

# 9 PM Current Affairs Weekly Compilation

For UPSC CSE mains examination



**1<sup>st</sup> Week**

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**Features :**

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

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## Importance of research security in India

**Source:** The post importance of research security in India has been created, based on the article “Research security should be a national priority” published in “The Hindu” on 2nd December 2024

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

**Context:** The article highlights the importance of research security in India as it invests in advanced technologies. It discusses risks like cyberattacks and foreign interference, global examples of breaches, and suggests measures to protect sensitive research while balancing openness and collaboration.

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

### What is the importance of research security for India?

1. India aims to achieve its development goals by 2047, emphasizing science and technology.
2. Investments in areas like AI, biotechnology, and quantum technology are critical.
3. Research security protects sensitive data, intellectual property, and national interests from risks like foreign interference and cyberattacks.
4. A breach can delay progress and expose critical data to adversaries.

### What are the global risks related to research security?

1. A Harvard professor was arrested for hiding links with Chinese funding while receiving U.S. defense funds.
2. COVID-19 vaccine research was targeted by cyberattacks in 2020.
3. The European Space Agency (ESA) faced cyberattacks, leading to partnerships with the European Defence Agency on cybersecurity.
4. These incidents highlight vulnerabilities in advanced research and the need for strong protections.

### How are other countries addressing research security?

Several nations have developed policies:

1. **United States:** The CHIPS and Science Act includes research security measures. The National Institute of Standards and Technology offers guidelines.
2. **Canada:** Policies include National Security Guidelines for Research Partnerships and restrictions on collaborations with countries like China and Russia.
3. **European Union:** A risk-based approach emphasizes self-governance, proportionate responses, and guidelines for Horizon Europe.
4. China's military-civil fusion strategy integrates civilian research with defense applications.

### What steps can India take to promote research security?

1. **Vulnerability Mapping:** Systematically identify risks by assessing foreign influences and insider threats in universities and key labs, as seen in the arrests at Harvard University linked to undisclosed foreign funding.

2. **Develop Guidelines:** Create a research security framework similar to the European Council's risk-based approach, minimizing over-regulation while protecting critical research areas.
3. **Engage Experts:** Collaborate with researchers to understand sensitive areas, essential for designing effective security measures.
4. **Global Partnerships:** Build capacity by working with trusted international partners, learning from global instances like the cyberattacks on COVID-19 vaccine research and ESA.
5. **Institutional Framework:** Establish a dedicated research security office within the Anusandhan National Research Foundation to coordinate efforts and ensure research is "as open as possible, as closed as necessary."

#### What are the challenges to implementing research security?

1. **Conflict with Academic Freedom:** Research security may restrict international collaborations. For example, open data sharing and partnerships drive scientific progress but could be limited by security measures.
2. **Balancing Open Science and Security:** Open science initiatives, like shared infrastructure and citizen science, are crucial. However, strict controls can hinder these efforts, affecting innovation.
3. **Bureaucratic Overload:** Indian research institutions already face excessive regulations. Adding security measures could increase the burden on researchers and slow progress.
4. **Risk of Misuse:** Security measures could become tools for political interference. Ensuring decisions are science-driven is crucial.

#### Question for practice:

Examine the importance of research security for India in the context of its development goals and the challenges of balancing openness with protection.

### Urban health challenges

**Source:** The post Urban health challenges has been created, based on the article "India's cities, their non-communicable disease burden" published in "The Hindu" on 2nd December 2024

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

**Context:** The article discusses poor health outcomes in urban areas, especially among marginalized workers. It highlights the need for better implementation of health policies, better access to healthcare, and the use of technology for health monitoring. It calls for collaborative action to create healthy cities for all.

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

#### What Are the Challenges Faced by Urban Marginalized Workers?

1. Marginalized workers, like gig workers, drivers, and sanitation workers, face poor working conditions.
2. Many lack health insurance and work in unhygienic environments. Sanitation workers, for example, clean cities while deprived of hygiene and nutrition.
3. **Financial Instability:** High out-of-pocket (OOP) medical costs lead to financial crises during health emergencies.
4. **Limited Healthcare Access:** Public healthcare systems fail to serve marginalized groups adequately.

### How Is Urbanization Affecting Health?

1. Urbanization has led to 50% of the world's population living in cities, projected to reach 70% by 2050.
2. In India, 49% of the urban population lives in slums, facing poor living conditions (UN-Habitat, 2022).
3. Rapid urbanization contributes to fragmented, overburdened health systems.
4. Hazardous environments and limited healthcare access harm marginalized groups like migrant workers and slum dwellers.
5. India's workforce includes 41 million inter-State migrants (Census 2011), adding to health challenges.
6. Rising non-communicable diseases (e.g., diabetes, hypertension) are noted despite reduced tobacco use (NFHS 2005-2021).

### How Can Technology Help Improve Health Outcomes?

- 1. Real-time Health Monitoring:** Tools can monitor hypertension and diabetes, enabling individuals to track their health ("health in our hands").
2. Screening through technology offers two advantages:
  - a. It provides population-level data for epidemiological modeling and public health planning.
  - b. It raises individual and community awareness of health risks.
- 3. Community-based Health Education:** Technology aids in creating sustainable health promotion activities, reducing health system burdens. It helps inform people about healthcare pathways and social protection schemes, reducing out-of-pocket expenses.

### What Should be Done?

1. State-level NCD action plans must focus on primary healthcare access for marginalized groups.
2. Collaboration is needed between local bodies, health departments, and communities.
3. Community-led health surveillance systems can address non-communicable diseases (NCD) challenges in urban settlements.

### Question for practice:

Discuss the challenges faced by urban marginalized workers and how technology can help improve their health outcomes.

### India's plan to establish an AI Safety Institute

**Source:** The post India's plan to establish an AI Safety Institute has been created, based on the article "What India's AI Safety Institute could do" published in "The Hindu" on 2nd December 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper3 – Science and Technology – S&T effects on everyday life

**Context:** The article discusses India's plan to establish an AI Safety Institute under the IndiaAI Mission. It emphasizes learning from global initiatives, focusing on technical research, international collaboration, and addressing societal risks while avoiding overly strict regulations that hinder innovation.

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

### What is the AI Safety Institute?

1. The AI Safety Institute is a proposed initiative under IndiaAI Mission. It aims to enhance India's AI safety and governance capabilities.
2. It focuses on technical research, risk assessment, and building global partnerships in AI safety.
3. The Institute aims to address risks like **bias, discrimination, social exclusion, gendered risks, labor market impacts, and privacy concerns**.
4. Supported by a **₹10,372 crore budget**, it positions India as a global AI governance leader.

