade Agreements:** India has signed FTAs with over 54 countries but lacks detailed insolvency provisions.
- 5. Global Competitiveness:** Including cross-border insolvency in trade agreements would boost India’s international trade competitiveness.

What Are the Challenges in Implementing Cross-Border Insolvency Laws?

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1. Although UNCITRAL's Model Law is recognized, its practical application in diverse legal and economic systems remains debated.
2. Only 60 countries have adopted UNCITRAL's Model Law, showing slow global progress.
3. The non-binding nature of the law allows nations to tailor it, leading to variations in implementation.
4. Countries often include exceptions, such as public policy and reciprocity clauses, complicating harmonization.

Question for practice:

Examine why India needs to adopt cross-border insolvency laws and how it can strengthen its trade relationships.

Supreme Court rule about accessing child sexual material

Source: The post Supreme Court rule about accessing child sexual material has been created, based on the article "**It is an offence: Court has done well to clarify law on online content showing child sex abuse**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 25th September 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 2- Governance-mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

Context: The article explains a Supreme Court ruling that accessing or storing child sexual material is punishable under Indian law. The court clarified laws, discouraged using the term "child pornography," and recommended education on the legal and ethical issues of such content.

For detailed information on **Supreme Court's Verdict on Child Sexual Exploitative and Abuse Material (CSEAM)** [read this article here](#)

What did the Supreme Court rule about accessing child sexual material?

1. The Supreme Court of India ruled that accessing or storing child sexual material is punishable under the **Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act**.
2. This ruling applies to both possession and viewing of such material online, even without actual storage on a device, by **invoking the doctrine of "constructive possession" under Section 15 of the POCSO Act**.
3. The Court set aside a Madras High Court judgment that had quashed charges against someone for viewing child sexual content, emphasizing that merely watching such material also violates the law.
4. The judgment highlighted the need to avoid narrow legal interpretations, reinforcing the penalties outlined in **Section 67B of the Information Technology Act** and **Section 15 of the POCSO Act**.

For detailed information on **Functioning of the POCSO Act** [read this article here](#)

What are the recommendations given by the Supreme Court?

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1. The Court recommended using the term "**Child Sexual Exploitative and Abuse Material**" (CSEAM) instead of "**child pornography**" to better reflect the gravity of the crime.
2. The Court has reminded platforms and intermediaries of their duty to **remove such content as well as report it to the police units concerned**.
3. The Court urged the government to **implement comprehensive sex education programs** to raise awareness about the legal and ethical issues related to child exploitation.

Question for practice:

Discuss the Supreme Court's ruling on accessing or storing Child Sexual Exploitative and Abuse Material (CSEAM) under Indian law and its recommendations for addressing the issue.

India's technology diplomacy

Source: The post India's technology diplomacy has been created, based on the article "**C Raja Mohan writes: India's tech diplomacy — from Nehru to Modi**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 25th September 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3-Science and technology-indigenization of technology and developing new technology.

Context: The article discusses Prime Minister Modi's recent visit to the U.S. and the focus on technology cooperation. It highlights past phases of India's technology diplomacy, the current geopolitical context, and the need for reforms in India's science and technology sectors to achieve better outcomes.

For detailed information on **Significance of Technology Policy reforms for India** [read this article here](#)

How has technology diplomacy evolved in India?

1. **1950s:** Nehru, alongside Homi Bhabha, built foundations for nuclear and space technology, with US support in the Green Revolution.
2. **1970s:** Internal populism, bureaucratic hurdles, and anti-Americanism slowed progress. India's 1974 nuclear test led to increased external restrictions.
3. **1980s:** Indira and Rajiv Gandhi renewed technological cooperation with the US, focusing on telecom and computing.
4. **2014-present:** Modi's government revitalized efforts, especially in nuclear deals, AI, and semiconductors.

What were the key challenges in previous India's technological phases?

1. **Economic Populism and Bureaucratisation:** In the 1970s, India's focus on economic populism and the growing bureaucracy slowed technological progress.
2. **Anti-Americanism:** Political sentiment turned against the US, reducing cooperation and affecting technology access.

3. Nuclear Test and Non-Proliferation: India's 1974 nuclear test led to global restrictions under the non-proliferation regime, constraining technology diplomacy.

4. Private Sector Marginalisation: The government sidelined India's private sector, limiting its role in technological advancements.

5. Brain Drain: Indian scientists, frustrated by limited domestic opportunities, moved to the US, diminishing India's talent pool.

How is the current phase of India's technology diplomacy different?

The current phase is driven by multiple factors:

- 1. India's new focus:** The Modi government has put advanced technologies at the top of its agenda.
- 2. US-China rivalry:** The US is seeking capable partners like India to counterbalance China.
- 3. Global supply chains:** The US and India want to reduce dependence on China, leading to joint initiatives like the iCET (Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies).

What are the outcomes of the current phase of technology diplomacy?

- 1. Wider technology cooperation:** Covers areas like semiconductors, AI, clean energy, biotech, and quantum computing.
- 2. Modernizing India's industrial base:** Focus on both civilian and military applications.
- 3. Supply chain rearrangements:** Efforts to reduce global dependence on China and build alliances with countries like the US, Japan, and Australia.
- 4. Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (iCET):** Strengthening India-US defense and technology partnerships.
- 5. Digital and green technologies:** Prioritized under Modi's leadership, contributing to India's advancements in AI, semiconductors, and nuclear technology.

What are the future challenges for India's technology sector?

1. Despite progress, India still needs reforms in its science and technology sectors.
2. Without addressing internal bureaucratic resistance, the outcomes of the current technology diplomacy phase could be limited.

Question for practice:

Evaluate how India's past challenges in technology diplomacy have shaped its current approach under Modi's leadership.

Main pollution issues in India

Source: The post main pollution issues in India has been created, based on the article “**Vacancies in pollution control boards: A deeper malaise**” published in “Indian Express” on 25th September is 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation

Context: The article discusses pollution issues in India, affecting not just big cities but also smaller ones. It highlights problems with regulatory bodies, like staffing shortages and lack of expert involvement. It suggests using university expertise to improve pollution control and enhance agency efficiency.

For detailed information on **India’s severe pollution crisis** read [Article 1](#), [Article 2](#)

What are the main pollution issues in India?

- 1. Pollution:** India faces serious pollution problems like bad air, poor water quality, and poor waste management.
- 2. Waste management:** These issues impact not only big cities but also smaller cities (Tier 2 and 3). Pollution affects the overall quality of life.
- 3. Staffing issues in regulatory bodies:** Nearly half of the posts in State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs) are vacant. In the National Capital Region, 54% of sanctioned posts are unfilled.
- 4. Lack of expertise:** Pollution control efforts are hampered by the absence of independent scientists, with civil servants occupying key positions instead of technical experts.

