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## Challenges and opportunities related to the growing elderly population in India

**Source:** The post challenges and opportunities related to the growing elderly population in India has been created, based on the article “India’s ‘silver dividend’, challenge to opportunity” published in “The Hindu” on 1st October is 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 challenges and opportunities related to the growing elderly population in India and China. It emphasises the need for healthcare reforms, financial support, social inclusion, and digital adaptation. It highlights the potential of a "silver economy" focused on elderly consumers and services.

For detailed information on **Challenges Faced by Older People in India** [read this article here](#)

### What are the challenges related to the growing elderly population in India?

- 1. Health Issues:** About 75% of elderly people suffer from chronic diseases, and a third display depressive symptoms, increasing their health-care consumption to \$7 billion.
- 2. Daily Living Limitations:** One-quarter of the elderly face limitations in daily activities, impacting their quality of life.
- 3. Economic Insecurity:** Many elderly people face financial challenges, especially due to healthcare costs, with a need for innovative insurance products like ₹5 lakh coverage for those over 70.
- 4. Social Exclusion:** The elderly often experience social isolation and need better awareness of legal safeguards for inheritance and succession.
- 5. Digital Exclusion:** Low digital adaptation excludes the elderly from accessing schemes and benefits, highlighting the need for targeted digital literacy programs.

### What are the opportunities related to the growing elderly population in India?

- 1. Health and Wellness Industry Growth:** The elderly population’s healthcare consumption, currently valued at \$7 billion, is increasing, presenting opportunities for health and wellness-driven businesses. Around 75% of the elderly have chronic illnesses, creating demand for healthcare services.
- 2. Silver Economy Expansion:** The silver economy is worth ₹73,082 crore and is expected to grow further. With 60-plus individuals constituting 13.2% of the population by 2031, this segment can drive economic activities, including health technology and utility infrastructure.

### What Should be Done?

- 1. Healthcare reforms:** Expand services like tele-consultation and strengthen the healthcare workforce. Currently, elderly healthcare consumption stands at \$7 billion. Around 75% of the elderly have chronic ailments, requiring comprehensive care like the Ayushman Arogya Mandir (AAM).

**2. Financial security:** Introduce tailored insurance products like ₹5 lakh coverage for individuals over 70. Innovative investment schemes can help reduce financial burdens, especially due to healthcare costs.

**3. Social inclusion:** Create peer support groups and educate the elderly about legal rights, inheritance, and protections. This will enhance their confidence in handling difficult situations.

**4. Digital adaptation:** Encourage digital literacy among the elderly. Their low engagement with digital services prevents access to schemes and benefits.

**5. Leverage the silver economy:** The elderly, with consumption worth ₹73,082 crore, can drive economic growth in health and wellness sectors. Programs like Senior Able Citizens for Re-Employment in Dignity (SACRED) and Senior care Ageing Growth Engine (SAGE) support this initiative.

**Question for practice:**

Examine the challenges faced by the growing elderly population in India and the opportunities presented by the "silver economy."

**NASA's cancellation of the VIPER mission**

Source: The post NASA's cancellation of the VIPER mission has been created, based on the article "**Steady but slow: India's space programme needs more resources to realise its full potential**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 1st October 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper3- Awareness in the fields of Space.

**Context:** The article discusses NASA's cancellation of the Volatiles Investigating Polar Exploration Rover (VIPER) mission to the moon due to delays and costs. It highlights India's opportunity to lead with its lunar missions but points out ISRO's limited capacity to handle multiple large missions simultaneously.

For detailed information on **NASA's VIPER Mission** [read this article here](#)

**Why did NASA cancel the VIPER mission?**

1. NASA canceled the VIPER mission in July due to delays and rising costs.
2. By this time, engineers had fully assembled the rover and completed some tests. VIPER was supposed to map water-ice in the moon's south pole.
3. The rover was to be launched using a SpaceX Falcon Heavy rocket, with Astrobotic's 'Griffin' lander, as part of NASA's Commercial Lunar Payload Services program.

**Why did this cancellation draw international attention?**

1. NASA's decision drew attention from the U.S. House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, and the international community.
2. The mission's cancellation is seen as an opportunity for China, which is advancing its lunar program.

3. VIPER was expected to strengthen the US-led 'lunar axis' under the Artemis Accords.

#### **How did India respond to NASA's cancellation?**

1. India successfully landed Chandrayaan-3 on the moon on August 23, 2023, joining an elite group of countries with autonomous lunar soft-landing capabilities.
2. The Union Cabinet approved Chandrayaan-4 on September 18, 2023, a mission to return samples from the moon.
3. ISRO follows a "one major mission at a time" approach, maximizing resource efficiency but limiting its ability to handle multiple missions simultaneously.
4. ISRO is planning a "Lunar Polar Explorer" mission with Japan, which could perform tasks similar to NASA's cancelled VIPER mission, especially exploring moon's water-ice deposits.

#### **Question for practice:**

Discuss how NASA's cancellation of the VIPER mission has opened opportunities for India's lunar exploration program.

### **India's plans to expand its nuclear energy sector**

**Source:** The post India's plans to expand its nuclear energy sector has been created, based on the article "Having private participation in India's nuclear energy" published in "The Hindu" on 1st October is 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper3- Infrastructures- Energy

**Context:** The article discusses India's plans to expand its nuclear energy sector by involving private companies in research and development. It highlights legal challenges, regulatory issues, and the need for legislative changes to attract investments while ensuring safety and accountability in nuclear power generation.

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

#### **What is the Indian Government's plan for expanding nuclear energy?**

1. The Indian government plans to expand nuclear energy by partnering with the private sector.
2. The focus is on developing Bharat Small Reactors (BSR) and Bharat Small Modular Reactors (BSMR).
3. This initiative aligns with India's goal to achieve 500 GW of non-fossil fuel energy by 2030, as pledged at COP26.
4. Private sector involvement aims to attract \$26 billion in investments.
5. Currently, private participation is limited to construction and procurement, not research and development, due to the Atomic Energy Act (AEA).

### What is the current legal framework for nuclear energy in India?

1. The **Atomic Energy Act (AEA), 1962** gives the Indian government control over nuclear energy activities.
2. Section **3(a) of AEA** restricts private sector involvement in research, development, and use of atomic energy.
3. The **Department of Atomic Energy (DAE)** and **Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL)** manage nuclear energy infrastructure.
4. Private participation has been limited to **engineering, procurement, and construction (EPC)** roles, like Megha Engineering & Infrastructures and Reliance.
5. Legal reforms are needed, as private investment in **Small Modular Reactors (SMRs)** requires a **conducive regulatory framework**, per a **2023 DAE-NITI Aayog report**.

### What are the challenges for nuclear energy in India?

1. **Legal Restrictions:** The Atomic Energy Act (AEA) of 1962 restricts private sector involvement in nuclear energy. Section 3(a) of the AEA gives sole control of nuclear energy to the central government, prohibiting private participation in research and development.
2. **Regulatory Independence:** The Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) oversees radiation protection, but concerns exist about its lack of independence. The Nuclear Safety Regulatory Authority Bill of 2011, which aimed to address this, was never passed.
3. **Investment Uncertainty:** The Supreme Court's dismissal of the Sandeep T.S. vs Union of India & Ors. petition in 2024 upholds restrictions on private participation, potentially discouraging investment in nuclear energy.
4. **Liability Concerns:** The Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act (CLNDA) of 2010 is being challenged in court. Critics argue that it violates liability principles and raises safety concerns, further creating uncertainty for private investors.
5. **Safety Risks:** Past nuclear disasters, such as Chernobyl and Fukushima, emphasize the risks associated with nuclear reactors. These events underscore the importance of stringent safety measures for any expansion of nuclear infrastructure.

### Question for practice:

Examine the legal and regulatory challenges that India faces in expanding its nuclear energy sector, especially in involving the private sector in research and development.

### Negative impact of delayed La Niña and late monsoon on air quality in north India

**Source:** The post negative impact of delayed La Niña and late monsoon on air quality in north India has been created, based on the article “**The La Nina and North India’s pollution**” published in “**Indian Express**” on 1st October is 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper3- environmental pollution

**Context:** The article discusses the negative impact of delayed La Niña and late monsoon on air quality in north India. It highlights the importance of understanding climate change's role in pollution, advocating for broader strategies to improve air quality and protect public health.

For detailed information on the **Impact of La Nina on Air Quality in India** [read this article here](#)

### **What is the Impact of La Niña and Late Monsoon on Air Quality?**

1. The delayed onset of La Niña and the late monsoon retreat will worsen air quality in north India this winter.
2. Without La Niña, stagnant surface winds will trap pollutants, raising PM2.5 and PM10 levels.
3. Stubble burning in Punjab and Haryana, combined with stagnant winds, will further deteriorate air quality in November.
4. Recent studies link climate change and meteorological phenomena like La Niña to fluctuating air quality. For example, the National Institute of Advanced Science (NIAS) found that these factors greatly affected Delhi's air during the winter of 2022-23, which was the best in a decade due to timely La Niña effects.
5. The NIAS-SAFAR model predicts that if La Niña starts in December, air quality may improve slightly, but a longer, severe winter could still limit benefits.

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

### **What Could Improve Air Quality Later in the Winter?**

1. If La Niña begins by December or January, it might improve air quality slightly. This is due to expected stronger winds and dynamic atmospheric conditions which help disperse pollutants.
2. However, a longer and severe winter could offset these benefits by lowering the atmospheric layer that traps pollutants, limiting their dispersion.

### **What should be done?**

1. Addressing air pollution should go beyond local emissions and include larger meteorological and climatological factors.
2. Need to shift focus from individual cities to larger airsheds, incorporating broader factors into air quality strategies to enhance public health protection.
3. The emphasis should be on PM2.5 reduction from fossil fuel emissions.
4. There's also a need for integrated scientific approaches and health-focused measures to tackle air pollution effectively.

### **Question for practice:**



Discuss how the delayed onset of La Niña and the late monsoon retreat contribute to worsening air quality in north India, and what measures can be taken to mitigate this impact.

### Current status of the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah

**Source:** The post current status of the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah has been created, based on the article “**With Nasrallah’s killing, Israel steps deeper into the war without victors**” published in “**Indian Express**” on 1st October is 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper2- International relations

**Context:** The article discusses the escalating conflict between Israel and Hezbollah, highlighting recent airstrikes, the killing of Hezbollah's leader, and the potential for a ground offensive in Lebanon. It emphasizes the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the risks of broader regional instability.

For detailed information on **Iran-Israel Conflict and India’s stake** [read this article here](#)

#### What is the current status of the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah?

1. Since October 7, Israel and Hezbollah have been engaged in aerial attacks across the Israel-Lebanon border.
2. Israel remotely triggered explosions of communication devices used by Hezbollah, causing thousands of casualties.
3. Israeli airstrikes killed Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah on September 27.
4. Over 60,000 civilians were displaced from northern Israel due to Hezbollah's attacks.
5. Israel may begin a limited ground offensive into southern Lebanon to secure the area and allow civilians to return.
6. Hezbollah is considered stronger than Hamas, making a ground conflict riskier for Israeli forces despite recent tactical victories.
7. Israel's credit rating has been downgraded by Moody's twice, now at Baa1, due to "intensified geopolitical risk," indicating the growing economic impact of the ongoing conflict.

#### How might Hezbollah retaliate after the death of its leader?

1. Following the death of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, the group may adopt new tactics. 2. Experts suggest that Hezbollah is highly organized and could introduce a new, undeclared leader. This new leadership could include younger, more passionate commanders who are risk-takers and eager for revenge.
3. The group may also operate with leaders staying under the radar to avoid being targeted, which makes it harder for Israel to neutralize them.
4. This strategy, seen in other groups like al Qaeda after the killing of Ayman al-Zawahiri, could make Hezbollah more unpredictable and dangerous.

### How does the broader Middle East conflict affect other regions?

1. The Middle East conflict is affecting distant regions, spreading instability.
2. On September 8, French authorities arrested a French-Algerian citizen involved in an Iran-backed plot to assassinate seven individuals across Paris, Munich, and Berlin.
3. Yemen's Houthis have attacked commercial vessels in the Red Sea, despite US-led retaliatory strikes.
4. In mid-September, a Houthi-fired hypersonic missile hit Tel Aviv, sparking panic.
5. The US and Iran have indirectly coordinated their actions to prevent direct conflict, with Iran helping to avoid attacks on US bases in Syria and Iraq.
6. The deepening humanitarian crisis in Gaza and escalating tensions in Lebanon make it difficult for Sunni Arab states to align with Israel against Iran, as they face growing regional pressures and sensitivities.

### Question for practice:

Discuss the potential consequences of Hezbollah's retaliation after the death of its leader, Hassan Nasrallah.

### Italy and India's shared interests and challenges in the Indo-Mediterranean region

**Source:** The post Italy and India's shared interests and challenges in the Indo-Mediterranean region has been created, based on the article "**Why Italy matters to India**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 4th October 2024

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

**Context:** The article discusses Italy and India's shared interests and challenges in the Indo-Mediterranean region. It highlights their growing defence cooperation, naval presence, joint efforts in trade and security, and people-to-people ties, emphasizing partnerships for regional stability and prosperity.

For detailed information on **India and Italy relations** read [Article 1](#), [Article 2](#)

### What are Italy and India's common interests in the Indo-Mediterranean region?

1. Italy and India share interests in ensuring security and prosperity in the Indo-Mediterranean region.
2. This area is vital for global trade and digital connectivity, with the upcoming Blue-Raman submarine data cables connecting Genoa and Mumbai.
3. Both countries face challenges such as piracy in the Red Sea, regional conflicts in Gaza and Lebanon, and the effects of the Russia-Ukraine war on trade.

### How has Italy increased its security and naval presence?

1. Italy has strengthened its naval presence in the Indian Ocean Region and West Asia. It is the second largest contributor to EU missions like EU NAVFOR Atalanta and EMASoH.

2. Italy joined the Information Fusion Centre in India in 2023, and Italian naval ships, including the ITS Francesco Morosini and ITS Cavour, have visited Indian ports.

3. Italy is also leading the EU's military operation EUNAVFOR ASPIDES, which began in 2024, to safeguard navigation in key waters like the Red Sea and Indian Ocean.

### What are the key aspects of defence ties between Italy and India?

**1. Defence Agreement (2023):** Signed in October 2023, this agreement expands cooperation in research, industrial collaboration, maritime awareness, and environmental military activities.

**2. Regular Defence Talks:** The Italy-India Military Cooperation Group met in March 2023, fostering stronger collaboration.

**3. Industrial Partnerships:** Italian companies, like Fincantieri and Leonardo (ranked among SIPRI's top 50 arms producers), are working with Indian companies, supporting India's 'Make in India' initiative. Fincantieri has cooperated with Cochin Shipyard since 2020.

**4. Joint Ventures:** Elettronica signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Bharat Electronics Limited in 2019.

### How are both countries cooperating in the Indian Ocean Region and Africa?

1. Italy and India promote Africa's role in global platforms, supporting the African Union's inclusion in the G20.

2. Italy launched the **Mattei Plan in January 2024**, mobilizing €5.5 billion in public investments. It aims to build partnerships in African countries like Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Mozambique, all of which are adjacent to the Indo-Mediterranean region.

3. Italy also supports the **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)**, which focuses on railways, ports, and logistics.

4. Amid conflicts in Gaza and rising tensions in West Asia, Italy views IMEC as a long-term project that can ensure shared prosperity between Europe, West Asia, and India, benefiting the entire region economically.

### How are people-to-people ties between Italy and India significant?

Italy hosts the second largest Indian diaspora in the European Union. The strong people-to-people ties between the two countries are rooted in ancient cultural exchanges and continue to grow through modern economic, cultural, and educational interactions.

### Question for practice:

Examine how Italy and India are enhancing their defence cooperation and naval presence in the Indo-Mediterranean region.

## Remediation of legacy waste dumpsites under the Swachh Bharat Mission

**Source:** The post remediation of legacy waste dumpsites under the Swachh Bharat Mission has been created, based on the article “**What is the status of the Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0?**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 4th October 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 India's legacy waste dumpsites, which are large areas filled with unprocessed solid waste. It highlights health hazards from these sites, outlines the government's Swachh Bharat Mission aimed at remediation, and notes progress, with only 19.43% of dumpsites fully remediated.

For detailed information on **Swachh Bharat Mission's 10-year impact** [read this article here](#)

### What are legacy waste dumpsites?

1. Legacy waste dumpsites store solid waste collected over years without scientific management.
2. India generates approximately 1,50,000 tonnes of municipal solid waste daily, as per the State of India's Environment 2023 report.
3. There are more than 3,000 such dumpsites, with 2,424 holding over 1,000 tonnes of waste.
4. These sites, once on city outskirts, are now often in city centers due to urban expansion.
5. About 15,000 acres of land is buried under 16 crore tonnes of legacy waste across India.

### What are the health hazards of legacy waste dumpsites?

1. Emissions from hazardous waste at legacy dumpsites can irritate the mouth and throat.
2. Inhaling methane from landfills can cause nausea, vomiting, and loss of coordination.
3. Ragpickers working at landfills often develop skin allergies due to prolonged waste exposure.
4. People living near landfills are prone to diseases such as tuberculosis, asthma, diabetes, depression, cholera, and malaria.
5. Dumpsites are a source of greenhouse gas emissions, particularly methane and carbon dioxide, contributing to environmental damage.

### What is the Swachh Bharat Mission?

1. The Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) was launched by the Central government on October 2, 2014, to eliminate open defecation.
2. Its first phase aimed for an Open Defecation Free (ODF) India by October 2, 2019, coinciding with Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary.

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3. In 2021, SBM-U 2.0 was launched to make all cities garbage-free by 2026.
4. It aims for 100% waste segregation, door-to-door collection, and scientific management of waste.
5. The mission includes the remediation of legacy dumpsites, converting them into green zones ₹3,226 crore has been approved for the remediation of dumpsites.

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

### What progress has been made so far?

1. As of September 2023, 471 out of 2,424 legacy waste dumpsites have been fully remediated, making up 19.43% of the total.
2. Remediation is ongoing for 1,226 dumpsites, while 727 remain untouched.
3. A total of 27% of the 17,039.71 acres of land buried under waste has been reclaimed, leaving 73% still awaiting remediation.
4. Tamil Nadu has reclaimed 837 acres (42%).
5. Gujarat is the best-performing state, reclaiming 75% of its landfill area, amounting to 698 out of 938 acres of land reclaimed.

### Question for practice:

Examine the progress made in the remediation of legacy waste dumpsites under the Swachh Bharat Mission as of September 2023.

## Importance of accurate population estimates for conserving endangered animals

Source: The post importance of accurate population estimates for conserving endangered animals has been created, based on the article "**Express View on shelving an elephant census: Elephant in the room**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 4th October is 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper3- Conservation

**Context:** The article discusses the importance of accurate population estimates for conserving endangered animals, especially elephants in India. It highlights the challenges in surveying wildlife, recent changes in census methods, habitat loss, and the government's neglect of important findings regarding elephant conservation.

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

### Why is population estimation important for wildlife conservation?

1. **Informs conservation strategies:** Reliable population estimates are essential for designing effective conservation strategies for endangered animals like tigers and elephants.

**2. Challenges in counting wildlife:** Large mammals, such as elephants, are difficult to survey due to camouflage and constant movement. Enumeration methods must be refined, as seen with India's tiger crisis in 2005, which led to improvements in counting methods.

**3. Habitat loss and human conflict:** Habitat fragmentation forces elephants into human-dominated areas, increasing conflicts. Accurate population estimates can help guide solutions to these conflicts and support eco-sensitive development.

#### **What led to changes in tiger and elephant counting methods?**

1. The 2005 tiger crisis in India led to discussions on improving tiger counting methods. Earlier methods provided inaccurate results, prompting the need for more refined techniques.
2. The Tiger Census today offers a more accurate picture of tiger numbers than in the early 2000s.
3. In 2017, the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) shifted from direct headcounts or dung counts to statistical modeling for elephant counting. This new method was similar to the tiger monitoring approach and aimed to provide more reliable population estimates.

#### **What are the government's actions?**

1. The government changed its method for counting elephants in 2017, adopting a statistical modeling approach used for tigers.
2. Despite a decline in elephant populations, the government shelved the latest survey report.
3. The NDA government claims the elephant population has stabilized, but delayed releasing census findings.
4. The UPA government did not act on the 2010 Elephant Task Force's recommendations for "science-based assessment."

#### **Question for practice:**

Discuss the importance of accurate population estimates in wildlife conservation, particularly for elephants and tigers in India.

### **Rising tensions between Iran and Israel and their impact on India**

**Source:** The post Rising tensions between Iran and Israel and their impact on India has been created, based on the article "**How India could play a meaningful role in the conflict in West Asia**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 4th October is 2024

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

**Context:** The article discusses the rising tensions between Iran and Israel, India's diplomatic stance urging restraint, and the country's strategic interests in the region. It highlights the potential risks to India's energy security, citizens, and economic ties with both Israel and Iran.

For detailed information on **Iran-Israel Conflict and India's stake** [read this article here](#)

### What is happening between Iran and Israel?

Iran fired 200 missiles at Israel this week. This attack follows tensions since April and earlier incidents where Iran launched aerial strikes in response to Israeli actions. There is concern that a strong Israeli response could lead to a full-blown war in the region.

### How has India responded?

1. India has urged that the conflicts should not expand regionally and has called for all issues to be resolved through dialogue and diplomacy.
2. Prime Minister Modi met Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on September 23 during the UN General Assembly, expressing concern over Gaza's humanitarian situation and reaffirming India's support for peace.
3. On September 30, Modi spoke to Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, condemning terrorism and stressing the need to prevent regional escalation, secure the safe release of hostages, and restore peace.
4. India has not yet offered to mediate but maintains strategic ties with both Israel and Iran.

### Why is the conflict a concern for India?

- 1. Impact on Indian citizens:** There are about 18,000 Indians in Israel and between 5,000-10,000 in Iran. A wider conflict could endanger the nearly 90 lakh Indians in the region.
- 2. Energy security:** The region provides India with 80% of its oil. War could disrupt supply and raise prices, impacting India's economy.
- 3. Strategic partnerships:** India has deep defense ties with Israel and economic interests in Iran, especially the Chabahar port.
- 4. Economic investments:** Arab countries investing in India might pause or pull back due to instability, harming India's economic plans.

### What are other regional players doing?

- 1. Qatar:** Qatar plays a major role, providing billions in aid to Palestine and hosting Hamas leaders. Both the US and Israel rely on Qatar for mediation. Al Jazeera, funded by Qatar, is influential in the Arab world.
- 2. Egypt:** Egypt has focused on preventing terrorism and addressing the Gaza-Israel conflict. It has pushed ceasefire initiatives due to concerns over a potential refugee influx from Gaza.
- 3. Saudi Arabia:** Saudi Arabia paused its peace talks with Israel amidst the conflict. Its complicated relationship with Iran adds to the tensions in the region.
- 4. UAE:** The UAE, a signatory of the 2020 normalization deal with Israel, supports regional stability to protect its economic interests and initiatives like the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor.

5. **China:** China is positioning itself as a mediator, driven by its geopolitical and economic interests in Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE. It has tried to broker deals, like the Saudi-Iran agreement and Hamas-Fatah talks.

**Question for practice:**

Evaluate India's diplomatic approach in handling the Iran-Israel conflict in light of its strategic interests and regional partnerships.

**The US offers an alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative**

**Source:** The post the US offers an alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative has been created, based on the article "**An American alternative to the China's Belt and Road Initiative**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 4th October is 2024

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

**Context:** The article discusses China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), its risks for countries, and China's influence. It contrasts this with US investments, which emphasize transparency and sustainability. The US must reauthorize its Development Finance Corporation to continue countering China's approach.