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

### Why is AI Safety Important Now?

1. **Global Prioritization:** Events like the UN Summit of the Future and the Quad Leaders' Summit have highlighted the urgent need for safe AI practices. The Global Digital Compact emphasized human-centric oversight and multi-stakeholder collaboration.
2. **Bletchley Process:** This international initiative includes AI Safety Summits in the U.K., South Korea, and France, forming a global network of AI Safety Institutes.
3. **India's Leadership:** India's role in the G20 and Global Partnership on AI (GPAI) showcases its growing influence in shaping AI governance policies globally.
4. **Rapid Technological Advances:** Countries like the U.S. and U.K. already have AI Safety Institutes collaborating with AI labs for risk assessments and early testing of large models.

### How Can India Build Its AI Safety Institute?

1. **Stay Independent of Regulation:** Keep the institute separate from rulemaking to encourage innovation and collaboration.
2. **Focus on Research and Testing:** Conduct risk assessments, red-teaming, and bias identification.
3. **Address Global Majority Concerns:** Focus on risks like bias, social exclusion, privacy, and labor markets.
4. **Join the Bletchley Network:** Collaborate with international safety institutes and share expertise.
5. **Promote Inclusive Governance:** Align with global efforts like the **Global Digital Compact** to prioritize collaboration and inclusivity.

### What Can India Achieve?

1. Contribute to global AI governance dialogues.
2. Set a benchmark for evidence-based, human-centric AI policies.
3. Strengthen its role as a global leader in AI safety and innovation.

### Question for practice:



Evaluate the importance of establishing an AI Safety Institute in India to address societal risks and enhance global collaboration.

### India's Economic Slowdown and Path to Recovery

**Source:** The post India's Economic Slowdown and Path to Recovery has been created, based on the article "A push for growth" Published in "Indian Express" on 2nd December 2024

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

**Context:** The article discusses India's slowing GDP growth, driven by weak industrial performance, reduced investments, and muted consumption. It suggests improving rural demand, boosting government spending, creating jobs, and offering tax benefits to strengthen domestic demand and sustain growth.

For detailed information on **Sharp slowdown in India's economic growth** [read this article here](#)

#### What is the Current State of India's Economy?

1. GDP growth slowed to **5.4%** in Q2 of 2024-25 from **6.7%** in Q1 and **8.2%** in 2023-24.
2. Industrial growth dropped to **3.6%** in Q2 from **8.3%** in Q1.
3. Sectors like **mining, manufacturing, and electricity** performed poorly.
4. **Agriculture** grew due to a good kharif harvest.
5. The **services sector** maintained steady momentum.
6. **Merchandise exports** were weak due to slow global growth.

#### How has consumption and investment been impacted?

##### A. Impact on Consumption

1. **Moderation in Growth:** Private consumption growth slowed to **6%**, which is higher than the **4% growth in 2023-24**, but still moderate.
2. **Rural vs Urban:** Rural consumption improved due to good **agriculture production**, reflected in **FMCG and two-wheeler sales volumes**. Urban consumption slowed because of **high food inflation** and a **slack IT job market** affecting household income.

##### B. Impact on Investment

1. **Government Capex Decline:** Centre's capex fell by **15%** in the first half of the year. State government capex dropped by **11%**.
2. Investment by central public enterprises contracted by **11%** in the same period.

#### Will growth improve in the second half?

1. GDP growth is expected to recover due to **better agriculture production, rural demand**, and likely lower food inflation.
2. **Government capex** may rise as only **37% (central)** and **28% (state)** of budgeted capex was spent in the first half.

3. **Private investments** are gaining momentum, with **capital goods companies** seeing a **10% increase** in order books in 2024-25.

**What are the challenges ahead?**

1. **Imported inflation** and global risks like a **trade war** could impact growth.
2. **Excess capacity in China** may lead to competition in Indian markets.

**What steps are needed to sustain growth?**

1. Boost consumption by **creating jobs** and providing **tax benefits** in the upcoming budget.
2. Focus on **widening the consumption base** to include all segments of society.
3. Strengthen **domestic demand** to counter global uncertainties and ensure sustainable growth.

**Question for practice:**

Examine the factors contributing to India's slowing GDP growth and the measures needed to sustain economic recovery.

### **The role and challenges of State Commissioners under the RPWD Act 2016.**

**Source:** The post the role and challenges of State Commissioners under the RPWD Act 2016 has been created, based on the article "**Citizens with disabilities, making their rights real**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 3rd December 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 highlights the role and challenges of State Commissioners under the RPWD Act 2016. It discusses issues like delayed appointments, lack of independence, ineffective functioning, and suggests best practices, such as Karnataka's initiatives, for better disability rights implementation.

**What is the status of disability in India?**

1. According to the 2011 Census, persons with disabilities constitute 2.21% of India's population, but the 2019 WHO survey reported severe disability among 16% of Indian adults, indicating underreporting.
2. India ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2007 and enacted the RPWD Act, 2016. It aligns national legislation with the UN Convention principles.
3. The Act promotes a rights-based approach and creates the position of State Commissioners for Disabilities.

**What are the role and challenges of State Commissioners under the RPWD Act 2016?**

**A. Role of State Commissioners under the RPWD Act, 2016**

1. **Monitoring and Review:** Oversee the implementation of the RPWD Act across states and ensure compliance with its provisions.
2. **Quasi-Judicial Powers:** Act like civil courts under Section 82, with powers to investigate violations of the law.



**3. Policy Intervention:** Address policies, programs, and actions that violate disability rights and recommend corrective measures.

**4. Promoting Research:** Undertake studies on disability-inclusive policies and practices, like social protection and climate change impacts.

**5. Community Engagement:** Interact with persons with disabilities and organizations to address concerns and ensure inclusivity.

## B. Challenges Faced

**1. Delayed Appointments:** Highlighted in *Seema Girija Lal v. Union of India* (2021).

**2. Lack of Independence:** Majority of Commissioners are civil servants, with only 8 states appointing non-civil service experts.

**3. Poor Functioning:** Many fail to resolve complaints or address discriminatory practices, eroding public trust.

**4. Missed Opportunities:** Few states like Karnataka and Delhi ensure proactive engagement through mobile adalats and district reviews.

## What are the best practices for effective functioning?

1. Some states like Karnataka have taken positive steps by working with law schools and legal experts to strengthen the capacities of State Commissioners.

2. They also organize mobile courts to address grievances of disabled individuals in remote areas directly and quickly.

3. Additionally, designating District Magistrates as Deputy Commissioners for disabilities has been effective in making local governance more inclusive.

4. Karnataka's practices, like capacity building through law schools, show how evidence-based approaches enhance governance and grievance redressal.

## How Can Research Enhance Disability Rights?

1. State Commissioners are encouraged to conduct and promote research on disability rights.

2. Collaborating with UN entities to explore areas such as disability-inclusive social protection and the impact of climate change on disabled persons can help develop more inclusive policies and improve the overall rights situation for persons with disabilities in India.

## Question for practice:

Discuss the role, challenges, and best practices for State Commissioners under the RPWD Act, 2016, in ensuring disability rights in India.