How has the mandate of SPCBs expanded?

1. SPCBs were originally set up in 1974 under the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act to address water pollution.
2. Over time, their mandate has expanded to include controlling air and noise pollution, and managing hazardous waste.
3. Despite this expanded mandate, SPCBs struggle to meet the challenges of post-liberalization India due to chronic understaffing.

What can be done to improve pollution control?

- 1. Utilize Academic Expertise:** Universities and technical institutions can provide the needed expertise to support pollution control exercises.
- 2. Increase Autonomy:** Financial and institutional independence for pollution control agencies will enhance their effectiveness in long-term pollution management.

For detailed information on **Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)** [read this article here](#)

Question for practice:

Discuss the challenges faced by pollution control agencies in India and potential solutions to improve their effectiveness.

Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)

Source: The post **Treaty on the Prohibition of nuclear weapons (TPNW)** has been created, based on the article **“Taking stock of global nuclear disarmament”** published in **“The Hindu”** on **26th September is 2024**.

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- international relations- Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India’s interests, Indian diaspora.

Context: The article discusses the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) and how its goal is total nuclear disarmament. It highlights global divisions on nuclear weapons and how the treaty's success or failure could impact future nuclear policies.

For detailed information on **Global Nuclear Order** [read this article here](#)

What is the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)?

1. The TPNW is a global treaty that came into force in 2021, aimed at completely banning nuclear weapons.
2. It prohibits countries from developing, testing, producing, stockpiling, transferring, using, or threatening to use nuclear weapons.
3. The treaty goes beyond the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which focuses on controlling nuclear weapons spread but does not explicitly ban them.
4. As of July 2024, 70 countries had ratified the TPNW, and 27 others had signed it, showing nearly 50% support from global states on nuclear disarmament.
5. Nuclear powers, such as the U.S., Russia, and China, have not signed the treaty, rejecting its provisions during negotiation.
6. Former NATO officials have urged their countries to join, suggesting nuclear weapons should be banned like chemical and biological weapons.
7. The TPNW aims to reduce nuclear risks by stigmatizing nuclear possession and use.

For detailed information on **Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Treaty** [read this article here](#)

What is India’s stance on the TPNW?

1. India has not signed the TPNW, considering it contrary to its interests.
2. India views the treaty as discriminatory, similar to its stance on the NPT.
3. India supports disarmament but prefers balanced global frameworks.

4. Despite staying out, India has not actively undermined the TPNW.
5. India has benefited from the NPT's efforts to curb nuclear weapons spread.

What challenges does the TPNW face?

- 1. Lack of Participation from Nuclear States:** Nuclear powers like the U.S., Russia, China, and India have not joined the TPNW. Their absence weakens the treaty's global impact.
- 2. Resistance from Allies of Nuclear States:** Countries allied with nuclear states, such as NATO members, oppose the treaty, despite some former NATO leaders advocating for joining. As of July 2024, 70 states are parties, and 27 have signed but not ratified.
- 3. No Enforcement Mechanism:** The TPNW lacks a robust system to enforce compliance, making it hard to ensure disarmament.
- 4. Nuclear Threats:** Russia's threats, North Korea's tests, and Iran's enrichment challenge the treaty's disarmament goals. Global tensions complicate efforts to reduce nuclear risks.

What are the implications of the TPNW's potential success?

- 1. Delegitimization of Nuclear Weapons:** If successful, the TPNW could render nuclear weapons as illegitimate as chemical and biological weapons.
- 2. Norm Strengthening:** Similar to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the TPNW could help strengthen the global norm against nuclear use.
- 3. Support from NATO Leaders:** Former NATO leaders, including two ex-Secretaries-General, urged their countries to consider joining the TPNW, showing significant backing.

Question for practice:

Examine the challenges the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) faces in achieving its goal of total nuclear disarmament.

Issue with China's Export Restrictions

Source: The post issue with China's export restrictions has been created, based on the article "**China's warning shots with minerals that run the world**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 26th September 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- International Relations-Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests.

Context: The article discusses China's decision to restrict exports of critical minerals like antimony, used in defense technologies. This move highlights China's dominance in the global mineral supply chain, which poses security risks for countries like India, Japan, and the U.S.

For detailed information on **China's Export Restrictions** read [Article 1](#), [Article 2](#)

What is the Issue with China's Export Restrictions?

1. Export Restrictions on Antimony: China announced restrictions on antimony exports, effective from September 15, citing national security concerns. Antimony is vital in defense sectors for military equipment like missiles and nuclear weapons.

2. Global Impact: China controls 60% of global rare earth production, 60% of critical minerals production, and 80% of processing. Its decisions can significantly affect countries reliant on these minerals, such as the U.S., Japan, and India.

3. Past Examples: In 2010, China stopped exporting rare earths to Japan following a maritime incident, showcasing its willingness to use **mineral exports as a political weapon**.

4. Recent Moves: In 2023, China restricted exports of gallium, germanium, and synthetic graphite after U.S. and Dutch export controls on semiconductor equipment, intensifying trade tensions.

How does China's strategy affect the West?

1. Restrictions on minerals like gallium, germanium, and graphite affect Western industries relying on these for technologies like solar cells, computer chips, and EV batteries.

2. China's curbs hinder the U.S.'s development of high-tech sectors, such as Virginia class submarines and F-35 fighter jets, which require rare earth elements.

3. As U.S.-China ties worsen, China's export controls will likely grow, further complicating Western supply chains and technological advancements.

How is India Affected?

1. India is heavily reliant on importing critical minerals like lithium, nickel, cobalt, and copper, essential for its industries.

2. In FY23, India spent around ₹34,000 crore on these mineral imports.

3. China's restrictions on minerals, such as antimony, increase India's vulnerability, as China dominates the global supply chain.

4. With India's demand for critical minerals rising, import costs will likely grow, worsening its strategic dependence on China.

5. The lack of alternative supply chains poses a risk, making India susceptible to geopolitical pressures.

Question for practice:

Examine how China's export restrictions on critical minerals like antimony impact India's strategic dependence and vulnerability in the global supply chain.

Issues with Climate Predictions

Source: The post Issues with Climate Predictions has been created, based on the article “**How global warming affects forecasting**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 26th September is 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Environment

Context: The article discusses the extreme weather events of 2023-2024 linked to global warming. It highlights the challenges in predicting climate patterns, the uncertainties in current models, and the need for improvements in forecasting. Reliable predictions are crucial for effective disaster management and planning.

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

What Has the Recent Warming Shown Us?