For detailed information on **an alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative** [read this article here](#)

**What is the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)?**

China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), also called "Yi dai yi lu," is a global infrastructure financing plan. It promotes a China-centered model of development. The BRI does not require strict terms on human rights or transparency.

For detailed information on **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)** [read this article here](#)

**What are the risks for participating countries?**

1. Participating countries often face substantial financial obligations due to long-term debts to China, creating financial dependence on China.
2. China prefers extending or renegotiating loans rather than offering debt forgiveness, increasing its control over these nations. For example, Sri Lanka leased 70% of the Hambantota Port to China for \$1.12 billion, which failed to resolve Sri Lanka's economic issues and transferred strategic assets to China.
3. China has investments in 101 global port projects, including 10 in the Indo-Pacific, giving it geopolitical leverage beyond economic influence over participating countries.

**How does the US offer an alternative?**

1. The US offers an alternative to China's BRI through the **US International Development Finance Corporation (DFC)**.
2. The DFC focuses on transparency, rule of law, and sustainable economic growth, unlike the often-opaque terms of BRI projects.



3. In 2023, the DFC committed \$500 million to develop the **West Container Terminal at the Port of Colombo, Sri Lanka**.

4. This project is expected to create over 40,000 jobs and boost Sri Lanka's GDP through shipping and logistics.

5. US investments are private sector-led, ensuring economic stability without creating dependency or debt traps.

6. In contrast to China's Hambantota Port deal, where Sri Lanka leased a 70% stake to China for \$1.12 billion, the DFC promotes transparency and strategic, long-term partnerships.

7. The DFC supports projects with high standards for environmental protection, human rights, and worker rights.

**Question for practice:**

Discuss the risks for countries participating in China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and how the US offers an alternative through its Development Finance Corporation (DFC).

**Circular migration benefits India**

**Source:** The post Circular migration benefits India has been created, based on the article "**How circular migration can help meet global skill shortage and lift Indians out of poverty**" published in "Indian Express" on 5th October is 2024

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

**Context:** The article discusses circular migration, where Indian workers, trained through government programs, go abroad for skilled jobs and return with enhanced expertise. This process benefits both India and countries facing skill shortages, such as Israel, Japan, and Germany.

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

**What is Circular Migration and How is it different from Brain Drain?**

1. **Circular Migration** involves workers going abroad temporarily and returning with enhanced skills, benefiting both India and the host countries.

- Example: 997 skilled youth from Maharashtra are working in Israel for five years, earning Rs 1.37 lakh per month. They will return with advanced construction skills.

2. **Brain Drain** is the permanent migration of highly qualified individuals, leading to a loss of talent for the home country.

- Example: Until 2000, many doctors and engineers, educated in subsidized Indian institutions, permanently settled abroad, contributing to brain drain.

3. **Key Difference:** Circular migration leads to skill transfer back to India, while brain drain results in a permanent loss of talent, with limited economic returns like remittances.

### How Does Circular Migration Benefit India?

1. Circular migration allows Indian workers to gain international experience and return with advanced skills, benefiting India's industries.
2. Over 40% of India's remittances come from manual workers in the Middle East, highlighting the economic benefits of migration.
3. Initiatives by MITRA and NSDC ensure workers are trained to meet global skill standards, improving job opportunities abroad.

### What are the government initiatives to facilitate Circular Migration?

Matching skills to international standards requires specialized training. Language barriers, legal compliances, and exact skill-matching are challenges.

To address these, the government has initiated several steps:

- 1. Labor Mobility Agreements:** India has signed agreements with countries like Israel, Japan, and Germany to fill skill shortages. For example, Israel needs over 100,000 workers, offering salaries of Rs 1.3 lakh per month.
- 2. Skill Development Programs:** The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) offers booster training to upgrade skills. Maharashtra's MITRA and NSDC trained 997 workers for jobs in Israel, focusing on construction trades like plastering and bar bending.
- 3. Language and Skill Matching:** Training includes English and skills required by foreign countries. Workers are also offered training in languages like Japanese, German, or French.
- 4. Infrastructure Support:** ITI Pune developed bar-bending machines to meet Israeli requirements, ensuring workers passed the required tests for international placements.

### Way forward

India should expand circular migration to countries like Japan and Germany with ageing populations. With targeted skill development, language training, and government support, India can fill global skill gaps while benefiting from returning experienced workers.

### Question for practice:

Discuss how circular migration benefits both India and the host countries and how the Indian government is facilitating this process.

### Problem with state government finances

**Source:** The post problem with state government finances has been created, based on the article “Should states that spend irresponsibly be penalised?” published in “Indian Express” on 5th October is 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper 2- Governance – issues related to federal structure

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**Context:** The article discusses India's state finances, highlighting how an implicit guarantee from the central government allows states to borrow without facing credit risks. It suggests that this arrangement encourages fiscal irresponsibility and questions whether stricter market pricing or new fiscal rules could improve the situation.

For detailed information on **Fiscal Consolidation of state governments in India** [read this article here](#)

### How is state debt in India perceived?

- 1. Implicit Union Guarantee:** State government borrowings in India are perceived to be backed by an implicit guarantee from the Union government, making default highly unlikely.
- 2. Auto-Debit Mechanism:** This guarantee is executed through an auto-debit mechanism on state accounts (CAS Nagpur), ensuring timely payments.
- 3. Uniform Bond Yields:** Despite differing fiscal conditions, state bond yields show little variation. For instance, Gujarat has a lower debt-to-GSDP ratio and a revenue surplus, while Punjab and Himachal Pradesh face fiscal strain, yet all states borrow at similar rates.
- 4. No Market Discipline:** Stressed states don't face higher interest rates, which would otherwise enforce fiscal discipline.

### What is the problem with state government finances?

- 1. TIPS (Tariffs, Interest, Pensions, Subsidies):** Tariffs for electricity and water are minimal in many states, not reflecting actual costs. This adds strain on state revenues.
- 2. Interest Payments:** Interest on state debt consumes a significant share of state revenues. For many states, interest payments, pensions, and power subsidies account for over 70% of their own tax revenue.
- 3. Pension Obligations:** Pension liabilities are rising as some states return to older schemes, adding fiscal pressure.
- 4. Subsidies:** States frequently announce new subsidies. For example, Himachal Pradesh is reviewing its subsidies, while Punjab has sought a bailout.
- 5. Borrowing for Consumption:** Many states borrow to fund consumption instead of capital expenditure, leading to poor financial management.

### What should be done?

- 1. Introduce market-driven pricing for state debt:** States like Himachal Pradesh, facing fiscal stress, should be subject to higher interest rates based on their financial position. This would incentivize fiscal discipline.
- 2. Reevaluate the Union government's implicit guarantee:** The current system, where all states, regardless of fiscal health, borrow at similar rates, encourages irresponsible borrowing.

**3. Control expenditure:** Many states, like Punjab and Himachal Pradesh, are borrowing not for capital investment but to cover consumption. States must reduce subsidies and control pension and interest costs, which consume over 70% of tax revenues.

**4. Learn from past bailouts:** Bailouts, like the Uday scheme for power discoms, did not resolve underlying issues. Repeated bailouts without structural reforms will not lead to sustainable solutions.

**5. Adopt fiscal rules:** The 16th Finance Commission should create differentiated fiscal rules to guide states based on their financial positions.

**Question for practice:**

Examine how the implicit guarantee from the Union government affects fiscal discipline and borrowing practices of state governments in India.

**Rising temperatures have a stronger correlation with food inflation than rains**

**Source:** The post rising temperatures have a stronger correlation with food inflation than rains has been created, based on the article “**Why heat, not rain, matters more for inflation and rural demand**” published in “**Indian Express**” on 5th October is 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper3- Economy- inflation And Environment- climate change

**Context:** The article explains that rising temperatures are becoming a better predictor of food inflation in India than rainfall or reservoir levels. As temperatures increase, crop yields drop, leading to higher food prices and inflation, affecting both crops and animal products.

For detailed information on **India’s food inflation** read [Article 1](#), [Article 2](#)

**How do temperatures impact food inflation?**

1. Rising temperatures have a stronger correlation with food inflation than rains or reservoir levels in India.
2. Higher temperatures lower crop yields, increasing food prices. For example, a temperature rise of 2.5-4.9°C could reduce wheat yields by 41-52% and rice yields by 32-40%.
3. The March 2022 heatwave reduced the sugarcane yield by 30%, affecting prices of vegetables and oilseeds.
4. Perishable crops like vegetables, harvested every 2-3 months, show a rising sensitivity to heat. Their price correlation with temperatures increased from 20% to 60% over a decade.
5. Durable crops like cereals, less sensitive historically, now show a correlation rise from 10% to 45%.
6. High temperatures also harm livestock, leading to higher prices for dairy, poultry, and fish products.
7. Temperature data significantly improves food inflation forecasting.

**What roles do reservoir levels and rains play compared to temperatures?**

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1. Reservoir levels and rainfall are becoming less important in predicting food inflation compared to temperatures.
2. With improved irrigation facilities, the impact of low rains has reduced, especially in north-western India, the country's food bowl.
3. Temperatures and reservoir levels have a 50% correlation, indicating that temperature data captures much of the information from reservoir levels.
4. In food inflation models, when temperatures are included and the reservoir variable is removed, the model's predictive power improves, increasing its R-squared value from 80% to 90%.

### What's the Current Outlook for Food Inflation?

1. With temperatures cooling after a heatwave earlier in 2024, food inflation may decrease.
2. If temperatures remain lower due to La Niña, inflation could drop to the RBI's target of 4% by March 2025.
3. However, rising temperatures could pose long-term challenges for inflation management.

### Question for practice:

Evaluate how rising temperatures compared to rainfall and reservoir levels have become a more significant predictor of food inflation in India.

## PM Internship Scheme

**Source:** The post PM Internship Scheme has been created, based on the article “**A learning curve: The outcomes of the PM Internship Scheme’s pilot project need monitoring**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 7th October is 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper3- Economy- Employment

**Context:** The article discusses the launch of the PM Internship Scheme to provide job training for unemployed youth in India. It aims to create one crore internships by 2029. A pilot project with 1.25 lakh interns will begin in December 2024.

For detailed information on **Internships to bridge job market-skills gap** [read this article here](#)

### What is the PM Internship Scheme?

1. The PM Internship Scheme is a government initiative to help unemployed youth by providing them with on-the-job training.
2. The scheme is primarily funded by the Centre and is part of a larger package designed to bridge the gap between education and the practical skills needed by employers.
3. It will operate through an online portal launched on October 3, which connects companies and potential interns.

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4. The scheme targets creating one crore internships by March 2029. Initially, a pilot project will start in December 2024 with 1.25 lakh interns.

### What are the benefits of PM Internship Scheme?

1. The scheme offers real-world experience and certification from well-known companies.
2. This can help improve the employability of youth by giving them skills and confidence in the job market.
3. The pilot project's success will be evaluated based on dropout rates, grievances, and the employment rate of interns after completing the internship.
4. Final insights will be gathered by December 2025 to inform the future design of the scheme.

### What are the challenges?

1. The scheme faces challenges such as finding placements for interns in less industrialized states like Bihar.
2. Also, it needs to focus on developing both shop floor skills and modern workplace skills, like digital and soft skills.

### Question for practice:

Examine the benefits of the PM Internship Scheme in improving the employability of unemployed youth.

## Israel's attempt to reshape West Asia after October 7 attack

**Source:** The post Israel's attempt to reshape West Asia after October 7 attack has been created, based on the article "**A three-tier war in West Asia with no endgame**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 7th October is 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 how Israel's attempt to reshape West Asia after Hamas's October 7, 2023, attack failed. Israel is now fighting wars against Hamas, Hezbollah, and Iran. Long-term stability in the region requires addressing the Palestine issue.

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

### What was Jake Sullivan's 2023 assessment of the Middle East?

1. Jake Sullivan, the U.S. National Security Adviser, wrote in October 2023 that the Middle East was quieter than it had been in decades. He acknowledged ongoing tensions, particularly in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
2. However, just days later, Hamas launched a major attack on Israel, killing at least 1,200 people and taking 250 hostages, reigniting the Israel-Palestine conflict.

### Why did Israel believe it had established a new status quo?

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1. Israel believed that it had created a new normal where it could occupy Palestinian territories without facing serious consequences.
2. Meanwhile, Arab nations like Saudi Arabia and the UAE were moving toward normalizing relations with Israel, sidelining the Palestine issue.
3. The **Abraham Accords of 2020 symbolized this shift**. The U.S. also pushed for stronger ties between Israel and Sunni Arab states, aiming to isolate Iran.

For detailed information on **The Abraham Accords** read [Article 1](#), [Article 2](#)

### **How did the status quo of this region disrupt?**

1. Hamas's October 2023 attack shattered Israel's belief in the status quo.
2. It also triggered a wider conflict in the region, proving that peace in West Asia is impossible without addressing the Palestinian issue.
3. This attack led Israel to respond with intense military actions in Gaza, killing more than 41,000 Palestinians and displacing nearly the entire population of Gaza.
4. Despite ongoing violence, Israel is focused on reshaping the region in its favor, rather than seeking peace. However, past attempts, like those by the U.S., to reshape the Middle East have failed.

### **What is Israel's strategy in its three-tier war?**

1. Israel is fighting a three-tier war. **First**, it aims to destroy Hamas in Gaza and rescue the hostages.
2. **Second**, it seeks to push Hezbollah back from Lebanon's border to protect northern Israel.
3. **Third**, it wants to weaken Iran, which it sees as the source of regional instability. Israel views Iran as the "head of the octopus" with militias like Hamas and Hezbollah as its "tentacles."

### **What role does Iran play in this conflict?**

1. Iran supports militias like Hezbollah and Hamas, making it a key player in the conflict.
2. Israel's intelligence capabilities allow for targeted attacks within Iran, but these strikes have not deterred Iranian support for its allies.
3. Israel's escalation could lead to a direct confrontation with Iran, raising fears that Iran might alter its nuclear policy.

### **What is needed for long-term stability in West Asia?**

1. **Address the Palestine Issue:** Peace in West Asia requires resolving the long-standing Palestine question. The ongoing conflict shows that the region cannot stabilize without addressing this issue.
2. **Ceasefire First Step:** A ceasefire in Gaza is essential to de-escalate and create conditions for long-term peace.

**Question for practice:**

Examine how Hamas's October 2023 attack disrupted the regional status quo and impacted Israel's strategic approach.

**Role of tanks in high-altitude warfare**

**Source:** The post role of tanks in high-altitude warfare has been created, based on the article “**How are tanks armouring Ladakh sector?**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 7th October is 2024

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

**Context:** The article discusses the role of tanks in high-altitude warfare, particularly in Eastern Ladakh, where Indian and Chinese forces face off. It highlights challenges, tank upgrades, and future plans, while noting lessons from other global conflicts and evolving warfare technology.

For detailed information on **Modern Warfare-Importance of absorption of technology** [read this article here](#)

**What are the role of tanks in high-altitude warfare?**

- 1. Tanks in Ladakh:** In September 2024, the Indian Army showcased the abilities of its T-90 tanks and BMP-2 armoured carriers near the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Eastern Ladakh. These tanks demonstrated crossing the Indus River at an altitude of 13,700 feet.
- 2. Mobility and Firepower:** T-90 tanks are equipped with a 1,000-hp engine, a 125-mm main gun, and anti-tank missiles, making them versatile in harsh terrains.
- 3. Challenges from China:** The Chinese PLA has deployed modern ZTQ-15 and Type 96A tanks, which are agile and well-suited for high-altitude operations.
- 4. Adaptations:** Special fuel, lubricants, and winterisation kits help maintain tanks in freezing temperatures.

**What challenges do tanks face at high altitudes?**

- 1. Low Oxygen Levels:** The thin air at high altitudes affects engine performance. For example, T-90 tanks need to have their engines started 2-3 times at night to remain functional due to low oxygen levels.
- 2. Extreme Cold:** Temperatures can drop to -40°C in areas like Ladakh. Special lubricants and fuel are used to prevent tanks from freezing and ensure they stay operational in these extreme conditions.
- 3. High Maintenance Needs:** Tanks require constant care. For instance, special maintenance facilities were set up at Nyoma and along the Daulat Beg Oldi axis to keep the tanks operational in these harsh environments.
- 4. Wear and Tear:** The harsh terrain and low temperatures cause rapid wear and tear, demanding faster repair cycles and replacement of parts.

**What lessons are being learned from global conflicts?**



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1. **Threat:** Global conflicts like the Ukraine war and Armenia-Azerbaijan tensions show the growing threat from drones, long-range projectiles, and loitering munitions.

2. **Adaptation required:** The Indian Army is adapting by upgrading tanks and seeking new air-burst ammunition to counter drones.

3. **Protecting armoured units:** Modern protective systems are being added to tanks globally. France, Germany, and the U.S. are enhancing their tank fleets by adding new protective systems based on battlefield experiences from these wars.

### What are India's future plans for tanks and armoured vehicles?

1. **Future Ready Combat Vehicle (FRCV)** project aims to replace older tanks, with expected induction by 2030.

2. **Future Infantry Combat Vehicle (FICV)** project is in progress to replace existing BMPs.

3. The **Zorawar light tank** is being developed by DRDO and L&T, with preliminary trials completed and user trials expected by August 2025.

4. India plans to procure 100 additional **K9 Vajra Howitzers** following their successful deployment in Ladakh.

5. Upgrades for **BMP-2s** include 3rd generation Anti-Tank Guided Missiles (ATGM) and air-burst ammunition to counter drones.

### Question for practice:

Evaluate the challenges tanks face in high-altitude warfare and the adaptations required to maintain their effectiveness in such environments.

## Government initiative to improve PMJAY

**Source:** The post government initiative to improve PMJAY has been created, based on the article "**How Ayushman Bharat is saving lives**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 7th October 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper 2 - 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 Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY), a healthcare scheme in India. It highlights its impact on providing free medical treatment to families, especially the poor and elderly, improving healthcare access and reducing financial burdens due to medical expenses.

For detailed information on **Expansion of the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY)** read [Article 1](#), [Article 2](#)

### What is Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY)?

The AB-PMJAY is a health insurance scheme in India that provides free healthcare to families for secondary and tertiary medical treatments up to Rs 5 lakh annually. It has been a critical part of India's approach to Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

### What are the key benefits of PMJAY?

- 1. Financial Protection:** It covers up to Rs 5 lakh per family annually for secondary and tertiary healthcare, preventing impoverishment due to medical expenses.
- 2. Widespread Access:** The scheme has facilitated 7.8 crore hospital admissions in six years, benefiting millions.
- 3. Comprehensive Healthcare:** PMJAY covers inpatient care, while over 1,75,000 Ayushman Arogya Mandirs provide free consultations, medicines (up to 172), and diagnostics (up to 63) for outpatient services.
- 4. Support for Elderly:** The scheme now benefits 4.5 crore families, covering about 6 crore senior citizens. The hospitalisation rate for those over 70 exceeds 11%.
- 5. Inclusive Coverage:** Unlike private insurance, PMJAY doesn't exclude those with pre-existing conditions or impose waiting periods, benefiting 58% elderly women, many of whom are widows.
- 6. Reduced Financial Vulnerability:** Studies show the bottom 50% of the population is now less vulnerable to medical expenses.

### How is the government improving PMJAY?

- 1. Expansion of Health Benefit Package (HBP):** The procedures covered under PMJAY increased from 1,393 in 2018 to 1,949 by 2022. This allows more treatments under the scheme.
- 2. Introduction of Differential Pricing:** To account for regional cost variations, differential pricing was introduced, enabling more accurate pricing for healthcare services.
- 3. Flexibility for States:** States and Union Territories were given additional flexibility to customize HBP rates to suit local healthcare needs.
- 4. Extended Coverage:** In 2022, PMJAY was extended to approximately 37 lakh ASHA and Anganwadi workers' families.
- 5. Elderly Coverage:** The scheme now covers all citizens aged 70 and above, benefiting around 6 crore senior citizens.
- 6. Hospital Network Expansion:** PMJAY has empanelled over 29,000 hospitals, with 57% of admissions happening in the private sector.
- 7. Public Hospital Improvement:** Public hospitals have utilized reimbursed funds to upgrade infrastructure and amenities under PMJAY.

### Question for practice:

Discuss the key benefits of the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) in improving healthcare access and reducing financial vulnerability.

## Escalating global conflicts could potentially lead to World War 3

**Source:** The post escalating global conflicts could potentially lead to World War 3 has been created, based on the article “**In 2024, a world driven dangerously close to the edge**” published in “**Indian Express**” on 7th October 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 escalating global conflicts, such as Israel-Palestine, Russia-Ukraine, and US-China tensions, potentially leading to World War 3. It emphasizes rising nationalism, eroded global rules, and how technology, especially AI weapons, influences modern warfare, while hoping innovation may promote peace.

### Why are global conflicts escalating?

1. The world is increasingly divided, with multiple conflicts escalating simultaneously.
2. **In the Middle East**, the Israel-Palestine conflict has worsened, with thousands of Palestinians, including many children, killed by Israeli bombings after Hamas' attack. This conflict has extended to Lebanon, involving Iran’s allies, such as Hezbollah.
3. Similarly, **in Europe**, the Russia-Ukraine war has become more intense, with Ukraine opening a new offensive. President Putin has warned that NATO’s support for Ukraine could lead to nuclear war.
4. **The US-China** tension also grows, as the US imposes tariffs on Chinese imports to curb China's technological and economic growth.
5. These separate conflicts echo World War 1’s origins, where small, unconnected events—like Franz Ferdinand’s assassination—escalated into a global war due to nationalism and egotistic leadership.

### How Does Nationalism Fuel These Conflicts?

1. Nationalism and jingoism are rising globally. Leaders use external threats to strengthen political positions, even at the cost of global stability.
2. For instance, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was unpopular before the conflict. But now, due to military successes, his political position has improved.
3. However, this escalates regional tensions and risks long-term instability, as seen with the displacement of

### What Happened to the Global Rules?

1. The global rules of engagement established after World War II have collapsed, leaving no clear framework for countries to follow.
2. Nations are acting independently, disregarding alliances and traditional diplomacy.

3. Israel, despite relying on the US, ignored President Biden's calls for restraint, showing how weakened global norms have become.
4. Military and economic superiority no longer ensure influence, as evidenced by Netanyahu's actions, despite Israel's dependence on the US.
5. This breakdown in global order allows countries to pursue their own interests, increasing the risk of conflict and instability worldwide.

### How Is Technology Changing Modern Warfare?

1. Technology, especially AI, is playing a significant role in modern warfare. Former Google CEO Eric Schmidt suggests that AI will dominate future wars, with AI weapons being developed by start-ups.
2. He emphasized that new "unicorn" companies will focus on creating AI-driven military technology.
3. Investors prioritize developing cost-effective AI weapons, even at the cost of human lives.
4. AI technology is seen as the future of military dominance, replacing traditional weaponry.
5. An example is the recent use of AI in detonating mobile devices in Lebanon, signaling how AI-driven methods are already influencing combat strategies.

### Way forward

Power is shifting from politicians to influential people in technology and wealth. These individuals have "persuasion power," as noted by economist Daron Acemoglu. If they use this power responsibly, there is hope that they may innovate solutions for peace and prevent the escalation of global conflicts into a full-scale war.

### Question for practice:

Evaluate how rising nationalism and the collapse of global rules have contributed to the escalation of current global conflicts.

## The Supreme Court declares caste-based labor divisions in prisons unconstitutional

**Source:** The post the Supreme Court declares caste-based labor divisions in prisons unconstitutional has been created, based on the article "On 'casteist' provisions in prison manuals" published in "The Hindu" on 8th October is 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper2- Governance- Prison Reforms

**Context:** The article discusses the Supreme Court's decision to declare caste-based labor divisions in prisons unconstitutional. It highlights discriminatory prison rules and urges reforms to abolish such practices that violate prisoners' fundamental rights, ensuring equality and dignity for all.