## Why Manual Scavenging Still Exists in India

**Source:** The post Why Manual Scavenging Still Exists in India has been created, based on the article "**Express investigation of manual scavenging: The apathy must end**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 3rd December 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 the continued practice of manual scavenging in India despite legal bans and safety mandates. It discusses government failures, lack of accountability, and the social inequalities that force marginalized workers into hazardous sewer-cleaning jobs, risking their lives.

### What is the Current Status of Manual Scavenging in India?

1. Manual scavenging is officially banned in India since 1993, but the practice persists.
2. The 2013 law mandates 44 types of protective gear for workers cleaning sewers, yet compliance is poor.
3. Between 2018 and 2023, 443 workers died while cleaning septic tanks and sewers, according to the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
4. Enforcement is weak, with only one conviction for 75 sewer deaths in Delhi over 15 years.
5. Municipalities deny the practice and often fail to provide safety equipment.
6. Private contractors avoid accountability by not keeping proper records.
7. Many deaths occur in prominent locations, such as malls and hospitals in Delhi.

### Why do government efforts fail?

1. The Manual Scavengers and Their Rehabilitation Act (2013) and Supreme Court orders have not been implemented effectively.
2. Civil society groups highlight caste-based discrimination, economic inequalities, and poor sewerage infrastructure as reasons.
3. Machines are often too large for narrow urban lanes, forcing manual work.

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

### What Needs to Be Improved?

The government needs to strengthen enforcement of existing laws, hold contractors and local bodies accountable, and address the social issues that force people into this dangerous work. The success of initiatives like Swachh Bharat Mission should also include the safety and well-being of sewer workers.

### Question for practice:

Examine the reasons for the persistence of manual scavenging in India despite legal bans and government efforts.

### Religious nationalism threatens democracy and minority rights

**Source:** The post Why Manual Scavenging Still Exists in India has been created, based on the article “Pratap Bhanu Mehta writes: Why the South Asian neighbourhood is on edge” published in “Indian Express” on 3rd December 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper1-Society-Social empowerment, communalism, regionalism & secularism.

**Context:** The article discusses the rise of religious nationalism in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. It warns that this ideology harms democracy, increases sectarian violence, and threatens minorities. It argues that religious nationalism will lead to authoritarianism and destroy both human rights and democratic values in these countries.

For detailed information on **Threat of Majoritarianism to Indian and US Democracies** [read this article here](#)

### What is the main issue in South Asia?

South Asia, including India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, is witnessing rising religious nationalism. This threatens democracy, peace, and human decency. These countries show similar symptoms of communalism, with state policies increasingly targeting minorities and fostering religious conflicts.

### What is happening in Bangladesh?

1. **Loss of Legitimacy:** Sheikh Hasina's government faces declining legitimacy. Political rivalry between the Awami League and its opponents dominates Bangladesh's political history.
2. **Rise of Islamism:** Islamist groups are gaining influence, creating risks for minorities, especially Hindus.
3. **Communal Targeting Denials:** The elite deny Hindu targeting, citing reasons like collateral damage or performative secularism. India often exaggerates the situation for political gains, worsening the issue.

### What role does India play?

1. **Concerns About Minorities:** India claims concern for minorities in Bangladesh but uses it politically to stoke communalism domestically.
2. **Internal Majoritarianism:** India is normalizing hate speech, lynching, and prejudice. For example, actions like mosque claims and Waqf Board issues escalate communal tensions.
3. **Ayodhya Effect:** The Ayodhya dispute's outcome fuels further Hindu nationalist agendas rather than resolving communal issues.

### What is Pakistan's situation?

1. **Religious Identity Crisis:** Pakistan's state identity, based on religion, puts minorities like Ahmadiyyas and Shias at risk. Recent Shia-Sunni violence, such as in Kurram, highlights this problem.
2. **Perpetual Crisis:** The military's weakening legitimacy and religious benchmarking contribute to ongoing instability.
3. **Lessons for Others:** Pakistan demonstrates how state-enforced religion leads to authoritarianism and violence, influencing Hindutva ideologies in India.

### What is the key lesson?

1. The identities of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh remain tied due to their shared history of partition and current communal politics. Each uses the other's turmoil to justify its actions, worsening the regional crisis.
2. State-sponsored religious nationalism always leads to authoritarianism, undermines democracy, and causes humanitarian crises.
3. Examples include the communal targeting in Bangladesh, India's majoritarian politics, and Pakistan's religious identity crisis.

### Question for practice:

Discuss how religious nationalism in South Asia threatens democracy and minority rights in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.

## Challenges of a Three-Child Norm in India

**Source:** The post Challenges of a Three-Child Norm in India has been created, based on the article “**Reversing family planning: A three-child norm is regressive**” published in “**Business Standard**” on 3rd December 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper1-Society-population and associated issues

**Context:** The article discusses India's declining fertility rate, highlighting concerns about population policies. It critiques Mohan Bhagwat's suggestion for a three-child norm, emphasizing its negative impact on women and societal progress. It advocates improving education, healthcare, and welfare instead of encouraging larger families.

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

### What is the Current Fertility Rate in India?

1. India's total fertility rate (TFR) has fallen from over five births per woman in 1965 to 2.01 in 2022.
2. This rate is now below the replacement rate of 2.1.
3. A study by Lancet predicts that by 2050, India's TFR could drop to 1.29.

### What are the Concerns with a Three-Child Norm?

1. **Impact on Women's Rights:** Women will bear the disproportionate burden of having and raising children, reversing progress in education and employment.
2. **Low Female Labour Participation:** India's female labour participation rate is already low at 37%, and this policy may worsen it.
3. **Negative Effects on Poor Families:** Women from poorer and conservative families will be the most affected, further entrenching gender inequality.
4. **Administrative Challenges:** India lacks the socio-economic progress and welfare efficiency seen in Scandinavian countries, which successfully support larger families through incentives like equal paternity leave.

### What are the Implications for Southern States?

1. Andhra Pradesh, led by Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, has removed a two-child limit for candidates in local elections and is considering incentives for larger families. Telangana might follow this example.
2. Southern states like Tamil Nadu and Kerala, which have effectively controlled their population growth, worry about negative impacts on financial awards from the Finance Commission and reduced parliamentary representation. These concerns suggest a need for national policy adjustments.

For detailed information on **What is “Maharashtra's two-child norm” for govt employees?** [read this article here](#)

### What Should Be the Way Forward?

1. Encouraging larger families would harm social progress.
2. Instead, India should focus on strengthening education and healthcare.
3. This would ensure balanced development and avoid burdening women or reversing societal gains.

**Question for practice:**

Evaluate the potential social and economic impacts of implementing a three-child norm in India, as discussed in the article.

**Pardoning powers of U.S. and Indian presidents**

Source: The post pardoning powers of U.S. and Indian presidents has been created, based on the article “**What are the controversies around pardoning power?**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 4th December 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper2- Comparison of the Indian constitutional scheme with that of other countries.