1. The Earth’s temperature has likely risen beyond the 1.5° C mark compared to pre-industrial levels. This has led to a range of extreme weather events, including heatwaves, cyclones, floods, droughts, and wildfires.
2. The unpredictability of these events highlights the challenges in current weather prediction capabilities.

What Are the Issues with Climate Predictions?

1. **Model Inaccuracy:** Current climate models struggle to accurately reproduce natural climate patterns like monsoons. For example, they have not accurately predicted monsoon trends over the past fifty years and are considered unreliable for future predictions.
2. **Increased Complexity with Warming:** As global temperatures rise, predicting natural phenomena like hurricanes, El Niño, and La Niña becomes more complex. The unexpected warming from events like the 2023 El Niño and underwater volcanic activity have made predictions more difficult.
3. **Variability and Unpredictability:** The climate models often produce different outcomes even when configured the same way, which complicates understanding and predicting the climate's response to ongoing warming.

How has the Indian monsoon been affected?

1. The 2023 Indian monsoon was erratic, with some areas experiencing drought and others facing severe floods and landslides.
2. Despite an El Niño event, the monsoon did not qualify as an El Niño drought, leaving researchers puzzled.
3. 2024 is expected to be a monsoon-surplus year, but it cannot be classified as a typical La Niña monsoon.
4. Predictions for a strong Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) have not materialized.
5. The unpredictability of monsoon patterns, as seen in 2023-2024, reflects the challenges in current climate and weather models.

What Is the Future of Climate Predictions?

9 PM Compilation September 2024

1. There is hope for improving prediction models through advanced technologies and better data collection.
2. However, the article suggests focusing on reliable short-term predictions rather than long-term projections due to the inherent uncertainties in predicting how various factors, like human activities and natural events, will interact in a warming world.

What can we learn from the recent warming?

1. **Threshold Exceeded:** Earth's average temperature likely surpassed the critical 1.5^o C increase over pre-industrial levels, leading to various extreme weather events.
2. **Model Limitations:** Current climate models struggle with accurate long-term predictions, particularly failing to reliably reproduce historical monsoon patterns.
3. **Need for Improved Prediction Methods:** There is a pressing need to enhance models using advanced technologies to better predict and manage the effects of climate variability.

Question for practice:

Discuss the challenges faced by current climate models in accurately predicting weather patterns, as highlighted by the extreme weather events of 2023-2024.

Contrasting trends in job growth and unemployment

Source: The post contrasting trends in job growth and unemployment has been created, based on the article "Jobs of the future require upskilling workers" published in "Indian Express" on 26th September 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Economy-employment

Context: The article discusses India's employment challenges, including job growth, unemployment, skill gaps, and the impact of technology on jobs. It suggests reforms in education and industry to balance economic and job growth for future workforce absorption.

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

What are the contrasting trends in job growth and unemployment?

1. The RBI's Capital, Labour, Energy Materials, Services (KLEMS) data shows a 6% increase in job growth for FY24, up from 3.2% in FY23.
2. However, the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) data shows unemployment rising to 9.2% in June 2024 from 7% in May. The annual unemployment rate for FY24 is 8%.
3. The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) survey shows urban unemployment decreased slightly from 6.8% to 6.7% between January-March 2023 and January-March 2024.

For detailed information on **The conflicting reports on job creation in India** [read this article here](#)

What are the India's employment challenges?

- 1. Job Creation Deficit:** India needs to create 1.2 crore jobs yearly, but only 80–90 lakh jobs are generated annually, leaving a 30–40 lakh shortfall (Citigroup Research).
- 2. Skill Gaps:** India faces two key issues: **imperfections in labour markets and skill gaps**. Many job seekers lack proper training or skills, leading to gaps in the workforce. The demand for jobs in IT and migrant labour highlights the **aspirational gap** between job seekers' expectations and available work.
- 3. Technological Impact:** AI and automation reduce employment elasticity, especially in middle management roles.

What Should be Done?

1. Provide better training as both skill and aspirational gaps persist, especially in sectors like IT and manual labour.
2. Focus on sectors like food processing and textiles that cater to the domestic market and absorb more labour.
3. Promote sectors like pharmaceuticals and electronics that can improve international competitiveness and spur job growth.

Question for practice:

Discuss the contrasting trends in job growth and unemployment in India, and the challenges the country faces in addressing the job creation deficit, skill gaps, and the impact of technology on employment.

Current State of India-US Relations

Source: The post Current State of India-US Relations has been created, based on the article “**Sanjaya Baru writes: Is India-US partnership an uncertain love affair?**” published in “**Indian Express**” on 26th September 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- International Relations-Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests.

Context: The article discusses how the India-US relationship has grown stronger over time, despite current challenges. It highlights issues like India's NSA staying home, tensions with Khalistani activists, and the need for deeper conversations on key strategic issues beyond photo-ops.

For detailed information on **India-U.S. relationship** read [Article 1](#), [Article 2](#)

What is the Current State of India-US Relations?

1. India and the US share a stronger relationship now than in the past.
2. Disagreements no longer disrupt their partnership. For example, despite challenges such as lawsuits involving Indian officials, the relationship remains stable.

Why Did the NSA Not Travel to the US?

1. Ajit Kumar Doval, India's **National Security Advisor**, did not accompany Prime Minister Modi to the US. This was unusual as it was the first time since the NSA position was established in 1998.
2. Media reports suggest he stayed to monitor the situation in Jammu & Kashmir.
3. However, his absence might also be due to avoiding potential embarrassment from a lawsuit filed in New York by Khalistani activist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun.

What Are the Challenges in the India-US Relations?

1. **Khalistani Activism:** A lawsuit filed by Khalistani activist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun against Indian officials, including NSA Ajit Doval, created diplomatic tensions.
2. **US Handling of Sensitive Issues:** US officials met Sikh activists before Modi-Biden talks, raising concerns about “transnational repression.”
3. **Differences in Strategic Views:** Disagreements on defense equipment sales, trade policies, and emerging technologies persist.
4. **Diverging Foreign Policy Stances:** India and the US differ on relations with Russia, China, and democracy in Bangladesh, complicating the strategic partnership.

What Should be Done?

1. **Deeper Strategic Conversations:** Both nations must engage in meaningful discussions beyond photo-ops, similar to the honest dialogues of the 1990s.
2. **Clarify Strategic Interests:** India and the US need to align on critical issues like defense sales and foreign policies, especially regarding Russia and China.
3. **Diplomatic Sensitivities:** Avoid public embarrassments like the Khalistani lawsuit and address concerns with clear communication.
4. **Balance Domestic Politics:** The Indian government should reconcile differences between official foreign policy and the narrative pushed by its supporters on social media.

