

# 9 PM Current Affairs Weekly Compilation

For UPSC CSE mains examination



**4<sup>th</sup> Week**

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**Features :**

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

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## Reasons and impacts of delayed paddy procurement in Punjab

**Source:** The post reasons and impacts of delayed paddy procurement in Punjab has been created, based on the article “**Overflowing Godowns, Unhappy Millers: Why Punjab’s paddy procurement has been delayed**” published in “**Indian Express**” on 25th October 2024

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

**Context:** The article discusses delays in paddy procurement in Punjab due to storage issues, low milling yield from hybrid rice, and labor disputes. These issues slow harvesting, affect crop quality, disrupt wheat sowing, and risk causing farmer unrest.

For detailed information on **Food Grain Storage Problem in India** [read this article here](#)

### How does paddy procurement work?

1. The Centre, along with state governments and the Food Corporation of India (FCI), plans paddy procurement before each kharif marketing season (October to September).
2. State agencies and FCI buy paddy from farmers at the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for the central pool.
3. This paddy is then milled, and the rice is stored for buffer stock or used in welfare schemes under the National Food Security Act (NFSA).

### What is the current situation in Punjab?

1. As of October 23, Punjab has procured only 37.68 lakh tonnes of paddy, compared to 49 lakh tonnes last year.
2. The target for the season is 185 lakh tonnes. The biggest issue is the slow movement of paddy from mandis.
3. Only 10.55% of the paddy (8.7 lakh tonnes) has been moved out, while last year, around 50% had been cleared by this time.

### What are the main reasons for the delay?

- 1. Storage Space Shortage:** Private rice millers resist storing government paddy due to limited storage in government godowns. Punjab could move only 7 lakh tonnes of the 124 lakh tonnes stored in godowns, leaving little room for this year’s crop.
- 2. Hybrid Controversy:** Hybrid rice varieties introduced this year have a lower milling out-turn ratio (OTR), yielding only 60%-62% rice from paddy, below the FCI standard of 67%. This leads to a loss of around Rs 300 per quintal for millers.
- 3. Labor and Arhtiyas' Demands:** Arhtiyas (middlemen) are demanding a higher commission of 2.5%, and mandi laborers are asking for higher wages. Protests from these groups have delayed the procurement process.

### What are the impacts of the delay?

- 1. Slow Harvest:** Farmers have only harvested 22% of the paddy crop, compared to 42% last year, due to lack of mandi space. Delayed harvesting can lead to crop quality decline, lower prices, and economic stress.
- 2. Wheat Sowing Delays:** Farmers need to plant wheat in November. Delayed paddy harvest may shorten the gap between crops, increasing stubble burning, which causes air pollution in North India.
- 3. Potential Unrest:** Extended delays can cause unrest among farmers, creating a law and order issue for Punjab.

#### What are possible solutions?

- 1. Temporary Storage:** The government could use Punjab's 5,000 rice mills as temporary storage but needs to resolve millers' concerns first.
- 2. Better Coordination:** Improved coordination between procurement, transport, and storage facilities, timely payments to arhtiyas, and meeting labor demands could help.
- 3. Long-Term Diversification:** Punjab should diversify its crops to prevent future storage and surplus issues.

#### Question for practice:

Examine the main reasons for the delays in paddy procurement in Punjab and their impacts on farmers and the agricultural cycle.

### Supreme Court's decision allowing Indian states to tax industrial alcohol

**Source:** The post Supreme Court's decision allowing Indian states to tax industrial alcohol has been created, based on the article "**Express View on SC verdict on industrial alcohol: Lifting spirits**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 25th October 2024

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

**Context:** The article discusses the Supreme Court's decision allowing Indian states to tax industrial alcohol. This decision, favoring states' revenue autonomy, reverses a past ruling. It follows a similar July verdict, supporting state royalties on mining, highlighting states' financial independence.

For detailed information on **Supreme Court Upholds States' Power to Regulate Industrial Alcohol** [read this article here](#)

#### What are the issues with industrial alcohol taxation?

- 1. Historical Restrictions:** A 1990 Supreme Court ruling in *Synthetics & Chemicals Ltd vs State of Uttar Pradesh* restricted states from taxing industrial alcohol, limiting their revenue potential from this lucrative source.
- 2. Revenue Needs Post-GST:** States argue for increased revenue sources, especially after GST centralization. Industrial alcohol, essential in sectors like biofuels, sanitizers, and the food industry, provides an untapped income stream for states.

**3. Constitutional Interpretation:** The case hinged on whether industrial alcohol qualifies as “intoxicating liquor” under the State List 8 in the Seventh Schedule, which allows states to tax “intoxicating liquors.” This debate led to legal ambiguity over states’ taxation rights.

**What is the recent judicial view on the term “intoxicating liquor”?**

1. The Supreme Court recently ruled that states can tax industrial alcohol, overturning the 1990 *Synthetics & Chemicals Ltd vs State of Uttar Pradesh* decision.
2. Chief Justice DY Chandrachud argued for a broad interpretation of “intoxicating liquor” in the Seventh Schedule, allowing states to include industrial alcohol in this category if it causes intoxication.
3. Justice B V Nagarathna dissented, stating industrial alcohol, meant for non-consumption uses like biofuels and sanitizers, should not be included.
4. The ruling strengthens state revenues, especially vital in the GST era, when states seek additional revenue sources.

**Question for practice:**

Discuss the implications of the Supreme Court's recent ruling allowing states to tax industrial alcohol on their financial autonomy and revenue generation.

**Arguments for and against reducing food subsidies**

**Source:** The post arguments for and against reducing food subsidies has been created, based on the article “**A case for food subsidies: An investment, not a waste**” published in “**Indian Express**” on 25th October 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper3- Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and minimum support prices

**Context:** The article argues for increasing investment in agricultural R&D to improve productivity and food security. It suggests that food subsidies are essential for vulnerable populations and that cuts should come from other areas, not food subsidies.

For detailed information on **Research and Development in Agriculture** [read this article here](#)

**What are the arguments for and against reducing food subsidies?**

**A. Arguments for Reducing Food Subsidies:**

- 1. Redirect Funds to Agricultural R&D:** Cutting food subsidies could free resources to boost agricultural R&D, improving crop productivity and addressing climate change. This shift could ensure long-term food security and benefit both farmers and consumers.
- 2. Alternative Subsidy Options for Farmers:** Input subsidies (for electricity, water, fertilizers) create resource inefficiencies, deplete groundwater, and harm soil. Reducing such subsidies might allow more effective funding for R&D rather than supporting inefficient practices.

**3. Overestimated Food Subsidy Burden:** Critics claim that expanding PDS under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) inflated the subsidy bill. However, coverage increased to 67% of the population, while grain supply per person fell from 7.9 kg to 5 kg, balancing costs.

**B. Arguments Against Reducing Food Subsidies:**

**1. Essential Support for the Poor:** Food subsidies act as income transfers for low-income families, saving about Rs. 700-800 monthly for a family of four and enabling spending on other essentials like pulses and milk.

**2. COVID-19 Lessons:** The pandemic underscored the importance of food subsidies in supporting food security for vulnerable populations.

**3. Consumer-Targeted, Not Producer-Focused:** Food subsidies primarily benefit consumers, not farmers, making them crucial for broader welfare rather than just agricultural support.

**Question for practice:**

Examine whether reducing food subsidies to redirect funds towards agricultural R&D would effectively enhance food security and benefit both farmers and consumers in the long term.

