

9 PM Current Affairs Weekly Compilation

For UPSC CSE mains examination



3rd Week

Jan. 2025

Features :

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

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Gender inequality and the problem with overwork

Source: The post Gender inequality and the problem with overwork has been created, based on the article “**Best of Both Sides: Working 70-90 hours isn’t the answer – more equity is**” published in “**Indian Express**” on 17th January 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper1- Society- Woman empowerment & GS3- Economy- Employment

Context: The article highlights gender disparities in domestic and paid work, criticizes glorifying long work hours, and emphasizes the need for sustainable schedules, fair compensation, and equity. It advocates balanced lives for both men and women to ensure a thriving, productive workforce.

For detailed information on **The Issue of Overwork in India** [read this article here](#)

What is the Issue with Long Work Hours?

1. **Glorification of Overwork:** Companies often promote long work hours, as reflected in the L&T chairman's comments about working on Sundays.
2. **Neglect of Well-being:** Such practices disregard employees' need for rest and their family responsibilities.
3. **Gender Inequality in Domestic Work:** Indian women perform 10 times more domestic work than men, with disparities peaking in Haryana (17x) and Gujarat (14x).
4. **Impact on Low-Income Women:** Women in lower-income groups work long, unstable hours and still shoulder most domestic responsibilities.
5. **Inequitable Compensation:** At L&T, managerial salaries increased by 20.38%, while worker salaries rose only 1.74%, highlighting unfair rewards for hard work.
6. **Career Barriers for Women:** Long hours force women onto the “mommy track,” stalling their professional growth and worsening gender inequality.

What is the Solution?

1. Sustainable work schedules are necessary to ensure employees do not burn out and can maintain a healthy work-life balance.
2. Balancing professional and personal life is essential for fostering a thriving workforce.
3. Gender equity is crucial—both men and women should have the opportunity to succeed professionally without sacrificing family or health.
4. Encouraging shared domestic responsibilities and reducing the “mommy track” burden on women will bridge the gender wage gap and ensure a more equitable society.

For detailed information on **Closing the gender pay gap in the workforce** [read this article here](#)

Question for practice:

Examine the impact of long work hours on gender disparities and employee well-being.

India champions hard work over vacation culture.

Source: The post India champions hard work over vacation culture has been created, based on the article “**Best of Both Sides: 90-hour work week isn’t always bad: Holidays and vacations are colonial hangover**” published in “**Indian Express**” on 17th January 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper1-Society- Woman empowerment & GS3- Economy- Employment

Context: The article defends L&T Chairman S N Subrahmanyam’s advice on hard work, emphasizing India’s cultural ethos of dedication to work. It criticizes excessive vacation culture, highlights the economic need for hard work, and promotes work as a path to national growth.

For detailed information on **70 Hours Work Week** [read this article here](#)

How does Indian work culture differ from Western vacation trends?

1. Indian ethos values *karmayogis* (dedicated workers) over *vacation bhogis* (pleasure-seekers).
2. From the Bhagavad Gita to historical practices, Indians focus on completing duties before seeking leisure.
3. The “holiday craze” is seen as a colonial influence, copied blindly from the West.
4. Indian workers traditionally thrive on *vidya* (knowledge) and find joy in work.

What demonstrates the importance of hard work?

1. **L&T’s Success:** Larsen & Toubro’s employees refused higher-paying offers due to its supportive, hardworking culture, showcasing how dedication builds trust and growth.
2. **Leadership Example:** PM Modi works tirelessly, even during long flights, inspiring millions.
3. **Historical Inspiration:** Swami Vivekananda’s quote: “Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached.”
4. **Worker Dedication: Vegetable vendors start at 4 am, demonstrating the necessity of hard work to support families.**
5. **Global Aspirations:** Hard work can make India a manufacturing hub, improving living standards.

What Are the Implications of a Vacation Culture?

1. **Economic Loss:** Excessive holidays, like five to six continuous days off, harm productivity and the economy. For example, West Bengal’s holiday-centric work culture hurt its economy, while Gujarat thrived under a “work hard” ethos.
2. **Public Work Impact:** Frequent holidays delay essential public work, causing inefficiencies.
3. **Cultural Mismatch:** Vacation culture contrasts with India’s ethos of “Karm Hi Puja Hai” (Work is worship).

4. **State Policies:** Holidays declared for festivals or leaders' anniversaries prioritize votes over economic goals.

Conclusion:

India's cultural ethos emphasizes hard work, exemplified by L&T's supportive environment and Prime Minister Modi's continuous dedication. Excessive holidays are criticized for causing economic losses. The ethos of "work as worship" is advocated as crucial for raising living standards and establishing India as a global manufacturing hub.

Question for practice:

Discuss how India's cultural ethos of hard work contrasts with the implications of adopting a vacation-centric work culture.

IMD Celebrates 150 Years and Improves Weather Forecasting Accuracy

Source: The post IMD Celebrates 150 Years and Improves Weather Forecasting Accuracy has been created, based on the article "**150 years of IMD: What the weather agency has planned for the future**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 17th January 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Disaster and disaster management.

Context: The article discusses the India Meteorological Department (IMD) celebrating its 150th anniversary on January 15. It highlights the improvements in weather forecasting accuracy and the IMD's Vision Document 2047, which outlines plans to enhance forecasting and weather management by India's centenary year of independence.

For detailed information on **150 years of IMD** [read this article here](#)

What Improvements Have Been Made in Weather Forecasting?

1. **Heatwave Prediction:** Forecasting heatwaves has improved to 95% accuracy up to two days in advance, compared to 50% in 2014.
2. **Thunderstorms:** The accuracy for detecting thunderstorms on an hourly basis is now 86%, up from 50% in 2017.
3. **Heavy Rainfall:** Predictions for heavy rainfall up to three days in advance have improved to 78%, from 50% a decade ago.
4. **Cyclone Tracking:** The accuracy of cyclone track predictions has improved by 35-40% over the past ten years, effectively reducing the loss of human lives to zero in many cases.

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

What Does IMD's Vision Document 2047 Entail?

1. The Vision Document 2047 aims to make India climate smart and weather ready by 2047.

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2. IMD plans for zero-error forecasting of severe weather up to three days in advance at the block level.
3. For forecasts up to five days, IMD targets 90% accuracy, and for seven-day forecasts, it aims for 80% accuracy.
4. The accuracy for 10-day forecasts will be 70%.
5. IMD will improve weather model resolution from 12 km to 5-6 km, enabling hyper-localized weather information at the village level.
6. By 2047, IMD aims to eliminate the loss of human lives due to severe weather events through better monitoring and timely warnings.

What Future Plans Does the IMD Have for Weather Management?