**Context:** The article explains the pardoning powers of U.S. and Indian presidents, highlighting controversies like Joe Biden's pardon for his son. It compares systems, discusses misuse concerns, and suggests reforms for fairness and trust in democratic processes.

**What is the Pardoning Power in the U.S.?**

1. The U.S. President has absolute power to grant pardons for federal criminal offences, except in cases of impeachment.
2. A pardon can be issued before or after conviction or even before legal proceedings begin.
3. Historical examples include George Washington pardoning leaders of the Whiskey Rebellion in 1795 and Bill Clinton pardoning his half-brother Roger in 2001.

For detailed information on **Pardoning Power in the U.S** [read this article here](#)

**What is the Current Controversy?**

1. President Joe Biden pardoned his son, Hunter Biden, for federal tax and gun offences.
2. Hunter Biden was convicted of illegally buying and possessing a gun as a drug user and pleaded guilty to tax evasion.
3. The pardon also covers any federal crimes Hunter may have committed between 2014 and 2024.
4. Joe Biden had earlier promised not to pardon his son but justified this decision by claiming selective prosecution.
5. This decision has sparked debates, much like Donald Trump's 2020 pardon of his son-in-law's father.

**How Does the Pardoning System Work in India?**

1. Articles 72 and 161 of the Constitution empower the President and Governors to grant pardons, commutations, or reprieves.
2. These powers are exercised based on the advice of the council of ministers.
3. In India, a pardon removes conviction, punishment, and related disqualifications.
4. Controversies have arisen due to delays and perceived political motives in mercy petitions.
5. The Supreme Court in *Epuru Sudhakar* (2006) ruled that pardons can be judicially reviewed if they are arbitrary, mala fide, or influenced by external factors.



For detailed information on **The Supreme Court's Judgment on Pardoning Powers of the Governor** [read this article here](#)

### What Should be Done?

1. Critics argue that pardoning powers were created during monarchies and are often misused for political purposes.
2. In the U.K., the Criminal Cases Review Commission investigates alleged miscarriages of justice, reducing the use of royal pardons.
3. A transparent system for correcting judicial errors is recommended to maintain trust in democracy.
4. Pardons should avoid nepotism or arbitrariness to ensure public trust in constitutional offices.

### Question for practice:

Examine how the pardoning powers of the U.S. President and the Indian President differ and discuss the controversies surrounding their use.

### Theatre of Negotiations' experiment

Source: The post Theatre of Negotiations' experiment has been created, based on the article "**Rethinking 'representation' for a meaningful COP30**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 4th December 2024

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

**Context:** The article discusses the challenges of climate change negotiations at COP29 and suggests a new approach to representation. It proposes giving equal rights to humans and non-humans, like the atmosphere and oceans, in negotiations, aiming for more inclusive and effective climate action.

### Why is COP29 seen as slow progress?

1. COP29 negotiations in Baku faced criticism for limited progress. Critics argue that the lack of a unified global authority and a universal metric for diverse nation-states' interests hinder effective climate action.
2. There is no global authority to act for the planet, making unified action difficult.
3. Diverse political, economic, and social interests of nations hinder consensus.
4. Critics argue that 'business as usual' is not working.

For detailed information on **COP 29 Outcomes** [read this article here](#)

### What is the 'Theatre of Negotiations' experiment?

1. **Overview:** The 'Theatre of Negotiations' was a week-long event held in May 2015 at Sciences Po, Paris, involving 200 students from 143 universities worldwide.
2. **Purpose:** It aimed to reimagine traditional COP climate negotiations by granting equal representation to both humans and non-humans, such as the atmosphere and oceans.
3. **Representation:** Non-human entities "spoke" through proxies to express their stakes in climate talks. For instance, the "Ocean" imposed conditions on the "United States," and the "Atmosphere" addressed "China" about emissions.

4. **Inclusive Approach:** Delegations included state representatives, scientists, businesses, and civil society, ensuring diverse perspectives.
5. **Outcomes:** Participants learned the importance of clear communication, while organisers identified logistical challenges.
6. **Significance:** The experiment demonstrated new ways to address climate challenges by rethinking sovereignty and ecosystem interdependence, offering an inclusive model for future negotiations.

#### How is representation of non-humans evolving globally?

1. Non-humans, like the atmosphere and oceans, are gaining legal and political agency as "interest bearers."
2. Countries like **Ecuador** and **New Zealand** grant legal rights to rivers and ecosystems.
3. **India** and **Pakistan** use courts to provide representation for non-humans.
4. In Canada, institutions recognize the moral standing of non-humans.
5. This reflects a growing trend to expand governance to include environmental entities, ensuring a more inclusive approach to climate action.

#### What should COP30 in Belém focus on?

1. COP30 in the Amazon could represent the "Amazon" itself as an entity.
2. Transparency and alignment of policies with climate values are essential for success.
3. Hosting COPs in oil-dependent economies erodes trust and progress.
4. New negotiation methods and actionable commitments are needed to bridge the gap between ambition and action.

#### Question for practice:

Discuss how the representation of non-humans in climate negotiations can lead to more inclusive and effective climate action.

### India's Population Growth and Its Wide Impacts

**Source:** The post India's Population Growth and Its Wide Impacts has been created, based on the article "Why scrutiny of lower fertility rates isn't the answer to the delimitation crisis" published in "Indian Express" on 4th December 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper1-Society-population and associated issues

**Context:** The article discusses India's population growth and its political, economic, and social impacts. It highlights the consequences of varying fertility rates among states, suggesting solutions like freezing delimitation, addressing demographic change, promoting economic growth, and focusing on reducing fertility in high TFR states.

#### What is India's population scenario?

1. India's population is expected to peak at **170 crores by 2070** and decline afterward.

2. The **Total Fertility Rate (TFR)** is 2, slightly below the replacement level of 2.1.
3. About **two-thirds** of India's population lives in states with replacement or lower fertility rates.
4. **Five states** have a TFR above 2.1, requiring focused intervention.
5. TFR varies significantly, from 1.5 in some states to 3.0 in others (as per NFHS-5).
6. Population reduction efforts must focus on empowering women and improving reproductive health services in high-TFR states to ensure balanced growth.

For detailed information on **UN Report on India's Population Growth** [read this article here](#)

#### **How has delimitation been addressed politically?**

1. **Freezing of Delimitation:** Delimitation of Parliamentary seats based on population was frozen in 1976 for 25 years and extended again in 2001 for another 25 years.
2. **Rationale for Freeze:** This measure prevents penalizing states that successfully reduced fertility rates.
3. **Extension Proposal:** Extending the freeze for another 25 years is suggested to maintain fairness.
4. **Alternative Solutions:** Proposals like allocating seats based on vote share were discussed but deemed impractical.
5. States like Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, with low fertility rates, might lose Parliamentary representation without this freeze.