For detailed information on **Supreme Court's Ruling on Caste Bias and Prison Segregation** [read this article here](#)

### **What Was the Issue Addressed by the Supreme Court?**

1. The Supreme Court addressed the issue of caste-based divisions of labor in Indian prisons, declaring such practices unconstitutional.
2. The case was initiated by a Public Interest Litigation filed by journalist Sukanya Shantha, highlighting discriminatory rules in prison manuals from states like Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Odisha, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala.

For detailed information on **Caste System in Indian Prisons: Unconstitutional But Legal** [read this article here](#)

### **Why Supreme Court's declare caste-based labor divisions in prisons unconstitutional?**

1. The Supreme Court declared caste-based labor divisions in prisons unconstitutional as they violate prisoners' fundamental rights under Articles 14, 15(1), and 17 of the Constitution.
2. The case was based on a PIL highlighting discriminatory prison manuals in states like Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan.
3. In Tamil Nadu's Palayamkottai Central Jail, Thevars, Nadars, and Pallars were segregated, reflecting caste-based segregation.
4. Rajasthan's Prison Rules, 1951, assigned latrine duties to the "Mehtar" caste, while higher-caste prisoners were given cooking tasks.
5. The court noted that these practices reinforced colonial-era stereotypes and perpetuated untouchability, violating Article 17.
6. Caste distinctions in labor assignments deprived marginalized prisoners of dignity and equality, which the court ruled as direct discrimination.

### **What Directions Were Issued by the Court?**

1. The court directed all states and Union Territories to amend their prison manuals within three months to remove discriminatory practices.
2. It also highlighted flaws in the Union government's Model Prison Manual of 2016 and the Model Prisons and Correctional Services Act, 2023.
3. Reforms were ordered to redefine the term "habitual offender" and ensure equality in prison work assignments.
4. Regular inspections will be carried out to ensure compliance.

### **How do prison manuals reinforce colonial stereotypes?**

1. The Criminal Tribes Act of 1871 allowed the British to label certain communities as "criminal tribes." Even after the Act's repeal, prison manuals continued to classify some groups as "habitual offenders," even without convictions.
2. In West Bengal, Rule 404 of the Jail Code discriminated against people from "wandering tribes," considering them prone to escape.
3. Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala used similar definitions, perpetuating harmful stereotypes.

**Question for practice:**

Examine how prison manuals in various Indian states reinforce colonial stereotypes and discriminatory practices against certain communities.

**Importance of high-performance buildings (HPBs)**

**Source:** The post importance of high-performance buildings (HPBs) has been created, based on the article "How high-performance buildings are the next step towards a sustainable future" published in "The Hindu" on 8th October is 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper3- Infrastructures

**Context:** The article discusses the importance of high-performance buildings (HPBs) in reducing energy consumption and carbon emissions. HPBs use advanced technologies and sustainable design to improve efficiency and occupant comfort. They offer environmental benefits and help cities adapt to rapid urbanization and climate challenges.

**Why are buildings important for sustainability?**

1. Buildings contribute significantly to global emissions, especially in fast-growing cities.
2. **Globally**, buildings account for **nearly 40% of total energy consumption** during their lifespan. They contribute **about 28% of energy-related carbon emissions**.
3. **In India**, buildings account for **more than 30% of national energy use and 20% of carbon emissions**, according to the Bureau of Energy Efficiency.
4. As urbanization increases, the demand for new buildings also rises, leading to higher emissions.

**What are high-performance buildings (HPBs)?**

1. High-performance buildings (HPBs) build upon the concept of green buildings, which focus on reducing environmental impact through energy efficiency, water conservation, and sustainable materials.
2. Green buildings are a foundational step, often certified through programs that assess design and sustainability outcomes.

3. HPBs take these ideas further by achieving peak efficiency in energy, water use, and occupant comfort, using advanced technologies like energy-efficient HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning) systems, smart lighting controls, and real-time monitoring through building management systems (BMS).

4. Examples of HPBs include Unnati in Greater Noida, which uses a solar-optimized façade, and Indira Paryavaran Bhawan in New Delhi, with its advanced HVAC system.

### What is the difference between HPBs and green buildings?

**1. Scope and Focus:** Green buildings focus on basic sustainability goals like energy efficiency, water conservation, and materials sourcing, while HPBs aim for peak efficiency in all areas, including energy, water, and occupant comfort.

**2. Technology and Monitoring:** HPBs use advanced technologies such as energy-efficient HVAC systems, smart lighting, and real-time performance tracking through building management systems (BMS), as seen in Infosys' Bengaluru campus. Green buildings are often assessed through certification programs that ensure sustainability goals are met.

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

### What are the benefits of HPBs?

1. HPBs provide both environmental and operational benefits.
2. They reduce energy demand, extend the lifespan of building systems, and lower maintenance costs.
3. HPBs also improve indoor air quality, natural lighting, and occupant comfort. Infosys campuses in Bengaluru and Hyderabad use building management systems (BMS) to monitor performance and make changes.
4. HPBs also **increase property value and create intelligent ecosystems with automation and AI.**

### How can HPBs help India's cities?

1. India's urban population will reach 600 million by 2030, increasing building demand. Without action, the building sector's carbon footprint will rise drastically. HPBs reduce energy use and emissions, addressing this urgent challenge.
2. HPBs offer resilience through energy-efficient and adaptive designs.
3. They improve air quality, enhance workplace environments, and reduce resource consumption.
4. Projects like TCS Banyan Park in Mumbai show how HPBs create better spaces with features like green areas and natural lighting.
5. HPBs help cities meet climate goals and manage the challenges of rapid urbanization.

### Question for practice:

Discuss how high-performance buildings (HPBs) contribute to reducing energy consumption and addressing climate challenges in rapidly urbanizing cities.

## Classification of languages problematic in modern India

**Source:** The post classification of languages problematic in modern India has been created, based on the article "New additions to classical languages list: Yet another divide-and-rule strategy" published in "Indian Express" on 8th October is 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper1-Society-Salient features of Indian Society, Diversity of India.

**Context:** The article discusses how British colonial policies divided Indian society, leading to modern divisions based on language, religion, and caste. It critiques the recent decision by the Union Cabinet to classify Marathi, Pali, Prakrit, Assamese, and Bengali as "classical" languages, arguing this fosters inequality and neglects many languages, undermining the value of all linguistic identities.

For detailed information on **Classical Language Status Granted to Five New Languages** [read this article here](#)

### What is meant by "classical language"?

1. Languages like Chinese, Sanskrit, Arabic, Greek, and Latin are universally accepted as classical due to their ancient literary and philosophical contributions.
2. Classical languages often provide root words or affixes to modern languages; for example, Latin "intelligentia" in "artificial intelligence."
3. The term "classical" became common in the 16th century, particularly in Europe, to distinguish refined languages from so-called "barbaric" or vernacular ones.
4. The Union Cabinet extended the "classical language" tag to Marathi, Pali, Prakrit, Assamese, and Bengali. Tamil, Sanskrit, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, and Odia already enjoy this status.
5. In India, there are over 1,000 "mother tongues," around 121 "languages," 22 "scheduled languages" in the 8th Schedule of the Indian Constitution, and 11 "classical languages."
6. Pali and Prakrit(s) are considered classical but are not part of the 8th Schedule, unlike some scheduled languages.

### Why is the classification of languages problematic in modern India?

1. **Promotes Division:** The classification of languages as "classical" creates divisions, similar to the British "divide and rule" policy.
2. The focus on a few "classical" languages **risks neglecting over a thousand other mother tongues**, as evidenced by the Census data from 2011, where many languages were not recognized officially. India's language pyramid has 1,369 accepted "mother tongues" (2011 Census), with only 121 considered "languages."
3. Such classifications, while bolstering majoritarian pride, neglect thousands of mother tongues and undermine linguistic diversity, **leading to the extinction of many languages.**

### Way forward



Every language has its unique worldview and deserves equal respect and preservation efforts from both speakers and the state to maintain cultural diversity and linguistic heritage.

**Question for practice:**

Examine how the classification of languages as "classical" in India promotes division and neglects the preservation of linguistic diversity.

**India's stance on Palestine has shifted**

**Source:** The post India's stance on Palestine has shifted has been created, based on the article "**From solidarity to pseud, India's shift on Palestine**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 9th October is 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 how India's stance on Palestine has shifted. It explains that India's focus has moved from supporting values like anti-colonialism to prioritizing economic and strategic interests, particularly aligning with Israel due to domestic and global factors.

For detailed information on **India's stand on the Israel-Palestine issue** [read this article here](#)

**How has India's stance on Palestine changed?**

**1. Historical Context:** Traditionally, India supported Palestine as part of its anti-colonial values. This support has waned post-Cold War, moving towards a more strategic partnership with Israel.

**2. Influence of Hindutva:** The rise of Hindutva has influenced India's foreign policy. The BJP and Sangh Parivar view Israel as a natural ally, particularly against perceived threats from "Islamic terror." This has led to closer ties with Israel and the marginalization of the Palestinian cause. Public support for Palestine is often portrayed negatively, and pro-Palestinian protests are sometimes treated as security threats. For example, leaders like Asaduddin Owaisi are vilified for supporting Palestine.

**3. Economic Interests:** Bilateral trade between India and Israel reached over \$10 billion in 2022-23, focusing on defence, agriculture, and technology. This reflects a move from values-based diplomacy to practical economic cooperation.

**4. Global Power Aspirations:** India's aspiration to become a global power plays a role in its shifting policies. Aligning with the U.S., Israel's key ally, and focusing on strategic autonomy and multialignment are part of this ambition. This has led to a muted response from India regarding the conflict in Gaza, with the government focusing on strengthening ties with Israel.

**5. Dehyphenation Policy:** India separates its relations with Israel and Palestine, deepening ties with Israel while marginalizing Palestine. This approach reflects a transactional shift.

For detailed information on **India's de-hyphenation policy on Israel and Palestine** [read this article here](#)

**Is India Abandoning Its Past Ideals?**

India's past support for Palestine, rooted in anti-colonialism and non-alignment, has been replaced by a focus on power politics. Though the government still supports a two-state solution, the emphasis is on strengthening ties with Israel and advancing its own economic and strategic interests.

**Question for practice:**

Examine how India's foreign policy has shifted from supporting anti-colonial values to prioritizing economic and strategic interests, particularly in its relations with Israel and Palestine.

**USCIRF (United States Commission on International Religious Freedom)**

**Source:** The post USCIRF (United States Commission on International Religious Freedom) has been created, based on the article “**What does USCIRF report say about India?**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 9th October is 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 the USCIRF's October 2024 report on India, which claims religious freedom in India is worsening. The Indian government rejected the report, calling it biased. USCIRF's recommendations are not binding but can influence U.S. foreign policy.

**What is USCIRF?**

1. The USCIRF (United States Commission on International Religious Freedom) is a U.S. government agency created in 1998 under the International Religious Freedom Act.
2. It monitors religious freedom violations worldwide, excluding the U.S., based on international human rights standards, especially Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
3. USCIRF is independent and different from the U.S. State Department's Office of International Religious Freedom (IRF).
4. USCIRF researches and monitors religious freedom conditions globally through travel, meetings, and studies.
5. It publishes reports listing countries for possible designation as a "Country of Particular Concern" (CPC) if there are severe violations.
6. Countries not meeting this threshold but still violating religious freedom are added to the Special Watch List (SWL).

**What did the 2024 USCIRF report say about India?**

The 2024 USCIRF report highlighted the following concerns about India:

- Religious freedom has worsened throughout 2024, with minorities being killed and lynched by vigilante groups.

## 9 PM Compilation October 2024

- Religious leaders have been arbitrarily arrested.
- Places of worship have been demolished.
- Laws such as the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, anti-conversion laws, and cow slaughter laws are discriminatory toward minorities.
- Indian officials have used hateful rhetoric, inciting violence and spreading false narratives about religious minorities.
- The report designated India as a "Country of Particular Concern" (CPC) for its religious freedom violations.

### Is USCIRF considered biased?

1. The USCIRF has been accused of bias by India, which rejected its 2024 report as "agenda-driven."
2. The report cited examples of lynchings, arrests of religious leaders, and destruction of worship places in India, all backed by public sources.
3. India's Ministry of External Affairs dismissed the USCIRF as politically motivated.
4. Despite the USCIRF's claims being based on research and citations, its timing raised concerns about bias.
5. USCIRF is often viewed by countries as a U.S. foreign policy tool, which may influence these accusations of bias.

### Question for practice:

Discuss the concerns raised by the 2024 USCIRF report about religious freedom in India and how the Indian government responded to the report.

## The Global Digital Compact (GDC)

**Source:** The post the Global Digital Compact (GDC) has been created, based on the article "**Global Digital Compact: advancing digital innovation in a sustainable fashion**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 9th October is 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 explains the Global Digital Compact (GDC), a non-binding agreement by UN members to harness digital technologies for global good. It highlights goals like reducing the digital divide, regulating AI, and promoting sustainable development, while addressing various challenges.

### What is the Global Digital Compact (GDC)?

1. The Global Digital Compact (GDC) is a diplomatic instrument adopted by UN member countries at the '**Summit of the Future.**' It is **not a binding law** but a set of shared goals.
2. The GDC focuses on regulating digital technologies for the common good and ensuring human oversight to advance sustainable development.

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3. The GDC is built on norms such as international law, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the UN 2030 Agenda. It calls for global cooperation in data and digital governance.

4. The GDC includes the establishment of two panels: an '**Independent International Scientific Panel on AI**' and a '**Global Dialogue on AI Governance**' panel.

### What are the benefits of the GDC?

**1. Reduces Digital Divide:** The GDC proposes "digital public goods" like open-source software, open data, and AI models to ensure broader access to the digital economy and help close the digital divide.

**2. Encourages Public-Private Partnerships:** The GDC envisions collaboration between governments and private entities to build shared digital infrastructure that delivers services according to stakeholders' needs.

**3. Advances AI Governance:** By establishing panels for AI governance, the GDC seeks to promote responsible and ethical use of AI with proper human oversight.

**4. Supports Sustainable Development:** The GDC links digital technologies to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by enabling data collection and analysis to measure progress.

**5. Strengthens Global Cooperation:** The GDC emphasizes capacity-building through partnerships, especially in **fostering South-South and North-South collaborations** for developing digital public goods.

### What are the challenges with the GDC?

**1. Limited Openness in Partnerships:** Public-private partnerships may face restrictions due to non-disclosure agreements and intellectual property protection. Openness is often limited to "as open as required."

**2. Ineffective Self-Regulation:** The GDC promotes self-regulation for tech companies, but past experience shows this has failed to protect users effectively.

**3. Data Privacy Concerns:** Increasing data collection for AI without strong personal data protection laws raises privacy risks.

**4. Monopolistic Control:** The GDC proposes giving more power to corporations in data governance but lacks safeguards against monopolistic practices.

**5. Global Cooperation Limits:** Some countries reject "data flow with trust" to protect digital sovereignty.

### What impact can the GDC have?

1. The GDC is not a complete solution but can foster collaboration, especially between developing and developed nations.

2. It can help in creating digital public goods, promoting digital inclusion, and supporting sustainable development goals.

3. If member states take it seriously, the GDC could lead to meaningful outcomes.

**Question for practice:**

Discuss how the Global Digital Compact (GDC) aims to reduce the digital divide and promote sustainable development.

**Differences between the UK's and India's approach to phasing out coal power**

**Source:** The post differences between the UK's and India's approach to phasing out coal power has been created, based on the article “**Sunset for the U.K.’s coal-fired power, lessons for India**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 9th October is 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper3- Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.

**Context:** The article discusses the differences between the UK's and India's approach to phasing out coal power. It highlights the UK's long history of reducing coal use, driven by environmental, economic, and geopolitical factors, and contrasts this with India's current reliance on coal, which is expected to peak around 2030-35. The article suggests that India can learn from the UK's transition but must adapt strategies to its own circumstances, considering the social and economic impacts on its coal-dependent regions.

For detailed information on **Phasing Out Coal in India** read [Article 1](#), [Article 2](#)

**What led to Britain's coal phase-out?**

1. Britain began moving away from coal long before its 2015 pledge at the Paris Agreement.
2. The transition started in the 1950s due to severe pollution events like the Great Smog of 1952, which led to the Clean Air Act of 1956.
3. The discovery of natural gas in the North Sea in 1965 and economic pressures from costly coal imports during the Cold War also accelerated this shift.
4. This process involved closing about 20 mines in the 1980s, which resulted in economic hardship for many communities.

**How does India's coal situation compare to the UK?**

- 1. Historical Development:** India's coal history began in 1774 with the Raniganj coalfield, while the UK started with the world's first public coal-fired power plant in 1882.
- 2. Current Reliance on Coal:** India relies on coal for 70% of its energy, while the UK has transitioned to alternatives like natural gas and renewables since the 1960s. India's coal consumption is expected to peak between 2030-35, around 80 years after Britain.
- 3. Energy Production:** India has over 350 operational coal mines, with 120 new ones planned, while Britain phased out most of its coal plants by 2025.
- 4. Employment:** India's coal sector employs over a million people. In contrast, coal jobs in the UK peaked in the early 20th century, employing 1.2 million miners.

**5. Per Capita Energy Use:** Britain's per capita energy consumption in 2022 was three times that of India.

**What can India learn from the UK's experience?**

**1. Holistic Transition:** The UK focused on retraining coal sector workers in similar skill-based industries, like engineering and heavy machinery. India could apply this approach, given its thermal power sector employs over 400,000 people.

**2. Clear Timelines:** The UK set a clear goal to phase out coal by 2025. India, with 70% of energy from coal and a peak expected by 2030-35, can benefit from setting fixed plant decommissioning dates.

**3. Regional Redevelopment:** The UK redeveloped coal-dependent regions by promoting new industries like offshore wind farms near Yorkshire. India, whose coal regions are some of the poorest, could implement regional development projects to ease economic transition.

**4. Learning from the Past:** The UK avoided the mistakes of the 1980s by ensuring support for miners. India can avoid similar pitfalls by providing retraining and financial support to miners transitioning from coal.

**Conclusion**

While Britain has largely completed its transition away from coal, India is at a different stage, with unique challenges and opportunities. Learning from the UK's approach, India can plan a phased, just transition that supports its workforce and regional economies.

**Question for practice:**

Evaluate how India can adapt the UK's approach to phasing out coal to address its own economic and social challenges.

**Challenges faced by India's textile and apparel industry**

**Source:** The post challenges faced by India's textile and apparel industry has been created, based on the article "**Why is the textile industry struggling to perform better?**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 9th October is 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper3- Economy- Growth and Development

**Context:** The article discusses challenges faced by India's textile and apparel industry, including export slumps, rising raw material costs, and shifts in consumer preferences. It highlights the need for investments, competitive pricing, and technological improvements to achieve future growth.

For detailed information on **Challenges faced by India's textile and apparel industry** read [Article 1](#), [Article 2](#)

**What is the current state of India's textile and apparel industry?**

1. The Indian textile and apparel sector aims for a \$350 billion business by 2030, creating 3.5 crore jobs.

2. The industry size was \$153 billion in 2021, with \$110 billion from domestic business.

3. India ranked third in textile exports globally in FY22, with a 5.4% share, exporting \$43.4 billion.
4. The sector contributed 2.3% to GDP in FY21 and 10.6% to manufacturing Gross Value Added (GVA) in FY23.

#### What challenges is the industry facing?

- 1. Export Decline Due to Geopolitical Tensions:** Export units were hit by geopolitical tensions and reduced demand in key markets, causing significant drops in business, particularly in FY23 and FY24. For example, Tiruppur saw a 40% decline in business.
- 2. High Raw Material Costs:** High prices for cotton and Man Made Fibres (MMF), combined with a 10% import duty on cotton, made Indian products less competitive internationally.
- 3. Disrupted MMF Supply:** Quality control orders on MMF have disrupted raw material availability, leading to price instability and impacting the industry's ability to meet demand.
- 4. Changing Market Dynamics:** The rise of e-commerce and sustainability demands from international brands, along with increased preference for comfort wear, are reshaping the traditional business landscape.

#### What does the industry need to move forward?

- 1. Investment:** The industry requires \$100 billion by 2030 to boost production capacities and meet the \$350 billion business target.
- 2. Raw Material Availability:** Removing the 10% import duty on cotton during off-season months (April to October) is crucial for competitive pricing.
- 3. Technology & Skilling:** The sector must adopt technology and train its workforce to improve productivity and reduce costs, with workers earning ₹550 per day.

#### Question for practice:

Examine how geopolitical tensions, rising raw material costs, and changing market dynamics have impacted India's textile and apparel industry in recent years.

### Causes of court delays in India

**Source:** The post causes of court delays in India has been created, based on the article “**The gruelling course of litigation in India**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 11th October is 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper2-Structure, Organization and Functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary

**Context:** The article discusses court delays in India, highlighted by President Droupadi Murmu. It explains that these delays discourage people from seeking justice. The judiciary needs better case management, and all participants should be incentivized to improve efficiency and reduce delays in the legal process.

For detailed information on **Issue of long judicial delays in India** [read this article here](#)

### What are the causes of court delays?

- 1. Fear of Lengthy Litigation:** People hesitate to approach courts due to long, complicated processes, leading to "black coat syndrome," similar to white coat hypertension.
- 2. Poor Case Management:** Case Flow Management Rules were introduced, but their inconsistent implementation has limited impact on streamlining court schedules.
- 3. Judicial Pressures:** District court judges face pressure from higher courts to meet disposal targets, leading to prioritization of specific cases and disruption of others.
- 4. Units System:** Judges prioritize simpler cases to accumulate points, neglecting complex cases that require substantial judicial intervention, contributing to further delays.
- 5. Lawyers' Strategic Decisions:** Lawyers handle multiple cases, often seeking adjournments based on strategic factors, adding to scheduling issues.
- 6. Stay Orders:** Obtaining a stay is seen as a victory in civil cases, reducing the urgency for case resolution, thus increasing the backlog.
- 7. Witness Scheduling Issues:** Unpredictable court schedules discourage witnesses from appearing, causing trial delays.

### What reforms are needed?

1. A holistic approach is necessary to address court scheduling.
2. Judges should be evaluated on managing complex cases, not just the number of cases disposed.
3. Lawyers need better scheduling systems to reduce adjournments. Litigants should be discouraged from using delay tactics through stay orders.
4. Witnesses should receive more predictable schedules and adequate compensation.
5. Technological solutions and data-driven approaches can improve case management.

### Question for practice:

Examine the causes of long judicial delays in India and the necessary reforms to address these delays.

### **Maldives President's visit to India was aimed at improving relations**

**Source:** The post the Maldives President's visit to India was aimed at improving relations has been created, based on the article "**First responder: India and Maldives let subtle diplomacy surpass muscular posturing**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 11th October is 2024



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

**Context:** The article discusses Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu's first visit to India, aiming to improve relations after tensions from his "India Out" campaign. India has supported the Maldives financially, leading to renewed cooperation on tourism and infrastructure projects, highlighting their historic relationship.

For detailed information on **India-Maldives Relations** read [Article 1](#), [Article 2](#)

### **What caused tensions between India and the Maldives?**

#### **A. Maldives:**

1. President Mohamed Muizzu's election campaign was built on the opposition's "India Out" message, which contributed to tensions with India.
2. Maldivian ministers criticized Prime Minister Modi, which led to a "Boycott Maldives" campaign in India.
3. President Muizzu visited Turkey, China, and the UAE before India, breaking a tradition that leaders of friendly countries observe by visiting India first, adding to the strain.