1. **Mission Mausam** aims to manage weather phenomena like rain, hail, and fog.
2. A cloud chamber will be established at IITM Pune to improve cloud seeding techniques.
3. IMD plans to use unmanned aerial vehicles and IoT-based sensors for remote data collection.
4. Weather models will be enhanced with better monitoring through satellites, radars, and wind profilers.
5. 100% detection capabilities for all weather phenomena are targeted.
6. The resolution of weather models will improve from 12 km to 5-6 km, providing hyper-localized weather forecasts at the village level.

Question for practice:

Evaluate the improvements made by the India Meteorological Department (IMD) in weather forecasting accuracy and the future plans outlined in its Vision Document 2047.

India's Economic Challenges and Policy Solutions 2025

Source: The post India's Economic Challenges and Policy Solutions 2025 has been created, based on the article "A macro tight rope walk" published in "Business Standard" on 17th January 2025

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

Context: The article discusses India's economic challenges in 2025, including global financial pressures, slower domestic growth, and the impact of US tariffs. It suggests that India should focus on flexible monetary policy, gradual fiscal consolidation, and structural reforms to stimulate growth and attract external investments.

For detailed information on **India's Economic Growth Slows with Mixed Trends** [read this article here](#)

What Are the Global Economic Challenges for India in 2025?

- 1. US Growth and Dollar Strength:** The US economy remains resilient, pushing the dollar index to 20-year highs. US 10-year bond yields have risen by 100 basis points since September 2024, tightening global financial conditions.
- 2. Pressure on Emerging Market Currencies:** The strong dollar has weakened currencies like the rupee, increasing external vulnerabilities.
- 3. US Tariffs and Trade Wars:** Trump's policies may escalate tariffs, reducing global growth and creating uncertainties. Similar tariffs during the earlier trade war depressed global investment.
- 4. Chinese Overcapacity:** Redirected Chinese production could flood global markets, threatening India's manufacturing sector and competitiveness.

How Is India's Domestic Growth Performing?

- 1. Urban Consumption Slowdown:** Pandemic savings are exhausted, formal-sector wage growth has slowed, and consumption-related lending has tightened, reducing urban demand.
- 2. Gradual Rural Recovery:** Rural consumption is improving, but the pace is slow due to fiscal and absorptive constraints.
- 3. Private Investment Waits:** Private investment is subdued, awaiting stronger demand visibility. Chinese excess capacity in India may further disincentivize investment.
- 4. Public Investment Limits:** The government's public investment push post-pandemic faces fiscal constraints.
- 5. Growth Deceleration:** The slowdown is deeper than delayed government spending, reflecting broader domestic challenges.

What Should India Focus on?

- 1. Avoid using monetary policy to defend the rupee:** India should not use monetary policy to defend the rupee but instead focus on controlling inflation and supporting growth.
- 2. Use foreign currency reserves wisely:** Reserves should be used to ensure orderly depreciation of the rupee, not to protect specific exchange rate levels.
- 3. Rupee adjustment:** The rupee should adjust to market fundamentals, as a weaker rupee can stimulate exports and support growth.
- 4. Structural reforms:** India must focus on structural reforms to boost long-term growth and employment. The global shift from US-China trade tensions presents an opportunity for India to attract foreign firms. India must be prepared to capitalize on these opportunities and make the economy more competitive.

What Are the Fiscal Policy Challenges for India?

1. India's fiscal space is limited due to rising public debt. With slow nominal GDP growth, the government must focus on fiscal consolidation to stabilize debt ratios.

2. However, fiscal tightening should be gradual to avoid slowing growth. The government has credible frameworks that help manage expectations during tough times.

For detailed information on **India's economic challenges in 2025** [read this article here](#)

How Can India Use Crises as Opportunities?

1. India's economic history shows that crises often present opportunities. The ongoing global trade tensions and deglobalization could lead to opportunities for India.
2. The government's upcoming budget offers a chance to focus on reforms that can improve growth, employment, and attract foreign investments.

Question for practice:

Discuss the impact of global economic challenges on India's growth prospects in 2025 and the policy measures needed to address them.

AI Transforming Search Work Ethics and Literacy

Source: The post AI Transforming Search Work Ethics and Literacy has been created, based on the article "**The ethics of AI will prove more important than the technology**" published in "**Live mint**" on 17th January 2025

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

Context: The article discusses AI's future impact, predicting chat-based search engines, human-AI integration, ethical challenges, and the need for AI literacy. It highlights AI's role in reshaping work, humanity, and the internet, emphasizing ethical regulation and universal AI understanding.

For detailed information on **Social and Political Impacts of AI** [read this article here](#)

What Is the Future Role of AI in Search Engines?

1. **Shift to Chat-Based Search:** AI-driven search engines like Perplexity.ai and SearchGPT offer conversational answers instead of traditional "10 blue links."
2. **User-Centric Approach:** These engines provide uncluttered, intuitive experiences by sourcing relevant information with cited references.
3. **Industry Transformation:** Companies like Google and Microsoft are adapting to this trend, highlighting its potential impact.

How Might Human Intelligence Merge with AI?

1. Historians like **Yuval Noah Harari** suggest humans could evolve into a new species, **Homo Deus**, combining human intelligence with AI.
2. This evolution may result in **God-like powers** through technologies like AI, biotech, and brain-computer interfaces.

3. Elon Musk's **Neuralink** exemplifies ongoing efforts in brain-machine interfaces to merge AI and humans.
4. While impressive, this possibility raises concerns about a **dystopian future**, including human obsolescence and loss of individuality.

Why Is Ethics Becoming Central to AI Development?

1. **Rapid Advancement:** AI technology is evolving quickly, raising urgent ethical concerns.
2. **Known Risks:** AI presents several risks including bias, privacy loss, increased surveillance, and job impacts.
3. **Early Discussions:** Unlike with past technologies, discussions about AI ethics started early, aiming to mitigate risks before they escalate.
4. **Global Response:** Worldwide, regulations are being developed, and AI safety institutes are being established to ensure safe and ethical AI usage.
5. **Preventive Measures:** This proactive approach is inspired by historical tech crises, aiming to avoid severe ethical lapses by regulating AI development and application from the outset.

How Is AI Redefining Literacy?

1. **Definition of Literacy:** Literacy now extends beyond reading, writing, and arithmetic to include proficiency with AI tools like ChatGPT and Perplexity.
2. **Workplace Impact:** The trend of "Bring Your Own AI" (BYOAI) shows 75% of employees bring personal AI tools to work.
3. **Hiring Practices:** Two-thirds of managers consider AI literacy essential, refusing to hire those without the ability to work with AI tools.
4. **Policy Development:** Organizations are encouraged to create policies and frameworks to enhance their employees' AI skills, an approach termed "JanAI."

Question for practice:

Examine how the integration of AI is reshaping traditional search engines and influencing user experiences.