**Global South's Position on the Israel-Palestine Conflict**

**Source:** The post Global South's position on the Israel-Palestine conflict has been created, based on the article "The Gaza war and the Global South's 'interventions'" published in "The Hindu" on 25th October 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper 2- International Relations

**Context:** The article discusses recent developments in the Israel-Palestine conflict, highlighting the role of key powers like India and China. It describes differing stances in the Global South and suggests that these divisions hinder any united approach to peace.

For detailed information on **Israel-Palestine Conflict** [read this article here](#)

**What Happened Recently in Gaza?**

On October 16, 2024, Israel killed Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar in Gaza. He had taken control of Hamas after Ismail Haniyeh's assassination in July 2024. Sinwar was a key figure behind the October 7, 2023 attacks on Israel. Israel has been targeting Hamas and Hezbollah leaders, increasing civilian casualties in Gaza and Lebanon.

**What is the Global South's Position?**

**A. South Africa's Position:**

1. South Africa, influenced by its apartheid experience, strongly opposes Israel's actions.
2. In December 2023, it took Israel to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to seek accountability for Israel's human rights actions.



3. South Africa wants the ICJ to issue a warrant against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

### B. China's Position

1. China backs Palestinian sovereignty from a decolonization perspective.

2. In July 2024, it hosted 14 Palestinian groups, including Hamas, to encourage unity.

3. Despite not condemning Hamas explicitly after the October 2023 attacks, China prioritizes its alliances with Arab nations.

4. China uses forums like BRICS to expand influence in the Global South, although its relations with Israel are limited.

### C. India's Position

1. India balances support for Israel in counterterrorism with support for a two-state solution.

2. India recognized Palestinian statehood in 1988 and aligns with anti-terrorism due to its own experiences, like the 1999 IC814 hijacking.

3. India promotes counterterrorism efforts globally while supporting Palestinian rights.

For detailed information on **Change and continuity in India's Palestine policy** [read this article here](#)

### What Are the Implications for Global South Unity?

1. There is no unified stance within the Global South. Each country prioritizes its interests, which leads to fragmented approaches.

2. The lack of a cohesive strategy makes it difficult to form a unified front that could effectively intervene or mediate in the conflict.

3. Major global players are involved, but there is no consensus on how to proceed, which complicates efforts towards peace.

### Question for practice:

Examine how the differing positions of Global South countries impact their ability to form a unified approach to the Israel-Palestine conflict.

### Issues, current challenges, and proposed amendments in the Anti-Defection law in India

**Source:** The post Issues, current challenges, and proposed amendments in the Anti-Defection law in India has been created, based on the article "**Sharpen the anti-defection law, strengthen democracy**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 26th October 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS paper 2- polity- Parliament and State Legislatures – structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these.

**Context:** The article discusses India's anti-defection law, created to prevent political instability from party-switching. It highlights the law's challenges, including delays in cases and the Speaker's role, and proposes timely amendments to strengthen democracy and stability.

### What is the Anti-Defection law in India?

1. The anti-defection law, introduced in 1985, aims to prevent elected legislators from frequently switching political parties.
2. The Indian Parliament added this law through the 52nd Amendment, introducing the Tenth Schedule.
3. The law allows disqualification of members of Parliament or state legislatures if they leave their party or disobey the party whip during important votes.

For detailed information on **Anti-Defection Law** [read this article here](#)

### How has the law changed over time?

1. Initially, the law allowed a split in a party if at least one-third of the members defected. This led to mass defections.
2. In 2003, the 91st Amendment revised this by requiring at least two-thirds of a party's members to defect to avoid disqualification, reducing small-scale defections.

### What challenges does the law face?

1. The law has gaps, including delays in decision-making on defection cases. In some cases, Speakers took months or years to decide, which allowed defectors to remain in their positions. The Speaker's power, without a set timeline, has raised concerns.
2. Also, the lack of transparency in party whips has led to confusion about defection cases. Although judicial review is allowed, courts avoid interfering to respect legislative autonomy.

For detailed information on **Issues with the Tenth Schedule** [read this article here](#)

### What amendments are proposed?

- 1. Fixed Time Frame for Decisions:** Establish a four-week limit for Speakers to decide on defection cases to prevent delays and misuse of power. This would ensure timely resolutions and reduce political bias.
- 2. Public Notice of Whips:** Require political parties to publish whips in newspapers or through electronic media, ensuring members are properly informed and reducing disputes over party stances.
- 3. Committee Recommendations:** Committees like the Dinesh Goswami Committee (1990) and the Law Commission of India (1999, 2015) have proposed reforms, emphasizing the need to strengthen the law's transparency and fairness.
- 4. Supreme Court Suggestion:** In *Keisham Meghachandra Singh v. Speaker Manipur Legislative Assembly (2020)*, the Supreme Court recommended an independent tribunal to handle defection cases, reducing the Speaker's potential bias.

### Why is political will necessary?



1. For effective reform, leaders like Prime Minister Narendra Modi and opposition leader Rahul Gandhi must prioritize amendments to the law.
2. Strengthening this law would ensure more stability and integrity in Indian democracy, supporting initiatives like "One Nation, One Election."

**Question for practice:**

Examine the challenges faced by India's anti-defection law and the proposed amendments to address these issues.

### India's Opportunities and Challenges in Carbon Markets

**Source:** The post India's opportunities and challenges in carbon markets has been created, based on the article "Fair trade: India must develop a transparent carbon trade policy" published in "The Hindu" on 26th October 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS paper3- Environment

**Context:** The article discusses the push for India's transition to carbon markets ahead of the COP29 in Baku. It highlights the role of Article 6 of the Paris Agreement in enabling carbon credit trading and India's plans to meet emission standards.

#### What is the Focus of COP29 in Baku?

1. The upcoming 29th Conference of Parties (COP29) in Baku, Azerbaijan, will focus on increasing climate finance and clarifying the rules for carbon markets as outlined in Article 6 of the Paris Climate Agreement.
2. Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, signed in 2015, defines how carbon markets can work globally. It allows countries to trade in carbon credits, which come from reducing or removing greenhouse gases.
3. This trade encourages nations to take more climate-friendly actions, like using renewable energy or conserving forests.

#### What are Carbon Markets?

1. Carbon markets allow countries or companies to trade carbon credits. These credits are generated by actions like switching to renewable energy or maintaining forests that absorb carbon dioxide. This system aims to motivate more countries and companies to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.
2. Carbon markets have faced criticism for being unclear and ineffective. For years, there has been confusion about how to verify carbon credits.
3. However, COP29 is expected to provide guidelines on verifying credits, making it possible for countries to claim legal credits starting next year.

For detailed information on **What are carbon markets** [read this article here](#)

## What are India's Opportunities and Challenges in Carbon Markets?

### A. Opportunities for India in Carbon Markets:

1. India's commitment to generate 50% of electricity from non-fossil sources by 2030 positions it as a key player in carbon-reduction projects.
2. With its voluntary carbon markets, Indian companies, including those in forestry, are creating carbon-trapping initiatives, attracting multinational interest.
3. The iron and steel industries are expected to meet emission standards by 2025, setting the stage for India's formal carbon market launch.
4. COP29 may bring clear guidelines, enabling India to legally claim and trade verified carbon credits.

### B. Challenges for India in Carbon Markets:

1. Verifying carbon credits is complex and lacks transparency, risking ineffective compliance.
2. Past experiences, like the energy-efficiency trading scheme, show limited pressure on companies to meet targets.
3. India needs transparent, globally-aligned policies to maintain credibility and attract investment.