#### **B. India:**

1. The "Boycott Maldives" campaign in India arose after criticism of Modi by Maldivian ministers.
2. India's concerns were heightened by Maldives' growing relationship with China, especially in defense and economic areas.

### **What steps were taken to smoothen relations?**

#### **A. Steps Taken by India to Smoothen Relations**

1. India replaced the troops stationed in the Maldives since 2012 with technical personnel for aircraft maintenance, meeting President Muizzu's request.
2. India extended financial support, including \$100 million in SBI subscriptions of Maldivian T-bills, helping the Maldives avoid defaulting on debt.
3. India provided \$400 million in support and facilitated a ₹3,000 crore currency swap arrangement to strengthen Male's currency reserves.
4. India and Maldives discussed infrastructure projects, a Free Trade Agreement, and a maritime security partnership.

#### **B. Steps Taken by the Maldives to Smoothen Relations**

1. President Muizzu softened his earlier stance and dismissed ministers critical of Prime Minister Modi.
2. He advocated for Indian tourists to return and invited more Indian investments, signaling cooperation in tourism and employment sectors.

**Question for practice:**

Examine the factors that contributed to the tensions between India and the Maldives and the steps both countries took to improve their relations.

**Strategies to escape the middle-income trap**

**Source:** The post strategies to escape the middle-income trap has been created, based on the article “**Can India escape middle-income trap?**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 11th October is 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper3- Indian Economy and issues relating to growth.

**Context:** The article explains how some countries escaped the middle-income trap by using state intervention, especially in South Korea and Chile. It emphasizes the need for strong state policies in India while ensuring democracy and addressing economic challenges, including wage stagnation and manufacturing decline.

For detailed information on **Middle-Income Trap** [read this article here](#)

**What is the middle-income trap?**

1. The middle-income trap refers to economies experiencing slower growth as incomes rise.
2. The World Bank estimates stagnation when economies reach 11% of U.S. per capita income.
3. Over the past 34 years, only 34 middle-income economies have transitioned to high-income levels.
4. Middle-income economies have per capita incomes between \$1,136 and \$13,845.
5. Countries like South Korea and Chile broke the trap through state intervention.

**What are the strategies to escape the middle-income trap?**

- 1. 3i Approach:** Focus on investment, infusion of global technology, and innovation. Countries that transitioned to high-income status applied these principles effectively.
- 2. State Intervention:** South Korea's government intervened heavily, directing private firms and supporting successful businesses with access to technology. Poorly performing firms were allowed to fail, promoting efficiency.
- 3. Export-driven Growth:** South Korea relied on manufacturing exports, boosting its economy. Although this strategy is less feasible today due to slowing global export growth, it remains a key lesson.
- 4. Targeted Support:** Chile's government provided targeted support for its natural resource sectors, like the salmon industry, to foster economic growth.

For detailed information on **Avoiding the Middle-Income Trap** [read this article here](#)

**What are the economic challenges facing India?**

- 1. Wage stagnation:** While India's real GDP growth is estimated at 7%, wages have not kept pace. Nominal wages for regular workers grew by about 5% and for casual workers by 7%. With inflation around 5%, real wage growth remains minimal, limiting consumption demand.
- 2. Manufacturing stagnation:** The manufacturing sector has not grown, and post-pandemic, employment has shifted back to agriculture and low-productivity sectors, reversing structural transformation.
- 3. Power of billionaires:** India's wealthy business elites are seen as close to the state, but they have not been investing at high levels, slowing growth.
- 4. Global export challenges:** Export opportunities are limited due to global protectionism and slower demand in developed economies, which affects India's export-led growth prospects.
- 5. Premature deindustrialization:** Manufacturing has lost its role as a growth engine, and it remains uncertain if the service sector can effectively replace it.

#### What should be done by India to escape the middle-income trap?

- 1. Adopt the "3i" approach:** India must focus on **investment, infusion of global technologies, and innovation**. These strategies were key to South Korea's success, where businesses innovated and adopted new technologies to drive growth.
- 2. Adapt to global shifts:** South Korea's model of manufacturing exports may not be viable for India today, as global export growth has slowed. India needs to recognize these changes and find new approaches to growth while addressing the challenges in the manufacturing sector.
- 3. Maintain democratic values:** Unlike South Korea and Chile's non-democratic regimes, which suppressed labor movements, India must uphold its democratic principles. The state should intervene to promote growth but also ensure fairness, protect workers' rights, and uphold the democratic ethos.

#### Question for practice:

Examine the economic challenges India faces in escaping the middle-income trap, and what steps the country should take to overcome them.

### Concerns about the Indian economy amid global uncertainties

**Source:** The post concerns about the Indian economy amid global uncertainties has been created, based on the article "**Two big risks and two challenges for India**" published in "**Business Standards**" on 11th October 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper3-Economy-growth and development

**Context:** The article discusses concerns about the Indian economy amid global uncertainties. It highlights rising oil prices, geopolitical tensions, and challenges in foreign investment. It notes India's efforts to attract FDI but warns of declining inflows and overvalued stocks affecting foreign institutional investments.

#### What is the outlook for India's economic growth?

The Indian economy is expected to meet the Economic Survey's growth forecast of 6.5-7% for FY25. However, global events could disrupt this forecast, especially with rising oil prices and geopolitical risks.

### What are the major concerns about the global economy?

- 1. Rising Oil Prices:** Brent crude oil is around \$80 per barrel, a 16% increase from September's low. A rise beyond \$100 would be worrisome for global economic stability.
- 2. Geopolitical Tensions:** The Ukraine war saw oil prices peak at \$120 in June 2022, but "managed escalation" has helped maintain prices below \$80 since July 2022. The Israel-Iran conflict, if escalated, poses a risk to the global economy.
- 3. Potential Trump Policies:** A Trump victory could lead to disruptive policies like tax cuts, 60% tariffs on Chinese goods, and 20% tariffs on all imports, which may slow U.S. growth and cause global economic instability.

### What is Managed Escalation?

- "Managed escalation" is a strategy where conflict is gradually intensified without causing direct large-scale war.
- NATO applied it in Ukraine, helping Ukraine fight Russia while avoiding NATO's direct involvement.
- Despite the Ukraine war, oil prices stayed below \$100 per barrel after June 2022, showing the strategy's effectiveness.
- This doctrine has also been applied in Israel's conflict with Hezbollah and Iran, limiting casualties.
- The risk remains that miscalculations or deliberate actions could escalate conflicts beyond control, especially with recent Israeli successes against Hezbollah.

### What are the economic challenges which is specific to India?

- 1. Declining FDI Inflows:** Net FDI fell by \$28 billion in 2023-24 compared to 2021-22. Gross inflows dropped from \$85 billion in 2021-22 to \$71 billion in 2023-24, raising concerns about India's investment appeal.
- 2. Falling FII Investments:** FIIs invested \$44 billion in 2023-24, but investments dropped to \$6.3 billion in the April-July period of FY25, partly due to overvalued Indian stocks and a shift to Chinese markets with lower valuations.

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

### Conclusion

India's economic stability is threatened by external factors like geopolitical risks, protectionism, and instability in Western banking, despite the country's internal economic management efforts.

### Question for practice:

Discuss how global uncertainties, such as rising oil prices and geopolitical tensions, impact India's economic growth and foreign investment landscape.

### Reasons and their impacts for the increasing heatwaves in Indian cities

**Source:** The post reasons and their impacts for the increasing heatwaves in Indian cities has been created, based on the article “A critical message for the urban elite” published in “The Hindu” on 14th October is 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper3- Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation

**Context:** The article discusses how poor urban planning and the urban heat island effect are worsening heatwaves in Indian cities. Technology and privilege insulate the elite, making them ignore these problems, which disproportionately affect marginalized workers, worsening urban inequality.

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

#### What are the reasons for the increasing heatwaves in Indian cities?

**1. Urban Heat Island Effect:** Indian cities, such as Delhi, are experiencing the Urban Heat Island (UHI) effect, where urban regions become significantly warmer than their rural counterparts due to human activities. This effect is intensified by the presence of heat-absorbing materials like concrete, asphalt, and glass. Examples include cities like Delhi experiencing temperatures above 50°C.

For detailed information on **Urban heat island** [read this article here](#)

**2. Poor Urban Planning:** Cities with poor urban planning, such as Gurugram, are notable for their modern glass buildings which, while aesthetically pleasing, trap more heat and contribute to higher local temperatures.

**3. Reduced Green Cover:** The lack of adequate green spaces in urban areas exacerbates the heat retention, adding to the discomfort and increasing temperatures experienced during heatwaves.

#### What are the impacts of the increasing heatwaves in Indian cities?

**1. Increased Mortality:** The official toll counts over 200 lives lost to heatwaves, but the actual number is likely higher, indicating a severe health crisis.

**2. Disproportionate Impact on Marginalized Communities:** Marginalized groups such as delivery workers, auto drivers, and construction workers suffer the most. They work in extreme conditions with inadequate shelter and hydration, directly exposing them to the risks associated with severe heatwaves.

**3. Decreased Outdoor Activity:** The intense heat reduces outdoor activities, impacting livelihoods like those of street vendors whose earnings decline with reduced foot traffic.

#### What needs to be done?

**1. Encourage public engagement:** The privileged, insulated by technology, need to advocate for better public services. For example, flooding in Delhi's elite areas prompted quick government action, showing how pressure from the elite can drive change.

**2. Reduce reliance on technology:** Technology-driven isolation, like app-based deliveries, is reducing outdoor engagement. The elite should step outside this comfort trap and reconnect with public spaces to push for more livable cities.

**Question for practice:**

Examine how poor urban planning and the Urban Heat Island effect are contributing to the worsening of heatwaves in Indian cities, and how these factors disproportionately affect marginalized communities.

### **The Wilmington Declaration's impact on India's relationship with China**

**Source:** The post the Wilmington Declaration's impact on India's relationship with China has been created, based on the article “China, India and New Delhi's Quad dilemma” published in “The Hindu” on 14th October 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 relationship with China amid growing tensions. It highlights India's military preparations along the border and warns against overt alignment with the Quad nations. It suggests India should carefully navigate its stance to avoid provoking China while managing its strategic partnerships.

#### **What was the significance of the Wilmington Declaration?**

The Wilmington Declaration, issued during a Quad meeting attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in September 2023, signaled a shift towards a security alliance between Australia, India, Japan, and the U.S. Though it did not name China directly, the Declaration's intent was clear — to contain China's influence across the Indo-Pacific region.

For detailed information on **Fourth Quad summit** [read this article here](#)

#### **How are India-China relations currently?**

**1. Deteriorating relations:** India-China relations are deteriorating, with tensions along the northern borders, particularly in Ladakh.

**2. Galwan region stalemate:** The Galwan region remains in a stalemate despite diplomatic efforts. No breakthrough has been achieved in the Depsang Plains and Demchok.

**3. Increased vigilance and deployment of forces:** India announced that it will maintain, if not increase, its vigilance in the border areas by inducting more forces despite the onset of winter.

**4. New weapons and artillery deployment:** "India is inducting new long-range firearms and heavy artillery, and has begun to deploy howitzers, missiles, rocket systems and 'loitering munitions'.

**5. Blocked patrolling points:** The number of 'friction points' has increased, with Indian forces unable to access several 'patrolling points' that they were previously accustomed to.

**6. China's larger defense budget:** China's defense budget, far larger than India's, allows it to stay confident in its ability to handle Indian military moves.

**7. China's concern over India's Quad membership:** China's growing concerns focus more on India's association with the Quad, which it sees as a U.S.-sponsored effort to contain China.

**8. China's measured response:** China appears unfazed by India's moves" and "China is unlikely to take such a situation lightly.

### **Why should India be cautious in its Quad relations?**

China views the Quad alliance as a direct threat. Xi Jinping's China sees India's growing alignment with the West, especially the U.S., as provocative. China's past statements, including a warning against external forces, underline this. India must be careful not to escalate tensions by aligning too openly with the West.

### **What is China's real threat perception?**

1. China differentiates between peripheral and real threats. Border issues with India in Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh are not seen as existential threats. However, threats to its eastern seaboard and Pacific claims are taken more seriously.

2. India's strategic experts understand this, but China may interpret India's changing stance as growing closeness with the West.

### **How should India navigate its relations with China and the Quad?**

1. India must avoid sending signals that it is fully aligned with U.S. efforts to contain China.

2. Although India participates in the Quad, it does not aim to checkmate China's ambitions.

3. India should focus on maintaining a balanced position, avoiding confrontational policies, and ensuring that China understands India's independent stance.

### **Question for practice:**

Evaluate how India's involvement with the Quad alliance impacts its relations with China amidst growing border tensions.

### **David Baker, Demis Hassabis and John M. Jumper contribution to protein research**

Source: The post David Baker, Demis Hassabis and John M. Jumper contribution to protein research has been created, based on the article "**Biology transformed: Nobel for determining protein structure recognises a big advance**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 14th October 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper- Miscellaneous

**Context:** The article discusses the Nobel Prize in Chemistry awarded to David Baker, Demis Hassabis, and John M. Jumper. They advanced protein research by creating new proteins and predicting complex protein structures using AI, making significant progress in understanding protein functions and applications.

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

### **How did David Baker contribute to protein research?**

David Baker developed **computer software called Rosetta**. This software creates new proteins that do not exist naturally. It determines the amino acid sequence for these proteins by comparing fragments of known proteins. Baker made Rosetta's code publicly available for researchers.

### **How did Demis Hassabis and John M. Jumper contribute to protein research?**

1. Demis Hassabis and John M. Jumper developed the AI model AlphaFold, solving a 50-year-old problem in protein structure prediction.

2. AlphaFold predicts the 3D structure of proteins, a task that used to take years of experiments.

3. By 2020, AlphaFold's accuracy was comparable to X-ray crystallography, a widely trusted method.

4. AlphaFold predicted structures for almost all 200 million proteins from nearly a million species.

5. Since 2021, the model's code has been publicly available, and over two million people from 190 countries have used it.

### **Why is protein structure important?**

Protein structure is crucial to understanding protein function. With 20,000 proteins in humans, predicting their structures was difficult. **AlphaFold and Rosetta have made this process much faster and more accurate, helping researchers worldwide.**

### **Question for practice:**

Discuss how the contributions of David Baker, Demis Hassabis, and John M. Jumper to protein research have advanced the field of biochemistry.

## **Supreme Court decide about the sub-categorization of Scheduled Castes**

**Source:** The post **Supreme Court decide about the sub-categorization of Scheduled Castes** has been created, based on the article "**Internal inequalities must stay at the heart of sub-quota conversation**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 14th October is 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper2-Social Justice

**Context:** The article discusses the Supreme Court's ruling on the constitutional validity of sub-categorizing Scheduled Castes. It highlights the legal reasoning behind the decision, emphasizing the need for fair representation and addressing internal inequalities among the Scheduled Castes.



For detailed information on **SC verdict allowing for Sub-Classification of SCs and STs** [read this article here](#)

### **What did the Supreme Court decide about the sub-categorization of Scheduled Castes?**

1. The Supreme Court upheld the constitutional validity of sub-categorizing Scheduled Castes in its October 4 decision, rejecting review petitions against its August 1 judgment.
2. The 6-1 decision by a seven-judge bench overturned the 2004 *E V Chinnaiah vs. State of Andhra Pradesh* ruling, which declared sub-categorization unconstitutional.

### **What is the main legal argument in the judgment?**

1. Justices D Y Chandrachud and Manoj Mishra argued that Article 341, which lists the Scheduled Castes, doesn't create new castes but selects existing ones for inclusion.
2. This "deemed fiction" allows Parliament, not the executive, to alter the list.
3. However, the government can address internal inequalities within the listed castes without changing the composition of the Schedule.

### **What are the four key principles of the judgment?**

#### **1. Sub-categorization promotes substantive equality:**

Like reservation itself, sub-categorization ensures fair representation among the Scheduled Castes (SCs) by addressing internal inequalities.

#### **2. Efficiency in administration fosters inclusion:**

Administrative efficiency must promote equality, countering past restrictions on reservations.

#### **3. Sub-categorization must not exclude advanced SCs:**

It cannot result in excluding socially and educationally advanced castes within the SCs, unlike the 2022 EWS verdict.

#### **4. Empirical evidence is necessary:**

Sub-categorization schemes must present data on material inequalities, such as unequal representation in government services, and acknowledge ongoing discrimination within SCs since their 1936 classification.

### **What challenges remain for sub-categorization?**

- 1. Development of Criteria:** Transparent, evidence-based criteria for sub-categorization must be developed. These criteria need to be specific to the context of each Scheduled Caste group to ensure fairness.
- 2. Evidence Requirement:** Sub-categorization schemes must provide empirical evidence of material inequalities within the Scheduled Castes.

### **What is the broader significance of this judgment?**

1. The judgment highlights the need for justice within the Scheduled Castes. As B.R. Ambedkar noted, some communities are more vulnerable within larger minority groups.

2. Sub-categorization ensures fair distribution of resources and rights, promoting unity based on justice.

**Question for practice:**

Evaluate how the Supreme Court's decision on sub-categorizing Scheduled Castes aims to promote substantive equality within the community.

**Protest for the right to form a trade union and to collectively bargain.**

**Source:** The post Protest for the right to form a trade union and to collectively bargain has been created, based on the article “**On Samsung workers’ right to unionise**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 15th October 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper2-Governance-Development processes and the development industry —the role of NGOs, SHGs, various groups and associations, donors, charities, institutional and other stakeholders.

**Context:** The article discusses Samsung India workers in Tamil Nadu protesting for their right to form a trade union and collectively bargain. The government formed a "workmen committee" but used police force against workers. Legal experts criticize this approach.

**Why are Samsung India workers protesting?**

Workers at Samsung India's Sriperumbudur plant in Tamil Nadu are protesting for their fundamental right to form a trade union and collectively bargain for better working conditions. They want to negotiate with the company on equal terms through the Samsung India Workers Union (SIWU).

**What was the government's response?**

1. The Tamil Nadu government formed a 'workmen committee' to address the issue.
2. However, it used police force against the protesting workers, which led to accusations of bias towards Samsung.
3. Legal experts argue that the trade union should have been registered before forming the committee.

**What does the law say about forming a union?**

1. The **Trade Unions Act, 1926** gives workers the legal right to form unions to represent their interests.
2. A minimum of **seven members** can apply to register a union under **Section 4** of the Act.
3. **Section 6** mandates that the Registrar should ensure the union's rules conform to the Act.
4. The **Supreme Court** in **B.R. Singh vs Union of India (1989)** recognized union formation as a **fundamental right** under **Article 19(1)(c)** of the Constitution.
5. Legal restrictions under **Article 19(4)** can be imposed only for reasons like public order and morality.

For detailed information on **challenges before trade unions** read this article here

## What is collective bargaining and why is it important?

### A. Collective bargaining :

1. It refers to negotiations between employees and employers to determine working conditions and terms of employment.
2. **Legal Basis:** Recognised by the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 and supported by the International Labour Organization (ILO) Collective Bargaining Convention of 1981.

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

### B. It's Important:

1. **Empowerment:** It allows workers to negotiate on equal terms with employers, as seen in the Samsung India Workers Union (SIWU) protest in Tamil Nadu.
2. **Social Justice:** The Supreme Court of India and the U.S. courts have acknowledged its role in ensuring fair working conditions. (e.g., the Karnal Leather Karmchari vs Liberty Footwear case).
3. **Legal Recognition:** The refusal to bargain is considered an 'unfair labour practice' under both India's 1947 Act and the U.S. Wagner Act.

## What is the role of the 'workmen committee'?

A 'workmen committee' should consist of equal representation from both workers and employers. According to the Industrial Disputes Act, the workers' representatives must be chosen in consultation with their trade union. In this case, legal experts argue that SIWU should have been registered before forming the committee.

## Why is Samsung opposing the use of its name in the union?

1. Samsung objected to the inclusion of its name in SIWU, claiming it violated the Trademarks Act, 1999.
2. However, trade unions are not business entities, and legal experts argue that this does not infringe on trademark laws.
3. The use of Samsung's name is for identification purposes, not for business.

### Question for practice:

Examine the legal and ethical challenges faced by Samsung India workers in their attempt to form a trade union and collectively bargain, as outlined in the article.

## **The need for comprehensive measures to protect children from online sexual abuse**

**Source:** The post the need for comprehensive measures to protect children from online sexual abuse has been created, based on the article "A blueprint for safeguarding children" published in "The Hindu" on 15th October 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 discusses the Supreme Court of India's historic judgment on online child sexual abuse. It expands the definition of crime and mandates strict actions against offenders and social media platforms, aiming to protect children and prevent exploitation globally.

For detailed information on **Supreme Court rule about accessing child sexual material** [read this article here](#)

### What was the Supreme Court's Historic Judgment?

- 1. Correction of Madras High Court Ruling:** In January 2024, the Madras High Court ruled that watching or downloading child pornography was not a crime. The Supreme Court reversed this decision.
- 2. Expanded Definition:** The Supreme Court expanded the crime's scope by making the downloading and storing of Child Sexual Exploitative and Abuse Material (CSEAM) an offense.
- 3. Mandate for Social Media Platforms:** The judgment mandated strict accountability for social media intermediaries to report CSEAM to law enforcement.
- 4. Terminology Shift:** It reframed "child pornography" as CSEAM, marking it as a serious crime, not adult entertainment.

For detailed information on **Supreme Court's Verdict on Child Sexual Exploitative and Abuse Material (CSEAM)** [read this article here](#)

### How does CSEAM affect children and families?

CSEAM keeps child abuse images online forever. These images revictimize children and their families, causing ongoing harm. Many children are unaware that their images are being used. This makes it hard to stop their exploitation.

### What should be done?

#### A. Legal Measures:

- 1. Define Cybercrime:** Indian laws should clearly define cybercrime and include CSEAM as an organized crime.
- 2. Treat AI-generated material as real:** AI-generated child sexual abuse material must be treated as equivalent to real child abuse.
- 3. Mandate social media reporting:** Platforms should report CSEAM to law enforcement in real-time, as ordered by the Supreme Court.

#### B. Technical Measures:

**1. Create forensic labs:** India should establish domestic forensic labs with advanced technology to handle increased reporting of CSEAM. Currently, international agencies like Interpol flag Indian IP addresses, delaying responses.

**2. National Database of Offenders:** Individuals prosecuted for CSEAM should be entered into a national database and barred from jobs involving children.

**C. Global Measures:**

**1. International convention:** Since CSEAM is a global crime, it needs a global solution. The UN has not addressed emerging crimes like these. An international convention is needed, and financial institutions must help track the money supporting child exploitation networks.

**2. Global database:** Establish an international sex offenders' database to improve law enforcement cooperation globally.

**Question for practice:**

Discuss the measures needed to address the issue of Child Sexual Exploitative and Abuse Material (CSEAM).

**Controversy over a research paper on Covaxin's side effects**

**Source:** The post controversy over a research paper on Covaxin's side effects has been created, based on the article "A study on side-effects of Covaxin and three lessons in public trust and research" published in "Indian Express" on 15th October is 2024

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

**Context:** The article discusses a controversy over a research paper on Covaxin's side effects. The study's flawed methodology and unsupported conclusions led to criticism from the ICMR and legal action by Bharat Biotech. It highlights concerns about research independence and editorial responsibility.

**What is the controversy about the BHU research paper?**

1. The BHU research paper analyzed Covaxin's long-term safety, published in *Drug Safety* in May 2024.
2. **Small Sample Size:** The study had a highly localized sample of 926 participants, which is statistically insignificant compared to millions vaccinated across India.
3. **Misinterpretation of Data:** The study's claim that one-third of participants developed AESIs (adverse events of special interest) could lead to public misinterpretation, as this high percentage suggests significant risk without robust evidence to support such a claim. Although the paper didn't claim a direct causal link, its language implied one, raising public concerns.
4. ICMR criticized the study for flawed methodology and improper use of AESIs.
5. Bharat Biotech filed a lawsuit against the authors, claiming it caused alarm and vaccine hesitancy.