How to Boost Investment and Economic Growth

Source: The post How to Boost Investment and Economic Growth has been created, based on the article "**Why the budget must prioritise incentives, not just resources**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 18th January 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilisation, of resources, growth, development

Context: The article highlights the need for better-targeted government spending, public investment, tax reforms, and incentives to boost corporate and private investment. It emphasizes simplifying regulations, improving food supply chains, and addressing demand constraints to drive sustainable economic growth.

For detailed information on **Addressing Key Challenges to Boost India's Growth** [read this article here](#)

What is the Current State of Government Spending?

1. As of November, the central government spent only **46.2%** of its capital expenditure target, compared to **58.5%** in the same period last year.
2. Revenue expenditure increased by about **1%**, but this did not offset the slowdown in capital spending.
3. States utilized only **Rs 0.88 trillion** of the **Rs 1.5 trillion** allocated for capital expenditure.
4. The slowdown in public investment has impacted economic growth, despite revenue spending being maintained.

How Does Government Spending Affect the Economy?

1. Government spending impacts economic growth by influencing public and private investment.
2. A decrease in public investment has contributed to economic slowdowns, evidenced by a corresponding slowdown in economic growth following reductions in public spending.
3. Maintaining or increasing public investment can stimulate the economy. For instance, the focus on quality spending and targeted public investment is crucial for stimulating economic activities and supporting overall economic growth.

What are the Challenges with Corporate and Private Investment?

1. **Low Corporate Investment:** Despite tax cuts, corporate investment has not increased significantly.
2. **Declining Private Fixed Capital Formation:** It peaked at 27.5% of GDP in 2007-08 but averaged only 21.5% from 2015-21.
3. **High Private Savings, Low Investment:** Private corporate savings rose from 1% of GDP (pre-1990s) to 10.7% after 2005-06, yet investments remain subdued.
4. **Increased Non-Business Income:** The share of corporate non-business income has quadrupled, indicating underutilized resources.

What Should be Done to Stimulate Economic Growth?

1. **Enhance Public Investment:** The slowdown in economic growth correlates with reduced public investment. Prioritizing high-quality public investment can serve as an effective economic stimulus.
2. **Reform Tax Policies:** Although corporate tax cuts haven't significantly boosted investment, modifying tax incentives to promote investment over mere tax reductions could be more effective. For instance, introducing a tax on non-business income balanced by an investment tax credit could stimulate corporate investment.

3. **Utilize Agricultural Reforms:** Encouraging states to implement agricultural marketing reforms and allowing direct farm gate sales have proven beneficial. These measures help diversify production and increase farmers' profits, contributing to economic stability and growth.

4. **Simplify Regulations:** Continuous efforts to simplify regulations at all government levels are necessary. Despite the removal of numerous outdated laws, businesses still face bureaucratic challenges that hinder their operation and growth.

Question for practice:

What measures can be taken to stimulate economic growth, considering the challenges with government spending and private investment?

ISRO's SpaDeX mission

Source: The post ISRO's SpaDeX mission has been created, based on the article “**How the Sun played a role in SpaDex success**” published in “**Indian Express**” on 18th January 2025

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

Context: The article discusses India's successful satellite docking under ISRO's SpaDeX mission, making it the fourth country to achieve this. It highlights the challenges of docking during solar activity and emphasizes the need for better space weather forecasting for future missions.

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

What is the SpaDeX Mission?

1. **SpaDeX (Space Docking Experiment)** is ISRO's first satellite docking mission.
2. It involved two satellites: **SDX01 (Chaser)** and **SDX02 (Target)**, launched on **December 30, 2024**, into a **low-Earth circular orbit**.
3. The satellites were initially separated by **20 km**. The Chaser satellite gradually approached the Target, reducing the distance to **5 km, 1.5 km, 500 m, 225 m, 15 m, and finally 3 m** before docking.
4. India became the **fourth country** to achieve satellite docking, after the US, Russia, and China.
5. Docking is vital for **future missions** like **Chandrayaan-4** and the **Bharatiya Antariksha Station**.

What role did solar activity play in the mission?

1. Solar activity directly impacts space missions by interfering with sensors and electronic control systems.
2. **Coronal mass ejections (CMEs)** and high-speed solar wind streams during strong solar activity cause positional errors and communication loss.

3. Docking requires precise alignment and negligible relative velocity, which is challenging during solar maximum.
4. The mission took place during **solar cycle 25**, which has been marked by strong solar activity.
5. Surprisingly, during the days leading up to the docking, the Sun displayed fewer sunspots and magnetic disturbances, enabling smooth operations.
6. This calm solar period contributed to India's successful docking of satellites under SpaDeX.

Why is Space Weather Forecasting Important?

1. Just as Earth weather forecasts are crucial for safety and planning, space weather forecasts are essential for successful space missions.
2. Accurate predictions help in planning critical operations like docking, especially during periods of high solar activity.
3. The SpaDeX mission highlights the importance of **investments in space weather prediction** during solar maximum phases.

Question for practice:

Discuss the significance of space weather forecasting in the success of ISRO's SpaDeX mission.

New Obesity Definition and Diagnosis for India

Source: The post New Obesity Definition and Diagnosis for India has been created, based on the article "**New definition for obesity? What a new Lancet commission has proposed to replace BMI**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 17th January 2025

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

Context: The article discusses a new definition and method for diagnosing obesity proposed by The Lancet Commission. It moves beyond BMI and includes other measurements to assess excess body fat and related health risks. The approach also considers specific needs for Indian populations.

For detailed information on **Lancet study on Global Obesity rates** [read this article here](#)

What is the new definition of obesity?

1. The Lancet Diabetes & Endocrinology Commission, composed of 58 experts, has proposed a new definition of obesity that goes beyond the Body Mass Index (BMI).
2. This definition includes additional measures like waist circumference and muscle mass assessments to provide a more accurate diagnosis of obesity.

3. The traditional BMI cutoffs have proven inadequate because they could misclassify the health status of individuals with different body compositions. For instance, people with high muscle mass might be categorized as obese under BMI metrics, even if they are healthy.

What Does the New Definition Include?

1. **Preclinical Obesity:** Identified as excess body fat without associated illnesses. It may or may not progress to clinical obesity. For example, some Indians with a BMI under 30 may have abdominal fat affecting organ function.

2. **Clinical Obesity:** Defined as a chronic illness that alters organ functions and leads to life-altering or life-threatening complications.

3. **Measurements Used:** BMI is supplemented with waist circumference, waist-to-hip ratio, or waist-to-height ratio. Two of these measures are recommended for accuracy.

4. **Advanced Diagnostics:** Methods like DEXA scans directly measure body fat for precise assessments.

How Will Obesity Be Treated Under the New Guidelines?

1. **Treatment strategies for Preclinical Obesity** focus on preventing disease progression through lifestyle changes and regular monitoring.