#### **How does population affect resource distribution?**

1. The Finance Commission allocates resources based on population.
2. Before its 14th edition (constituted in 2013 for 2015-2020), calculations were based on the 1971 population.
3. From the 14th Finance Commission onward, calculations shifted to using current population figures (2011 Census data).
4. To offset disadvantages to states with low fertility rates, a "demographic change" variable was introduced.
5. In the 15th Finance Commission, population was weighted at 15%, and demographic change at 12.5%.
6. States with higher populations benefit more, while states reducing fertility rates receive less unless adjustments are made. This approach balances fairness and supports population control efforts.

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

#### **Why is increasing fertility in low-TFR states unwise?**

1. **Low Fertility Rates Reflect Progress:** States with low Total Fertility Rates (TFR), like 1.5 (NFHS-5), have achieved this by understanding the hardships of large families.
2. **India is Overpopulated:** The population will peak at 170 crores by 2070, requiring high economic growth for a decent standard of living.

3. **Behavioral Patterns Are Hard to Change:** Residents in low-TFR states may resist efforts to increase fertility due to their existing mindset.

4. **Impracticality:** Raising TFR where it is already low contradicts the goal of reducing overall population pressure.

#### What should be done?

1. **Enhancing Women's Empowerment:** Empowered women tend to have fewer children.

2. **Improving Reproductive Health Services:** Better services help couples plan smaller families.

3. A multi-pronged approach, including freezing delimitation, improving health services, empowering women, and supporting lagging states economically, is necessary for harmonious relations and balanced development.

#### Question for practice:

Examine how India's population dynamics influence political representation, resource allocation, and the need for targeted interventions in high TFR states.

### Trump's Tariff Policies Reshaping Global Trade Dynamics

**Source:** The post Trump's Tariff Policies Reshaping Global Trade Dynamics has been created, based on the article "**Ready, set, tariff: Donald Trump's bargaining chip and Delhi's chance to reshape bilateral trade**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 4th December 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 Donald Trump's tariff-driven policies, focusing on reshaping global trade and finance. It highlights his threats against BRICS, emphasis on leveraging tariffs for foreign policy, and India's need to adapt its trade strategy with the US.

For detailed information on **Trump's Tariffs and Their Impact on Trade** [read this article here](#)

#### What is Trump's tariff strategy?

**High Tariffs on Imports:** Trump plans to impose 60% tariffs on Chinese imports and 20% on imports from other countries, aiming to reduce trade deficits and strengthen domestic industries.

**Tariffs for Foreign Policy:** Trump's nominee Scott Bessent highlights tariffs as tools to achieve objectives like increasing allies' defense spending, stopping drug trafficking, and deterring military aggression.

**Leveraging US Market Power:** The US, being the largest importer, uses its market size to dictate global trade terms.

**Actions During First Term:** Trump withdrew from the Pacific Free Trade talks, renegotiated NAFTA, and imposed tariffs on China, Canada, and the EU, reshaping global trade relations.

#### Why does Trump target BRICS nations?

1. Trump threatened 100% tariffs on imports from BRICS nations if they create an alternative currency to the US dollar.

2. He wants to defend the dollar's global reserve currency status.

3. However, BRICS countries lack unity and financial capability for such a move.
4. India's economic ties with the US remain vital, despite echoing BRICS rhetoric on de-dollarisation.

#### What challenges do US trade partners face?

1. **Pressure on Negotiations:** Mexico and Canada faced 25% tariff threats over drug and migrant issues, prompting them to negotiate.
2. **Europe's Trade Surplus:** Trump labeled Europe "more dangerous than China," pushing it to reduce trade imbalances.
3. **Limited Retaliation:** European Central Bank President Christine Lagarde advised against retaliatory tariffs, favoring negotiation.
4. **Uncertainty in Trade Relations:** Partners must adapt to Trump's tariff-led foreign policy goals.

#### What should India do?

1. **Reassess Trade Policies:** India should adapt to Trump's tariff-driven policies by emphasizing reciprocity and mutual benefit, as highlighted by S. Jaishankar.
2. **Leverage US-China Rivalry:** India can strengthen trade ties with the US by using Trump's focus on China to its advantage.
3. **Focus on Mutual Gains:** India should align with Trump's vision of a "fair-trade block" among allies with shared interests. India has an opportunity to align with this vision while protecting its economic interests.

#### Question for practice:

Examine how Trump's tariff-driven policies influence India's trade strategy and its relationship with the United States.

### Analyzing India's Economic Slowdown and Policy Responses

**Source:** The post Analyzing India's Economic Slowdown and Policy Responses has been created, based on the article "Bring on the rate cut" published in "Indian Express" on 4th December 2024

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

**Context:** The article discusses India's economic slowdown and policy responses. It highlights factors like high interest rates, manufacturing slowdown, and the need for better fiscal and monetary coordination. It emphasizes the importance of targeted reforms, especially in agriculture and food supply chains, to sustain growth.

For detailed information on **India's Economic Slowdown and Path to Recovery** read [Article1](#), [Article2](#)

#### What caused the economic slowdown in India?

1. **High real policy rates:** Persistent real policy rates higher than unity led to a slowdown in durable consumption, especially among first-time salary earners. Manufacturing and construction, which are interest-sensitive sectors, saw the largest growth slowdown. Like, Firms preferred earning treasury income rather than expanding capacity.



**2. Lack of counter-cyclical policies:** Domestic policy did not respond adequately to the falling export growth by boosting domestic demand. This imbalance contributed to the economic slowdown.

**3. Simultaneous tightening of policies:** Government spending slowed due to the election, while macro-prudential policies tightened in overheated areas. However, monetary policy did not ease to counterbalance these actions.

**4. Consumption patterns:** Despite the K-shaped recovery, private consumption grew at 6% this year, up from 4% last year, showing the slowdown was cyclical. **Example:** Services continued to grow, indicating a recovery in certain sectors.

**5. Inflation and high interest rates:** High inflation expectations and tight liquidity also contributed to slow growth.

#### What role do global factors play in India's growth?

**1. Global shocks from U.S. policy:** The article mentions that U.S. policy under Donald Trump could lead to global shocks, which would require counter-cyclical domestic policies in India.

**2. Impact of global inflation:** Global inflation, particularly due to food and fuel prices, affects India's domestic inflation and economic growth.

**3. Export growth slowdown:** India's export growth has been affected by external factors, further highlighting the impact of global conditions on India's economy.

#### What can be done to improve the economy?

**1. Monetary policy adjustments:** A policy rate cut is long overdue to boost demand. High real rates need to be reduced. Cutting rates will help reduce liquidity pressure and support growth.

**2. Fiscal reforms in agriculture:** Restructure agricultural policies to shift consumer demand to non-grain food items. Like, spending more on vegetables and reducing barriers to private participation in supply chains.

**3. Better coordination of policies:** Improve fiscal and monetary coordination to ensure smooth growth. The government should support demand while monetary policy should ease when needed.