Question for practice:

Discuss the challenges currently affecting India-US relations and what steps can be taken to strengthen their strategic partnership.

Concerns About the Police encounter in Thane

Source: The post concerns about the police encounter in Thane has been created, based on the article “**A rape accused was killed in a police vehicle. That’s not the end of the story**” published in “**Indian Express**” on 27th September 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Governance -Important aspects of governance

Context: The article discusses a controversial police encounter in Thane, where a rape accused was killed inside a police vehicle. It questions the legitimacy of the encounter, highlights political implications, and raises concerns about fake encounters targeting the poor for political gain.

For detailed information on **Issues related to policing in India** [read this article here](#)

What Concerns Were Raised About the Police encounter in Thane?

- 1. Unusual Deployment:** It is not common to assign a senior inspector for prisoner escort duty. Both the senior and junior inspectors' presence seemed unnecessary, raising suspicions about the purpose of the assignment.
- 2. Suspicious Circumstances:** The accused, reportedly handcuffed and with his face covered, allegedly snatched a police officer's pistol. This seems unlikely and makes the police account questionable.
- 3. Past Record of the Senior Inspector:** The officer who shot the accused has a controversial past. His dismissal was once recommended for helping a gangster relative escape custody, which questions his credibility.
- 4. Comparison to Similar Cases:** The Thane encounter resembles the Hyderabad case, where police killed four rape accused. That case was later found to have significant flaws, casting doubt on such encounters.
- 5. Targeting the Poor:** The article notes that fake encounters often target poor individuals, hinting that the accused's social status made him vulnerable to such actions.

Question for practice:

Discuss the concerns raised about the legitimacy of the police encounter in Thane, focusing on the unusual deployment, suspicious circumstances, and the targeting of the poor.

India's legal provisions for handling FDI and international trade on national security grounds

Source: The post India's legal provisions for handling FDI and international trade on national security grounds has been created, based on the article "**How to deal with the national security risk from FDI and trade**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 27th September is 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper-Security

Context: The article discusses India's lack of a clear legal framework to handle foreign direct investment (FDI) and international trade on national security grounds. It emphasizes the need for a dedicated law, similar to global practices, to address such security risks.

For detailed information on **Need of Specific Law for National Security Screening of Inward FDI** [read this article here](#)

What are India's legal provisions for handling foreign direct investment (FDI) and international trade on national security grounds?

1. Press Note 3 (PN3) Regulation: In April 2020, India implemented PN3 under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) to regulate FDI from neighboring countries, particularly aimed at controlling Chinese investments during the COVID-19 pandemic. PN3 requires government approval for investments from land-bordering countries.

2. Comparison with Other Nations: Countries like Canada and Australia have specific laws that directly address national security risks from FDI. For example, Canada's Investment Act which allows for screening and action against foreign investments that threaten national security.

3. Legal Vacuum: India lacks a dedicated law for FDI related to national security, using FEMA and the Customs Tariff Act as stop-gap measures. This has exposed India to potential challenges in international courts.

4. International Practices: India's international investment agreements, like the 2015 Model Bilateral Investment Treaty, separate provisions for national security from other economic concerns, underlining the absence of a comprehensive domestic law.

Has This Legal Vacuum Impacted International Trade?

1. In 2019, following the Pulwama terror attack, India used Section 8A(1) of the Customs Tariff Act to impose a 200% duty on Pakistani imports. This act is generally for economic emergencies, not security threats.

2. Such measures, not rooted in a clear national security framework, could be challenged in international courts.

3. India's reliance on general laws like FEMA and the Customs Tariff Act, instead of dedicated security legislation, highlights a critical gap that could affect its standing and effectiveness in international trade disputes.

Question for practice:

Examine how the absence of a dedicated national security law for FDI in India has impacted the country's ability to regulate foreign investments and international trade.

Indian Oil Companies' Dividend Income Stuck in Russia

Source: The post Indian Oil Companies' Dividend Income Stuck in Russia has been created, based on the article "Challenge for oil PSUs: How to get \$900 million dividends out of Russia" published in "Indian Express" on 27th September 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- International Relations-Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Context: The article discusses how Indian oil companies are unable to access \$900 million in dividend income from investments in Russian projects. Western sanctions on Russia, including banking restrictions, make it difficult to transfer or use these funds.

How Much Investment Has India Made in Russian Oil Projects?

1. India has invested over \$6 billion in Russian oil and gas projects.

9 PM Compilation September 2024

2. ONGC Videsh (OVL) holds a 20% stake in the Sakhalin-1 project and a 26% stake in the Vankor project.
3. A consortium of Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Oil India (OIL), and Bharat PetroResources (BPRL) holds a 23.9% share in the Vankor project.
4. The same consortium has a 29.9% stake in the Taas-Yuryakh oil field project.
5. These investments were made to secure energy for India, which relies heavily on oil imports to meet its energy needs.

Why is Indian Oil Companies' Dividend Income Stuck in Russia?

1. Indian oil companies have \$900 million in dividend income stuck in Russia, including \$600-650 million from IOC-OIL-BPRL and \$250 million from ONGC Videsh (OVL).
2. This money is trapped in Commercial Indo Bank (CIBL) (an affiliate of State Bank of India (SBI)) accounts in Moscow due to Western sanctions imposed on Russia after the Ukraine war started in 2022.
3. The sanctions include restrictions on financial transaction systems like SWIFT, making it difficult to transfer the funds out of Russia.
4. The investments are structured through special purpose vehicles based in countries like Singapore, complicating cross-border payments.
5. These funds cannot be easily used for operational needs or to purchase Russian oil due to international legal, taxation, and accounting challenges.

What Are the Possible Solutions?

1. The solution will likely require a combination of diplomacy and commercial negotiations between India, Russia, and other stakeholders.
2. Legal and international accounting experts are being consulted to find a viable path forward.

Question for practice:

Discuss the reasons why Indian oil companies' dividend income from Russian projects is stuck and the potential solutions to address this issue.

Supreme Court of India warned judges against making biased or sexist comments

Source: The post Supreme Court of India warned judges against making biased or sexist comments has been created, based on the article "**Judge and prejudice: Judicial officers must be mindful of language that reveal bias**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 27th September is 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 2 – Indian Polity - Judiciary

Context: The article discusses how the Supreme Court of India warned judges against making biased or sexist comments. It emphasizes the need for judges to be fair and to uphold constitutional values. The court aims to combat gender stereotyping and ensure a bias-free judicial system for all communities.

Why Did the Supreme Court Reprimand Judges?