2. **Clinical Obesity requires** personalized, evidence-based treatments, potentially including new medications or surgeries, depending on the severity of symptoms and health conditions.

How Are Indians Specifically Addressed?

1. **Lower BMI Cutoffs:** Indian guidelines define overweight at BMI 23–24.9 and obesity at BMI over 25 due to higher health risks at lower BMI compared to Western populations.

2. **Higher Body Fat Percentage:** Indians have higher central obesity, making them prone to diabetes, hypertension, and heart diseases even at lower BMI levels.

3. **Stage-Based Classification:** Obesity is classified into Stage 1 (no significant symptoms) and Stage 2 (symptoms affecting daily life or comorbidities).

4. **Familiarity with BMI:** BMI remains the entry point for diagnosis in India for easier implementation.

5. **Expert Insight:** Expert highlighted Indians' unique risks, linking obesity to chronic conditions despite lean appearances.

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

Question for practice:

Examine how the new definition of obesity proposed by The Lancet Commission addresses the specific health risks and needs of Indian populations.

Delays in the India-EU Free Trade Agreement

Source: The post delays in the India-EU Free Trade Agreement has been created, based on the article “DIFFERING ASPIRATIONS” published in “Business Standard” on 18th January 2025

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 delays in the India-EU Free Trade Agreement due to differing priorities on tariffs, sustainability, and intellectual property. It highlights past negotiation challenges, ongoing hurdles like EU regulations, and the need for balanced commitments to boost trade relations.

For detailed information on **Rules of origin delay FTA tariff discussions with EU** [read this article here](#)

What is the India-EU FTA and its current status?

1. The India-EU Free Trade Agreement aims to enhance trade between the two regions.
2. Negotiations resumed after an 18-year gap but remain delayed despite nine rounds of talks. The next round is scheduled for March 2025 in Brussels.
3. Differences persist on tariff elimination, sustainability, and intellectual property rights.
4. The EU demands tariff cuts on 95% of exports, while India agrees to only 90%.
5. In 2023-24, the EU accounted for **17.4% of India’s goods exports (\$75.9 billion)** and **9% of imports (\$61.5 billion)**, making it India’s largest trading partner.

Why are negotiations delayed?

1. Differing Tariff Aspirations:

- The EU seeks tariff elimination on 95% of its exports, including agricultural products and automobiles.
- India is open to reducing tariffs on only 90% of its market and is hesitant on bulk agricultural products.

2. Sustainability and Labour Standards:

- The EU’s regulations like the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) and deforestation laws create barriers for Indian exports.
- India seeks a transition period, citing the UN principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibility (CBDR-RC).

3. Intellectual Property and Investor Disputes:

- The EU demands stronger intellectual property protections.
- India’s dispute settlement mechanism requires investors to exhaust local remedies before international arbitration, causing delays.

For detailed information on **EFTA-India Relations** [read this article here](#)

What Could Improve India-EU FTA Negotiations?

- 1. Balanced Commitments:** Both sides need to recalibrate goals, addressing India's concerns on tariffs and the EU's demands for sustainability and labour standards.
- 2. Transition Period:** India seeks time to adapt to EU regulations like the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), as per the UN's Common but Differentiated Responsibility principle.
- 3. Focus on Market Access:** Resolving differences on automobiles, wines, and sensitive agricultural products could ease tensions.
- 4. Enhanced Political Engagement:** Ministerial-level discussions should prioritize bridging gaps, given the EU accounts for 17.4% of India's exports (\$75.9 billion).

Conclusion

Despite challenges, finalizing the India-EU FTA can boost trade relations significantly. However, differences in tariffs, sustainability, and intellectual property laws remain key hurdles.

Question for practice:

Examine the key factors delaying the finalization of the India-EU Free Trade Agreement and suggest measures to overcome them.

India's Real Growth Rate and Forecast

Source: This post on **India's Real Growth Rate and Forecast** has been created based on article "**India's real growth rate and the forecast**" published in **The Hindu** on **18th January 2025**.

UPSC Syllabus topic: GS Paper 3- Indian Economy

Context: This article evaluates India's economic performance in 2024-25 and provides projections for its growth trajectory over the next five years. It highlights the country's real and nominal GDP growth, government expenditure, and long-term development prospects.

What is the real and nominal GDP growth for 2024-25?

- The First Advance Estimates (FAE) of National Accounts for 2024-25 indicate:
 - Real GDP growth: **6.4%**
 - Nominal GDP growth: **9.7%**
- These figures are below the Reserve Bank of India's revised estimates of:
 - Real GDP growth: **6.6%**
 - Nominal GDP growth: **10.5%**, as per the 2024-25 Union Budget.

How has GDP growth performed over the fiscal year?

- Real GDP growth in 2024-25 consists of:
 - **6% growth** in the first half.
 - **6.7% growth** in the second half.
- The 2024-25 growth of **6.4%** is significantly lower than the previous year's **8.2%**.

- Manufacturing sector growth dropped sharply from **9.9% in 2023-24** to **5.3% in 2024-25**.
- Government investment growth slowed, remaining negative at **-12.3%** after eight months of the fiscal year.
- **Gross Fixed Capital Formation** is expected to remain stable at **33.4%** of GDP.
- **Incremental Capital Output Ratio (ICOR)** is assumed to be **5.1**, suggesting a realistic **6.5% real GDP growth**.

What role will domestic demand and government investment play?

- Global economic conditions are unlikely to change significantly, with India relying primarily on **domestic demand**.
- The Government of India must focus on **accelerated capital expenditure**, ensuring at least **20% growth** over revised estimates for 2024-25.

What challenges does lower nominal GDP growth pose? What caused the dip in capital expenditure?

- A nominal GDP growth of **9.7%** (vs. budgeted **10.5%**) could impact the budgeted **Gross Tax Revenue (GTR)** of ₹38.4 lakh crore.
- However, GTR growth for the first eight months stood at **10.7%**, indicating a potential buoyancy of **1.1**, reducing the risk of a revenue shortfall.
- As of the first eight months, capital expenditure reached only ₹5.14 lakh crore, **46.2% of the budget target**.
- Accelerated spending in the remaining four months may still fall short of the ₹11.1 lakh crore target, dampening overall growth.

What is India's growth potential over the next five years?

- Real GDP growth is projected at **6.5%**, with **4% IPD-based inflation**, yielding **10.5%-11% nominal GDP growth** annually.
- Growth could reach **7%** in favourable global conditions with significant contributions from net exports.

Can India achieve developed country status?

- Sustained real growth of **6.5%**, nominal growth of **10.5% -11 %**, and an **average annual exchange rate depreciation of 2.5%** enable India to achieve developed country status within 25 years.
- However, growth must initially exceed **6.5%** to compensate for the increasing base size.

How should 2024-25 growth be viewed?