For detailed information on **India stands to gain from the trading of carbon credits** [read this article here](#)

### Question for practice:

Examine how COP29 in Baku is expected to impact the rules for carbon markets and what this means for India's participation in carbon trading.

## Criticisms of Nobel laureates AJR's views

**Source:** The post criticisms of Nobel laureates AJR's views has been created, based on the article "**A Nobel in hand, but where AJR's model falls short**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 26th October 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS paper3- Growth and Development

**Context:** The article discusses the 2024 Nobel Prize winners, Daron Acemoğlu, Simon Johnson, and James Robinson, and critiques their Eurocentric view on economic prosperity. It argues that their framework oversimplifies history, ignores diverse development paths, and fails to account for the complexities of colonial institutions.

For detailed information on **Nobel Prize in Economics 2024** [read this article here](#)

**What is the Nobel-winning theory of economic development by Acemoğlu, Johnson, and Robinson (AJR)?**

The 2024 Nobel winners in Economic Sciences, Daron Acemoğlu, Simon Johnson, and James Robinson, studied how institutions affect economic prosperity. They found that institutions created during colonial times shaped the economic growth of today's nations. Where Europeans faced high death rates, they set up "extractive" institutions that exploited resources, slowing long-term growth. Where Europeans could settle, they built "inclusive" institutions with secure property rights and checks on power, which encouraged growth.

For detailed information on **How different types of institutions impact a country's prosperity** [read this article here](#)

### **What are the criticisms of AJR's view?**

#### **A. Eurocentric Perspective**

1. AJR's framework suggests that European-style "good institutions" are universally ideal for development, promoting a Eurocentric view.
2. They imply that nations should aim to replicate Europe's model to achieve prosperity, ignoring diverse development paths like those in East Asia.

#### **B. Misrepresentation of Western Development**

1. AJR's emphasis on "good" Western institutions overlooks exclusion and cronyism as drivers of growth in the West.
2. For instance, Britain's Industrial Revolution, cited as a triumph of inclusive institutions, relied heavily on labor exploitation and political disenfranchisement.

#### **C. Overlooked Role of State Intervention**

1. AJR's framework omits the role of state intervention and industrial policy in Western development.
2. Economist Ha-Joon Chang highlights that countries like the U.S. and U.K. used protectionism and state-led planning to build industrial strength before adopting inclusive, free-market policies.

#### **D. Simplistic Historical Interpretation**

1. AJR classify institutions as either "extractive" or "inclusive," overlooking the complexity of historical processes.
2. Scholars Frederick Cooper and Mahmood Mamdani note that colonial institutions were often hybrids, blending local governance with imposed authority, creating diverse outcomes.

#### **E. Ignorance of Colonial Legacies**

1. AJR's theory downplays the impact of colonial institutions, which entrenched structural dependencies favoring colonizers.

2. Dependency theory argues that colonial powers' exploitation left countries like Congo impoverished despite natural wealth, while Europe gained economically.

For detailed information on **How western industrialization led to political and economic advantages over the East** [read this article here](#)

### Question for practice:

Examine the criticisms presented against AJR's Eurocentric view on economic development in the context of diverse global development paths.

## Desire for Upward Mobility Declining

**Source:** The post desire for upward mobility declining has been created, based on the article "**Harish Damodaran writes: Why aspiration is dead in India**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 26th October 2024

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

**Context:** The article discusses how people's desire for social and economic advancement is fading in India. It highlights signs like reduced migration, lower consumer spending, and increased reliance on government aid, indicating a decline in aspirations and optimism about the future.

### Why is the Desire for Upward Mobility Declining?

1. Historically, business was limited to certain communities in India, with most people not aspiring to move beyond their family's traditional work.
2. But in recent decades, this changed, and many, including slum-dwellers, began hoping for better futures for their children, like becoming doctors or government officials. This shift has stalled recently, as optimism fades.

### What Are the Signs of Lower Aspirations?

- 1. Reduced Migration:** Migration to cities is a common indicator of people's optimism for a better life. Indian Railways' passenger numbers, often linked to migration, peaked at 8,439 million in 2018-19 but dropped to 6,730 million in 2023-24, showing a decrease in movement for work opportunities.
- 2. Increased Dependence on Agriculture:** From 1993 to 2018, the workforce in agriculture decreased, with workers moving to other sectors. This trend reversed after the pandemic, with agriculture absorbing 46.1% of the labor force in 2023-24, a sign of people staying in traditional roles.
- 3. Reduced Consumer Spending:** Two-wheeler sales, a sign of consumer confidence, peaked at 21.2 million in 2018-19 but only reached 18 million in 2023-24, indicating cautious spending.

### What Causes People to Settle for Less?

- 1. Influence of Free Services and Cash Transfers:** Schemes like Maharashtra's Ladki Bahin Yojana provide small monthly payments, which have led some agricultural workers to reduce workdays, as they feel less pressure to earn more.

**2. Fewer Aspirations for Higher Living Standards:** With rising dependence on government schemes, many people feel satisfied with limited financial support and basic comforts, instead of pursuing higher earnings.

### Is India Alone in This Trend?

1. India isn't alone in experiencing declining aspirations.
2. In China, only 47% of people feel hopeful about their future, down from 73% in 2014.
3. The belief that "hard work pays off" in China dropped from over 60% (2004-2014) to 28.3% in 2023.
4. China's economy has a \$12,600 per capita GDP, allowing some to adopt a "lying flat" attitude.
5. India's per capita GDP is \$2,500, making similar attitudes more challenging for sustainable living.

### Question for practice:

Discuss the factors leading to the decline in aspirations for social and economic advancement in India.

## Issue, Reasons, and Solutions for Crop Stubble Burning

**Source:** The post issue, reason, and solution for crop stubble burning has been created, based on the article "Paying farmers to harvest paddy manually could reduce NCR's pollution" published in "Indian Express" on 26th October 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS paper3- Environment

**Context:** The article discusses the Supreme Court's criticism of the government for not addressing crop stubble burning, which contributes to pollution. It explains why farmers burn stubble and suggests paying them for manual harvesting to reduce pollution. This approach could improve air quality and support rural employment.

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

### Why is stubble burning a problem?

1. Stubble burning is a significant pollution source in Delhi-NCR, contributing 5-30% of the area's pollution load during certain months.
2. It releases harmful greenhouse gases, impacting air quality and increasing health risks for residents.
3. Burning stubble destroys essential soil nutrients, such as nitrogen, phosphorus, sulfur, and potassium, which are crucial for soil health.
4. Soil nutrient loss from burning raises dependency on imported chemical fertilizers, adding to India's import bill.
5. For instance, earthworms and other beneficial organisms are killed during burning, further degrading soil quality.



For detailed information on **Stubble Burning Issue** [read this article here](#)

### Why do farmers burn crop stubble?

- 1. Shortened Harvesting Window:** The Sub-soil Water Conservation Acts in Punjab and Haryana delay paddy sowing until mid-June to conserve groundwater. This shortens the time between paddy harvesting and the next wheat crop, pressuring farmers to clear fields quickly.
- 2. High Labor Costs:** Due to the shorter window, labor demand peaks, making manual harvesting unaffordable for many farmers. This costs around Rs 4,000 per acre.
- 3. Harvesting Issues:** Machines leave about two feet of stubble, which needs to be removed rapidly. Burning is the quickest and cheapest option.
- 4. Financial Constraints:** Farmers cannot easily afford the Rs 4,000 required for manual or alternative stubble management.