1. The Supreme Court reprimanded judges for making biased and inappropriate remarks during proceedings.
2. It cited examples like Karnataka High Court Judge V. Srishananda, who made sexist comments and referred to a Muslim area as 'Pakistan.'
3. The court emphasized that such remarks violate constitutional values and harm the judiciary's image.

What is the Importance of Fairness in Judging?

1. The Supreme Court stressed that fairness is the heart and soul of judging.
2. Judges must strictly follow constitutional values and avoid prejudice.
3. Casual remarks, or biased comments can negatively impact the public's view of the judiciary.

What Initiatives Have Been Taken to Combat Bias?

1. **Suo Motu Cognizance:** The Supreme Court took action against Judge V. Srishananda for his sexist comments and referring to a Muslim area as 'Pakistan'.
2. **Handbook Against Gender Stereotyping:** In 2023, the Court released a handbook to combat gender bias, suggesting alternative, gender-neutral terms.
3. **Live-Streaming Caution:** The live-streaming of court proceedings has increased the reach of judicial remarks, making it essential for judges to be mindful of their words.
4. **Public Caution:** The Court cautioned Punjab and Haryana High Court judges for making unwarranted remarks, reinforcing the importance of fair language during proceedings.

Question for practice:

Evaluate how the Supreme Court of India has taken steps to address bias and promote fairness in judicial proceedings.

Challenges and opportunities facing the Self-Respect Movement today

Source: The post challenges and opportunities facing the Self-Respect Movement today has been created, based on the article "**Keep the fire of the self-respect movement going**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 28th September is 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper1- Society-Social empowerment,

Context: The article discusses the Self-Respect Movement, which aimed to challenge social hierarchies and promote rational thinking, women's rights, and social justice. It highlights the movement's impact on Tamil Nadu and its relevance in resisting cultural homogenization today.

What is the Self-Respect Movement?

1. The Self-Respect Movement was **founded in 1925 by E.V. Ramasamy, also known as Periyar.**
2. Its goal was to challenge social hierarchies, including caste-based oppression and gender inequality.
3. The movement advocated for social reforms such as women's rights, including equal property rights, widow remarriage, and the right to divorce.
4. Periyar launched the ***Kudi Arasu* weekly in 1925** to promote these ideas and criticize Brahminical dominance.
5. It contributed to promoting rationalism, social justice, and regional identities in Tamil Nadu.

For detailed information on **E.V. Ramasamy (Periyar)** [read this article here](#)

How did the Self-Respect Movement influence Tamil Nadu's politics?

1. The Self-Respect Movement significantly influenced Tamil Nadu's politics by promoting social justice and equality.
2. In 1929, the first Self-Respect Conference addressed issues like equal property rights for women and caste abolition.
3. **The Justice Party**, allied with the movement, passed the Communal Government Order and nominated **Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy, the first woman Legislative Council member.**
4. Periyar introduced self-respect marriages, legalised in 1967 by the DMK.
5. The movement focused on reforms such as widow remarriage and inter-caste marriages, which challenged traditional Hindu practices and Brahminical dominance in society.

What are the challenges and opportunities facing the Self-Respect Movement today?

1. **Cultural Homogenization:** Hindutva promotes a singular identity, threatening the diversity the Self-Respect Movement protects. This erodes regional, caste, and gender identities central to the movement's cause.
2. **Intersectionality:** New social dynamics—where caste intersects with class, religion, gender, and sexuality—require the movement to expand its focus to include LGBTQIA+ rights and gender fluidity.
3. **Digital Misinformation:** social media amplifies caste biases and group prejudices, making it harder to uphold anti-caste reforms. The movement must engage young people to combat these influences.
4. **Youth Disconnect:** Many young individuals, though distanced from caste practices, are vulnerable to right-wing propaganda. The movement must reconnect with them to reinforce social reforms like reservations.

Why is the Self-Respect Movement still important?

1. As the movement enters its second century, it remains crucial in fighting for social justice and equality.
2. It must adapt to contemporary societal changes and continue to oppose forces that threaten India's cultural diversity.
3. The movement's ongoing mission is to maintain and promote individual and community rights against overarching nationalistic ideologies.

Question for practice:

Examine how the Self-Respect Movement has influenced social and political reforms in Tamil Nadu, particularly regarding caste abolition and women's rights.

Russia shifts its trade focus from Europe to Asia

Source: The post Russia shift its trade focus from Europe to Asia has been created, based on the article "Russia's geopolitical pivot to Asia, a new India chapter" published in "The Hindu" on 28th September is 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- international relation- Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Context: The article discusses the shift in Russia's trade from Europe to Asia, especially with India. It highlights increasing economic ties despite challenges like sanctions, limited technology cooperation, and trade imbalances. The goal is to boost collaboration despite hurdles.

For detailed information on **India-Russia Relations** [read this article here](#)

Why did Russia shift its trade focus from Europe to Asia?

1. Russia cut ties with Europe in 2022, turning its focus to Asian countries, especially China and India.
2. The shift began due to Russia's vulnerability to external political and financial shocks.
3. Economic links with Europe were affected by the Ukraine conflict, leading Russia to explore new markets.

How did India-Russia trade develop?

1. India-Russia trade increased significantly after the Ukraine conflict.
2. By June 2022, their bilateral trade was \$3.5 billion. By May 2024, it reached \$7.5 billion. The target is to reach \$100 billion by 2030, despite challenges like sanctions.
3. Russia became India's fourth-largest trading partner in 2022.
4. India imports Russian oil, fertilizers, and sunflower oil, helping reduce domestic costs.

5. India re-exports Russian oil to Europe, benefitting its economy.

What challenges exist between India and Russia's economic relations?

1. Economic complementarity: Both nations focus on self-reliance—Russia on industrial production and India on 'Make in India'.

2. Sanctions and payment issues: There are no stable payment mechanisms or logistics operators. More cooperation between banks could help ease financial challenges.

3. Technology and investment gaps: Except for the nuclear and military sectors, there are no significant investment projects. Historical collaboration in technology has weakened since the USSR's collapse.

4. Education and research: Cooperation in STEM and social sciences is slow. More collaboration is needed to bridge knowledge gaps.

What is the outlook for India-Russia relations?

1. The Ukraine conflict drove the relationship forward, but both countries face pressure—India from external forces and Russia from economic strain.

2. Growth may come from military and civilian engineering sectors, but trade quality must improve through stronger bilateral production chains.

Question for practice:

Evaluate the challenges and opportunities in India-Russia trade relations, considering the impact of sanctions, payment issues, and technological gaps.