### What are the concerns about ICMR's involvement?

- 1. Conflict of Interest:** ICMR co-owns Covaxin's patent with Bharat Biotech, raising concerns about impartiality when criticizing the BHU study.
- 2. Vaccine Development Role:** ICMR's National Institute of Virology provided virus strains for Covaxin, linking it closely to the vaccine's success. Questions about ICMR's impartiality were raised given its financial stakes in Covaxin's success.
- 3. 2021 Concerns Resurfaced:** Earlier questions about ICMR's involvement in Covaxin's development were raised in 2021 but subsided after the vaccine's success. The BHU paper's controversy has reignited these concerns.
- 4. ICMR's Influence:** Its criticism of the BHU study could be seen as protecting Covaxin's reputation rather than encouraging independent research.

### What are the Broader Implications?

- 1. Threat to Independent Research:** If defamation cases against academics become common, as seen with Bharat Biotech's lawsuit, it will discourage research, especially on drugs and vaccines. This could hurt consumers, who depend on unbiased scientific studies for safety information.
- 2. Need for Institutional Screening:** ICMR and universities must see that medical research proposals are screened institutionally to avoid causing public mistrust or impacting the delivery of essential public health services, including vaccination.
- 3. Practical Research Methodology:** Researchers should avoid drawing impractical conclusions. Staying grounded is crucial to producing credible, actionable research in medical fields.

### Question for practice:

Examine how the controversy surrounding the BHU research paper on Covaxin's side effects highlights concerns about research independence and potential conflicts of interest.

## Sonam Wangchuk's protest for Ladakh's rights

**Source:** The post Sonam Wangchuk's protest for Ladakh's rights has been created, based on the article "Yogendra Yadav on Sonam Wangchuk: Delhi needs to listen to Himalayas" published in "Indian Express" on 15th October 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper2- Polity- federalism

**Context:** The article discusses Sonam Wangchuk's protest for Ladakh's rights, demanding democratic governance and ecological development. It highlights the broader issues of the Himalayan region and urges the Indian government to adopt a coherent "Himalayan policy" for addressing these concerns effectively.

For detailed information on **Sixth Schedule for Ladakh** [read this article here](#)

### What is Sonam Wangchuk's Padyatra and Protest About?

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1. Sonam Wangchuk led a 1,000 km padyatra from Leh to Delhi, representing the demands of Ladakh's people.
2. The protest demands democratic governance for Ladakh, either as a full state or a Union Territory with an elected legislature, similar to Delhi and Puducherry.
3. Ladakh's population is around 3 lakhs, but its area exceeds 59,000 square km, larger than J&K or several northeastern states.
4. Wangchuk advocates for Sixth Schedule status, ensuring Autonomous District Councils for Ladakh's diverse communities, empowering them to preserve their cultural identity.
5. He promotes "ecological democracy," opposing indiscriminate hydropower projects while calling for sustainable development models.

### What Is the Connection to Rammanohar Lohia's "Himalayan Policy"?

1. Lohia, a political thinker, emphasized a coherent "Himalayan policy," linking external and internal challenges faced by Himalayan states.
2. He criticized India's foreign policy for ignoring Chinese expansionism and advocated for democratic rights across the Himalayan region.
3. Today, Wangchuk's movement echoes Lohia's vision of integrating the Himalayas' needs with India's larger governance framework.

### What Vision Does Sonam Wangchuk Present?

- 1. Moral Standpoint:** Wangchuk sets a moral equation with the state, like Gandhiji did with the British empire. He remains firm and persistent without being aggressive.
- 2. Focus on Ecological Democracy:** Wangchuk promotes a model of ecological democracy that prioritizes land, jobs, and cultural rights for locals. He opposes indiscriminate development projects but advocates for sustainable growth.
- 3. Democratic Governance Demand:** His primary focus is on Ladakh's political rights, seeking Sixth Schedule status for autonomous governance in eight districts.
- 4. Alternative Vision:** Wangchuk emphasizes a new model of development and education, rooted in local context and wisdom, as exemplified by his 2018 Ramon Magsaysay Award.

### What should be done?

- 1. Shift the Focus from Military to Human Security:** The Indian state must evolve its perspective on the Himalayas from just a military stronghold to a region rich in biodiversity and sustainable livelihoods. Prioritizing human security is essential.

**2. Develop a Coherent Himalayan Policy:** This policy should address the interconnected issues of biodiversity, sustainable livelihoods, and human security. The Indian state must recognize that the Himalayas are not just geographic but involve the lives and cultures of the people living there.

**3. Incorporate Local Wisdom:** The government should listen to the people of the region to ensure sustainable, culturally sensitive development.

**Question for practice:**

Discuss how Sonam Wangchuk's protest and padyatra highlight the need for democratic governance and ecological development in Ladakh, and its connection to Rammanohar Lohia's "Himalayan policy."

**World Food Day 2024 emphasizes the right to safe and nutritious food for all**

**Source:** The post World Food Day 2024 emphasizes the right to safe and nutritious food for all has been created, based on the article "**Food access is about equitable agrifood systems**" published in "The Hindu" on 16th October 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper3- Agriculture - food security

**Context:** The article discusses World Food Day 2024, emphasizing the right to safe and nutritious food for all. It highlights India's progress in food security, ongoing challenges in agriculture, and the need for equitable systems to ensure everyone, including urban families, has access to food.

**What is the theme of World Food Day 2024?**

1. The theme for **World Food Day 2024** is "**Right to Foods for a Better Life and a Better Future.**" It stresses the need for safe, nutritious, and affordable food for all.
2. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP), and the Government of India are working together to ensure this human right is upheld.
3. Around 733 million people worldwide face hunger, emphasizing the urgency of addressing food insecurity.

**How has India progressed in food security?**

1. India transitioned from a **food-deficient nation to a food-surplus country** over the past 60 years.
2. **The Green Revolution**, supported by institutions like the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, helped improve food availability.
3. The **National Food Security Act (NFSA) of 2013** ensures food entitlements for over 800 million people.
4. **Fortified rice** distribution, from July 2024 to December 2028, is a step towards improved nutrition.
5. Initiatives like the **White Revolution (milk)** and **Blue Transformation (fisheries)** diversified food sources.



6. India's robust food systems help address hunger and promote nutrition security across rural and urban communities.

For detailed information on **FAO report on food security in India** [read this article here](#)

### **What are the challenges in India's agriculture sector?**

**1. Small and Marginal Farmers:** 82% of India's 93.09 million agrarian households are small and marginal farmers holding less than two hectares of land. Fragmented landholding reduces their productivity.

**2. Resource Degradation:** Overuse of groundwater and chemical fertilizers harms water tables and soil health, reducing agricultural productivity.

**3. Limited Market Access:** Smallholder farmers struggle to access markets due to infrastructure limitations and supply chain inefficiencies.

**4. Rural Poverty:** Small farmers lack access to financial services, technology, and irrigation systems, which impacts their income and livelihoods.

**5. Climate Change:** Erratic weather patterns affect farming. Sustainable practices like water conservation are needed to build resilience.

For detailed information on **Challenges Facing Indian Agriculture** [read this article here](#)

### **How does food security affect non-agricultural households?**

1. Food security is essential for both farming and non-farming families. As urbanization increases, ensuring that non-agricultural households have access to nutritious food becomes crucial.

2. India's Public Distribution System plays a key role in providing food to both agricultural and non-agricultural households.

3. Strong social safety nets and market interventions are important for stabilizing prices and supporting vulnerable communities.

### **Why is food security a collective responsibility?**

1. Ensuring food security goes beyond producing more food. It involves creating fair, resilient, and sustainable food systems that benefit everyone.

2. The partnership between the FAO, IFAD, WFP, and the Government of India reflects a shared responsibility to build a food-secure society.

3. This includes supporting both farmers and urban communities, reducing food inequalities, and ensuring no one is left behind.

### **Question for practice:**

Examine how India has progressed in ensuring food security and addressing challenges in the agriculture sector.

## Problem with focusing only on agricultural yield

**Source:** The post problem with focusing only on agricultural yield has been created, based on the article “Yield’ can’t be the sole indicator for agriculture” published in “The Hindu” on 16th October 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper3-Indian Agriculture

**Context:** The article argues that India's focus on maximizing agricultural yield (kg/hectare) is outdated. While it helped secure food supply, it now harms nutrition, biodiversity, and long-term sustainability. It suggests shifting to indicators that measure nutrition, water efficiency, biodiversity, and overall farm resilience.

### What is the problem with focusing only on agricultural yield?

- 1. Scarcity of Inputs:** Essential inputs like water, plant nutrition, and labor are becoming scarce, making yield maximization less sustainable.
- 2. Nutritional Deficiency:** High-yield varieties of rice and wheat have reduced micronutrient content. Zinc levels in rice dropped by 33%, and in wheat by 30%. Iron levels in rice and wheat decreased by 27% and 19%, respectively.
- 3. Malnutrition:** This lack of nutrition contributes to widespread malnutrition, with one-third of Indian children under five stunted and two-thirds anaemic.
- 4. Farmer Income:** Maximizing yield does not always increase farmers' incomes effectively, as the cost of additional inputs like fertilizers can outweigh the benefits
- 5. Biodiversity Loss:** India has lost about 1,04,000 varieties of rice since the Green Revolution, reducing agricultural resilience.
- 6. Monoculture Focus:** The area under millets has reduced by 10 million hectares, while rice and wheat have expanded by 13 and 21 million hectares.

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

### What alternative indicators should be considered?

- 1. Nutritional output per hectare:** Focus on the nutritional value of the crops produced.
- 2. Soil health:** Include metrics like soil organic carbon.
- 3. Water-use efficiency:** Use technology to provide farmers with real-time data for better water management.
- 4. Biodiversity:** Assess not just crop diversity at the farm level but also regional diversity and economic resilience through indicators like the 'Landscape Diversity Score'.

### What are the benefits of these new indicators?

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1. These indicators aim to ensure that agriculture contributes to nutritional security, conserves natural resources, and enhances farmer profitability through sustainable practices.

**2. Economic Resilience:** Intercropping practices in Andhra Pradesh have shown to provide stable income and increase profitability, demonstrating the benefits of diverse and resilient farming methods.

**3. Resource Efficiency:** Water-use efficiency indicators help conserve resources. The 'Saagu Baagu' project in Telangana shows how AI can improve irrigation and crop management.

### Question for practice:

Discuss how shifting from focusing solely on agricultural yield to alternative indicators can improve nutrition, biodiversity, and sustainability in India.

## The major issues in Pakistan's western borderlands

**Source:** The post the major issues in Pakistan's western borderlands has been created, based on the article "C Raja Mohan writes: Why India must pay attention to the churn on Pakistan's border with Afghanistan" published in "Indian Express" on 16th October 2024

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

**Context:** The article discusses the overlooked geopolitical issues surrounding Pakistan and Afghanistan, focusing on the Pashtun Qaumi Jirga and the rise of Pashtun nationalism. It highlights how instability in Pakistan's western regions could impact India-Pakistan relations and regional dynamics.

For detailed information on **Pakistan's National Security Policy and its Implications for India** [read this article here](#)

### What are the major issues in Pakistan's western borderlands?

**1. Pashtun Discontent:** The Pashtun Qaumi Jirga and Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) reflect growing unrest among the Pashtuns. PTM's 22 demands include the removal of the Pakistani Army and militants from their lands.

**2. Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP):** The TTP, allegedly sheltered by Afghanistan, is fighting to establish autonomous zones in Pashtun areas, further undermining Pakistan's control.

**3. Taliban-Afghanistan Tensions:** Pakistan's hope of controlling Afghanistan through the Taliban has failed. The Taliban is asserting autonomy and challenging Pakistan's policies.

**4. Baloch Nationalism:** Violence in Balochistan is increasing, with attacks on Chinese nationals and Punjabi settlers due to rising discontent over political and economic issues.

**5. Instability Spillover:** The unrest in these regions could destabilize Pakistan further, with consequences for neighboring countries, including India.

### How do these issues affect bilateral relations between India and Pakistan?

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1. The India-Pakistan relationship remains stagnant despite occasional diplomatic efforts, including Jaishankar's visit, which had minimal impact.
2. Key bilateral issues remain unresolved for decades, with no major breakthroughs.
3. The ongoing unrest and demands for autonomy in these areas threaten Pakistan's stability, which in turn affects its relations with neighbors, including India.

### What could be the future implications for the region?

1. The destabilization in Pakistan's western regions could have long-term impacts on the entire South Asian region.
2. The unrest might not only shape Pakistan's domestic politics but also its international relations, particularly with India.
3. The situation could influence future diplomatic strategies and border policies between the two countries.

### Question for practice:

Examine how the unrest in Pakistan's western borderlands, including Pashtun discontent and Baloch nationalism, could affect the stability of the region and its implications for India-Pakistan relations.

## How different types of institutions impact a country's prosperity

**Source:** The post how different types of institutions impact a country's prosperity has been created, based on the article "A Nobel for explaining why nations fail" and "The Economics Nobel for 2024 underlines the connection between wealth of nations and democracy" published in "The Hindu" on 16th October 2024 and in "Indian Express" on 14th October 2024, respectively.

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper3- Indian Economy Growth and Development

**Context:** The article discusses the **2024 Nobel Prize in Economics awarded to Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, and James A. Robinson**. They studied how different types of institutions impact a country's prosperity. Their work shows that inclusive institutions promote growth, while extractive institutions lead to poverty.

**What is the significance of the work by the 2024 Economics Nobel laureates Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, and James A. Robinson?**

1. The significance of their work lies in their analysis of **how the quality of economic and political institutions impacts national prosperity**.
2. They argue that "**inclusive**" institutions, which feature secure private property rights and democratic governance, foster long-term economic growth and higher living standards.
3. In contrast, "**extractive**" institutions, which are characterized by insecure property rights and lack of political freedom, lead to economic stagnation and poverty.

4. Their research highlights the crucial role that **these institutions play in explaining the economic divergence between rich and poor countries.**

**How do the laureates explain the lasting economic effects of colonialism?**

1. The laureates suggest that colonialism shaped the institutions that persist today.
2. In colonies where Europeans settled, inclusive institutions that promoted long-term economic growth were established.
3. In contrast, in regions where Europeans did not settle, such as India, extractive institutions were set up for short-term exploitation, resulting in long-term economic stagnation.

**Why are inclusive institutions not universally adopted, according to the laureates?**

1. Inclusive institutions, while beneficial for long-term growth, are often resisted by ruling elites who benefit from extractive systems.
2. If rulers can continue to extract wealth without facing rebellion, they have no incentive to implement reforms.
3. Inclusive institutions only emerge when the masses revolt or rulers see a threat to their control.

**What are the implications of their findings for global economic development?**

1. The implications are profound for global economic development. The laureates emphasize that the presence of inclusive institutions is crucial for sustainable economic growth.
2. They suggest that without democratic frameworks that protect individual rights and encourage economic participation, countries are unlikely to achieve significant economic advancement.
3. Their findings underscore the importance of reforming political and economic systems to create more inclusive institutions, which can lead to more equitable growth and development across nations.

**How do the laureates' theories apply to modern examples like China and Singapore?**

1. While the laureates **advocate for democratic institutions as ideal for economic prosperity**, they acknowledge exceptions like China and Singapore.
2. China, despite its autocratic regime, has seen significant economic growth, though with notable internal inequalities.
3. Singapore, also not fully democratic, has thrived due to strong institutional frameworks.
4. These examples show that while inclusive institutions generally foster economic growth, there can be variations based on specific national contexts and policies.

**Question for practice:**

Discuss how the quality of economic and political institutions impacts a country's prosperity according to the 2024 Economics Nobel laureates.

### Third-Party Litigation Funding (TPLF) in India

**Source:** The post Third-Party Litigation Funding (TPLF) in India has been created, based on the article "Reimagining access to justice" published in "The Hindu" on 17th October 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper2- dispute redressal mechanisms

**Context:** The article discusses Third-Party Litigation Funding (TPLF) in India. It highlights how TPLF can help individuals afford legal battles against powerful entities. The article also emphasizes the need for a regulatory framework to manage TPLF and ensure fair access to justice for all.

For detailed information on **third party funding** [read this article here](#)

#### What is Third-Party Litigation Funding (TPLF)?

Third-Party Litigation Funding (TPLF) allows external investors to finance legal cases. In return, these investors get a share of the winnings. It helps people who can't afford legal expenses, making justice more accessible.

#### Why is TPLF Important in India?

1. Justice in India is becoming increasingly expensive, and many can't afford them.
2. With over 80,000 cases pending in the Supreme Court and around 40 million across the country,
3. TPLF could provide access to justice and empower disadvantaged groups to pursue legal action.
4. The Supreme Court views TPLF as a "**potential equaliser**" in the courtroom.

#### How has TPLF been accepted in India?

1. The Supreme Court, in **Bar Council of India v. A.K. Balaji**, supported TPLF. It said TPLF is acceptable as long as lawyers don't fund the cases.
2. This builds on the **Ram Coomar Coondoo v. Chunder Canto Mookerjee** case, which said English laws against such funding don't apply in India.

#### What Challenges Does TPLF Face?

- 1. Profit-Driven Funding:** Critics worry that funders may choose only profitable cases, ignoring important but less profitable ones. There is also concern over how much control funders should have in deciding case strategies.
- 2. Regulatory Gaps:** India lacks a comprehensive national framework for TPLF, leading to uncertainty in operations. Only some states, like Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, have started to recognize TPLF.

**3. Transparency Issues:** Without regulations, there are concerns about how funding deals are structured, risking clients' decision-making rights.

**4. Court Involvement:** Determining the appropriate level of court oversight is complex and needs clear guidelines to maintain judicial integrity.

#### **What are global examples of TPLF regulation?**

Hong Kong's 2019 Code of Practice for Third Party Funding in Arbitration requires funders to disclose financial details, liability, and control. India may adopt similar rules to protect against risks and ensure fair litigation.

#### **Question for practice:**

Discuss the importance of Third-Party Litigation Funding (TPLF) in making justice more accessible in India.

### **Status of organ transplant surgeries in India**

**Source:** The post status of organ transplant surgeries in India has been created, based on the article "**Express View on illicit kidney trafficking: The body shop**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 17th October 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 organ transplant sector, highlighting both its growth and the illegal organ trafficking networks. It mentions legal donations and reveals international illicit markets, emphasizing the need for stricter enforcement and better awareness about organ donation.

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

#### **What is the status of organ transplant surgeries in India?**

1. India is a major hub for organ transplants, performing about 18,000 operations each year, the highest number after the US and China.
2. These surgeries mostly occur in private hospitals and attract international patients, showcasing India's advanced healthcare capabilities.

For detailed information on **India trails in deceased organ donation** [read this article here](#)

#### **What illegal activities are associated with organ transplants?**

1. The sector faces challenges with illegal organ trafficking involving doctors, hospital staff, and criminals.
2. A report exposed a network operating between India and Bangladesh, using fake documents to facilitate organ sales, deceiving the system as "altruistic donations."

#### **What are the legal frameworks for organ donation in India?**

1. India's laws allow three types of organ donations: from close relatives, altruistic donors, and swap donations between incompatible pairs.
2. Foreign donors must prove their donations are not coerced or paid for, requiring a certificate from their embassy.

For detailed information on **National Organ Transplant Programme(NOTP)** [read this article here](#)

### **What are the consequences of these illegal activities?**

1. Illegal organ trading has been ongoing for over eight years, undermining trust in the healthcare system.
2. Despite some police success in dismantling trafficking rings, more consistent and thorough investigations are needed to preserve the integrity of organ transplantation.

### **What are the solutions to organ trafficking?**

In addition to stronger law enforcement, there is a need to raise awareness about organ donation, correct misconceptions, and address gender imbalances—where women are often donors and men recipients. These steps could reduce organ trafficking in the long term.

### **Question for practice:**

Examine the challenges faced by India's organ transplant sector, including both legal frameworks and the illegal organ trafficking networks.

## **Importance of disaster risk insurance**

**Source:** The post importance of disaster risk insurance has been created, based on the article “**Why climate change is a national security issue**” published in “**Indian Express**” on 17th October 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper3- Disaster Management

**Context:** The article discusses the importance of disaster risk insurance in protecting both individuals and the economy from the impacts of disasters. It emphasizes the need for early warning systems, compensation, and insurance to secure human and national security.

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

### **How do disasters affect personal and national security?**

1. Disasters can devastate personal lives, rendering even middle-class families homeless, as seen during earthquakes.
2. Nationally, disasters hinder economic growth, impacting India's \$5-trillion and \$10-trillion economic goals.
3. Disasters lead to downturns, damaging infrastructure and disrupting livelihoods.
4. In 1991, Bangladesh lost 140,000 people to a super cyclone, causing long-term human security challenges.



5. The 2011 Haiti earthquake killed 316,000 people, forcing migration due to inadequate recovery efforts.
6. Pakistan's 2022-23 floods displaced 2.6 million people, making them vulnerable to exploitation by extremist groups, further destabilizing national security.

#### **What role does disaster risk insurance play?**

1. Disaster risk insurance helps people recover from losses after a disaster.
2. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's **Ten-Point Agenda on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)** highlights the importance of risk coverage for everyone, including households and companies.
3. Insurance cannot stop disasters, but it can ensure that people receive compensation to rebuild their lives.
4. Many countries use disaster risk insurance to ensure faster recovery.

#### **Why is disaster-related insurance important in India?**

1. India is now focusing on disaster-related insurance as it realizes the importance of protecting people and the economy.
2. The **National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)** is working with insurance companies to develop effective insurance models.
3. Parametric insurance is being considered, as it offers quick payouts based on agreed disaster parameters, avoiding lengthy claim processes.

#### **How can disaster risk insurance strengthen human security?**

1. Human security is crucial for national security, especially in conflict-prone regions.
2. Countries like Bangladesh and Haiti have struggled with the aftermath of disasters, leading to displacement, illegal migration, and vulnerability to radical ideologies.
3. Pakistan's floods displaced 2.6 million people in 2022-23, and without proper recovery support, these people could be exploited by extremist groups, just like Afghan refugees were in the 1980s. Disaster risk insurance can reduce such vulnerabilities.

#### **Question for practice:**

Discuss how disaster risk insurance can strengthen human and national security.

### **India's electronics manufacturing goal**

**Source:** The post India's electronics manufacturing goal has been created, based on the article "**India's \$500 billion opportunity — and how not to lose it**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 17th October 2024

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

**Context:** The article discusses India's ambitious goal of reaching \$500 billion in electronics manufacturing by 2030. It emphasizes the need for regional clusters to support growth, customized regulations, and devolution of powers to local authorities to create competitive manufacturing environments.

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

### **What is India's electronics manufacturing goal?**

1. Prime Minister Narendra Modi set a target of \$500 billion (Rs 4.20 lakh crore) for electronics manufacturing by 2030.
2. This target is bold, as India's total manufacturing output in 2023-24 was only \$660 billion (Rs 55.4 lakh crore). Growth in electronics manufacturing can help create jobs.

### **What Strategy is Needed to Meet This Target?**

1. The government plans to focus on export-led growth.
2. This involves developing competitive regional manufacturing clusters, similar to those in Silicon Valley, Taiwan, and Shenzhen.
3. Regions like Sriperumbudur in Tamil Nadu and Noida in Uttar Pradesh are already key players, contributing nearly 50% of India's electronics exports.