- The **6.4% growth** in 2024-25 aligns with India's potential growth rate of **6.5%**.
- The **8.2% growth** in 2023-24 was an exception, not a trend.
- Sustained government capital expenditure and effective policy design will be critical for achieving consistent growth.

Current state of India's economic growth

Source: This post on **Current state of India's economic growth** has been created based on article **"To fix economy, boost consumption"** published in The Hindu on 18th January 2025.

UPSC Syllabus topic: GS Paper 3- Indian Economy

Context: This article highlights the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) assessment of India's economic challenges and potential strategies to address slowing growth. It underscores the need to stimulate consumption and rekindle private sector investment amid persistent inflationary pressures and an uncertain global economic environment.

What is the current state of India's economic growth?

India's economic growth is slowing, with private capital expenditure (capex) showing no visible signs of revival and government capex declining.

What are the RBI officials' suggestions for reviving growth?

- Senior Reserve Bank of India (RBI) officials suggest boosting consumption as a means to revive the economy.
- They emphasize rekindling private sector investment, creating mass consumer demand, and triggering an investment boom.
- Investment and manufacturing are identified as the primary drags on economic growth.

What role does food inflation play in the current scenario?

- Food inflation remains persistently high, even though December recorded a 5.22% inflation rate due to the seasonal availability of fruits and vegetables.
- Several key food products are experiencing double-digit inflation, which impacts disposable incomes and consumer demand.

What challenges are posed by food inflation?

- High food inflation persists despite seasonal easing.
- Rising rural wages and increasing corporate salaries could lead to second-order effects, requiring careful monitoring.

What is the impact on the middle class?

The urban middle class is looking for relief from high food prices to improve their disposable incomes, which could enhance consumption and support economic growth.

How is private consumption performing?

- Private final consumption is a bright spot in the economy, driven by e-commerce and quick commerce (q-commerce).
- Encouraging competition in these sectors is seen as more beneficial than imposing restrictions.

What are the inflation concerns and monetary policy challenges?

- Disinflation may bring some relief to households, but inflation risks remain due to uncertainties, such as geopolitical issues.
- The future path of interest rates is uncertain, posing challenges to monetary policy.

Deciphering the Script of the Indus Valley Civilisation

Source: This post on **Deciphering the Script of the Indus Valley Civilisation** has been created based on article **"To fix economy, boost consumption"** published in The Hindu on 18th January 2025.

UPSC Syllabus topic: GS Paper 1- Indian History

Context: This article explores the complexities and challenges surrounding the decipherment of the Indus Valley Civilisation (IVC) script.

What is the significance of the recent announcement by Tamil Nadu's Chief Minister?

- Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin announced a \$1-million prize for deciphering the script of the Indus Valley Civilisation (IVC).
- This initiative aims to revive interest in the IVC script and was made as part of the centenary celebrations of its discovery, first published by John Marshall, then chief of the Archaeological Survey of India, in September 1924.

What is the Indus Valley Civilisation?

- The IVC, also called the Harappan Civilisation, flourished during the Bronze Age (3000–1500 BCE) across 1.5 million square kilometers, covering parts of present-day India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.
- It is known for its urban development, it was as sophisticated as Mesopotamian, Egyptian, and Chinese civilisations.

Why is deciphering the Indus script important?

- While the IVC has yielded numerous seals, tablets, and archaeological artifacts, the decipherment of its script remains unresolved.
- This is essential to understanding the civilisation's literacy, language, and culture.

What are the main debates surrounding the script?

- **Western Scholars' Theory:** About two decades ago, some scholars argued that the IVC was not a literate society, suggesting its symbols do not qualify as a full-fledged script.
- **Proto-Dravidian Theory:** Another school of thought claims the script could be "proto-Dravidian," "non-Aryan," or "pre-Aryan." This aligns with Tamil Nadu's interest in promoting research, linking the script to early Tamil roots.

What steps has Tamil Nadu taken to study the script?

The Tamil Nadu government supports research on Indus signs and graffiti, alongside documenting and digitizing Tamil Nadu's graffiti and Tamil-Brāhmī-inscribed potsherds.

What challenges do researchers face in deciphering the script?

1. **Limited Access to Data:** The database of Indus seals is not fully available in the public domain.
2. **Contextual Understanding:** Providing proper context for the artifacts is essential for accurate interpretation.
3. **Political Interference:** Intellectual pursuits should remain unbiased, and unaffected by political or ideological influences.

How can South Asia contribute to deciphering the Indus script?

- Collaboration among South Asian countries—India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh—could significantly aid in unravelling the script.

- Political differences should not hinder such efforts, as they are critical for global historical understanding.

Why is unbiased research crucial for this initiative?

- The study's findings may challenge established narratives, which necessitates free and interference-free intellectual exploration.
- Failure to ensure this could lead to missed opportunities in understanding the IVC.

China's Population Decline

Source: This post on **China's Population Decline** has been created based on article "China's population declines for third consecutive year, straining economy" published in The Hindu on 18th January 2025.

UPSC Syllabus topic: GS Paper 2- Issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

Context: This article highlights the continued decline in China's population for the third consecutive year, marking a significant demographic challenge for the world's second-most populous nation. The population was reported at 1.408 billion at the end of 2024, representing a decline of 1.39 million from the previous year. The article examines the causes, implications, and broader regional and global trends related to declining birth rates and population shifts.

What is the current population of China?

- At the end of 2024, China's population stood at **1.408 billion**, marking a decline of **1.39 million** compared to the previous year.
- This is not a **new trend for China**. This is the **third consecutive year** of population decline. China first recorded a population drop in 2023.
- The decline aligns with global trends, especially in **East Asia**. Countries like **Japan** and **South Korea** have also seen significant drops in birth rates.

What are the main reasons for the declining birth rate?

- **Rising living costs:** Young people are delaying or avoiding marriage and childbirth.
- **Focus on careers and education:** Higher education and career aspirations often take precedence.
- **Longevity:** While people are living longer, it does not offset the low birth rates.

Does China face unique challenges due to its demographics?

- Yes, several unique factors exacerbate the issue:
 - **Lopsided sex ratio:** There are **104.34 men for every 100 women**, although independent estimates suggest the imbalance may be worse.
 - **Minimal immigration:** Unlike some countries, China allows very limited immigration, reducing the possibility of population stabilization through migration.

What are the broader implications of population decline for China?

- The decline poses severe challenges, including:
 - **Ageing population:** A growing number of elderly people.
 - **Shrinking workforce:** Fewer working-age individuals to sustain economic growth.

- **Economic strain:** Pressure on consumer markets and social support systems.
- **Social instability:** A significant surplus of unmarried men could lead to societal challenges.

Has India surpassed China in population size?

- Yes, in 2023, **India overtook China** as the world's most populous nation.
- With continued low birth rates and minimal immigration, China faces a **diminishing workforce** and an increasing dependency ratio, threatening its economic stability and growth.