Technological Solutions Alone Are Not Enough to Address Land Governance Challenges in India

Source: The post technological solutions alone are not enough to address land governance challenges in India has been created, based on the article “**Why digitisation is not enough to reform land laws**” published in “**Indian Express**” on 28th September 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 3 - Land reforms in India

Context: The article discusses how India's land governance is complicated by conflicting laws, unclear property rights, and outdated records. While digitization efforts help modernize land administration, comprehensive legal reforms are essential to address deeper issues hindering land use and development.

What are the key challenges in India's land governance?

1. Unclear land titles: Insecurity of tenure hinders investments and ownership transfers.

2. Fragmented landholdings: 90% of farm households own less than 2 hectares, limiting agricultural productivity.

3. Complex laws: Conflicting regulations, like Gujarat's 40 types of land ceiling laws, create administrative difficulties and encourage rent-seeking.

4. Outdated land records: Poor record management delays infrastructure projects and limits credit access.

5. Gender inequality: Women face challenges in owning land and property.

6. Inability to use land efficiently: Leasing agricultural land is prohibited in many states, and complicated tenancy laws make land use risky.

7. Weak targeting of subsidies: Fertiliser subsidies aren't integrated with land data, leading to inefficiencies.

8. Benami properties: The legal framework lacks clarity for regularising these properties, contributing to uncertainty in ownership.

For detailed information on **Challenges of land reforms in India** read [Article 1](#), [Article 2](#)

Why are technological solutions alone not enough?

While the 2024 Budget proposed digitisation (like land records digitisation and Agri Stack integration), this is not enough:

1. The root problem is the complex legal framework, not just outdated records.
2. Simply digitising land records without legal reform won't improve land markets or property rights.
3. Laws like the Ninth Schedule prevent judicial review, limiting property owners' rights.
4. State-level legal complexities, like Gujarat's land ceiling laws, create multiple regulations based on land quality and ownership.

What should be Done?

1. Legal Reforms: Comprehensive legal reforms should address the complex and conflicting land laws. These reforms must strengthen property rights and streamline regulations for more efficient land markets. For example, updating tenancy laws and land use regulations can help ensure better property rights and access to formal credit.

2. Digitization and Integration: Accelerate the digitization of land records and integrate these with platforms like Agri Stack. However, ensure these technological solutions are complemented by legal reforms. For instance, digitizing land records should go hand in hand with updating the laws that govern land ownership and use.

3. Enhance Land Banks: Improve the functioning of land banks to support infrastructure, renewable energy, and industrial projects by addressing legal hurdles that currently limit their effectiveness.

4. Targeted Subsidy Reforms: Link subsidies more closely to land ownership data to ensure efficient targeting and reduce misuse. This includes integrating Point of Sale devices for fertilizer subsidies with updated land records.

5. Promote Land Consolidation: Implement policies that facilitate land consolidation, particularly in rural areas where land fragmentation affects agricultural productivity. Nearly 90% of farm households own less than 2 hectares, leading to suboptimal economies of scale.

Question for practice:

Examine how legal complexities and fragmented landholdings hinder agricultural productivity and land use efficiency in India.

Challenges in disciplining constitutional court judges

Source: The post challenges in disciplining constitutional court judges has been created, based on the article “How Supreme Court deals with errant judges, works around limitations” published in “Indian Express” on 28th September is 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2-Judiciary

Context: The article discusses the challenges in disciplining constitutional court judges. Impeachment is rare and difficult, so alternatives like judicial intervention and transferring judges are used. Recent cases highlight concerns about judicial accountability and the limits of these methods.

For detailed information on **Supreme Court of India warned judges against making biased or sexist comments** [read this article here](#)

What is the Concern Regarding the Karnataka HC Judge's Comments?

1. Justice V Srishananda of Karnataka High Court made controversial comments, including comparing a Bengaluru locality to Pakistan and making an objectionable remark about a female lawyer.
2. The Supreme Court (SC) expressed concern but dropped its intervention after the judge apologized.

How are Constitutional Court Judges Protected?

1. Judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts have strong protections to ensure judicial independence. The only constitutional method of removing a judge is through impeachment.
2. According to Article 124(4), a judge can only be removed through a political process in Parliament. Impeachment requires a two-thirds majority and must prove "misbehaviour" or "incapacity." This high standard makes impeachment rare.
3. Impeachment proceedings have been initiated five times, including against Justice V Ramaswami (1993), Justice Soumitra Sen (2011), and Justice C V Nagarjuna (2017). However, no judge has been successfully impeached, although Justice Sen resigned after being impeached by the Rajya Sabha.

What Other Methods Does the SC Use to Discipline Judges?

1. **Judicial Intervention:** The Supreme Court can act directly, as seen in the 2017 case of Justice C S Karnan, who was sentenced to six months' imprisonment for contempt of court. This set an uneasy precedent but showed SC's willingness to act.

2. Transfer Policy: The Supreme Court's Collegium transfers judges as a disciplinary measure. For instance, Justice P D Dinakaran was transferred from Karnataka High Court to Sikkim High Court amidst corruption allegations. However, critics argue this only moves problems instead of solving them.

3. Mild Reproach: The SC can issue reprimands, as seen in the recent case of Justice V Srishananda, who apologized for controversial comments, and the SC dropped its intervention.

What are the concerns related to the Supreme Court's intervention in disciplining judges?

1. **Impeachment is rare due to the high political consensus required.** It has only been initiated five times, with none fully succeeding.

2. The 2017 case of Justice C S Karnan, sentenced to imprisonment for contempt, **raised questions about one constitutional court disciplining another.**

3. The Supreme Court uses the transfer of judges as a disciplinary measure, as seen with Justice P D Dinakaran. However, this method has been **criticized for simply moving corruption instead of addressing it.**

Question for practice:

Discuss the alternative methods the Supreme Court of India uses to discipline constitutional court judges, aside from impeachment.

Importance of vigilant drug regulation

Source – This post on **importance of vigilant drug regulation** is based on the article “**Random checks find ‘not of standard quality’ drugs in market: Here’s all you need to know**” published in “**Indian Express**” on **28th September 2024**.

Why in the News?

The recent discovery of spurious or “not of standard quality” (NSQ) medicines by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) highlights the importance of vigilant drug regulation.

About CDSCO

The Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) is the Central Drug Authority for discharging functions assigned to the Central Government under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act. CDSCO has six zonal offices, four sub-zonal offices, 13 port offices and seven laboratories under its control.

Major functions of CDSCO

1. Regulatory control over the import of drugs
2. Approval of new drugs and clinical trials
3. Meetings of Drugs Consultative Committee (DCC) and Drugs Technical Advisory Board (DTAB)
4. Approval of certain licenses as Central License Approving Authority is exercised by the CDSCO headquarters.