### **What factors make successful manufacturing regions?**

Three main factors are crucial:

- 1. Large Size with Anchor Investors:** Successful regions are large and have major companies that drive growth. For example, Shenzhen in China covers 2,000 square kilometers and exports around \$350 billion.
- 2. Customized Regulations:** These include favorable labor laws and taxation policies that facilitate easy movement and management of components across borders.
- 3. Devolution of Power:** Local authorities need the power to make decisions quickly and efficiently, catering to the needs of the manufacturing sector.

### **How Can India Implement These Changes?**

1. It is suggested to develop around existing manufacturing clusters by declaring large special regions. This would integrate current factories and new parks.
2. Regulations should be adjusted to attract major global players and streamline processes. The example of GIFT city, a differentially regulated zone for financial services, shows that such models can work in India.
3. By focusing on these strategic areas, India aims to transform its electronics manufacturing sector and meet its ambitious 2030 target.

### **Question for practice:**

Examine the strategies and factors necessary for India to achieve its \$500 billion electronics manufacturing target by 2030.

### How western industrialization led to political and economic advantages over the East

**Source:** The post how western industrialization led to political and economic advantages over the East has been created, based on the article “**Spotlighting the work of the Economics Nobel winners**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 17th October 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper3-Indian Economy Growth and Development

**Context:** The article discusses the Great Divergence, highlighting how Western industrialization led to political and economic advantages over the East. It emphasizes the role of institutions, especially extractive ones established during colonialism, in shaping long-term economic development, particularly in countries like India.

#### What is the Great Divergence?

1. The Great Divergence refers to the growing economic and political gap between the West and the East in the 17th and 18th centuries.
2. Western Europe industrialized early, gaining advantages that allowed them to project political power globally. This also helped them reap economic rewards, leading to lasting global inequalities.

#### What is the role of institutions in development?

1. Institutions are the rules that shape human behavior and constrain power. For example, constitutional limits on executive power prevent misuse of authority.
2. Economists Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, and James Robinson (AJR) highlighted the difference between extractive and inclusive institutions. Extractive institutions benefit a small elite, while inclusive institutions promote broad participation and prosperity.

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

#### How does AJR's research apply to India?

1. AJR's research highlights how colonialism established **extractive institutions** in India that hindered long-term development.
2. **Landlord-based land tenure systems** under British rule led to lower agricultural investments and productivity. Abhijit Banerjee and Lakshmi Iyer (2005) found that these areas still suffer from lower growth today.
3. **Direct vs. Indirect Colonial Rule:** Lakshmi Iyer (2010) showed that areas under **direct British rule** in India had fewer schools, roads, and health centers than those under indirect rule. This disparity persisted for years.

4. AJR's research suggests that **political power** shaped economic outcomes. Colonial elites benefited from extractive institutions, which hindered economic progress in many regions of India, especially in agriculture and infrastructure development.

**Question for practice:**

Examine how the establishment of extractive institutions during colonialism impacted long-term economic development in countries like India.

**Benefits and Criticisms of Universal Transfers**

**Source:** The post benefits and criticisms of Universal Transfers has been created, based on the article “**A modified UBI policy may be more feasible**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 18th October 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 adopt a Universal Basic Income (UBI) to address unemployment and poverty. It explores the feasibility of a modified UBI as a social safety net and suggests combining it with existing welfare programs for better coverage.

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

**Why is UBI Being Discussed Again?**

1. UBI is being discussed again due to rising concerns about unemployment and inequality, as highlighted by the International Labour Organization.
2. Automation and Artificial Intelligence have slowed global job growth, contributing to rising youth unemployment in India.
3. India faces a problem of jobless growth, where productivity increases without matching job creation, worsening inequality.
4. The 2016-17 Economic Survey of India recommended considering UBI as a solution to help those affected by unemployment and poverty.
5. UBI has become more feasible with India's JAM (Jan-Dhan, Aadhaar, Mobile) infrastructure, enabling direct benefit transfers.
5. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the importance of income transfers in times of crisis, adding urgency to discussions around UBI.

**What are the current income transfer schemes in India?**

1. **PM-KISAN:** Provides ₹6,000 annually to all farmers. By 2020-21, it aimed to cover 10 crore households, with a cost of ₹75,000 crore (0.4% of GDP).
2. **Rythu Bandhu Scheme (Telangana):** Offers unconditional payments of ₹4,000 per acre to farmers.

**3. KALIA (Odisha):** Provides cash transfers to farmers to support their livelihoods.

### What are the Benefits and Criticisms of Universal Transfers?

#### A. Benefits of Universal Transfers:

**1. Reduced Administrative Costs:** Universal schemes reduce costs by eliminating the need for beneficiary targeting, as seen in broader applications like PM-KISAN.

**2. Minimized Exclusion Errors:** By covering everyone, universal transfers reduce the risk of missing eligible recipients.

**3. Fewer Intermediaries Involved:** This directly lowers the chances of funds leaking before reaching the intended recipients.

**4. Avoids Work Disincentives:** Universal transfers provide a basic income without discouraging work, unlike some targeted programs that may reduce incentives to seek employment.

#### B. Criticisms of Universal Transfers:

**1. High Financial Cost:** Implementing a UBI could require up to 11% of GDP, posing substantial budgetary challenges.

**2. Benefits to the Wealthy:** The inclusion of wealthier individuals in UBI schemes raises concerns, although tax adjustments could offset the net benefit to high earners.

**3. Implementation Challenges:** Issues like Aadhaar verification failures and bank rejections have been problematic, as highlighted by the PM-KISAN experience.

#### Is UBI Financially Feasible?

1. Large-scale UBI proposals, amounting to 3.5%-11% of GDP, are financially challenging for India. Implementing such a scheme would require cutting other anti-poverty programs or raising taxes substantially.

2. A more feasible option is a limited UBI scheme pegged at 1% of GDP. This scheme would provide ₹144 per month to every citizen, similar to PM-KISAN, which currently supports farmers.

3. The PM-KISAN scheme, covering 10 crore households, costs ₹75,000 crore, about 0.4% of GDP. Expanding this scheme universally would cost approximately double.

4. The fiscal burden is manageable if it's combined with existing schemes like MGNREGS.

5. Thus, a modified UBI scheme, rather than a full-scale one, could be financially feasible.

#### Question for practice:

Examine the financial feasibility of implementing a Universal Basic Income (UBI) in India, considering its potential costs and the possibility of combining it with existing welfare programs.

## The case regarding the marital rape exception (MRE)

**Source:** The post the case regarding the marital rape exception (MRE) has been created, based on the article "On the exception to marital rape" published in "The Hindu" on 18th October 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 a Supreme Court case challenging the legal exception that protects husbands from being prosecuted for marital rape. It explains the origins of this exception, judicial precedents, and ongoing legal debates about its constitutionality and societal impact.

For detailed information on **The Issue of Marital Rape** [read this article here](#)

### What is the case regarding the marital rape exception (MRE)?

1. The Supreme Court is hearing petitions challenging the marital rape exception (MRE) in Indian law.
2. This exception, found in Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), protects husbands from being charged with rape if their wife is over 18 years old.
3. The challenge also extends to a similar provision in the new Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023.

### Where did MRE Law originate?

1. The Marital Rape Exception (MRE) law originated from English common law, specifically the "**doctrine of coverture**." This doctrine treated the husband and wife as a single entity after marriage, denying women legal autonomy.
2. **British jurist Matthew Hale codified the MRE in a 1736 treatise**, stating that a husband could not rape his wife due to marital consent.
3. The doctrine was adopted by British colonies, including India.
4. **England abolished the MRE in 1991 in R vs R**, recognizing that it no longer reflected the modern view of marriage and women's rights.

### What are the major issues with MRE?

1. **Violation of Equality (Article 14):** The MRE creates unequal treatment by denying married women legal protection against non-consensual sex, unlike unmarried women.
2. **Impact on Women's Rights:** Violates women's right to privacy and bodily autonomy (Article 21), as seen in *K.S. Puttaswamy* and *Joseph Shine* cases.
3. **High Incidence of Domestic Violence:** Nearly one-third of married women (18-49 years) in India experience physical or sexual violence by their husbands (NFHS-5).
4. **Colonial Legacy:** The MRE stems from outdated colonial laws rooted in patriarchal views of marriage.

### What are the Judicial views on MRE?

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- 1. Karnataka High Court (2022):** Ruled that a husband can be prosecuted for raping his wife, emphasizing no legal exception should license crimes, citing the 2013 Justice J.S. Verma Committee report.
- 2. Delhi High Court (2022):** Issued a split verdict. Justice Shakti Chaudhary found the MRE unconstitutional, citing bodily autonomy. Justice Shankar upheld it, seeing marital sex as a “legitimate expectation.”
- 3. Supreme Court (2022):** Recognized marital rape in cases involving intimate partner violence, acknowledging that sexual assault by a husband could constitute rape.

### What is the Government's Stance?

1. The government opposes removing the marital rape exception (MRE) and has stated this position in a Supreme Court affidavit.
2. It argues that marriage creates an expectation of “reasonable sexual access” not found in other relationships.
3. The government acknowledges that violating a wife’s consent is wrong but considers labeling it as “rape” to be too harsh and disproportionate.
4. It warns that criminalizing marital rape could harm the sanctity of marriage and lead to false accusations.
5. The government's stance echoes Justice C. Hari Shankar's 2022 Delhi High Court opinion supporting the MRE's legality.

### What would happen if the Law changed?

1. If the Supreme Court strikes down the MRE, it will not create a new offense but would remove the husband's immunity from prosecution for rape within marriage.
2. This change would align legal treatment of marital rape with that of other forms of sexual assault.

### Question for practice:

Examine the implications of removing the Marital Rape Exception (MRE) in Indian law, particularly regarding its effects on gender equality, privacy rights, and the institution of marriage.

## India's progress in human development

**Source:** The post India's progress in human development has been created, based on the article “**India’s SDG focus and its human development issues**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 18th October 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper2- Issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources

**Context:** The article discusses India's progress in human development, highlighting its HDI ranking, gender gaps in labor participation, and rising income inequality. It emphasizes the need to address these challenges to achieve sustainable development and meet the SDGs.

For detailed information on **Prioritizing Human Development** [read this article here](#)

### How are human development and the SDGs connected?

1. The Human Development Index (HDI) measures progress in **three key dimensions: a long and healthy life, knowledge, and a decent standard of living.**
2. These dimensions are directly linked to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) such as SDG-3 (good health), SDG-4 (quality education), SDG-5 (gender equality), SDG-8 (decent work), and SDG-10 (reduced inequality).
3. Achieving sustainable development requires boosting human development through improvements in health, education, and income equality.

### What is India's progress in human development?

1. According to the UNDP's Human Development Report (HDR) 2023-24, India is in the 'medium human development category' with an **HDI value of 0.644. India ranks 134 out of 193 countries.**
2. Neighboring countries like Bangladesh (129), Bhutan (125), and China (75) have seen faster progress.
3. Its HDI value increased from 0.434 in 1990 to 0.644 in 2022, marking a 48.4% rise.
4. However, the HDI value stagnated in 2019-20 at 0.638 and fell to 0.633 in 2021 before improving again.

### What are the gender development issues in India?

1. India has a large gender gap, especially in the Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR), with a difference of 47.8% between men (76.1%) and women (28.3%).
2. Female participation in labor is much lower compared to countries like China (53.6%) and Bangladesh (39.2%).
3. In rural areas, female participation has risen from 24.6% in 2017-18 to 41.5% in 2022-23, but in urban areas, it has only increased slightly, from 20.4% to 25.4%.

### How severe is income inequality in India?

1. India has high income inequality, with the richest 1% holding 21.7% of the country's wealth.
2. This is higher than countries like Bangladesh (11.6%), China (15.7%), and Nepal (9.7%).
3. India's inequality also exceeds the global average of 17.5% and South Asia's average of 19.6%.

### Way forward

India must address gender gaps in labor participation and growing income inequality. These challenges need attention to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and foster human development.

### Question for practice:

Discuss how gender gaps in labor participation and income inequality affect India's progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)



## Signs of a potential improvement in India-Pakistan relations

**Source:** The post signs of a potential improvement in India-Pakistan relations has been created, based on the article “**In India-Pakistan meet on sidelines of SCO, a kind of hope**” published in “**Indian Express**” on 18th October 2024

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

**Context:** The article discusses signs of a potential improvement in India-Pakistan relations following Minister S. Jaishankar's visit to Islamabad for the SCO summit. It highlights Pakistan's recent diplomatic warmth and suggests this might lead to renewed dialogue between the two nations.

### What is the significance of Jaishankar's visit to Islamabad?

1. Jaishankar's visit to Islamabad for the SCO summit marks a possible thaw in India-Pakistan relations.
2. The diplomatic tone was notably warmer compared to previous engagements, such as Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's abrasive stance at the 2023 SCO meeting in Goa.
3. Pakistan's hospitality, despite internal turmoil, reflects a possible shift in its foreign policy approach.

For detailed information on **What is SCO?** [read this article here](#)

### Why is Pakistan reassessing its foreign policy?

1. Pakistan is facing severe internal challenges, including political instability, economic problems, and rising public unrest, prompting a reassessment of its foreign policy.
2. Inflation and economic instability are at the forefront, pressuring the government to focus on stabilising the country.
3. The army, led by General Asim Munir, appears to support a shift in foreign relations to ease tensions.
4. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's government, mentored by Nawaz Sharif, is adopting a more pragmatic approach. It recognises that better relations with India could help address domestic issues and bring economic benefits.
5. Additionally, Pakistan is recalibrating its stance due to India's growing global influence, recognizing that cooperation with India could bring more advantages than hostility.

### What is the role of different perspectives in India's policy towards Pakistan?

- 1. Realists (Subedars):** Realists have dominated India's policy, especially during Modi's tenure. They focus on security and advocate a hardline stance against Pakistan, prioritizing national defense.
- 2. Liberal Institutionalists (Saudagars):** This group emphasizes trade and economic ties as tools for peace. They argue that cooperation in areas like trade can benefit both nations economically.

**3. Constructivists (Sufis):** Constructivists promote dialogue, cultural exchanges, and reconciliation. They believe addressing historical grievances through diplomacy can build trust between India and Pakistan.

4. Incorporating all three perspectives could create a more balanced and cooperative approach to India-Pakistan relations.

**Question for practice:**

Discuss the factors influencing Pakistan's reassessment of its foreign policy towards India.

### Impacts of the Char Dham Highway Project

**Source:** The post impacts of the Char Dham Highway Project has been created, based on the article “**A perilous highway to salvation in the Himalayas**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 19th October 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper3 – Disasters and disaster management

**Context:** The article criticizes the Char Dham Highway Project in Uttarakhand for causing ecological damage. A study reveals that road widening has doubled landslides, leading to fatalities. The government ignored environmental concerns and prioritized tourism over safety, risking further harm to the fragile Himalayan ecosystem.

#### What is the Char Dham Highway Project?

1. The Char Dham Highway Project is a 900-kilometre long, 12-metre wide, two-lane road meant to boost religious tourism in Uttarakhand.
2. It aims to connect four sacred shrines in the Himalayas.
3. The project costs ₹12,000 crore and was initiated despite opposition from environmentalists.

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

#### What are the impacts of the Char Dham Highway Project?

- 1. Increased Landslides:** Road-widening has caused 309 landslides along a 247 km stretch, with a density of 1.25 landslides per km. This has doubled the frequency of landslides, leading to road blockages and accidents.
- 2. Loss of Lives:** Landslides have become a regular occurrence, especially during pilgrimage seasons. In the last four years, 160 people have died in landslide incidents across Uttarakhand.
- 3. Ground Subsidence:** Joshimath has suffered land subsidence due to unplanned development and poor drainage, with temples like Tungnath facing foundation weakening and water leakage.
- 4. Depopulation of Villages:** According to the 2011 Census, 1,053 villages in Uttarakhand are uninhabited, and more than 400 have fewer than 10 residents. Large infrastructural projects, combined with low agricultural returns, are forcing locals to leave farming and seek jobs in tourism. Local land is increasingly sold to entrepreneurs from the plains.

**5. Climate Change Contribution:** Climate change models predict more extreme rainfall, increasing the frequency of landslides and accidents. The researchers warn that as summer monsoon precipitation increases, the risks to the already fragile mountain ecology will rise further.

**What is the government's justification for the project?**

1. The government justifies the Char Dham Highway Project by citing the need for faster, all-weather road connectivity for pilgrims and the military.
2. It argues the project will help move troops and armaments to remote areas.
3. Despite initial recommendations for a narrower road (5.5 m), the Supreme Court allowed the wider roads, prioritizing national security.
4. The government bypassed environmental clearances by dividing the project into over 50 smaller segments.
5. It highlights increased employment in tourism but overlooks environmental and local distress.

**What are the larger concerns?**

1. The government continues with major construction projects in fragile areas, such as plans to widen roads in the Bhagirathi Eco-Sensitive Zone.
2. Environmentalists argue that such development is unsustainable and calls for a reduction in these massive projects to protect the Himalayas from further harm.

**Question for practice:**

Discuss the government's justification for the Char Dham Highway Project despite the environmental concerns.

**India's recent monsoon challenges and Mission Mausam**

**Source:** The post India's recent monsoon challenges and Mission Mausam has been created, based on the article "Forecasting better in India, come rain or shine" published in "The Hindu" on 19th October 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper3 – Disasters and disaster management and GS 3-Science and Technology-developments and their applications and effects in everyday life

**Context:** The article discusses India's recent monsoon challenges, including severe flooding and changing weather patterns. It highlights the need for better weather forecasting and early warning systems. The government's 'Mission Mausam' aims to enhance weather observation, improve forecasting, and make data accessible for public use.

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

**What are the current weather challenges in India?**

1. India is experiencing severe monsoon seasons with recurrent flooding affecting many states.
2. According to a 2021 study by the Council on Energy, Environment, and Water (CEEW), about 40% of Indian districts face alternating climate hazards.

3. Flood-prone areas also experience droughts in the dry season. Over the past decade, heavy rainfall days during the monsoons have increased by 64%.

4. Nearly two-thirds of India's population are exposed to flood risks, but only one-third of the flood-prone areas are covered by early warning systems.

### What is 'Mission Mausam' and its objectives?

1. **Mission Mausam** was approved in September 2024 to improve India's weather forecasting capabilities.

2. The mission has a budget of ₹2,000 crore and aims to strengthen India's weather observation network.

3. It will be implemented by three key institutes under the Ministry of Earth Sciences: the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF), and the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM).

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

### What more needs to be done to improve India's weather forecasting capabilities?

1. **Expand radar coverage:** India has 39 Doppler Weather Radars, but only five cover the west coast where cyclones are increasing. Cities like Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, and Jodhpur need radar coverage to manage frequent flooding.

2. **Open access to weather data:** The United States and European countries provide weather data openly, encouraging innovation. India should follow this model to help researchers and entrepreneurs develop localized early warning tools.

3. **Improve communication tools:** While the IMD provides weather warnings through apps, user guidance is needed. Videos and media explaining how to interpret warnings will enhance decision-making.

### Question for practice:

Discuss how the implementation of 'Mission Mausam' aims to address India's weather forecasting challenges highlighted by recent severe monsoon seasons.

## The issue around satellite spectrum allocation in India

**Source:** The post the issue around satellite spectrum allocation in India has been created, based on the article "**Satellite spectrum, a high stakes game**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 19th October 2024

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

**Context:** The article discusses the debate over how satellite communication spectrum should be allocated in India. While some favor auctioning it, others, including the government, support administrative allocation, which aligns with global practices. The issue of spectrum charges remains unresolved.

For detailed information on **Telecom Sector and Spectrum Auctions in India** [read this article here](#)

### What is the issue around satellite spectrum allocation?

1. There is a debate in India over how satellite communication spectrum should be allocated.
2. Some companies, like Reliance Jio, support auctioning the spectrum.
3. Others, like Starlink and OneWeb, prefer administrative allocation, as satellite spectrum is internationally regulated by the ITU (International Telecommunications Union) and does not have national territorial limits.

### What is the government's position?

1. Jyotiraditya Scindia, the Minister of Communications, has clarified that the government will administratively allocate the spectrum for satellite communication.
2. This follows global practices and aligns with The Telecommunications Act 2023.
3. The Act permits spectrum allocation by administrative processes for services listed in the First Schedule, including satellite-based services.

### What are the concerns about spectrum charges?

1. There are ongoing discussions about how companies should pay for the satellite spectrum.
2. One option is to link spectrum charges to a company's Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR).
3. Another proposal suggests an upfront fee to ensure only serious companies enter the market.

### What is the market potential for satellite broadband in India?

India's satellite broadband service market is expected to grow significantly. Deloitte predicts the market will reach \$1.9 billion by 2030. The goal is to create a competitive and vibrant industry without making it too difficult for new players to enter.

### Question for practice:

Examine the debate over satellite communication spectrum allocation in India and the different perspectives of companies and the government on this issue.

## India's innovation landscape transformed

**Source:** The post India's innovation landscape transformed has been created, based on the article "**Manpreet Badal writes: There is a start-up revolution in India**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 19th October 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 highlights India's rise as a global innovation leader, driven by a strong start-up ecosystem, government initiatives, and expanding entrepreneurship. Key policies and programs have boosted India's innovation ranking, benefiting sectors across the country, including smaller cities.

For detailed information on **The Indian Innovation That Can Change the World** [read this article here](#)

### How has India's innovation landscape transformed?

1. India has undergone a remarkable transformation in innovation. It moved from the third quartile to becoming a global leader in technology and creativity.
2. The country's start-up ecosystem is now the third-largest in the world. India had 111 unicorn start-ups in January 2023, valued at over \$350 billion.
3. By 2030, the number of tech start-ups is expected to grow from 68,000 to 1,80,000.
4. Innovation is spreading to Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities, showing that entrepreneurship is growing beyond major urban centers.
5. India is ranked first among 37 lower-middle-income economies and first in Central and Southern Asia.
6. Globally, India improved from 81st in 2015 to 40th today. It ranks 5th in ICT services exports, 6th in venture capital received, 11th in science and engineering graduates, and 13th in global corporate R&D investors.

### What initiatives have contributed to India's innovation rise?

- 1. Robust Innovation Ecosystem:** India's rise is driven by a strong innovation ecosystem that includes vast knowledge capital, a dynamic start-up landscape, and collaborations between public and private research entities. The NIDHI (National Initiative for Developing and Harnessing Innovations) programme by the Department of Science and Technology has set up technology business incubators and science parks across the country, fostering innovation commercialization.
- 2. Government-led Initiatives:** Government initiatives, including those by the Departments of Science and Technology, Biotechnology, and the Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), have played crucial roles. AIM established 4,880 operational Atal Tinkering Labs in over 650 districts and 102 Atal Incubation Centres, nurturing more than 900 start-ups.
- 3. Policy-driven Innovation:** NITI Aayog has optimized efforts in strategic sectors like electric vehicles, biotechnology, nanotechnology, space, and alternative energy.
- 4. Progress in Key Indicators:** India has made significant progress in domestic industry diversification, patent origination, and exports of cultural and creative services.
- 5. Highest Innovation Quality:** Among lower-middle-income countries, India has the highest innovation quality. Its Global Innovation Index ranking improved from 81st in 2015 to 40th in the world today.

### How have specific sectors benefited?

- 1. Railway Sector:** NITI Aayog partnered with the Ministry of Railways to fast-track railway station redevelopment through public-private partnerships, enhancing infrastructure.
- 2. Pharmaceutical Industry:** Indian pharmaceutical firms adopted contract manufacturing and clinical trials for multinational companies. This allowed them to integrate into global innovation chains.

### What is the broader cultural impact of innovation?

A culture of innovation is now seen across the country, from schools to top sectors. This national movement is creating millions of young innovators and entrepreneurs. The growth is driven by a strong vision, notably from Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

#### Question for practice:

Evaluate how government-led initiatives and policy-driven innovation have contributed to India's rise as a global innovation leader.