For detailed information on **reasons that caused the stubble burning** [read this article here](#)

### What should be done?

- 1. Encourage Manual Harvesting:** Governments could pay farmers Rs 4,000 per acre to cover manual harvesting costs. This could be funded partly by MGNREGA.
- 2. Promote Crop Diversification:** Farmers could shift from water-intensive crops like paddy to other crops like coarse cereals and pulses. Legal guarantees for MSP (Minimum Support Price) on these alternative crops can help farmers transition.
- 3. Support Migrant Labor:** Higher wages could attract laborers to Punjab and Haryana, helping manage the manual harvesting process.

For detailed information on **Solution for stubble burning** [read this article here](#)

### Question for practice:

Examine the reasons why stubble burning is prevalent among farmers in India and discuss potential solutions to address this issue.

## Impacts of the SC ruling on alcohol regulation

**Source:** The post impacts of the SC ruling on alcohol regulation has been created, based on the article "**Beyond intoxication: On alcohol regulation, judicial verdict**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 28th October 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper 2- Governance- issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein.

**Context:** The article discusses a Supreme Court ruling that allows States to regulate both potable and industrial alcohol, reinforcing federal principles. This limits Parliament's control over "intoxicating liquors," preserving State power in alcohol regulation. Justice Nagarathna dissented.



For detailed information on **Supreme Court's decision allowing Indian states to tax industrial alcohol** [read this article here](#)

### What did the Supreme Court rule regarding alcohol regulation?

1. The Supreme Court ruled that States can regulate both potable (drinkable) and industrial alcohol.
2. A nine-judge Bench clarified that Entry 8 in the State List includes all types of alcohol, including rectified spirit, extra neutral alcohol, and denatured alcohol.
3. This interpretation means States have control over the production, sale, and distribution of these alcohol types.

### What are the impacts of this judgement?

- 1. Strengthening Federalism:** By allowing States to regulate both potable and industrial alcohol, the ruling reinforces federalism, safeguarding State powers over alcohol regulation.
- 2. Limiting Central Control:** Parliament lacks legislative competence over the entire industry of intoxicating liquor. This ruling restricts the Union's reach, ensuring the States retain authority in alcohol matters.
- 3. Reaffirming State Authority on Economic Resources:** Following a similar decision in July on mineral rights, the judgment preserves States' legislative domain on local resources, protecting their autonomy in economically crucial sectors.
- 4. IDRA Exclusion:** The Industries (Development and Regulation) Act (IDRA), 1951, listed "fermentation industries" for Union regulation, raising debate on State control over "industrial alcohol." The Supreme Court's judgment excludes intoxicating liquor, including industrial alcohol, from IDRA's reach, clarifying that States retain regulatory power.

### Question for practice:

Examine the impact of the Supreme Court's ruling on state authority over the regulation of both potable and industrial alcohol.

## India's biopharmaceutical and biosimilar industry

**Source:** The post India's biopharmaceutical and biosimilar industry has been created, based on the article "Tweaks in drug formulations to extend copyrights is a public health challenge" published in "Indian Express" on 28th October 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper3- changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth. And GS2- Governance- Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

**Context:** The article discusses India's growing biopharmaceutical industry and the challenges of patent evergreening, which keeps drug prices high. It highlights efforts like the National Biopharma Mission to boost biosimilar production and calls for stronger patent opposition.

For detailed information on **the rapid growth of the biopharmaceutical industry** [read this article here](#)

### What is the current status of India's biopharmaceutical industry?

1. India's biopharmaceutical industry is valued at \$60 billion, ranking as one of the fastest-growing globally.
2. The country has improved in innovation, **moving from 81st to 39th in the Global Innovation Index since 2015.**
3. India is a leader in biosimilars, with 98 approved products, including those sold in the US; it was the **first to approve a Hepatitis B biosimilar.**

### What are biopharmaceuticals and biosimilars?

1. **Biopharmaceuticals are medicines derived from living cells, such as yeast or bacteria, unlike conventional drugs made from chemicals.**
2. They are crucial in treating chronic illnesses like cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and autoimmune diseases.
3. **Biosimilars are medicines made from living cells, similar to original biologic drugs.** They offer the same safety and effectiveness as the original biologic.
4. India's biosimilars market was valued at \$349 million in 2022 and is projected to grow by 25.2% annually, reaching \$2,108 million by 2030.

### How is the Global Landscape on Biosimilar Patents?

1. In the US, 74% of new patents are associated with existing drugs, extending their monopoly period. Nearly 80% of top-selling drugs are protected by extended patents.
2. In Europe, the approval process for biosimilars is simpler, especially in countries like Germany and the UK, leading to cost savings and wider access to medicines.

### What incentives have been implemented to support India's biopharmaceutical industry?

1. **National Biopharma Mission (NBM):** The \$250 million NBM, co-funded by the World Bank, supports 150 organizations and 300 MSMEs. It has established 21 research facilities crucial for COVID-19 vaccine trials, boosting India's biopharma industry.
2. **Make in India Initiative:** This initiative supports domestic manufacturing, including the biopharmaceutical sector.
3. **Biopharma Product Development:** NBM funding led to 18 successful products, benefiting India's healthcare goals.

### What are the challenges facing India's biopharmaceutical industry?

1. **Patent Evergreening:** Multinational companies extend monopoly by making minor changes to drugs nearing patent expiry. Roche, for example, extended the patent exclusivity of trastuzumab (a biologic used to

treat breast cancer) by introducing a subcutaneous version of the drug just as the original patent was nearing its expiration.

**2. Market Access Limitations:** India holds only 3% of the global biosimilars market due to barriers like patent extensions, limiting affordable options for patients.

**3. Delayed Biosimilar Adoption:** Unlike the EU, where biosimilars are widely accepted, Indian regulations need enhancement for quicker approval, as seen in Europe, where countries like Germany and the UK save costs with simpler approvals.

**4. Regulatory Challenges:** India's robust patent laws, like Section 3(d) of the Patents Act, aim to curb evergreening, yet about 72% of granted pharmaceutical patents in India are for minor or secondary innovations, highlighting the need for more stringent patent scrutiny.

For detailed information on **INDIAN PHARMACEUTICAL SECTOR CHALLENGES AND REFORMS** [read this article here](#)

#### Question for practice:

Evaluate the current status, growth potential, and challenges facing India's biopharmaceutical industry, particularly in the area of biosimilars.

### High vegetable inflation makes it hard for the RBI to lower interest rates

**Source:** The post high vegetable inflation makes it hard for the RBI to lower interest rates has been created, based on the article "TOP crops, price volatility and RBI" published in "Indian Express" on 28th October 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper3-Indian Economy-Inflation

**Context:** The article explains that high vegetable inflation, especially from tomatoes, onions, and potatoes, makes it hard for the RBI to lower interest rates. Structural issues in agriculture, outdated food weights in inflation calculations, and poor supply chains worsen the problem.

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

#### Why is the RBI not reducing repo rates?

1. The RBI is hesitant to reduce repo rates due to high inflation, which remains above the comfortable level of 4%.
2. In September, Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation reached 5.5%, with food inflation climbing above 9.2%.
3. This is primarily due to rising vegetable prices, particularly tomatoes, onions, and potatoes (TOP), which have impacted the CPI significantly.

For detailed information on [Factors influence the RBI's decision on rate cuts](#) read this article here

#### How does food inflation affect overall inflation?

1. Food inflation drives overall inflation due to outdated weights assigned to food in the CPI basket. 2. Food and beverages make up 45.9% of the CPI, with food alone accounting for 39%.