Overview of Findings

9 PM Compilation September 2024

1. **Sample Testing:** CDSCO conducts routine testing of medicine samples to ensure quality, with recent checks revealing that several common medications, including **paracetamol**, **metformin**, and **pantoprazole**, are not of standard quality (NSQ).

2. **Monthly Reports:** Each month, CDSCO releases lists of medicines identified as NSQ to inform the public, healthcare professionals, and regulatory bodies.

Categories of Non-Standard Quality Drugs

1. **Spurious Drugs:** These are counterfeit products pretending to be established brands. For example, Samples of telmisartan and pantoprazole were found not to be manufactured by their branded companies.

2. **Poor Quality:** These drugs may have incorrect descriptions, inadequate dissolution, or insufficient active ingredients. For example, Metformin failed a dissolution test, meaning it may not dissolve effectively in the body.

3. **Adulterated Drugs:** These contain harmful contaminants or adulterants. Such drugs are usually recalled by regulators or manufacturers.

Purpose of Testing and Reporting

1. **Public Awareness:** Monthly lists serve to inform consumers and health authorities about potentially unsafe drugs in the market.

2. **Industry Accountability:** Random testing acts as a deterrent for manufacturers, ensuring they maintain quality standards.

UPSC Syllabus: Governance

Global governance challenges highlighted by the Summit of the Future

Source: The post global governance challenges highlighted by the Summit of the Future has been created, based on the article "**Bridging the chasm of global inequality**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 30th September 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- International Relations - Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Context: The article discusses the global governance challenges highlighted by the Summit of the Future. It emphasizes the imbalance in power between developed and developing countries, the need for reform, and the role of Asia in shaping global priorities and cooperation.

For detailed information on **Summit of the Future** [read this article here](#)

What is the focus of global governance?

1. The Summit of the Future raises questions about whether global governance should focus on great power competition or the continuing imbalance in institutions and global inequality.

2. While great power competition debates the means, the imbalance raises questions about justice.

3. Global governance now focuses on **sustainability** and improving **well-being**, not just economic growth through **GDP**.

4. Global goals do not resolve issues but create new forms of cooperation.

What key initiatives emerged from the Summit?

1. The Summit resulted in two major initiatives: the **Global Digital Impact initiative** and the **Declaration on Future Generations**, which call for national action.

2. Concrete impacts include the formation of an **International Scientific Panel** and a **Global Dialogue on AI**.

3. These initiatives mirror how climate change became a global issue 30 years ago.

What challenges remain in reforming global institutions?

1. Lack of Progress on Security Council Reform: The Summit of the Future did not agree on a clear pathway for **UN Security Council reform**, only discussing member categories without reaching a conclusion.

2. Limited Reform in Global Financial Institutions: Reforms for global financial institutions are restricted to a promise of giving developing countries a greater say. However, no significant actions have followed this pledge.

3. Developing Countries' Debt Burden: Developing nations face a massive public debt of **\$29 trillion**, paying **\$847 billion** in interest alone in 2022, showing the continued imbalance in global economic power.

4. Sustainable Development Goals Lagging: Only **17%** of the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** are on track, reflecting the systemic issues in meeting global challenges.

5. Influence of Developed Nations: Developed countries still dominate agenda-setting, as shown by the ongoing control of **G-7** nations despite the rise of emerging powers like China and India.

What role do developing countries and emerging powers play?

1. Re-emergence of China and India: Emerging powers like China and India, through BRICS, began influencing global governance in 2009.

2. Resource Use Shift: In 1950, the U.S. consumed 40% of global resources, but by 2010, Asia's share grew to half of global usage.

3. Global GDP Share: By 2016, the GDP share of 17 developing countries tripled to 63% compared to G-7 countries.

4. Global Agenda Influence: Despite growing influence, developing countries still struggle to set the global agenda.

Question for practice:

Examine the challenges developing countries face in influencing global governance, as highlighted by the Summit of the Future.

Need to revise international carbon finance standards

Source: The post need to revise international carbon finance standards has been created, based on the article "**Common Practice Standards must have India outlook**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 30th September 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3-Agriculture

Context: The article discusses the need to revise international carbon finance standards to include India's small farmers in agroforestry projects. By changing the "common practice" definition, more farmers can benefit from carbon credits and boost their income sustainably.

What is the status of India's agroforestry sector?

1. India's agroforestry sector covers 28.4 million hectares, representing 8.65% of the country's land area.
2. Agroforestry contributes 19.3% of India's total carbon stocks, showing its environmental significance.
3. The sector has potential for expansion to 53 million hectares by 2050.
4. Research suggests it could create an additional carbon sink of over 2.5 billion tons of CO₂ by 2030 with proper policies and support.

What are the benefits of carbon finance support for agroforestry?

1. **Expands India's agroforestry area** from 28.4 million hectares to 53 million hectares by 2050, contributing to environmental sustainability.
2. Agroforestry can be integrated with carbon finance projects like Afforestation, Reforestation, and Revegetation (ARR) initiatives. If proper policies and financial support are in place, it could **create an additional carbon sink**.
3. Provides **additional income for small and marginal Indian farmers** through carbon credits.
4. Improves **soil fertility, water retention, and prevents erosion, enhancing agricultural productivity**.

What is 'Common Practice' in Carbon Finance?

1. "Common practice" assesses if a project goes beyond typical activities in a region to qualify for carbon credits.
2. Projects considered common do not earn credits, as they provide no additional environmental benefits.
3. Global standards, like **Verra's and Gold Standard**, use this criterion, often reflecting large-scale agriculture in regions like Latin America and Africa.
4. In India, **86.1% of farmers are small and marginal with less than two hectares**, practicing scattered agroforestry.
5. These fragmented practices may be seen as "common," excluding Indian farmers from participating in carbon finance projects.

What Should be Done?

1. **Redefine the "common practice" criteria** to recognize India's agroforestry activities, allowing small farmers to qualify for carbon credits.
2. Provide financial support and incentives to increase India's carbon sink through Afforestation, Reforestation, and Revegetation (ARR) projects.
3. **Use successful models like TERI's 19 ARR projects**, which have benefited over 56,600 farmers across seven states, as examples for scaling up carbon finance initiatives.
4. Encourage international platforms like Verra and Gold Standard to **adopt India-centric approaches**.

Question for practice:

Why is there a need to adopt India-centric approaches in international carbon finance standards?

Causes of Food Loss and Waste (FLW) in India

Source: The post causes of Food Loss and Waste (FLW) in India has been created, based on the article "**What India can do to reduce food wastage**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 30th September is 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- issues of buffer stocks and food security

Context: The article highlights the issue of food loss and waste (FLW) and its global impact. It discusses India's food losses, the need for better technology, mechanisation, storage, and policy support to reduce these losses and improve food security and environmental sustainability.