### How can businesses worldwide promote inclusive growth and development?

**Source:** The post how businesses worldwide can promote inclusive growth and development has been created, based on the article “**Essential business priorities in a changing world**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 21st October 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper 3 - Economy-growth and development And Inclusive growth

**Context:** The article highlights how businesses worldwide can promote inclusive growth and development. It focuses on priorities like equitable development, food security, digital innovation, sustainability, and corporate governance. Businesses must collaborate and lead efforts for a better global economy.

For detailed information on **Inclusive Growth** read this article here

### What role do businesses play in fostering growth and spreading developmental gains?

- Promoting Inclusive Development:** Businesses must prioritize equitable growth by offering tailored programs for skilling and upskilling workers. This is crucial, especially for women, to help them adapt to evolving industrial needs. On-the-job training and partnerships with academic institutions can enhance this.
- Supporting Financial Inclusion:** Brazil's B-20 emphasized the need for diverse credit solutions. India's Jan Dhan Yojana successfully opened over 530 million bank accounts, transforming financial transactions and serving as a model for global financial inclusion.
- Expanding in Africa:** Africa's inclusion in the G-20 under India's presidency presents new opportunities. Businesses can leverage Africa's young population and rapid growth, integrating the continent into global value chains.
- Ensuring Food Security:** Businesses play a key role in promoting sustainable agriculture. Investments in precision farming and collaboration with governments help tackle food crises caused by extreme weather.
- Advancing Digital Transformation:** Businesses should harness AI in healthcare and climate change, while investing in STEM education and mentoring social tech startups for innovation and societal impact.
- Prioritizing Sustainability:** Businesses should aim for carbon mitigation and support the net-zero transition. This includes financing for small and medium enterprises, developing renewable energy, and adopting circular economy practices.

### Why Is Corporate Governance Important?

1. Businesses must maintain high standards of corporate governance by adhering to ethical practices.
2. This builds trust with communities and governments, making it easier to operate globally.
3. Strong governance is essential for driving long-term growth and ensuring compliance with regulations.

### What Role Does the B20 Global Institute Play?

1. The B20 Global Institute was initiated during India's B20 leadership.
2. It aims to align policy suggestions for businesses across G-20 countries.
3. The institute will drive action agendas that enhance business competitiveness.
4. It will monitor outcomes on priorities like inclusive growth, food security, and sustainability.
5. The Institute ensures businesses contribute to achieving global aspirations, including integrating technology and promoting renewable energy to meet net-zero targets.

### Question for practice:

Discuss how businesses can promote inclusive growth and development, focusing on priorities such as equitable development, financial inclusion, food security, and sustainability.

### Need for climate finance is especially critical for developing countries

**Source:** The post need for climate finance is especially critical for developing countries has been created, based on the article “On climate finance to developing nations” published in “The Hindu” on 21st October 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper 3 - Environment — Conservation.

**Context:** The article discusses the need for climate finance, especially for developing countries. It highlights the challenges they face due to climate change and their need for external financial help. A new global target for climate finance will be set at COP29.

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

### What Are the Key Issues at COP29?

COP29, held in Baku, Azerbaijan, is focused on climate finance. This means leaders will discuss money related to climate change, particularly helping developing countries that are vulnerable but have less money to cope with climate effects.

### What Is Climate Finance?

1. Climate finance refers to funding aimed at supporting climate action, such as mitigation and adaptation projects.



2. It can come from public or private sources and be used domestically or internationally.
3. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) tracks climate finance from developed to developing countries.
4. In 2022, loans made up 69.4% of international public climate finance, with grants accounting for 28%.
5. Critics argue climate finance should be based on actual disbursements, not just commitments, and focus on new and additional funding, not reclassified aid.

### Why Are Developing States More at Risk?

- 1. Geographical Location:** Developing countries are often located in areas prone to extreme weather events, such as floods and droughts, making them highly vulnerable to climate change effects.
- 2. Economic Dependency:** Developing countries' economies heavily rely on sectors like agriculture, which are highly sensitive to climate changes. Agriculture is directly impacted by shifting weather patterns.
- 3. Financial Constraints:** Developing countries face higher costs of capital for climate technologies. According to the IEA, the cost of capital for solar photovoltaic and storage technologies is about twice as high in developing economies than in developed ones.
- 4. Other Factors:** Competing developmental needs, such as providing electricity to 675 million people who lacked access in 2021 (IEA), limit their ability to invest in climate action.

### How Much Does India Need for Its Climate Goals?

1. India has ambitious climate targets for 2030, including installing 500 GW of capacity from non-fossil fuels, producing five million metric tonnes of green hydrogen, and expanding electric vehicle use.
2. To meet these goals, India needs an estimated ₹40.8 lakh crore by 2030.
3. For renewable energy (450 GW by 2030), an additional ₹16.8 lakh crore is required.
4. The National Green Hydrogen Mission needs ₹8 lakh crore in investments.
5. Consumers must spend about ₹16 lakh crore to adopt electric vehicles.
6. Long-term, India needs ₹850 lakh crore from 2020 to 2070 to achieve net-zero emissions.

### What Is the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG)?

1. The NCQG aims to establish a new annual climate finance target for developing countries.
2. It must focus on actual disbursements, not just commitments or promises of funding.
3. It should be new and additional, not reclassified from existing aid programs.
4. Public capital should include direct grants, mobilizing private finance through public funds.

5. Organically flowing private finance should not count.
6. An expert group estimates developing countries, excluding China, will need \$1 trillion annually by 2030 to meet climate goals.
7. This target is crucial for balancing development and climate action in vulnerable nations.

**Question for practice:**

Examine the challenges developing countries face in accessing climate finance and how the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) aims to address these challenges.

**The unveiling of a new statue of 'Lady Justice' in India and its significance**

**Source:** The post the unveiling of a new statue of 'Lady Justice' in India and its significance has been created, based on the article “**What does the new 'lady justice' statue signify?**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 21st October 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper2- Judiciary

**Context:** The article discusses the unveiling of a new statue of 'Lady Justice' in India, which symbolizes a move towards decolonization and represents Indian traditions. It emphasizes urgent reforms needed in the judiciary, including timely appointments and better representation to ensure fair justice.

For detailed information on **new statue of Lady Justice** [read this article here](#)

**What is the new 'Lady Justice' statue and what does it represent?**

1. The new 'Lady Justice' statue was unveiled at the Supreme Court of India, symbolizing a **shift towards decoloniality**.
2. It is dressed in a saree, replacing the western attire of the original statue, **aligning with Indian traditions**.
3. The statue's eyes are open, replacing the blindfold, to represent that **justice in India is not blind but sees everyone equally**.
4. It holds the Indian Constitution in one hand, symbolizing the **supremacy of the Constitution in Indian jurisprudence**, replacing the traditional sword.
5. The scales of justice are retained, symbolizing **impartiality in delivering judgments**.
6. This change emphasizes that the law should consider India's social diversity and the upliftment of underprivileged sections.
7. The move reflects India's effort to shed colonial symbols and build a justice system more relevant to its own cultural and constitutional values.

**What is the historical significance of 'Lady Justice'?**

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1. The 'Lady Justice' symbol originates from Roman mythology, representing Justitia, the goddess of justice.
2. She is typically depicted with a blindfold, scales, and a sword.
3. The blindfold, added during the Renaissance (14th century), was initially a satire on legal corruption but later symbolized impartiality during the Enlightenment (17th-18th century).
4. The **scales signify fairness**, requiring courts to weigh both sides of an argument.
5. The **sword symbolizes the law's authority, representing its power to protect or punish**.
6. This symbol became prominent in India during British rule and was placed outside courtrooms.

### What are the challenges faced by India's judiciary?

India's justice system faces challenges like high case pendency, with over five crore cases pending in various courts. The Supreme Court has recognized the problem but says resolving all cases within three years is unrealistic. Around 4.4 crore cases are pending in lower courts, while 60 lakh cases await judgment in High Courts.

For detailed information on **Issues faced by the Indian judicial system** [read this article here](#)

### What urgent actions are needed for the judiciary?

- 1. Appointment of Judges:** The process for appointing judges through the collegium is delayed, and the Memorandum of Procedure has not been finalized for eight years.
- 2. Representation Issues:** Backward classes, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and religious minorities represent less than 25% of higher judiciary, and women less than 15%. Improving representation is needed.
- 3. Judicial Strength:** High Courts operate at 60-70% capacity, contributing to delays. Filling vacancies quickly is crucial to reduce the backlog.
- 4. Priority Cases:** Cases related to constitutional amendments and individual liberty should be prioritized for faster hearings.

### Question for practice:

Discuss the symbolism of the new 'Lady Justice' statue and the reforms needed in India's judiciary system.

## Global Water Crisis Warning

**Source:** The post Global Water Crisis Warning has been created, based on the article "A major new report makes the case for water as a global common good?" published in "Indian Express" on 21st October 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper3- Environment — Conservation.

**Context:** The article discusses a report by the Global Commission on the Economics of Water, warning of a looming global water crisis. It highlights the urgent need for better water management to prevent severe food production losses and economic impacts, especially in poorer countries.

### What is the Global Water Crisis Warning?

1. The Global Commission on the Economics of Water, set up by the Netherlands in 2022, released a report warning that the global water crisis could worsen if no action is taken.
2. The report predicts that demand for freshwater will exceed supply by 40% by 2030.
3. The report states that over half of the world's food production could be threatened if water management does not improve.
4. It also warns that the global GDP could drop by 8% by 2050, with poorer countries losing up to 15%.
5. The report highlights that many developing countries already suffer from water stress. More than 1,000 children die daily, primarily in poor nations, due to the lack of safe water access.
6. The report points out that subsidies in agriculture lead to wasteful water use, and industries are rarely punished for water pollution.
7. Globally, 80% of industrial wastewater is not recycled.

### What is the Solution Proposed by the Commission?

- 1. Global Pact for Water Conservation:** The Commission recommends a worldwide agreement to better manage and conserve water resources.
- 2. Adaptation to Local Contexts:** Countries should tailor the global recommendations to their specific situations. For example, resolving internal water disputes is crucial for a country like India before it can commit to international agreements.
- 3. View Water as a Global Common Good:** This shift in perspective is crucial for sustainable water management and encourages collective responsibility.

### What are the Challenges in India?

1. India faces **significant groundwater depletion**, as noted in a 2018 NITI Aayog report.
2. **Internal water disputes** are a major challenge that needs to be addressed before participating in global efforts to conserve water.

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

### Question for practice:

Discuss the key warnings and proposed solutions from the Global Commission on the Economics of Water regarding the looming global water crisis.

## Adoption of the Global Digital Compact and the importance of DPI for global cooperation

**Source:** The post adoption of the Global Digital Compact and the importance of DPI for global cooperation has been created, based on the article “**How to realise the full potential of Digital Public Infrastructure**” published in “**Indian Express**” on 21st October 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 discusses the Global Digital Compact's adoption and the importance of digital public infrastructure (DPI) for global cooperation. It highlights India's leadership in DPIs, the need for impact assessments, and the significance of data for understanding how these systems affect people's lives and economies.

### What is the Global Digital Compact?

1. The Global Digital Compact (GDC) was adopted on September 22, 2024, at a UN summit. It aims to ensure that technology benefits everyone globally.
2. It builds on the Universal Safeguards for Digital Public Infrastructure initiative started in 2023.
3. For detailed information on The Global Digital Compact (GDC) read this article here

### How has India contributed to digital public infrastructures?

1. India, holding the G20 presidency, promoted digital public infrastructures (DPIs) to boost economic growth, especially in the Global South.
2. India leads with the world's largest digital identity program, Aadhaar, and the most real-time digital payments, reaching 14.96 billion transactions in August.

### What are the global impacts of DPIs?

1. The World Bank’s ID4D (**Identity for Development**) initiative supports digital identity systems in nearly 60 countries, enhancing global digital public infrastructure (DPI) adoption.
2. G2Px (**Digitising government-to-person payments**), a program for digitizing government-to-person payments, is active in 35 countries, improving financial accessibility.
3. **India’s Modular Open Source Identity Platform (MOSIP)** is assisting 11 countries in building secure digital identity systems.

### What are the challenges and benefits of DPIs in India?

1. DPIs have significantly increased financial inclusion in India, raising the percentage of adults with bank accounts from 25% in 2008 to over 80% recently, with women owning 56% of these accounts.
2. Digital transactions comprised nearly 50% of India’s GDP in 2022-23, facilitating access to credit through pre-approved loans via UPI.

3. However, understanding the exact impact of DPIs on income and social status is difficult due to limited data.

### How Can India Improve Impact Assessments?

1. India can improve impact assessments by focusing on three areas: design, data, and dialogue.
2. DPIs should include built-in assessment mechanisms.
3. Reliable data collection and management are crucial, as is fostering dialogue among stakeholders like government, private sector, and civil society.

### Question for practice:

Discuss how India's leadership in digital public infrastructures (DPIs) has contributed to economic growth and financial inclusion.

## Significance of the 75th anniversary of the Constitution of India

**Source:** The post significance of the 75th anniversary of the Constitution of India has been created, based on the article “**An approaching milestone in constitutional governance**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 22nd October 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper 2 - Constitution of India —historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.

**Context:** The article commemorates the 75th anniversary of India's Constitution, highlighting its importance in shaping democratic values. It emphasizes respect for institutions, smooth power transitions, protection of rights, federalism, and the role of media and civil society in strengthening democracy.

### What is the significance of the 75th anniversary of the Constitution of India?

1. November 26 marks the 75th anniversary of the Constitution of India.
2. This milestone is a chance for all stakeholders in Indian democracy to celebrate and reflect on constitutional governance.
3. It is about instilling a strong constitutional culture among Indians, regardless of their backgrounds.

For detailed information on **Significance of the Constitution Museum** [read this article here](#)

### What Are the Core Constitutional Values of India?

**1. Respect for Democratic Institutions:** Since the Constitution's adoption in 1949, India's life expectancy has increased from 32 to 70 years. This development has fostered respect for democratic institutions. The 2024 general election saw a voter turnout of 65.79%, demonstrating faith in democracy.

**2. Smooth Transition of Power:** Over seven decades, India has seen peaceful transitions of power across various political parties. Despite intense election campaigns, results reflect the will of the people. This commitment to democratic processes is a key value.

**3 Protection of Rights and Freedoms:** The Constitution safeguards fundamental rights through courts. The framers, many of whom were part of the freedom movement, prioritized protecting individual rights from state power. This principle remains robust in India.

**4. Federalism:** India's federal system respects its diversity. State-level political parties have grown in strength, contributing to coalition governments. The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments strengthened local governance through panchayati raj institutions and nagarpalikas.

**5. Role of Media and Civil Society:** Media and civil society contribute to democracy by providing diverse perspectives and access to information. While challenges exist, media transparency has fostered an informed electorate, strengthening India's democratic framework.

### How Has India Proved Skeptics Wrong?

1. Post-independence, skeptics doubted the unity of India's diverse regions. General Claude Auchinleck (last British commander in chief of the Indian Army) doubted India's ability to stay united.
2. However, India has successfully forged a national identity rooted in constitutional ideals, using the Constitution to foster social and political consciousness across its subcontinent-sized diversity.

### Question for practice:

Examine how the Constitution of India has contributed to fostering democratic values and national unity over the past 75 years.

## India needs a Nature Restoration Law

**Source:** The post India needs a Nature Restoration Law has been created, based on the article "**The case for a nature restoration law in India**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 22nd October 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper3-Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation

**Context:** The article suggests India needs a Nature Restoration Law, inspired by the European Union's model, to restore its degraded ecosystems. It highlights the environmental, economic, and social benefits of restoring land, wetlands, rivers, and urban green spaces.

### What is the Nature Restoration Law (NRL)?

The Nature Restoration Law was adopted by the European Union on June 17, 2024. It requires that 20% of the EU's land and sea areas be restored by 2030, with a goal to fully restore all ecosystems by 2050. This law is part of efforts to reverse the loss of biodiversity, with measures like restoring rivers and planting trees.

For detailed information on **EU Nature Restoration Law** [read this article here](#)

### Why does India need a Nature Restoration Law?

**1. Land Degradation:** India has nearly 97.85 million hectares (29.7%), as per ISRO's report, of its total geographical area affected by land degradation, showing a notable increase from 94.53 million hectares between 2003-05.

**2. Desertification:** A significant portion, 83.69 million hectares, is experiencing desertification, notably in major states like Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan.

**3. Environmental Challenges:** The existing initiatives like the Green India Mission and the Integrated Watershed Management Programme, though substantial, are insufficient given the scale of degradation.

**4. Legal Framework:** A specific law mandating ecosystem restoration could emulate the EU's Nature Restoration Law, setting clear, legally binding restoration targets and timelines to ensure sustained environmental recovery and compliance.

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

#### **What could a Nature Restoration Law in India include?**

**1. Restoration Targets:** Aim to restore 20% of degraded land by 2030 and all ecosystems by 2050, similar to the EU's approach.

**2. Wetland Restoration:** Target restoring 30% of degraded wetlands, focusing on crucial wetlands like the Sundarbans and Chilika Lake.

**3. Biodiversity in Agriculture:** Promote agroforestry and sustainable agricultural practices, using biodiversity indicators like the butterfly and bird index to track progress.

**4. River Restoration:** Restore free-flowing rivers such as the Ganga and Yamuna, addressing pollution and obstructions.

**5. Urban Green Spaces:** Prevent further degradation of urban areas by ensuring no net loss of green spaces and promoting urban forests to combat heat islands.

#### **What are the benefits of ecosystem restoration?**

1. Restoring ecosystems can generate significant economic returns, potentially up to \$10 trillion globally by 2030 (World Economic Forum).

2. For India, this would mean improved agricultural yields, better water security, and job creation.

3. It would also strengthen India's ability to meet its climate goals (Paris Agreement commitments) by increasing carbon absorption and combating desertification.

4. Restoration helps India meet Sustainable Development Goal 15, which focuses on managing forests and combating desertification.

#### **Question for practice:**



Examine the reasons why India needs a Nature Restoration Law and what potential benefits it could bring.

### How is India adopting High-Performance Buildings (HPBs)?

Source: The post how is India adopting HPBs has been created, based on the article “**How policies shape high-performance building standards and climate goals**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 22nd October 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper3- Infrastructures

**Context:** The article discusses High-Performance Buildings (HPBs), which reduce energy use and emissions while improving occupant well-being. HPBs offer financial benefits, including lower costs and higher property values. Governments promote HPBs through energy efficiency policies, financing, and carbon credits.

#### What are High-Performance Buildings (HPBs)?

1. HPBs are buildings designed to reduce energy use, greenhouse gas emissions, and operational costs while improving occupant well-being.
2. These buildings minimize energy and water consumption through climate-adaptive designs, contributing to climate mitigation and adaptation.
3. HPBs address urban and climate challenges as the construction industry contributes 39% of energy-related CO2 emissions globally.

For detailed information on **Importance of high-performance buildings (HPBs)** [read article here](#)

#### How are governments supporting HPBs?

1. The **European Union’s Green Deal** mandates energy-efficient building designs and retrofits, aiming for climate neutrality by 2050.
2. **Germany’s KfW Bank** provides low-interest loans for energy-efficient projects.
3. **Denmark’s BR18 building codes** encourage sustainable construction by offering incentives.
4. The **U.S. programmes Energy Star and LEED** promote energy-efficient buildings and offer tax credits for green building initiatives.

#### How is India adopting HPBs?

1. India promotes High-Performance Buildings (HPBs) through its **National Action Plan on Climate Change**, focusing on energy-efficient construction.
2. **The Energy Conservation Building Code (ECBC)** aims to reduce energy demands by up to 30% in buildings.
3. **India’s Green Rating for Integrated Habitat Assessment (GRIHA)** has registered over 3,000 projects that prioritize sustainable practices and reducing carbon emissions.

4. **The Indian Green Building Council (IGBC)** has certified more than 14,000 projects, covering 12.5 billion square feet of green building space.

5. Cities like Hyderabad, Noida, and Pune offer higher floor area ratios and incentives for buildings that meet ECBC standards. Examples include ITC's Green Centre in Gurugram, TCS Siruseri IT Park in Chennai, and the Embassy's commercial developments in Bengaluru, which command premium rents and higher occupancy rates due to their green certifications.

#### **How are HPBs financed?**

1. **Carbon financing** supports HPBs by converting carbon savings into financial value. Carbon credits are tradable permits earned by reducing emissions.

2. **Carbon pricing regions**, like the European Union and China, allow HPBs to generate credits, providing developers with financial incentives.

3. **Green bonds** finance HPBs; in 2020, \$269.5 billion in green bonds were issued globally.

4. **Climate funds** like the World Bank and Green Climate Fund provide financial backing.

#### **Question for practice:**

Evaluate how High-Performance Buildings (HPBs) contribute to financial and environmental benefits, as well as government climate goals.

### **Significance of Scholz's visit to India**

**Source:** The post significance of Scholz's visit to India has been created, based on the article "**C Raja Mohan writes: In German chancellor's India visit, a chance for deeper ties with Berlin**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 22nd October 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper2- Bilateral groupings and agreements

**Context:** The article discusses the importance of German Chancellor Olaf Scholz's visit to India. It highlights how Germany's cooperation with India, particularly in economic, defence, and strategic areas, could strengthen India's global position and enhance its relationship with Europe.

For detailed information on **India-Germany relationship** read [Article 1](#), [Article 2](#)

#### **What is the significance of Scholz's visit to India?**

1. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz's visit to India is seen as important for strengthening the Indo-German partnership.

2. Although less glamorous than meetings with the US or Russia, it could be crucial for India's ties with collective Europe.

3. India and Germany have had a formal strategic partnership since 2000. However, translating intentions into outcomes has been difficult. Scholz aims to improve this by enhancing cooperation across multiple areas, despite differences, such as India's stance on the Ukraine war.

### **What is Germany's new approach toward India?**

**1. Recognition of India's Global Role:** Germany acknowledges India as a crucial international player, highlighting its stable democracy and significant population.

**2. Focus on Dialogue and Peace:** Despite divergences, particularly regarding the Ukraine conflict, Germany is keen on dialogue and welcomes India's efforts toward a peaceful resolution.

**3. Economic Partnership in the Indo-Pacific:** Moving away from a China-centric approach, Germany aims to deepen economic ties with India, viewing it as a key partner in the volatile Indo-Pacific region.

**4. Enhancing Defence Cooperation:** Germany proposes to expand defence relations with India, improving arms export reliability and supporting joint projects, like submarine acquisitions, to modernize India's defence industry.

### **How does Germany plan to support India's defence sector?**

1. Germany aims to be a strong defence partner for India, expanding arms cooperation and defence diplomacy.

2. Scholz's visit includes discussions on enhancing military exchanges and reciprocal access arrangements between Indian and German armed forces.

3. Germany offers to help India modernize its defence manufacturing sector by collaborating with Indian arms companies.

4. Berlin promises to improve the reliability and predictability of arms export control procedures to facilitate smoother cooperation.

5. Negotiations on acquiring submarines from Germany demonstrate its commitment to strengthening India's defence capabilities.

6. Germany sees this partnership as vital for raising its profile in the Indo-Pacific, an increasingly strategic region.

7. This cooperation aligns with India's goal to boost domestic manufacturing under initiatives like "Make in India," making Germany a valuable defence partner.

### **What broader geopolitical shifts support Germany's engagement with India?**

1. Germany is reassessing its global stance due to various challenges, including Russian aggression in Europe and China's assertiveness.

2. These changes make a strong relationship with India more critical, especially as India seeks to balance its international relations amid challenges from China, Russia, and the U.S.

**Question for practice:**

Discuss how Germany's evolving approach toward India is shaping their partnership in economic, defence, and strategic areas.