3. These weights, based on 2011-12 data, need updating to reflect current consumption. The 2022-23 survey suggests a 5-6 percentage point reduction, which could help better represent today's spending patterns.

### What factors are driving high vegetable prices?

1. Vegetable inflation reached 36% in September, contributing 42.8% to overall CPI inflation. The prices of tomatoes, onions, and potatoes surged dramatically, driven by:

**Tomatoes:** Price increases of 42.4% due to crop delays from heavy rains and white fly infestations in Karnataka, impacting key production areas.

**Onions:** Prices rose by 66.2%, with storage losses reported in Maharashtra and delayed crop arrivals due to rain.

**Potatoes:** Increased prices by 65.3%, as stored rabi crops began perishing in October.

2. **Operation Greens**, initiated in 2018 to stabilize prices of TOP vegetables, has been diluted to include all fruits and vegetables, losing its focus. This has led to ongoing supply disruptions and post-harvest losses, with potatoes facing 18-26% losses, onions 25%, and tomatoes 11.6%.

For detailed information on **Extension of Operation Greens from TOP to Total** [read this article here](#)

### What should be done?

1. Short-term measures, such as the 40% export duty on onions, address immediate consumer concerns but don't solve the root issue. For lasting stability, policies suggest **processing surplus vegetables** into products like tomato paste, onion flakes, and dehydrated potatoes to reduce wastage and boost income for farmers. Examples include Jain Irrigation's onion dehydration efforts with farmers.

2. The RBI cannot manage food inflation through repo rates alone, as it lacks authority over agricultural policies. So there is a need for a **dedicated agency to manage the supply and pricing of tomatoes, onions, and potatoes effectively**.

### Question for practice:

Discuss the impact of outdated CPI food weights and high vegetable prices on the RBI's ability to reduce repo rates.

## Challenges in adopting electric buses in India

**Source:** The post challenges in adopting electric buses in India has been created, based on the article **"The private sector holds the key to India's e-bus push"** published in **"The Hindu"** on 28th October 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 India's new PM E-DRIVE scheme, which funds electric buses. It highlights concerns over private bus operators being excluded from subsidies. It also mentions challenges like financing, charging infrastructure, and suggests innovative models like Battery-as-a-Service to promote private electric bus adoption.

### What is the PM E-DRIVE Scheme?

1. The PM Electric Drive Revolution in Innovative Vehicle Enhancement (PM E-DRIVE) scheme aims to boost electric vehicle use in India.
2. It provides ₹4,391 crore for subsidies to help buy 14,028 electric buses in nine cities, focusing on strengthening public transport's shift to electric vehicles (EVs).
3. Private bus operators are not included in the PM E-DRIVE scheme or other major national subsidy programs.
4. This exclusion raises concerns about scaling electric mobility beyond state-run buses, especially since private buses make up 93% of India's total bus fleet.

For detailed information on [PM E-DRIVE Scheme](#) read this article here

### What Are the Challenges in Adopting Electric Buses?

1. The International Council on Clean Transportation (ICCT) identifies financing as a major hurdle for private operators due to high upfront costs and uncertainties like battery life.
2. Despite electric buses being potentially more profitable over their service life, high interest rates, loan costs and low resale value make them less viable initially.
3. Charging infrastructure is another challenge, as most private operators cannot afford the high costs of land for charging stations.

For detailed information on [Adoption of EVs: Challenges and Solutions](#) [read this article here](#)

### What Should be Done?

- 1. Offer Financial Support:** Provide interest subsidies, longer loan tenures, and credit guarantees to reduce financial risks, as suggested by the ICCT.
- 2. Expand Charging Infrastructure:** Set up shared charging stations in cities and on key highways to support private operators managing smaller fleets, given high land and power costs.
- 3. Implement Battery-as-a-Service (BaaS):** Adopt BaaS to separate battery ownership from vehicles, lowering costs. Models like battery swapping and usage-linked leasing, seen in China, Kenya, and through Macquarie's Vertelo in India, could boost private electric bus adoption.

### What Are the Potential Benefits?

- 1. Reduces Fuel Costs:** Electric buses reduce fuel costs for intercity travel, which serves 22.8 crore daily passengers and covers 57% of total ridership.



**2. Supports Sustainable Routes:** Around 40% of intercity trips fall within 250-300 km, fitting electric buses' single-charge range.

**3. Offers Long-Term Savings:** Despite high initial costs, electric buses can be more profitable over time compared to diesel.

**Question for practice:**

Examine the challenges and potential solutions for scaling the adoption of electric buses in India as highlighted by the PM E-DRIVE Scheme.

### Transforming India's Soap Industry Through Sustainable Initiatives

**Source:** The post transforming India's Soap Industry through sustainable initiatives has been created, based on the article "**Sustainability science for FMCGs**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 28th October 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper3-Achievements of Indians in Science & Technology; Indigenization of Technology and Developing New Technology.

**Context:** This article discusses India's initiatives to promote sustainable development through research and bio-based industries. It highlights reducing palm oil in soaps, using alternative materials, and regulatory changes for eco-friendly products, encouraging partnerships between academia and industry.

#### What Are India's New Initiatives for Sustainable Development?

1. India has introduced the **Anusandhan National Research Foundation** (ANRF) and the BioE3 (Biotechnology for Economy, Environment and Employment) policy to encourage research and develop sustainable bio-based industrial models.
2. These initiatives aim to transform chemical-based industries to more sustainable ones, supporting India's commitment to climate action and sustainable development.

For detailed information on **Anusandhan National Research Foundation** read [Article 1](#), [Article 2](#)

#### How Is the Soap Industry Impacting the Environment?

1. The global soap industry heavily relies on palm oil, which is mainly produced in Borneo, Sumatra, and the Malay Peninsula.
2. This production contributes to significant deforestation, biodiversity loss, and greenhouse gas emissions.
3. About 90% of palm oil plantations are located in these regions, and palm oil satisfies 40% of the world's vegetable oil demand.

#### What Are the Alternatives to Palm Oil in Soap Production?

1. Emerging technologies are exploring ways to replace or reduce palm oil in soap production.
2. Innovations include synthetic biotechnologies that can mimic the fatty acids in palm oil, which are essential for the soap's structure and cleansing properties.



3. Alternatives like plant-based polysaccharides could potentially replace the structuring agents in soap, enhancing environmental sustainability.

### How Is India Supporting Sustainable Palm Oil Production?

1. India's National Mission on Edible Oils-Oil Palm aims to increase the oil palm production area to 10 lakh hectares and boost crude palm oil production to 11.20 lakh tonnes by 2025-26.

2. The mission emphasizes sustainable practices, including the policy of 'No Deforestation, No Peat', and supports smallholder farmers through regenerative agriculture practices.

### What Regulatory Changes Are Needed?

**1. Move Away from Fatty Material-Based Standards:** Current soap grades rely on fatty content, misleading consumers and regulators to equate higher fatty material with better quality. Research suggests this doesn't necessarily improve product quality.

**2. Mandate Sustainability Labels:** Introducing mandatory sustainability labeling would help consumers make informed, eco-friendly choices based on a product's sourcing and production practices.

**3. Support Bio-Based Alternatives:** Regulatory standards should encourage using bio-based materials, like plant-based polysaccharides, to reduce the reliance on palm oil in soap production, promoting sustainability.