US Restrictions on AI Chips and Its Impact on India

Source: The post US Restrictions on AI Chips and Its Impact on India has been created, based on the article **"New restrictions on AI chips into India"** published in **"Business Standard"** on 20th January 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Science and Technology- Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, nano-technology, bio-technology and issues relating to intellectual property rights.

Context: The article explains US restrictions on exporting high-end AI chips, their limited impact on India's IT services exports, and India's focus on leveraging global AI developments. It highlights India's role in services, not hardware, and domestic AI application strategies.

For detailed information on **US Proposal Restricting Chips Impacting India** [read this article here](#)

What are the US restrictions on AI chip exports?

The US has imposed restrictions on exporting advanced AI chips, treating them like defense equipment. These restrictions limit exports for AI model training but allow Indian firms to import up to **1,700 Nvidia H100 chips per firm annually**. Domestic needs for AI applications remain unaffected.

How do the restrictions impact India?

The US restrictions on AI chip exports have a limited impact on India due to its strong services exports and available alternatives for domestic AI applications:

1. **Resilient IT Services Growth:** IT services exports grew at **9.17% annually** (doubling every 7.5 years), and "other business services" grew at **11.86% annually** (doubling every 5.8 years). Services exports totaled **\$341 billion in 2023-24** and are projected to double in a decade.

2. **Domestic AI Applications Unaffected:** Indian firms have three pathways to manage AI needs:

- Renting server capacity from cloud vendors abroad continues without restrictions.
- Firms can import up to 1,700 Nvidia H100 chips annually, enough for most Indian firms.
- Cheaper chips, like **Nvidia H20**, remain unrestricted for AI inference tasks.

3. **Support for Data Centers:** Domestic players, such as Tata and Jio, can import up to 100,000 chips annually, which meets the current needs for large-scale AI model training. This limit is set to increase to 320,000 by 2027.

This capacity is significant, especially when compared to the 50,000 chips used in the largest US computers for nuclear weapon development.

4. These points highlight that India's services-driven growth remains unaffected while domestic AI applications have sufficient flexibility.

What is the role of the Indian government in AI technology?

1. The Indian government's role involves regulating and facilitating the AI technology sector, focusing on preventing high-tech exports to sensitive countries like Russia, China, and Iran.

2. Successful regulation helps more Indian firms qualify for "National Verified End User" (NVEU) status, easing some restrictions.

How can US firms contribute to AI development in India?

1. US firms that obtain "Universal Verified End User" (UVEU) status can transfer a significant amount of their AI chip inventory to India—up to 7% of their annual global count.

2. This policy could potentially bring more than 7,000 AI chips per year to India from each qualifying firm, enhancing local knowledge and infrastructure.

Question for practice:

Examine how the US restrictions on exporting advanced AI chips impact India's IT services exports and domestic AI applications.

International Migrant Workers and Their Global Impact

Source: The post International Migrant Workers and Their Global Impact has been created, based on the article "What did the ILO report state about international migrants?" published in "The Hindu" on 20th January 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2-Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate. Ans GSPaper1-population and associated issues

Context: The fourth edition of *Global Estimates on International Migrant Workers* was released by the International Labour Organization (ILO). It highlights migrants' contributions to global economic growth. The report focuses on labor market participation, gender gaps, and key employment sectors. It also discusses their concentration in high-income nations.

For detailed information on **US Proposal Restricting Chips Impacting India** [read this article here](#)

What is the contribution of international migrants to the global economy?

1. International migrants (IMs) contribute significantly to world economic growth.

2. They address labor market shortages in host countries and send remittances to their home countries.

3. In 2022, IMs made up 4.7% (167.7 million) of the global labor force, an increase of over 30 million since 2013.

How many international migrants are employed and unemployed?

1. Out of the 167.7 million IMs in the labor force in 2022, 155.6 million were employed, while 12.1 million were unemployed.

2. The share of IM men in global employment was 4.7%, while IM women accounted for 4.4%. Between 2019-2022, annual growth slowed to less than 1%, partly due to the pandemic.

What is the gender and age distribution of international migrants?

1. A higher proportion of IM males were employed (61.3% of 102.7 million) compared to females (38.7% of 64.9 million).

2. Although women's participation has steadily increased since 2015, they remain a smaller portion of the IM population.

3. Prime-age adults (25-54 years) made up 74.9% (125.6 million) of IM workers. Young IMs (15-24 years) were 9.3%, while those aged 55-64 years were 12.5%.

Which sectors attract the most international migrants?

1. **Services Sector:** Attracted 68.4% of international migrants (IMs) in 2022. Women IMs dominated this sector at 80.7%, compared to 60.8% for men.

2. **Industry Sector:** IMs accounted for 24.3%, slightly higher than non-migrants (24.2%).

3. **Agriculture Sector:** Only 7.4% of IMs worked in agriculture, far lower than non-migrants (24.3%).

4. IMs consistently dominate the services sector, especially in care work, across high-income countries.

Which countries host the most international migrants?

1. **High-Income Countries:** These host the largest number of international migrants (IMs), accounting for 68.4% (114 million). Many work in the services sector, especially in care-related jobs.

2. **Upper-Middle-Income Countries:** They host 17.4% (29.2 million) of IMs, a much smaller but significant share.

3. **Europe:** Northern, southern, and western Europe had 23.3% of IM workers in 2022, showing slight growth since 2013.

4. **North America:** It hosted 22.6% of IMs, showing a decline compared to a decade earlier.

5. **Arab States:** These hosted 13.3% of IM workers in 2022, a decrease of three percentage points since 2013.

Question for practice:

Evaluate the contribution of international migrants to the global economy, considering their labor force participation, employment distribution, and remittances.

Building a Strong Health System for India 2047

Source: The post Building a Strong Health System for India 2047 has been created, based on the article “**For a Viksit Bharat, focus on health**” published in “**The Hindu**” on 20th January 2025

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

Context: The article emphasizes creating a robust health system for India by 2047. It highlights the need for universal health coverage, stronger healthcare infrastructure, digital integration, trained workforce, data-driven policies, and addressing non-communicable diseases, infectious diseases, and climate-related health challenges.

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

How can universal health coverage be achieved?

- 1. Increased Public Financing:** Health budgets at central and state levels must rise to support expanded services and infrastructure.
- 2. Primary Healthcare-Led Approach:** Universal health coverage (UHC) must focus on delivering quality primary care. Ayushman Bharat provides a model for improved care at the grassroots level.
- 3. Training a Skilled Workforce:** Address doctor shortages by training technology-enabled frontline health workers and allied professionals to deliver age-appropriate services efficiently.
- 4. Digital Integration:** The Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission can connect primary care with public insurance programs like PMJAY to ensure seamless service delivery.
- 5. Health Infrastructure Improvements:** Ayushman Bharat’s upgraded health infrastructure strengthens the foundation for UHC.
- 6. Disaggregated Data for Equity:** District-level data helps address diverse population needs effectively, ensuring inclusivity and equity in healthcare delivery.