**4. Encourage investment and employment:** Induce firms to invest and employ more by ensuring steady growth.

#### Question for practice:

Examine the key factors contributing to India's economic slowdown and the policy measures needed to address them.

### Sixteenth Finance Commission and India's Fiscal Challenges

**Source:** The post Sixteenth Finance Commission and India's Fiscal Challenges has been created, based on the article “States and the challenge before the Finance Commission” published in “The Hindu” on 6th December 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper2-Indian Polity – Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies.

**Context:** The article discusses the Sixteenth Finance Commission chaired by Arvind Panagariya, focusing on fiscal challenges in India. It highlights the need for a fair distribution of resources between States and the Union, addressing issues like devolution, growth incentives, urbanization, and demographic changes.

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

### What is the Role of the Sixteenth Finance Commission?

1. The Sixteenth Finance Commission, led by Arvind Panagariya, is tasked with addressing India's fiscal challenges and improving the financial relationship between the States and the Union.
2. It aims to create a balance between equitable redistribution of resources and incentivizing growth in high-performing States like Tamil Nadu.

For detailed information on **16th Finance Commission** [read this article here](#)

### How do global trends impact the Commission's decisions?

1. Global economic changes, such as "friendshoring" and "reshoring," are reshaping trade and investment.
2. These trends provide opportunities for India, especially Tamil Nadu, to strengthen its position in international markets.
3. The Commission must align its policies to support this growth.

### How Has the Finance Commission Changed Over Time?

1. Since its first formation in 1951, each Finance Commission has tried to fairly distribute resources.
2. They have increased the States' share of taxes and directed funds to less-developed regions.
3. However, there have been discrepancies in achieving these goals, as shown by the Fifteenth Finance Commission's results where the actual money given to States was only 33.16% of the Union's gross tax revenue instead of the proposed 41%.

### What challenges do progressive States face?

1. **Aging Population:** States like Tamil Nadu face rising costs to support an aging population, as their median age is above the national average. This reduces consumption-based tax revenue.
2. **Urbanization:** Tamil Nadu is rapidly urbanizing, with its urban population projected to reach 57.30% by 2031, compared to the national average of 37.90%. This creates infrastructure demands.
3. **Middle-Income Trap:** Progressive States risk stagnation and "growing old before becoming rich."
4. **Fiscal Strain:** Limited fiscal autonomy and inadequate resource allocation hinder these States' ability to sustain growth and address local needs effectively.

### What should be done for future resource distribution?

1. States should receive 50% of the gross central taxes to better manage local schemes and expenses.
2. There is a need to balance between giving enough resources to both less-developed and progressive States to support overall growth.

### What is the broader impact of the Commission's work?

1. The Commission's decisions affect manufacturing, urban challenges, and climate resilience.
2. Its work is vital for ensuring that all States contribute to and benefit from national progress, aiming to position India among the leading global economies.

**Question for practice:**

Examine the impact of global economic trends on the decisions and policies of the Sixteenth Finance Commission.

**India strengthens global relations through Modi's visits**

**Source:** The post India strengthens global relations through Modi's visits has been created, based on the article "A three-nation visit as a foray into summit diplomacy" published in "The Hindu" on 6th December 2024

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

**Context:** The article discusses Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Nigeria, Brazil, and Guyana from November 16-21, 2024. It highlights India's focus on strengthening bilateral ties, promoting Global South perspectives, and enhancing cooperation in diverse sectors across three regions.

**Why was Nigeria the first stop?**

1. **Key Highlights:** Nigeria is Africa's most populous nation and the fourth-largest economy. It was invited to the G-20 and BRICS due to its growing global influence.
2. **Ceremonial Honours:** PM Modi was gifted the keys to Abuja and received a national award recognizing India-Nigeria ties.
3. **Bilateral Cooperation:** Discussions included expanding trade, investment, education, energy, and agriculture. India also committed to fighting terrorism and radicalization with Nigeria.
4. **MOUs Signed:** Three MOUs were finalized despite delays.
5. **India's Role:** Nigeria benefits from India's development assistance and human resource programs.

**What was India's contribution at the G-20 summit in Brazil?**

1. **Focus Areas:** Hosted in Rio de Janeiro (November 18-19), the summit advanced the Global South's perspectives initiated in New Delhi. Key priorities were social inclusion, sustainable development, and governance reform.

**2. Achievements:**

- Launched the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty.
- Adopted a roadmap for stronger multilateral development banks.

**3. Challenges:**

- Limited progress on climate finance.
- No significant breakthroughs on UN and WTO reforms.

4. **India's Diplomacy:** PM Modi met leaders from the US, Europe, and the Global South. Indian and Chinese foreign ministers discussed steps for rapprochement.

**What made Guyana significant?**

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- 1. Historical and Strategic Importance:** Guyana has a 40% Indian-origin population and growing energy resources. It also plays a key role in the Caribbean.
- 2. MOUs Signed:** 10 agreements covered energy, defence, urban development, and education.
- 3. India-Caribbean Community Summit:** PM Modi proposed seven pillars of cooperation, including agriculture, climate change, technology, and culture. These pillars aligned with Caribbean priorities.
- 4. Recognition:** Guyana's President praised Modi as a "champion among leaders."

### What was the overall outcome?

1. In six days, the visit showcased India's growing global role and commitment to fostering ties.
2. The outcomes included deeper bilateral and regional cooperation, strengthened India's G-20 leadership, and expanded relations with Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

### Question for practice:

Discuss the significance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Nigeria, Brazil, and Guyana in strengthening India's global role and fostering bilateral and regional cooperation.

## China's Critical Minerals Control Challenges US Dependency

**Source:** The post China's Critical Minerals Control Challenges US Dependency has been created, based on the article "**China's mineral export curbs have a silver lining for the US**" published in "**Live mint**" on 6th December 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper2-International Relations- Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests,

**Context:** The article discusses China's dominance in critical minerals essential for clean energy and military uses. It highlights U.S. dependence, Trump's anti-green policies, efforts to boost domestic mining, and geopolitical tensions influencing critical mineral strategies during his upcoming presidency.

For detailed information on **Issue with China's Export Restrictions** [read this article here](#)

### How Does China Dominate Critical Minerals?

1. China plays a crucial role in the global energy transition due to its dominance in critical minerals.
2. It recently banned exports of antimony, gallium, and germanium to the U.S., which are used in semiconductors, ammunition, and electronics.
3. China also restricted graphite exports, a key material for EV batteries and grid storage.

### Why Are Critical Minerals Important?

- 1. Essential for Energy Transition:** Minerals like graphite, cobalt, and lithium are crucial for EV batteries and grid storage.
- 2. Military Applications:** Minerals such as gallium, graphite, and rare earths like lanthanum are used in semiconductors, bombs, and electronics.
- 3. U.S. Dependency:** The U.S. depends entirely on imports for 12 of 50 identified critical minerals, including gallium and natural graphite. Over 50% of its supply for 29 others comes from foreign sources.