For detailed information on **Issue of food wastage in India** [read this article here](#)

What is Food Loss and Waste (FLW) and Why is it Important?

1. The UN observes September 29 as the International Day of Awareness of FLW.
2. Globally, food loss between harvest and retail is 13.2% of production, and food wasted after retail is 17%. Together, FLW accounts for 30% of global food production.
3. Reducing FLW by half could feed all hungry people and lower greenhouse gas emissions by 8-10%.
4. FLW also impacts energy use, with potential savings of 38%.
5. Addressing FLW can significantly contribute to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for food security and environmental sustainability.

For detailed information on **Food Waste Index Report 2024** [read this article here](#)

Where Does India Stand in Terms of FLW?

1. In India, post-harvest losses amount to Rs 1.53 trillion (\$18.5 billion).

2. Losses include 12.5 million metric tons (MMT) of cereals, 2.11 MMT of oilseeds, and 1.37 MMT of pulses.
3. Horticultural losses total 49.9 MMT annually due to poor cold chain infrastructure.

What are the Key Causes of FLW in India?

- 1. Low Mechanisation:** A lack of machinery like combine harvesters leads to higher food losses. In Bihar, only 10% of paddy farmers use combine harvesters, compared to 97% in Punjab, resulting in higher losses.
- 2. Inadequate Storage Infrastructure:** Poor storage leads to 10% of total food grain production losses. The government plans to increase storage capacity by 70 MMT in five years.
- 4. Poor Cold Chain:** Horticultural crops lose 49.9 million metric tons (MMT) annually due to poor cold chain infrastructure, affecting fresh produce availability and farmer income.

What Should be Done?

- 1. Upgrade Storage Systems:** The government's plan to add 70 MMT of storage capacity over five years could reduce 10% of food grain losses.
- 2. Promote Green Technologies:** Encourage the use of solar dryers and airtight bags to cut losses and improve food safety.
- 3. Revisit the Jute Packaging Material Act (1987):** While jute is biodegradable, its use leads to rodent attacks and pilferage in tropical climates. Expanding the use of airtight bags could reduce storage and transit losses.
- 4. Strengthen Policy Support:** Support small farmers with mechanisation through Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) and Custom Hiring Centres (CHCs).

Question for practice:

Discuss the key causes of Food Loss and Waste (FLW) in India and the measures that can be taken to address them.

Reasons for Ghee Adulterated in India

Source: The post reasons for ghee adulterated in India has been created, based on the article “**Express View on ghee adulteration: High taxes are the problem**” published in “**Indian Express**” on 30th September is 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- food security

Context: The article discusses the high cost of milk fat, its vulnerability to adulteration, and how incidents like the Tirupati ghee controversy may increase consumer demand for branded ghee. It suggests reducing taxes on ghee to prevent further price increases and adulteration risks.

What are the Reasons for Ghee Adulterated in India?

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1. High Cost of Milk Fat: Milk fat is expensive, priced at Rs 460-470 per kg, much higher than refined oils like palmolein, soyabean, and sunflower oil (Rs 125-130/kg) and beef tallow (Rs 85-90/kg). This cost difference makes ghee prone to adulteration with cheaper foreign fats.

2. Limited Availability: India produces only 4 lakh tonnes of milk fat annually, mostly used by dairies for ice cream, butter, and ghee. This limited supply increases the temptation to adulterate ghee.

3. High Demand for Large Quantities: Large buyers like the Tirupati temple need significant amounts of ghee (5,000 tonnes annually), increasing the risk of adulteration due to the pressure to supply large volumes.

4. Tax Anomaly: The 12% GST on ghee, compared to 5% on vegetable fat, makes ghee costlier, encouraging adulteration.

What Can the Government Do?

Reducing the 12% Goods and Services Tax (GST) on ghee, butter, and milk fat. It argues that this higher tax makes these products even more expensive compared to vegetable fat and milk powder, which are taxed at 5%.

Question for practice:

Examine how the high cost of milk fat, limited availability, and tax anomalies contribute to the adulteration of ghee in India.

Reasons for the shortage of donated cadavers in India

Source: The post reasons for the shortage of donated cadavers in India has been created, based on the article "Why more people need to donate their bodies to science" published in "Indian Express" on 30th September is 2024

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Governance-Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

Context: The article discusses the importance of cadaver donation in India, especially after Sitaram Yechury's decision to donate his body to AIIMS. It explains how cadavers are used for medical training, who can donate, the donation process, and the current shortage of cadavers in medical colleges.

For detailed information on **Organ donation in India** read this article here

What are cadavers used for?

1. Cadavers are primarily used for training doctors in anatomy and surgical techniques.
2. Medical students require cadavers for realistic surgical practice, as dummies do not provide the same experience.
3. Cadavers also aid in developing medical devices and understanding disease effects on the body.

How is Cadaver donation different from Organ donation?

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1. **Cadaver donation** involves donating the entire body after death for medical training, while **organ donation** focuses on donating specific organs to save lives.
2. Cadavers are primarily used to train doctors in anatomy and surgery, whereas organ donations help patients in need of transplants.
3. Organ donation is more organized, with national bodies overseeing the process, unlike cadaver donation, which lacks a centralized system.
4. Bodies used for organ donation typically cannot be used as cadavers.

What are the reasons for the shortage of donated cadavers in India?

1. **Lack of Awareness:** Many people are unaware of body donation procedures. There is no national body to track whole-body donations, making it harder for people to donate.
2. **Low Donation Rates:** AIIMS Delhi meets its demand with 70 cadavers in two years, but Safdarjung Hospital and Vardhaman Mahavir Medical College (VMMC) received only 24 in five years, despite the government guideline requiring one cadaver for every 10 students. VMMC has 150 students per batch, but cadaver donations fall far short.
3. **Eligibility and Acceptance Issues:** Bodies of individuals with infectious diseases like HIV or tuberculosis are not accepted. Additionally, medical colleges often refuse bodies from unnatural deaths, especially if they are part of a medico-legal case.
4. **Rising Demand:** The number of medical students is increasing, with Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Medical Sciences (ABVIMS) admitting 100 students annually but receiving only 18 cadavers from 2019.

How do medical colleges manage the shortage?

1. Medical colleges use unclaimed bodies under the state's Anatomy Act.
2. These bodies are often from poor or marginalized communities, raising ethical concerns.
3. Other countries, like those in the developed world, require explicit consent for body donations.

Question for practice:

Examine the reasons for the shortage of donated cadavers in India and how medical colleges manage this shortage.