**Role of the UN in maintaining peace**

**Source:** The post role of the UN in maintaining peace has been created, based on the article “**The world needs blue helmets who act as blue helmets**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 23rd October 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper2 International Relations – Important International institutions, agencies and fora – their structure, mandate.

**Context:** The article discusses the role of the UN in maintaining peace. It criticizes the UN for often being a bystander in conflicts, failing to protect civilians. It calls for reform in the Security Council to allow quicker action and better support for peacekeeping missions.

For detailed information on **shortcomings of UN** [read this article here](#)

**How does the UN Charter address peacekeeping?**

1. The UN aims to prevent wars and protect civilians through its Charter and peacekeeping forces. It has over 100,000 peacekeepers deployed worldwide.
2. The UN Charter’s Chapter VI promotes peaceful settlements of disputes. Chapter VII allows the use of armed force, with Security Council authorization, in cases of aggression. Chapter VIII also allows regional forces to enforce peace if authorized by the Security Council.

**Where has the UN succeeded and failed?**

**UN Successes:**

1. **Peacekeeping Operations:** The UN successfully restored peace in countries like Cambodia, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Angola, Timor Leste, Liberia, and Kosovo.
2. **Notable Examples:** In Kosovo, only 6,000 peacekeepers helped stabilize the region between 1999-2008. Similarly, 3,000 UN police and Australian infantry restored order in Timor Leste during the same period.
3. **Impact:** These missions helped in re-establishing rule of law and forming elected governments.

**UN Failures:**

1. **Rwanda and Bosnia:** In 1994 and 1995, the UN failed to protect civilians, leading to mass casualties, such as the Rwanda genocide, where nearly 1 million Tutsis were killed.
2. **Current conflicts:** In Ukraine and Gaza, the UN has been criticized for inaction, despite having 100,000 peacekeepers that could have been redeployed to prevent massive civilian casualties.

**What changes are needed for the UN Security Council?**

**1. Expand Permanent Membership:** Include countries like India and South Africa to better represent the global South and Africa. India is a major global voice, and South Africa's inclusion would address long-overdue representation for Africa.

**2. Reform the Veto Power:** Limit the veto power of the P5 members, which often prevents decisive action. For instance, the U.S. and Russia would veto interventions in West Asia and Ukraine, respectively.

**3. Division of Votes:** In an expanded P7, a vote should decide interventions instead of relying on a single country's veto. This would enable faster deployment of UN troops under Chapters VII and VIII.

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

### Question for practice:

Examine how the proposed reforms to the UN Security Council could improve its effectiveness in peacekeeping missions?

## Issue with India's job market

**Source:** The post issue with India's job market has been created, based on the article “**The job crisis undermines state legitimacy**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 23rd October 2024

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

**Context:** The article discusses India's lack of good-quality jobs, especially for the youth. It argues that the failure to address unemployment and inequality could lead to political instability and criticizes solutions like UBI for ignoring dignity and social participation.

For detailed information on **Issues in Indian Labor Market** [read this article here](#)

### What is the main issue with India's job market?

**1. Lack of Good-Quality Jobs:** Many jobs in India are informal, unpaid, or have no opportunities for growth. The unemployment rate seems low, but this is misleading because working just one month in a year counts as being employed.

**2. Youth Unemployment:** The shortage of quality jobs, especially for the youth, can lead to frustration and economic problems. This is a significant issue as young people need meaningful work to feel included in society.

**3. Impact of Technology and Capital:** Technological advances and the concentration of capital are displacing many workers. This increases inequality, as only the elite benefit from these changes, leaving a large part of the population without dignity or financial security.

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

### How Are Political Parties Responding?

1. Political responses have been inadequate, relying on market forces or short-term solutions.

2. The idea of 'creative destruction' assumes old jobs will naturally be replaced by better ones, which isn't always true.
3. Universal Basic Income (UBI) has also been suggested, but it doesn't address people's need for dignity or contribution to society.
4. Political parties focus too much on winning elections and fail to address long-term structural problems like unemployment.
5. This makes people feel neglected and lose trust in democratic institutions. Globally, we see this through the rise of populism and authoritarianism.

### Way forward

Political parties must lead by addressing structural issues such as unemployment, inequality, and dignity. The future of India's democracy depends on restoring a sense of purpose and participation to all citizens. Without this, political parties may become irrelevant.

### Question for practice:

Discuss how the lack of good-quality jobs in India contributes to political instability and the potential consequences for democratic institutions.

## Government's efforts to tackle Naxalite violence in Chhattisgarh

**Source:** The post government's efforts to tackle Naxalite violence in Chhattisgarh has been created, based on the article "**Working toward a meaningful 'victims' register' in Bastar**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 23rd October 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper3-Security Issues

**Context:** The article discusses the government's efforts to tackle Naxalite violence in Chhattisgarh. It highlights the importance of supporting victims, improving governance, and using a holistic approach, while cautioning against creating further societal divides during conflict resolution efforts.

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

### How is the government addressing left-wing extremism?

1. The government is tackling Naxalite violence in Chhattisgarh by addressing security and development together.
2. They aim to ensure local community rights and improve governance. This approach has shown some success in decreasing violence in areas like Bastar division, which includes districts such as Bastar, Narayanpur, and Dantewada.
3. The government plans to improve how victims of violence are registered and supported, as stated by Chhattisgarh's Deputy Chief Minister, Vijay Sharma.

4. The victims' register aims to document all affected individuals impartially, which can aid in conflict resolution, similar to successful efforts in countries like Colombia.

5. This should build trust among tribals and strengthen the state's position against Maoists, especially now when Maoist influence is waning.

### What challenges do the victims face?

**1. Displacement and Insecurity:** Around 55,000 tribals fled to Andhra Pradesh during the peak years of Salwa Judum (mid-2000s) and have not been able to return home. They continue to seek redress and the opportunity to return to their communities in Chhattisgarh.

**2. Historical Neglect:** The tribal communities have been victims of structural violence and neglect since colonial times, which has persisted post-independence. This ongoing neglect allowed Maoists to gain support by filling governance gaps in regions like Dandakaranya, covering parts of Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, and Maharashtra.

**3. Dual Victimization:** Tribals are often caught between violence from Maoist groups and state forces, complicating their identification and support through governmental initiatives like the victims' register.

### Way forward

The victim identification process must be fair and unbiased. If not, it could create further divides in society. Trust and reconciliation are key to making this effort successful, ensuring that all victims are heard and supported.

### Question for practice:

Discuss the challenges faced by tribal victims of Naxalite violence in Chhattisgarh and the government's efforts to support them.

## UN's urgent call for action against antimicrobial resistance (AMR)

**Source:** The post UN's urgent call for action against antimicrobial resistance (AMR) has been created, based on the article "UN recognition of antibiotic abuse offers India an opportunity" published in "Indian Express" on 23rd October 2024

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

**Context:** The article discusses the UN's urgent call for action against antimicrobial resistance (AMR). It highlights AMR as a global health threat, outlines key targets, and emphasizes sustainable use of antimicrobials across sectors, especially healthcare and agriculture, by 2030.

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

### What is AMR and why is it a global threat?

AMR stands for antimicrobial resistance, where bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites no longer respond to medicines. This makes infections harder to treat. It threatens human, animal, and plant health. Misuse of antibiotics in humans and animals since the 1950s has worsened this problem. WHO warned about phasing out antibiotics in food production in 2000.

#### **What are the consequences of AMR?**

- 1. Health Setbacks:** AMR could reverse progress in treating infectious diseases like tuberculosis and malaria due to drug-resistant strains. Common surgeries and cancer treatments become riskier and more expensive.
- 2. Disproportionate Impact:** Low- and middle-income countries are hit hardest due to poverty and inequality, worsening global health inequality.
- 3. Economic Losses:** The World Bank estimates AMR could result in up to \$1 trillion in healthcare costs by 2050 and annual GDP losses between \$1-3.4 trillion by 2030, comparable to the 2008 global financial crisis.
- 4. Death Toll:** AMR is linked to 4.95 million human deaths annually. The UN aims to reduce this by 10% by 2030.
- 5. Agricultural Impact:** Misuse of antimicrobials in industrial food production since the 1950s exacerbates AMR in animals and plants.

#### **What is the UN's strategy to fight AMR?**

- 1. Reducing AMR-related deaths:** The UN aims to lower bacterial AMR-related deaths by 10% by 2030, currently estimated at 4.95 million annually.
- 2. Funding and support:** The UN advocates for sustainable national financing, including \$100 million in catalytic funding, to ensure 60% of countries have funded national action plans by 2030.
- 3. Antimicrobial usage:** At least 70% of antimicrobials used in human healthcare should belong to WHO's Access Group, known for fewer side effects and a lower risk of causing AMR.
- 4. Healthcare facility standards:** All countries must have basic water, sanitation, hygiene, and waste management in healthcare facilities, and 90% should meet WHO's Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) standards by 2030.
- 5. Agriculture sector:** The agri-food sector must prioritize responsible antimicrobial use, ensuring evidence-based practices for animal health.

#### **Question for practice:**

Discuss the consequences of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and the UN's strategy to combat it.



## UN Biodiversity Conference- COP16

**Source:** The post UN Biodiversity Conference- COP16 has been created, based on the article “**Biodiversity COP16: What is it, what is on agenda this year**” published in “**Indian Express**” on 23rd October 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper3-Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

**Context:** The article discusses the **UN Biodiversity Conference in Cali, Colombia**, focusing on the Convention on Biological Diversity. It highlights goals to protect biodiversity, including the 30 x 30 targets. Financial support for conservation and fair sharing of genetic resources are key topics at COP16.

### What is the UN Biodiversity Conference and its purpose?

1. The UN Biodiversity Conference, held every two years, is currently taking place in Cali, Colombia.
2. It focuses on the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), established at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, which aims to protect global biodiversity, restore ecosystems, and equitably share biological resources.
3. This year’s event is the 16th Conference of Parties (COP16) under the CBD.
4. The main goal is to implement the **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (COP15)**, which includes four goals and 23 targets to be achieved by 2030.

For detailed information on **COP15 of Convention on Biodiversity** [read this article here](#)

### Why are biodiversity discussions gaining attention?

Biodiversity discussions are gaining attention due to their strong link with climate change. Both crises are caused by resource extraction and unsustainable practices. Climate change accelerates biodiversity loss, while degraded ecosystems contribute to global warming. This has led to a convergence in the goals of biodiversity and climate negotiations.

### What are the expected discussions of CO16?

- 1. Progress on 30 x 30 Targets:** Countries will push forward on the goal to conserve 30% of land and oceans and restore 30% of degraded areas by 2030. Countries need to submit **National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs)**, similar to climate-related Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). So far, only 32 out of 196 countries have submitted their NBSAPs.
- 2. High Seas Treaty:** It is also known as the agreement on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdictions or BBNJ, which was finalised last year as a separate international agreement to maintain the ecological health of oceans. At COP16, the focus will be on protecting biodiversity-rich ocean areas and ensuring fair distribution of genetic resources.
- 3. Sharing Genetic Resources:** The Nagoya Protocol, agreed upon in 2010, set rules for sharing benefits from bio-resources. At COP16, discussions will include how to share profits from digital genetic sequences of plants and organisms. This is especially important for indigenous populations.

**4. Financial Mobilization:** The Kunming-Montreal Framework calls for \$200 billion per year by 2030 to be spent on conservation, with developed countries providing \$20-30 billion annually to developing countries. Ways and means to mobilise these financial resources is one of the main items on the agenda at COP16.

**5. Eliminating Harmful Subsidies:** Countries are expected to phase out \$500 billion worth of harmful subsidies by 2030.

**Question for practice:**

Discuss the main goals and expected discussions at COP16 of the UN Biodiversity Conference in Cali, Colombia.

**India's progress in eliminating kala-azar and trachoma as public health issues**

**Source:** The post India's progress in eliminating kala-azar and trachoma as public health issues has been created, based on the article "**Celebration and vigil: India must not let its guard down on kala-azar**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 24th October 2024

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

**Context:** The article talks about India's progress in eliminating kala-azar and trachoma as public health issues. It highlights India's achievements, the difference between elimination and eradication, and emphasizes the need for continued efforts and vigilance to prevent future outbreaks.

For detailed information on **India to seek certification from WHO for eliminating Kala-azar** [read this article here](#)

**What is the recent achievement of India in disease control?**

1. India has made significant progress in eliminating kala-azar and trachoma. Kala-azar cases have dropped to less than one in 10,000 for two consecutive years.
2. Trachoma, which once caused 5% of blindness in the 1970s, has also been eliminated as a public health problem.
3. In 2023, India had 595 cases of kala-azar with four deaths, and in 2024, 339 cases with one death. India needs to maintain low numbers for another year to receive WHO certification for eliminating kala-azar.

For detailed information on **India Eliminates Trachoma as a Public Health Problem** [read this article here](#)

**What is the difference between elimination and eradication?**

1. Elimination means reducing the number of disease cases to a specific limit within a country, so it's no longer a public health problem.
2. Eradication, however, means completely stopping any new cases globally.
3. Only smallpox has been eradicated so far. Eliminating a disease like kala-azar or trachoma, which has no vaccine, is a significant challenge.

### What challenges does India face in eliminating kala-azar and trachoma?

- 1. Lack of vaccines:** Neither kala-azar nor trachoma has a vaccine, making elimination harder. Kala-azar is spread by sandflies carrying *Leishmania donovani*, and trachoma is caused by *Chlamydia trachomatis*.
- 2. Socio-economic conditions:** Both diseases are linked to poverty and poor sanitation. India's success required a government-run health campaign to tackle these factors.

For detailed information on **India achieves target to eliminate 'Kala-Azar'** [read this article here](#)

### Question for practice:

Discuss the recent achievements of India in eliminating kala-azar and trachoma as public health issues, and the challenges faced in maintaining this progress.

### Constitution's role in managing diversity through special provisions for various states

**Source:** The post Constitution's role in managing diversity through special provisions for various states has been created, based on the article "**The Manipur crisis, the issue of managing diversity**" published in "The Hindu" on 24th October 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 the violence in Manipur and the Chief Minister's demands for more control over security. It highlights the Constitution's role in managing diversity through special provisions for various states, aiming to ensure political stability and represent different cultural identities effectively.

### What is the situation in Manipur?

There has been an escalation of violence in Manipur. The Chief Minister is demanding greater control over security. Media reports suggest the constitutional machinery in Manipur is breaking down, with Article 355 invoked to manage internal disturbances.

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

### How does the Constitution handle diversity?

- The Indian Constitution uses "**special provisions**" to manage diversity across states. These provisions aim to maintain political stability and address cultural or developmental concerns.
- States like Maharashtra, Gujarat, Nagaland, Assam, Manipur, Andhra Pradesh, Sikkim, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, and Karnataka have been granted such provisions.
- Article 371F, for example, was introduced when Sikkim joined India in 1975.** It protected different sections of Sikkim's population and ensured power sharing to promote stability.
- In *R.C. Poudyal* (1993), the Supreme Court upheld Article 371F, allowing greater representation for the **Bhutia-Lepcha community due to Sikkim's** historical background.

5. **Tripura's inclusion in the Sixth Schedule in 1984** resolved insurgency issues by reserving a third of its legislative seats for Scheduled Tribes.

6. The Constitution's flexibility helps reconcile competing identities while preserving political stability.

For detailed information on **Article 371 of Indian Constitution** [read this article here](#)

### What is the current legal framework in Manipur?

**1. Article 371C:** Manipur is governed by Article 371C, which mandates the creation of a Hill Area Committee to represent tribal areas. However, its approval is not required for decisions affecting governance.

**2. Autonomous District Council:** The Manipur Hill Areas Autonomous District Council Act, 2000 governs district councils for Scheduled Tribes but lacks veto power, unlike states like Nagaland and Sikkim.

**3. No Sixth Schedule Protections:** Unlike Tripura, Manipur is not governed by the Sixth Schedule, which devolves more power to local tribal councils.

**4. Challenges in Representation:** The lack of strong representation for tribal areas has fueled tensions, contributing to ongoing violence.

### What should Manipur consider?

The Court in *R.C. Poudyal* emphasized that pluralist societies are part of history. The Constitution has shown it can adapt to different challenges. Manipur should look to constitutional solutions to manage its internal conflicts and achieve peace.

### Question for practice:

Examine how the Indian Constitution's special provisions, particularly Article 371C, impact the governance and representation of tribal areas in Manipur, and how these provisions compare to those in other states.

## Supreme Court judgment addressing CSEAM in India

**Source:** The post Supreme Court judgment addressing CSEAM in India has been created, based on the article "**Supreme Court's child sexual abuse verdict is a step forward**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 24th October 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 Supreme Court's recent judgment on child sexual exploitative and abuse material (CSEAM). It emphasizes the seriousness of the issue, India's alarming involvement, and the need for strict action against both viewing and producing such content.

For detailed information on **Supreme Court's Verdict on CSEAM** read [Article 1](#), [Article 2](#)

### What is the Supreme Court's judgment on CSEAM?

The Supreme Court ruled that viewing child sexual exploitative and abuse material (CSEAM) is a serious offense. Even watching it once is a crime. The Court stated that demand for such material fuels its production, making the crime more heinous.

### How widespread is CSEAM in India?

1. India leads the world in uploading Child Sexual Exploitative and Abuse Material (CSEAM), according to reports.
2. The National Centre for Missing & Exploited Children reported 46,99,515 CSEAM videos uploaded in India.
3. Cases of child pornography rose significantly, from 44 in 2018 to 1,171 in 2022, as per National Crime Records Bureau data.
4. Local children, aged 5 to 16, are frequently involved, with covert videos taken using spy cameras.
5. Kerala Police seized over 200 devices containing illegal content, revealing growing CSEAM activity on platforms like WhatsApp and Telegram.

### What actions have been taken to combat CSEAM?

1. **MoU with NCMEC:** India signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Centre for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC), U.S. This agreement facilitates the receipt and analysis of Cyber Tipline Reports (CTR) related to CSEAM activities, which are shared with respective states for further action.
2. Kerala Police seized over 200 devices containing illegal content, revealing growing CSEAM activity on platforms like WhatsApp and Telegram.

### How does CSEAM impact children?

CSEAM victims often don't realize they've been exploited until much later. The knowledge that their abuse is being viewed repeatedly causes lifelong trauma. This exploitation affects all of society, as it perpetuates a culture of treating children as objects.

### Way forward

While prosecuting offenders is essential, long-term prevention through sex education and awareness is crucial. Schools, governments, and law enforcement must work together to create safe environments for children online and offline.

### Question for practice:

Examine the Supreme Court's stance on viewing Child Sexual Exploitative and Abuse Material (CSEAM) and its impact on the production of such content.

## Importance of educating students about the Constitution

**Source:** The post importance of educating students about the Constitution has been created, based on the article “**Almost 75 years after Constitution was adopted, what does education mean for nation-building?**” published in “**Indian Express**” on 24th October 2024

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

**Context:** The article emphasizes the importance of educating students about the Constitution. It highlights its role in shaping collective consciousness, fostering national identity, celebrating diversity, promoting social justice, and empowering people, especially as India marks 75 years of its adoption.

For detailed information on **Significance of the 75th anniversary of the Constitution of India** [read this article here](#)

### What is the Current State of Higher Education in India?

1. India has over 40 million students in higher education and 1.5 million faculty members.
2. There are more than 1,100 universities and nearly 50,000 colleges.
3. In 1947, India had only 20 universities and 500 colleges, with 2.5 lakh students and 20,000 faculty members.
4. Higher education is now accessible to more than just the elite.
5. Universities play a vital role in shaping India’s identity, diversity, and social justice.

For detailed information on **Quality Education for All** [read this article here](#)

### What are the challenges of education in India?

- 1. Quality of Education:** A focus on STEM subjects alone cannot drive the necessary transformation in society’s value system. Broader education on the Constitution is essential.
- 2. Lack of Constitutional Awareness:** Schools and universities often fail to teach the values and importance of the Indian Constitution, which is crucial for nation-building and social transformation.
- 3. Diversity and Inclusion:** While the Constitution promotes equality, higher education must better incorporate lived experiences of diversity to build informed citizens.

### Why should universities educate students about the Constitution?

- 1. Promoting Collective Consciousness:** The Constitution binds India’s diverse population. With over 80% illiteracy at independence, universities now must shape this consciousness to build a progressive, unified nation.

**2. Identity Creation:** The Constitution fosters an Indian identity that respects socio-cultural diversity. It promotes "constitutional patriotism" through education, reflecting values like equality and freedom, as seen in India's pluralistic identity.

**3. Celebrating Diversity:** Universities must promote diversity through lived experiences. This builds an enlightened citizenry by allowing students to engage with diverse perspectives.

**4. Empowering Citizens:** The Constitution abolished untouchability (Article 17), emphasizing liberty, equality, and fraternity. Universities are ideal places to teach these values, shaping a socially aware and empowered population.

**5. Advancing Social Justice:** Social justice is a core theme of the Constitution. Universities, by embedding constitutional values, can drive societal transformation and create a new generation committed to equality, aligning with India's evolving educational ecosystem of over 40 million students.

### Question for practice:

Discuss how universities in India can promote constitutional values to foster social justice and empower citizens.

## UK transfer the Chagos Archipelago to Mauritius

**Source:** The post UK transfer the Chagos Archipelago to Mauritius has been created, based on the article "**UK-Mauritius Chagos Deal: Crossroads for India's strategic autonomy**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 9th October 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 the UK's decision to transfer the Chagos Archipelago to Mauritius. This move affects Indian Ocean geopolitics. It also discusses India's role, the strategic importance of Diego Garcia, and balancing ties with the US while countering China's influence.

For detailed information on **Why Mauritius is calling UK an 'illegal colonial occupier' over a tiny set of islands** [read this article here](#)

### Why did the UK transfer the Chagos Archipelago to Mauritius?

**1. International Pressure:** The UK transferred the Chagos Archipelago to Mauritius due to mounting international pressure from the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the UN General Assembly, and several regional states, including India.

**2. UK's Strategic Interests:** while the UK transferred sovereignty of the archipelago, it ensured US-UK control over Diego Garcia for 99 years, maintaining strategic interests.

**3. Pragmatic Move:** UK viewed the transfer as a **pragmatic move** to align with international consensus and avoid diplomatic challenges.

### How does this affect India's role in the Indian Ocean?

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**1. Diego Garcia Access:** India could potentially gain access to Diego Garcia's military facilities, supporting its naval patrols, anti-piracy operations, and intelligence gathering.

**2. Countering China:** With China's increasing presence in the Indian Ocean, including bases in Djibouti and Pakistan, India can leverage closer cooperation with the US to counterbalance Beijing's influence.

**3. Strategic Autonomy:** India's access to Diego Garcia raises concerns about maintaining strategic autonomy, as deeper cooperation with the US may complicate India's foreign policy, especially with non-Western nations like Russia and Iran.

**4. Mauritius Partnership:** India can help Mauritius safeguard its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) against illegal fishing, particularly by China, enhancing regional security without direct intervention.

**5. Middle East Relations:** India needs to manage relations in the Middle East, especially with growing tensions between Israel (a US ally) and Iran, a key Indian partner.

### What is the Future of India's Regional Strategy?

1. India aims to maintain its role as an independent regional power. This involves balancing its relationships with Western countries and other global partners.
2. The agreement with Mauritius offers an opportunity for India to enhance its maritime security collaboration and assert its presence in the Indian Ocean, countering China's growing influence without aligning too closely with Western political strategies in the Middle East.

### Question for practice:

Examine how the transfer of the Chagos Archipelago to Mauritius impacts India's role in the Indian Ocean region.

## 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 Acemoglu, 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 Acemoglu, Johnson, and Robinson (AJR)?**

The 2024 Nobel winners in Economic Sciences, Daron Acemoglu, 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?**

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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.