### Question for practice purr

Evaluate how India's new initiatives, such as the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) and the BioE3 policy, are supporting sustainable development and reducing environmental impacts in the soap industry.ilk

### Lack of women in the judiciary

**Source:** The post lack of women in the judiciary has been created, based on the article "**The under-representation of women in the judiciary**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 29th October 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper 2- judiciary And GS1-Society-Role of women and women's organization.

**Context:** The article discusses the lack of women in the judiciary, highlighting issues in entry and retention. It emphasizes the need for supportive policies, infrastructure, and gender-sensitive practices. Greater representation and understanding of women's specific needs are essential for their advancement in the legal profession.

For detailed information on **Women's Representation in Judiciary** [read this article here](#)

### What is the current state of women's representation in the judiciary?

1. Women's representation in the judiciary is low, especially in higher roles.

2. In district judiciary, women make up 36.3%, with 14 states having over 50% female recruits as junior judges.

3. However, only 13.4% of High Court judges and 9.3% of Supreme Court judges are women (as of January 2024).

4. States like Bihar, Chhattisgarh, and Jharkhand have either no women judges or only one.

5. In the Bar, just 15.31% of enrolled advocates are women, with few reaching senior roles.

### What policy gaps hinder women's progress in the judiciary?

**1. Entry Barriers:** Judicial Service Rules in several states require continuous practice for bench elevation, challenging for women balancing family roles without maternity benefits or stipends.

**2. Restrictive Transfer Policies:** Transfer rules often disregard women's responsibilities as primary caretakers, limiting career growth.

**3. Infrastructural Deficits:** Many courts lack women-specific amenities. For instance, about 100 district courts have no dedicated washrooms for women, and facilities like crèches are limited, such as Delhi High Court's crèche serving only children under six.

**4. Underrepresentation in Administrative Roles:** Few High Court committees, critical for infrastructure decisions, include women, limiting gender-sensitive policymaking.

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

### What should be done?

1. A female-centric perspective would prioritize women's needs and promote support systems.

2. Recognizing women's experiences would help create gender-sensitive policies and infrastructure, fulfilling the judiciary's promise of inclusivity and empowerment for women.

### Question for practice:

Examine how existing policy gaps and infrastructural deficits hinder women's progress and representation in the judiciary in India.

## Criticism of Model Code of Conduct (MCC)

**Source:** The post Criticism of Model Code of Conduct (MCC) has been created, based on the article "**Yogendra Yadav writes: It's time to junk the Model Code of Conduct**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 29th October 2024

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

**Context:** The article criticizes the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) for elections in India. It argues that the MCC is ineffective and often ignored. The Election Commission (EC) fails to enforce it, leading to electoral misconduct. The author suggests scrapping the MCC and strengthening existing election laws instead.

For detailed information on **Model Code of Conduct** [read this article here](#)

### Why is the MCC Criticized?

- 1. Ineffective Enforcement:** The MCC's rules are often violated with impunity. For example, Himanta Biswa Sarma's speech in Jamshedpur was openly communal, violating the MCC's guidelines against inciting communal tensions, yet no action was taken.
- 2. Selective Action:** The Election Commission of India (ECI) has been inconsistent in enforcing the MCC. Despite clear violations, such as slanderous remarks by politicians in Maharashtra and Jharkhand, the ECI has not promptly or effectively responded.
- 3. Failure in Preventing Voter Bribery:** The Maharashtra government's announcement of schemes worth Rs 1 lakh crore just before elections is a classic example of voter bribery, which the MCC is supposed to prevent but fails to.
- 4. MCC as a Distraction:** The MCC is used to delay governance activities during elections, serving as an excuse for officials to pause regular duties, thus disrupting normal governance.

### What Was the MCC Originally Meant to Do?

- 1. Purpose of the MCC:** The Model Code of Conduct (MCC) was designed to ensure that elections are conducted in a fair and impartial manner. It aimed to foster a healthy democratic spirit and ensure a level playing field among competing political parties.
- 2. Promoting Decency:** The MCC emphasized the need for decency in campaign practices. It sought to prevent practices that could lead to unfair advantages, particularly for the ruling parties during the run-up to elections.
- 3. Quick Redressal Mechanism:** It provided a framework for quick identification and redressal of electoral violations, which was simpler compared to the lengthy legal processes involved in adjudicating election law violations.
- 4. Independent Enforcement:** The MCC positioned the Election Commission as an independent body capable of resolving disputes during elections, complementing the existing laws governing electoral practices.

### What should be done?

- 1. Scrap the MCC:** The MCC is ignored and ineffective. Leaders like Himanta Biswa Sarma make divisive remarks, violating MCC rules without consequences.
- 2. Strengthen Election Laws:** Use the Representation of the People Act, 1951, which already covers corrupt practices, like voter bribery and misuse of funds, for enforcement.
- 3. Empower the ECI:** With powers under Article 324, the ECI should focus on enforcing laws, not managing the MCC.
- 4. Avoid Governance Disruption:** MCC often delays governance activities, as seen in Maharashtra's Rs 1 lakh crore schemes announcement before elections, which risk being seen as bribery.

**Question for practice:**

Discuss the effectiveness of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) in ensuring fair and impartial elections in India and whether it should be replaced by strengthened election laws.

**India's fertilizer situation amid global crises**

**Source:** The post India's fertilizer situation amid global crises has been created, based on the article “**What challenges does India face in fertilizer imports?**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 29th October 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper 3 -Agriculture -Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies.

**Context:** The article discusses India's fertilizer situation amid global crises. It highlights India's reliance on imports for urea, DAP, and MOP. Experts suggest increasing domestic production and adopting better farming practices. The government has allocated significant subsidies for fertilizers in the 2023-24.

For detailed information on **Issue of fertilizer** read [Article 1](#), [Article 2](#)

**What is India's Current Fertilizer Scenario?**

**1. Dependency on Imports:** According to the Parliamentary Standing Committee report (August 2023), around 20% of urea, 50-60% of DAP, and 100% of Muriate of Potassium (MOP) are imported. This dependence on imports makes India vulnerable to global supply disruptions.

**2. Production vs. Consumption:** In 2021-22, India produced 435.95 lakh metric tonnes (LMT) of chemical fertilizers but consumed 579.67 LMT, showing a significant shortfall.

**3. Impact of Global Crises:** The conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza may disrupt fertilizer imports due to possible increases in oil prices and limited supply from key regions. India imports fertilizers from countries such as China, Russia, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Oman, Iran, and Egypt. Political instability in these regions could impact India's supply chain.

**Why is Fertilizer Demand Rising in India?**

1. India is experiencing high demand for fertilizers due to the ongoing sowing season for winter (rabi) crops, especially in wheat-growing states.
2. Fertilizers like Diammonium Phosphate (DAP) and NPK (Nitrogen, Phosphorus, Potassium) are essential for crop growth.
3. However, states like Uttar Pradesh report only 10 days' worth of fertilizer stocks, raising concerns about supply.

**What Measures Has the Government Taken?**

1. The government allocated ₹1.79 lakh crore in fertilizer subsidies for 2023-24. This includes ₹1,04,063.20 crore for indigenous urea and ₹25,500 crore for indigenous P&K fertilizers.

2. For imported fertilizers, subsidies include ₹31,000 crore for urea and ₹18,500 crore for P&K fertilizers to support affordability and supply.
3. The New Investment Policy of 2012 led to the establishment of six new urea plants, adding a production capacity of 76.2 LMT per year.
4. Revival efforts include four major urea units (Ramgundam, Gorakhpur, Sindri, and Barauni) now operating as gas-based greenfield facilities.
5. The government encourages investment in public, cooperative, and private sectors to strengthen fertilizer production and marketing.