For detailed information on **India’s Goal for 2047** [read this article here](#)

How can digital health systems improve care?

- 1. Efficient Disease Detection:** Wastewater surveillance can detect microbial threats and monitor antimicrobial resistance, as mentioned in the article.
- 2. Integrated Patient Data:** Combining diagnostic and treatment data across healthcare institutions ensures accurate diagnosis and better treatment outcomes.

3. **Addressing Public-Private Disconnects:** Digital systems bridge gaps between primary care and publicly funded health insurance programs like PMJAY.

4. **AI-Driven Healthcare:** Big data analytics applied to large Indian datasets can create locally relevant diagnostic and treatment algorithms.

5. **Community Involvement:** Digital platforms can crowdsource surveillance data during outbreaks and gather feedback on program implementation.

What challenges do climate and zoonotic diseases pose?

1. **Climate Change:** Rising temperatures and extreme weather increase water-borne diseases and give rise to vector-borne diseases.

2. **Zoonotic Diseases:** These diseases, spread between animals and humans, can cause national outbreaks or global pandemics.

3. **Surveillance Gaps:** Current systems lack real-time zoonotic data across humans, wildlife, and veterinary populations.

Conclusion

In conclusion, India's path to becoming a developed nation by 2047 depends on a robust health system. By prioritizing universal health coverage, improving digital health integration, and addressing emerging health threats like NCDs and zoonotic diseases, India can ensure a healthy population. Initiatives like Ayushman Bharat and increased data integration are key to achieving these goals.

Question for practice:

Discuss the role of digital health systems in improving healthcare delivery in India.

Challenges of education expansion in India

Source: The post challenges of education expansion in India has been created, based on the article "**How quality of higher education is tied to primary education**" published in "**Indian Express**" on 20th January 2025

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

Context: The article discusses the challenges of education expansion in India, highlighting the importance of quality leadership in schools and universities. It compares India's system with Japan's, stressing the need for cultural values in education. It also emphasizes the role of individuals in creating great institutions.

For detailed information on **Challenges and Solutions of the Indian Education System** [read this article here](#)

What are the challenges of educational expansion in India?

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1. **Manpower Shortage:** India faced a serious deficit of qualified teachers and academic leaders during the expansion of education post-independence.
2. **Constitutional Mandates:** The Constitution required free and compulsory education for all children up to 14 years, adding pressure to the system.
3. **Rapid Population Growth:** The literacy rate improved from around 18-20% to nearly 80%, despite the population increasing by about 100 crore, demonstrating significant efforts under restrictive conditions.
4. **Trust Deficit:** Government schools, especially in rural areas, face a loss of credibility, impacting educational outcomes.
5. **Leadership Challenges:** There has been a lack of focus on preparing academic leaders, which is crucial for maintaining the quality of education as the system expands.
6. **Quality Dilution:** Rapid expansion often led to a dilution in quality, impacting the credibility of educational institutions, similar to the trust deficit observed in government schools.

How does Japan's educational culture compare to India's?

1. **Priority on Education:** Post-WWII Japan focused intensely on primary education to rebuild the nation, valuing punctuality and respect for hard work.
2. **Cultural Differences:** In Japan, teachers arriving late is rare due to a strong sense of responsibility, whereas in India, it is common for classes to start late.
3. **Impact on Professionalism:** Japanese educational practices instill a sense of duty and effort in students, preparing them to be punctual and dedicated professionals. This cultural emphasis contributes to the nation-building ethos observed daily in Japanese schools.

What is the importance of leadership in educational institutions?

1. Leadership is crucial for the success of educational institutions.
2. Great leaders like Madan Mohan Malaviya, Syed Ahmed Khan, and Rabindranath Tagore helped elevate universities such as BHU, AMU, and Vishwa Bharati.
3. Similarly, Homi Bhabha and Vikram Sarabhai contributed to the growth of BARC and ISRO.
4. Strong leadership shapes the direction and quality of education.
5. Leaders transform institutions and guide the nation towards progress and development.

What role does the Central Advisory Board on Education (CABE) play?

1. CABE is a platform for discussing national education issues.
2. It is led by the Union education minister and includes state education ministers and academics.
3. The board can discuss and resolve issues like education policy and procedures for selecting vice-chancellors.

4. It aims to prepare leaders at every educational level.
5. With wide national representation, it provides a forum for serious debates and discussions.
6. CABE's role is vital for improving the education system and leadership, as shown in the article's examples of successful educational figures.

Question for practice:

Examine the challenges of educational expansion in India and how leadership can address these issues.

India's Economic Slowdown Requires Structural Issue Fix

Source: The post India's Economic Slowdown Requires Structural Issue Fix has been created, based on the article "A different economic question" published in "Indian Express" on 20th January 2025

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

Context: The article highlights India's economic slowdown as driven by both structural and distributional issues. It points to limited job creation, stagnant wages, unequal income growth, and rising household debt, emphasizing that consumption growth is skewed toward higher-income groups, leaving broader demand weak.

For detailed information on **India's Economic Slowdown and Path to Recovery** [read this article here](#)

Is the Indian Economy Just in a Temporary Slump?

1. The economy has slowed, with second-quarter growth declining and GST collections dropping from 8.9% to 8.3% in Q3. Forecasts suggest GDP growth will align with the pre-pandemic decadal average of 6.6%, reflecting weak momentum.
2. The government blames a cyclical slowdown, attributing it to RBI's tight monetary policies that weakened exports and the rupee.
3. This slowdown differs from earlier episodes like 2008 or 2013 because it stems from **structural and distributive issues**, not temporary shocks.
4. Uneven growth benefits the highly skilled, limiting upward mobility and broader consumption.

What Does the Data Show About Growth?

1. Recent growth spurts were largely due to a boom in services exports, particularly Global Capability Centres (GCCs), which also boosted sectors like real estate and high-end goods.
2. However, this growth was uneven, benefiting mainly the highly skilled, small segment of the workforce.
3. This has not significantly expanded the overall consumption base, as evidenced by slowing car sales in the affordable segment. For example, cars priced under Rs 10 lakh, which are often first cars for many, have reduced from 73% of sales in 2014-15 to just 46% in 2024-25.

What Are the Implications for Employment and Consumption?

1. The job market has not improved, with more people working in informal or low-skill jobs and real wages not increasing significantly.
2. This is reflected in the car market and broader consumption trends, where demand for basic consumer goods like low-priced cars is weakening.
3. Household debt has increased to 43% by June 2024, indicating that people are borrowing more, often to meet basic consumption needs, rather than because of rising prosperity.