### What Is the U.S. Doing to Address This?

1. The U.S. is boosting domestic critical mineral production to reduce dependence on imports, especially from China.
2. **Grants and Loans:** The Pentagon funded Graphite One to mine graphite in Alaska. The company is also seeking further loans from the Export-Import Bank to counter China's dominance.
3. **Increasing Mining:** Non-fuel mineral mining employed 150,000 people in 2023, almost matching oil, gas, and coal production combined.
4. **Trump's Presidency Impact:** Trump supports mining and drilling. His administration may ease mine permitting, open federal lands for mineral extraction, and prioritize stockpiling critical minerals to reduce foreign reliance.

### What Challenges Lie Ahead?

1. **Geopolitical Tensions:** China's export bans, such as on graphite, impact U.S. supply chains.
2. Decarbonization efforts may slow under Trump, but critical mineral demand will remain high.
3. U.S. dependence on China drives urgency to build domestic capacity despite geopolitical tensions.

### Question for practice:

Examine how China's dominance in critical minerals impacts U.S. energy transition and military capabilities.

### Brazil's Cadastro Ambiental Rural (CAR) system

**Source:** The post Brazil's *Cadastro Ambiental Rural* (CAR) system has been created, based on the article “**Let digital public infrastructure help meet climate aims**” published in “**Live mint**” on 6th December 2024

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

**Context:** The article discusses Brazil's *Cadastro Ambiental Rural* (CAR), a digital platform to map and monitor rural land use. It ensures compliance with environmental laws, promotes sustainable practices, reduces costs for farmers. The system could be adapted for other countries to meet sustainability goals and create evidence-based policies.

### What is Brazil's CAR system?

1. **CAR (Cadastro Ambiental Rural)** is Brazil's digital rural environmental registry under the Forestry Code.
2. It maps, monitors, and regulates rural properties to promote sustainable land use.
3. Farmers self-declare their land, providing geo-referenced details on boundaries, forest areas, water bodies, and preservation zones.

### Why is CAR important for Brazil?

1. **Addresses Deforestation:** Brazil has lost **97% of its native vegetation** due to aggressive agricultural expansion.
2. **Supports Trade Compliance:** CAR helps Brazil meet regulations like the **EU Deforestation**

**Regulation,** ensuring access to global markets.



3. **Promotes Sustainable Practices:** Farmers prove compliance with sustainability targets using CAR.
4. **Reduces Costs:** Small producers avoid high certification costs for deforestation-free products.
5. **Facilitates Policy Design:** Policymakers use CAR data to offer **incentives for compliance** and enforce penalties.
6. **Encourages Loans:** Lenders use CAR for verifying sustainability compliance before approving agricultural loans.
7. **Consumer Assurance:** Buyers verify product origins using CAR.

#### **What is CAR's potential for global climate action?**

1. CAR could be modular and interoperable like India's digital public infrastructure (DPI).
2. It could integrate with **sustainability certificates, benefit transfers**, and other government solutions.
3. Other countries could adapt CAR-like systems for their ecological challenges.
4. CAR can inspire a **climate-change DPI** model.
5. With **CoP-30 in Brazil**, the government could showcase CAR globally.
6. It can help regulators develop evidence-based policies to meet sustainability goals.

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

Examine how Brazil's Cadastro Ambiental Rural (CAR) addresses environmental sustainability and supports global climate action.

#### **Lessons learned from the 1896 Bombay Plague**

**Source:** The post Lessons learned from the 1896 Bombay Plague has been created, based on the article "**Public health — insights from the 1896 Bombay Plague**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 7th December 2024

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

**Context:** The article discusses the 1896 Bombay Plague and how colonial authorities used mapping, policing, and surveillance to control the epidemic. It highlights the shift from focusing on public health to maintaining order and examines lessons for modern public health policies, ethics, and surveillance practices.

#### **What was the Bombay Plague and its impact on Colonial India?**

1. The Bombay Plague of 1896-97 was a major epidemic in colonial India.
2. It originated in Bombay through trade with the Far East and spread across the subcontinent, killing over 370,000 people by September 1899. The outbreak exposed weaknesses in public health infrastructure.
3. The colonial government formed the Indian Plague Commission in 1898, chaired by T.R. Fraser, to study the epidemic.
4. Despite extensive investigations and five volumes of documentation, the Commission failed to determine the plague's origins and transmission.

5. The Indian Plague Commission used maps to highlight control measures rather than disease spread. Unlike John Snow's maps of cholera cases, these maps emphasized railway lines, inspection stations, and quarantine zones.

6. The focus was on maintaining order rather than addressing community health needs.

#### **What role did policing play in managing the plague?**

1. Policing was central to controlling the plague. The government used police to enforce quarantines, monitor movement, and collect data.

2. Observation camps near railway stations were operated by police.

3. Military ward orderlies were deployed in hospitals.

4. Chaukidars reported deaths to police stations, a practice that continues in some areas for death registration.

5. The reliance on policing linked public health with colonial control, prioritizing order over care. The Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897, gave the state unrestrained powers, often misused.

#### **What were the ethical implications of these measures?**

1. Colonial strategies prioritized control over care, raising ethical concerns.

2. Maps and data reinforced power dynamics and overshadowed individual suffering.

3. Control measures were aimed at protecting colonial interests, not improving community health.

4. The Indian Plague Commission's focus on control reflected a lack of transparency and respect for individual rights.

#### **What lessons can be learned for modern public health?**

The Bombay Plague provides key insights for today's public health strategies:

1. **Framing health problems:** Prioritize individuals and communities over control measures.

2. **Evolving surveillance:** Transition from policing to health professionals for surveillance reflects ethical progress.

3. **Ethical governance:** Balance effective control with transparency and respect for freedoms.

4. **Power dynamics:** Ensure data collection methods do not reinforce inequities.

5. **Continuity in practices:** Practices like death reporting by police highlight lasting influences of colonial approaches.

By learning from history, policymakers can design surveillance systems that address health crises ethically and effectively.

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

Examine how colonial strategies during the 1896 Bombay Plague influenced public health practices and their ethical implications.

## India's Manufacturing Growth and Challenges it Faced

**Source:** The post India's Manufacturing Growth and Challenges it Faced has been created, based on the article "Building on the revival of the manufacturing sector" published in "The Hindu" on 7th December 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper3- Economy-growth, development and employment and changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth.

**Context:** The article discusses India's efforts to become a global manufacturing hub through the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme. It highlights the sector's growth, challenges like high input prices, the need for regional balance, and focus on MSMEs and women's participation to boost inclusive development. For detailed information on **India Struggling to become a Global Manufacturing Hub** [read this article here](#)

### What is the Impact of the PLI Scheme on India's Manufacturing Sector?

1. The Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme has transformed India's manufacturing landscape.
2. It has driven growth in mobile manufacturing, electronics, pharmaceuticals, automobiles, and textiles.
3. Manufacturing output grew by **21.5%**, and Gross Value Added (GVA) grew by **7.3%** in 2022-23 (ASI data).
4. Sectors like basic metals, chemicals, motor vehicles, and food products contributed **58% of manufacturing output**, with a growth of **24.5%**.
5. The PLI scheme has enhanced production, exports, and job creation.