#### Way forward:

India should increase its fertilizer production to reduce reliance on imports, as it currently imports 100% of MOP and over 50% of DAP. Additionally, adopting sustainable farming and using nano urea can decrease import reliance and ensure stable fertilizer supply for crops.

#### Question for practice:

Discuss the measures India can take to reduce its reliance on fertilizer imports amid global supply challenges and rising domestic demand.

### How solar energy decentralizes power generation

**Source:** The post how solar energy decentralizes power generation has been created, based on the article “Solar, a game changer in women’s empowerment” published in “The Hindu” on 29th October 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper3- infrastructure and GS1-Society-Role of women

**Context:** This article discusses how solar energy decentralizes power generation, benefiting communities, especially women, with income and job opportunities. It highlights solar's positive social and environmental impacts and emphasizes the need for inclusive, gender-aware energy policies.

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

#### What Is the Role of Solar Energy in Modern Society?

1. Solar energy provides a direct way to generate electricity at home, unlike traditional energy sources like coal and oil that require extensive infrastructure.
2. This decentralization of power helps reduce barriers to accessing energy, particularly benefiting individuals and local communities by making them more self-sufficient and reducing environmental impact.

#### How Does Solar Energy Empower Women?

**1. Income and Health Opportunities:** Solar energy provides women with improved access to income and health benefits, particularly in rural and under-resourced areas.



**2. Gujarat's Little Rann of Kutch Example:** Women salt farmers who switched from costly diesel to solar pumps increased their income by 94% and reduced CO2 emissions by up to 1,15,000 metric tons annually.

**3. Women as Solar Engineers:** Initiatives like Barefoot College in India, Grameen Shakti in Bangladesh, and Solar Sister in Africa empower women by training them as solar engineers. This impacts millions and improves community health and safety.

**4. We Care Solar in Uganda:** The We Care Solar program's solar suitcases reduced perinatal deaths by 72% in Ugandan health centers.

**5. Women in Solar Workforce:** The solar industry employs more women than other energy sectors, with women making up 40% of the workforce in the solar photovoltaic industry in 2022.

**6. Job Growth in India:** India's renewable energy goals are expected to create three million new jobs by 2030, offering significant employment opportunities for women.

### What Challenges Does Solar Energy Face?

**1. Geographical Imbalance:** Most investments are concentrated in developed countries, leaving regions like Africa underfunded in solar projects.

**2. Sectoral Imbalance:** Large-scale solar farms receive the majority of funding, while small-scale applications like solar pumps and cold storage are often overlooked.

**3. Manufacturing Concentration:** Only two countries dominate solar manufacturing, disrupting supply chains and increasing costs as demand rises globally.

**4. End-of-Life Management:** Proper recycling and waste management are lacking. A framework for recycling photovoltaic materials is needed to prevent waste and enhance sustainability.

**5. Affordability Issues:** Ensuring easy and affordable access to solar requires government and market support.

### How Can Energy Policies Be Improved?

1. Energy policies need to incorporate a gender perspective to be truly effective.

2. Integrating solar energy initiatives with other sectors such as agriculture can help dismantle systemic barriers that affect women, promoting a more inclusive energy economy.

3. This approach ensures that solar energy not only supports sustainability but also drives socio-economic development.

### Question for practice:

Discuss how solar energy decentralization impacts communities, especially women, and promotes socio-economic development.



## India's Diplomatic Balancing Act Amid Myanmar Civil War and ASEAN Struggles

**Source:** The post India's diplomatic balancing act amid Myanmar Civil War and ASEAN struggles has been created, based on the article "A collective effort towards peace in Myanmar" published in "The Hindu" on 30th October 2024

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

**Context:** The article discusses Myanmar's ongoing civil war, ASEAN's struggle to mediate peace, and India's delicate position balancing security and diplomacy. ASEAN faces internal divisions, while India focuses on regional connectivity and stability amid Myanmar's political turmoil and humanitarian crisis.

For detailed information on **India-Myanmar Relations Amid Myanmar Civil War** [read this article here](#)

### What is the crisis in Myanmar?

1. Since a military coup in 2021, Myanmar is in crisis.
2. A brutal civil war rages between the junta, Ethnic Armed Organisations (EAOs), and the People's Defence Forces (PDFs).
3. Armed resistance groups hold large territories, even controlling six major border trade routes.
4. The junta's violent suppression has displaced hundreds of thousands, creating a humanitarian emergency.
5. The United Nations estimates 18.6 million people need aid, including 6 million children.

### How has ASEAN responded to Myanmar's crisis?

1. ASEAN responded to Myanmar's 2021 coup by breaking its non-interference policy, acknowledging the violation of ASEAN's Charter on rule of law.
2. ASEAN created the **Five-Point Consensus for peace**, including violence cessation and humanitarian aid, yet implementation has been limited.
3. To pressure Myanmar, ASEAN excluded its military leaders from summits for non-compliance.
4. For the 44th ASEAN Summit, Myanmar sent a senior official, signaling slight engagement.
5. Thailand proposed informal talks involving ASEAN Troika (Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia) for diplomatic progress.

For detailed information on **ASEAN's Initiative to End Political Crisis in Myanmar** [read this article here](#)

### What are the challenges within ASEAN?

**1. Internal Divisions:** ASEAN members like Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines advocate stronger actions, while others, such as Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos, maintain closer relations with Myanmar's military government.

**2. Non-Interference Policy:** ASEAN broke its traditional non-interference stance in response to Myanmar's 2021 coup, reflecting internal tensions over governance and rule of law.

**3. Consensus-Based Decision-Making:** ASEAN's consensus model slows responses, as decisions require unanimity, weakening the bloc's reaction to Myanmar's crisis.

**4. Limited Stakeholder Engagement:** Thailand's proposed talks focus on the junta and lack involvement from Myanmar's National Unity Government and ethnic groups, limiting inclusivity.

**5. Humanitarian Challenges:** Thailand's humanitarian corridor operates only in areas controlled by Myanmar's junta, limiting effective aid distribution.

### What is India's stance on Myanmar?

**1. Support for ASEAN's Role:** India endorses ASEAN's centrality and its Five-Point Consensus for peace in Myanmar, as highlighted by Prime Minister Modi at recent ASEAN-India and East Asia Summits.

**2. Strategic Importance for Act East Policy:** Myanmar is essential for India's Act East Policy, serving as a land bridge to other ASEAN countries, with a 1,643 km shared border.

**3. Regional Connectivity Projects:** India is involved in projects like the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project and the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway to boost trade and connectivity.

**4. Developmental Assistance:** India recently signed five Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with Myanmar under the Quick Impact Projects framework, backed by a \$250,000 grant for agriculture, vocational training, disaster management, and education.

**5. Border Security Measures:** Concerns over regional stability and refugee influxes led India to fence its Myanmar border and discontinue the Free Movement Regime.

**6. Broad Engagement Approach:** India aims to engage with various stakeholders in Myanmar to safeguard its strategic interests while promoting peace.

### Question for practice:

Examine how India balances its strategic interests and humanitarian concerns in Myanmar amid the ongoing civil war.

### EAC-PM Report about state-wise economic performance

**Source:** The post EAC-PM report reveal about state-wise economic performance has been created, based on the article "A picture of a growing economic divide in India" published in "The Hindu" on 30th October 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS paper3 -Economic- growth, development and employment; Inclusive growth and issues arising from it.

**Context:** The article discusses economic disparities among Indian states. It highlights that richer states attract more investment, leading to growing inequalities. To address this, it suggests improving governance and focusing on the unorganised sector in poorer states to boost their growth and federal unity.

For detailed information on **Economic divide among India's States** read [Article 1](#), [Article 2](#)

### **What does the EAC-PM Report reveal about state-wise economic performance?**

1. **The Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM)** released a report on the economic performance of Indian states from 1960-61 to 2023-24.
2. It compares each state's share in the national income and their per capita income against the all-India average. The report highlights significant disparities among states, with Maharashtra as the top contributor to the national economy. However, Maharashtra also has regions like Vidarbha, which face severe poverty and farmer distress, showing inequality within states.
3. The report notes that western and southern states consistently outperform eastern states, and most northern states perform poorly, except for Haryana and Delhi.
4. This widening gap leads to a federal divide, with wealthier states like Kerala questioning resource allocation by the central government. Similar protests occurred in 2000 against the Eleventh Finance Commission's decisions.

### **What role does investment play in state development?**

1. Investment drives economic output.
2. Richer states generally attract more investment due to higher returns, stronger infrastructure, and better governance.
3. Private investment, comprising 75% of total investment, favors well-developed areas like Mumbai, Delhi, and Bengaluru, where market potential is high. In contrast, poorer states see less investment due to weaker infrastructure and governance, further widening regional inequalities.
4. Coastal areas, including Odisha in the east, benefit from easier export access and lower import costs, attracting investment.
5. Urban centers such as Delhi and Bengaluru are preferred due to larger markets and better facilities.
6. Additionally, rich states have more efficient governance and educational facilities, attracting companies seeking productive labor.

### **How has liberalisation affected investment trends?**

1. Post-1991 liberalisation reduced public sector investment in backward regions and increased private sector dominance, directing more funds to already developed states.
2. Consequently, savings from poorer states have moved to wealthier regions offering higher returns, worsening the credit-deposit ratio gap between rich and poor states.

3. Poorer states have larger unorganised sectors with low productivity and income. NEP policies favor the organised sector, and projects like freight corridors and highways extend this sector's reach, benefiting richer states at the expense of poorer ones.

#### Why do some states face unique economic challenges?

1. West Bengal and Kerala have strong labor movements, which discourage private investment.
2. Border states receive less public investment due to strategic and security concerns, while opposition-led states allege the central government favors "Double Engine" (same-party) states, impacting investment flows.
3. In poorer states, weak governance, high black-market activity, and policy failures discourage investment, limiting growth potential.
4. Cronyism in investment decisions benefits select companies, raising overall investment risk, especially in less developed states.

#### How can India address these economic disparities?

1. To strengthen federalism and reduce inequalities, states need to improve governance and invest in social services.
2. The central government should focus on the unorganised sector to boost demand in poorer states, encouraging private investment.
3. Reducing regional disparities would support balanced growth across India.

#### Question for practice:

Examine how investment patterns contribute to economic disparities among Indian states and the potential solutions to address these inequalities.

#### India's concerns related to low levels of investment

Source: The post India's concerns related to low levels of investment has been created, based on the article "**Pratap Bhanu Mehta writes: India's economic credibility challenge**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 30th October 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS paper3- Economy-mobilisation of resources, growth, and development.

**Context:** The article critiques India's economic situation, noting that despite government optimism and some reforms, private and foreign investments are slow. It highlights gaps in credibility, regulatory challenges, over-concentration of capital, and reliance on empty statements to inspire growth.

For detailed information on **Decline in India's FDI and an increase in disinvesting** [read this article here](#)

#### What Is the Current State of Investment in India?

1. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman expressed concerns about low levels of domestic and foreign investments in India, despite favorable growth figures and government incentives like tax breaks.
2. However, investments continue to lag, and the expected boom in private investment has not materialized despite optimistic projections over the years.
3. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) notes some positive signs in private investment but acknowledges significant ongoing weaknesses.
4. Corporate growth is slowing, and companies are cautious with spending, affecting investments in new capacities.

### What Are the Major Credibility Gaps?

- 1. Epistemic Gaps:** There are conflicting reports about consumer confidence and economic conditions, making it difficult to gauge the real economic situation.
- 2. Regulatory Issues:** India is perceived as having a challenging business environment due to unpredictable regulations and increased compliance burdens.
- 3. Concentration of Capital:** Economic power is increasingly concentrated among a few large firms, which harms competition and may deter smaller enterprises and new entrants.
- 4. General Economic Credibility:** Frequent reliance on optimistic statements (termed "Open Mouth Operations") by officials fails to convincingly address underlying economic issues, leading to a lack of trust in the government's economic management.

For detailed information on **Challenges and Opportunities in Indian Economy** [read this article here](#)

### How Does Lack of Credibility Affect Economic Growth?

1. For sustainable growth, credibility in governance is crucial.
2. While India showcases large infrastructure projects, issues like urban flooding indicate gaps in basic governance.
3. Statements without actions create a perception that India's economic management lacks clarity and consistency, weakening trust among investors.

### Question for practice:

Discuss how credibility gaps in governance impact India's economic growth and investment climate.



## Impact of Upcoming Census on Delimitation and Women's Reservation

**Source:** The post impact of upcoming census on delimitation and women's reservation has been created, based on the article “**Why this Census is crucial for delimitation, women's quota, what's the legal roadmap**” published in “**Indian Express**” on 30th October 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS paper2-polity- issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure

**Context:** The article discusses the upcoming Census in India, expected to start next year and finish by 2026. This will affect delimitation, which redraws constituency boundaries, and women's reservation in elections. Both processes depend on the Census results and legal amendments.

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

### What is the expected timeline for the census and its impact on Delimitation?

1. The Indian government aims to begin the Census next year and complete it by 2026, aligning it with preparation for the 2029 Lok Sabha elections.
2. Delimitation, or redrawing constituency boundaries, depends on Census data. It last happened in 2002, using data from the 1971 and 2001 Censuses.
3. Currently, Lok Sabha has 543 seats and all state Assemblies together have 4,123 seats, based on older Census figures when India's population was 54.81 crore (1971) and 102.87 crore (2001).
4. With the expected 1.5 billion population in the upcoming Census, seats in the Lok Sabha and Assemblies are likely to increase significantly.

### What legal changes are needed for delimitation?

1. For delimitation to happen before the next Lok Sabha election in 2029, Article 82, along with Articles 81, 170, and 55, will need to be amended.
2. The 42nd Constitutional Amendment in 1976 froze delimitation until after the 2001 Census, and it was extended for 25 years in 2001.
3. Now, any adjustment must wait until the Census after 2026. Southern states with controlled population growth worry they might lose seats if only population data is considered.

### What role does the Census play in women's reservation?

1. The Constitution (128th Amendment) Act, passed in 2023, reserves 33% of seats in Lok Sabha and state Assemblies for women.
2. This reservation will only be implemented after the Census and subsequent delimitation. Currently, with 545 seats in Lok Sabha, 182 would be reserved for women, leaving 363 for men, which could challenge current male representatives.



3. However, if the strength of Lok Sabha increases to 770 seats, as projected, there would be 257 seats for women, with 513 for men, easing the transition for male politicians.

For detailed information on **Political Empowerment of Women** [read this article here](#)

**Question for practice:**

Discuss how the upcoming Census in India is expected to impact delimitation and the implementation of women's reservation in the Lok Sabha and state Assemblies.