### What challenges does India face in manufacturing?

1. **Input Costs:** Input prices surged by **24.4%** in 2022-23, causing a gap between output growth (21.5%) and GVA growth (7.3%).
2. **Import Dependency:** High import costs of raw materials impact competitiveness.
3. **Regional Imbalance:** Over 54% of manufacturing GVA and 55% of employment are concentrated in states like Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Uttar Pradesh, limiting equitable growth across other regions.
4. **MSME Challenges:** MSMEs contribute 45% to manufacturing GDP but face barriers due to high investment thresholds in PLI schemes. This limits their ability to scale up and integrate into value chains.
5. **Low Female Participation:** Manufacturing output could rise by 9% with increased women's participation. Lack of supportive infrastructure, such as childcare facilities, hinders this potential.

### What is India's manufacturing vision for 2047?

1. India aims to raise manufacturing's share in GVA from **17% to 25% by 2030-31** and **27% by 2047-48**.
2. Sustained efforts in domestic manufacturing and value addition are critical.
3. Policies improving ease of doing business will help achieve this vision.

**Conclusion:** India's manufacturing sector is growing steadily with strong policy support. Expanding PLI, addressing challenges, and fostering inclusivity can make India a global manufacturing powerhouse.

### Question for practice:

Examine the impact of the PLI scheme on India's manufacturing sector and the challenges hindering its growth.

### **RBI's monetary policy decisions aim to balance inflation control and economic growth**

**Source:** The post India's Manufacturing Growth and Challenges it Faced has been created, based on the article "Staying the course: The RBI has done well to stay focused on inflation amid rate cut clamour" published in "The Hindu" and the article "MPC FOCUSES ON STABLE INFLATION, LIQUIDITY BOOST" published in "Live mint" on 7th December 2024

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

**Context:** The article discusses the RBI's monetary policy. It highlights the decision to keep interest rates unchanged but lower the cash reserve ratio to improve liquidity. The RBI revised GDP growth and inflation forecasts downward due to weak consumption and investment. It emphasizes balancing inflation control with growth, while expecting improved economic conditions in the second half of the year.

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

#### **What decisions did the RBI's MPC make?**

1. **Interest Rate:** The MPC kept the benchmark interest rate unchanged at **6.50%** for the 11th consecutive time.
2. **Focus:** The MPC maintained a **neutral policy stance**, balancing inflation control and growth support.
3. **CRR Reduction:** To improve liquidity, the RBI reduced the **cash reserve ratio (CRR)** by **50 basis points to 4%**, releasing ₹1.16 trillion liquidity in two phases.
4. **Growth Forecast:** The RBI lowered the **GDP growth forecast** for FY25 to **6.6%** from **7.2%**, and for Q1FY26 to **6.9%** from **7.3%**.
5. **Inflation Target:** The FY25 inflation forecast was revised upward to **4.8%** from **4.5%**, reflecting food price spikes.
6. **Support Measures:** Liquidity measures like OMOs and activity in the **NDF market** were enhanced to stabilize the economy.

#### **How Has Inflation Affected the Economy?**

1. **Rising Prices:** Inflation spiked in September and October due to high food prices, impacting household spending.
2. **Lower GDP Growth:** Q2FY25 GDP growth fell to **5.4%** from an earlier estimate of **7%**, driven by weak private consumption and investment.
3. **Impact on Urban Spending:** High inflation reduced households' spending power, affecting urban consumption
4. **Balanced Risks:** While inflation risks remain due to adverse weather and global price hikes, cooling measures like the kharif harvest are expected to help.

#### **What are the risks and expectations?**

1. Risks include global commodity price rises, adverse weather, and geopolitical uncertainty.
2. The RBI expects inflation risks to remain balanced.

3. Liquidity support measures, like OMOs, are expected to continue in Q1CY2025.
4. A rate cut cycle may start in **February 2025** with a 50 bps reduction.

#### How is the economic situation evolving?

1. Domestic economic activity rebounded post-Q2FY25, helped by the festive season and rural demand.
2. The RBI remains hopeful of GDP recovery and inflation cooling in H2FY25.
3. The government may consider steps like **rolling back import duties on edible oils** to ease inflation and boost consumption.

#### Question for practice:

Discuss how the RBI's monetary policy decisions aim to balance inflation control and economic growth in the current economic scenario.

#### Risk of silicosis among Indian mine workers

**Source:** The post risk of silicosis among Indian mine workers has been created, based on the article "**Silica scars: On India's silicosis problem**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 7th December 2024

**UPSC Syllabus Topic:** GS Paper

Context: The article discusses the severe risk of silicosis among Indian mine workers exposed to silica dust. It highlights government inaction, poor enforcement of safety laws, misdiagnoses, and the exploitation of workers in low-literacy, resource-dependent mining regions.

#### What is Silicosis and Why is it a Concern?

1. **Silicosis** is a chronic lung disease caused by inhaling microscopic silica dust particles found in sand and stone.
2. It occurs when silica particles lodge in the lungs, impairing their normal function. The risk is age-agnostic but depends on exposure duration. Once developed, it is irreversible and life-threatening.
3. A **1999 report by the Indian Council of Medical Research** estimated over 8 million Indians were highly exposed to silica dust. This number has likely increased due to expanded mining activities to meet India's growth aspirations.
4. Workers often delay seeking medical help until the disease becomes critical.
5. Health-care providers frequently misdiagnose silicosis as tuberculosis, further worsening the problem.
6. Silicosis exemplifies poor enforcement of worker safety laws, especially in resource-dependent regions with limited health-care access.

#### What Actions Has the National Green Tribunal Taken?

1. On November 29, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) directed the Central Pollution Control Board to create new guidelines for silica mining and washing plants.
2. The Uttar Pradesh government was also instructed to establish health-care facilities near silica mines.
3. These steps aim to reduce health risks and provide medical support for affected workers.



**What Does the Law Say About Worker Safety?**

1. The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code 2020 requires mine operators to:

- Notify authorities about workplace threats and cases of silicosis.
- Provide free annual health check-ups for workers.

2. However, mine operators often fail to report cases, preventing authorities from tracking workplace practices. States also do not collect this data independently.

**What is the Broader Context of This Issue?**

1. Mining regions, often with low literacy and health-care coverage, rely heavily on mining for income.
2. This dependency compels workers to endure poor conditions without seeking help, exacerbating the health crisis.
3. The state's lack of proactive measures contrasts with India's active climate justice advocacy internationally.

**Question for practice:**

Examine how government inaction and poor enforcement of safety laws contribute to the prevalence of silicosis among Indian mine workers.