How Is Investment Responding?

1. With uncertain government policies and a lack of clear demand, investment remains low.
2. New project announcements are decreasing, and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) has not reached its previous highs.
3. This reluctance from the corporate sector to invest indicates a lack of confidence in the market's growth potential.

Conclusion

India's economic challenges are structural, marked by limited job creation, stagnant wages, weak consumption, and rising debt. Without addressing these issues, returning to a robust growth trajectory may remain difficult.

Question for practice:

Discuss how structural issues in the Indian economy, such as limited job creation, stagnant wages, and rising household debt, are impacting consumption and investment trends.

UGC Regulations and State University Laws

This post on UGC Regulations and State University Laws has been created based on article "UGC regulations or State university laws?" published in The Hindu on 21st January 2025.

UPSC Syllabus topic- GS Paper 2- Issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

Context: The article addresses the ongoing dispute between the Union Government, represented by the University Grants Commission (UGC), and State Governments concerning the appointment of Vice Chancellors (VCs) in State universities. At its core, the conflict highlights the constitutional and legislative tensions between central regulations and State autonomy in the governance of higher education institutions.

What is the core issue in the dispute between UGC regulations and State University Acts?

1. The central dispute lies in whether UGC regulations, framed by the UGC's Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and 10 members, can override State University Acts, which are plenary laws passed by State legislatures and assented to by the Governor or President.

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2. This conflict reflects broader tensions between Centre-State relations and the scope of delegated legislation.

What is the current situation in Tamil Nadu's State universities?

1. **Vacancies:** Six State universities in Tamil Nadu lack Vice Chancellors (VCs), with some positions vacant for over a year.
2. **Reason for Stalemate:** The Governor (ex-officio Chancellor) insists on including a UGC nominee in VC selection committees as per Regulation 7.3 of UGC Regulations, 2018. The State government, adhering to State University Acts, opposes this on grounds of protecting State autonomy.

How do UGC Regulations and State University Acts differ on VC selection?

1. **UGC Stance:** Regulation 7.3 mandates a UGC nominee on the VC search committee.
2. **State Acts:** Committees typically comprise one nominee each from the Chancellor, syndicate, and senate, without UGC involvement.

What complications arise from conflicting Supreme Court judgments?

1. **Support for UGC:** Some judgments (e.g., Annamalai University and Gambhirdan K. Gadhvi) hold that UGC regulations are mandatory and can override State laws.
2. **Support for States:** Other judgments (e.g., Kalyani Mathivanan and P.J. Dharmaraj) declare UGC regulations merely advisory unless adopted by the State.

What constitutional principles are at stake?

The issue underscores critical constitutional principles:

1. **Article 254(1):** Governs conflicts between Central and State laws, prioritizing plenary Central laws over State laws in the Concurrent List.
2. **Delegated Legislation:** Supreme Court rulings assert that subordinate legislation (like UGC regulations) cannot override plenary State laws unless explicitly provided by Parliament.

What are the judicial precedents on delegated legislation?

1. **Key Cases:**
 - a. Ch. Tika Ramji v. State of UP (1956): Subordinate legislation cannot repeal plenary State laws.
 - b. Indian Express v. Union of India (1984): Subordinate legislation must conform to its parent Act and yield to plenary legislation.
 - c. J.K. Industries v. Union of India (2007): Similar reaffirmation of subordinate legislation's limitations.
2. **Principle:** Only Parliament can repeal or override State laws, not Central agencies via delegated legislation.

Is the UGC overreaching its mandate?

1. **Legal Limits:** The UGC Act, 1956, does not explicitly address VC appointments. UGC's authority under Sections 26(1)(e) and 26(1)(g) applies to teaching staff and coordination standards but not to university officers like VCs.
2. **Judicial View:** The Supreme Court in University of Delhi v. Raj Singh (1994) affirmed that UGC regulations are advisory, not binding, unless adopted by the State.
3. **Policy Shifts:** The UGC's fluctuating rules on VC selection (introduced in 2010, withdrawn in 2013, reinstated in 2018) reflect a focus on administrative control rather than academic standards.

What are the inconsistencies in recent Supreme Court rulings?

1. **Mandatory Interpretation:** Some judgments assert that UGC regulations, once laid before Parliament, integrate into the UGC Act under Article 254(1).
2. **Counterview:** Others argue that subordinate legislation remains advisory and does not acquire plenary status unless approved through an affirmative resolution procedure, as highlighted in Chief Inspector of Mines v. Karam Chand Thapar (1961).

What are the procedures for laying subordinate legislation?

1. **Three Methods:**
 - a. **Without further procedure:** Subordinate legislation takes effect immediately, with no legislative oversight.
 - b. **Negative resolution:** Takes effect but can be annulled or modified within a limited time.
 - c. **Affirmative resolution:** Becomes valid only after explicit legislative approval.
2. **Significance:** Courts should recognize only affirmative resolution procedures as integrating rules into parent legislation.

What is the way forward?

1. **Need for Clarity:** A definitive Constitutional Bench ruling is essential to resolve ambiguities and affirm:
 - a. Article 254(1) applies only to plenary Central and State laws.
 - b. Delegated legislation remains advisory unless laid through affirmative resolution.
 - c. UGC regulations are not binding on State universities unless adopted by the State.
2. **Outcome Desired:** Such clarity will restore normalcy in State universities and uphold the federal balance of power between the Centre and States.

IMEC: A Strategic Partnership for a Balanced Global Economic Future

This post on IMEC: A Strategic Partnership for a Balanced Global Economic Future **has been created based on article "Prioritising IMEC is in America's best interest" published in The Hindu on 21st January 2025.**

UPSC Syllabus topic- GS Paper 2-International relations

Context: The article emphasizes the strategic and economic importance of the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC). It highlights how IMEC serves as a viable alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and discusses the diplomatic and geopolitical implications of the corridor, underscoring the role of the United States and India as key drivers of the project.

What is the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)?

1. IMEC is an ambitious initiative announced in 2023 to establish an integrated economic network linking India, the Middle East, and Europe through advanced physical and digital infrastructure.
2. It aims to enhance trade connectivity, lower transportation costs, diversify global supply chains, and promote economic integration.
3. Key infrastructure includes railways, shipping networks, pipelines for electricity and hydrogen, and digital communication systems.

Which countries and organizations are participating in IMEC?

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1. The participating entities include India, the United States, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Italy, France, Germany, and the European Commission.
2. Countries like Greece and Turkey have also initiated related trade agreements, complementing the corridor.

How is IMEC different from China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)?

1. IMEC seeks to provide an alternative to China's BRI by promoting a balanced global economic architecture based on democratic values and market principles.
2. It emphasizes transparency, sustainability, and multilateral cooperation.

What challenges does IMEC face?

1. **Investment Demands:** Substantial infrastructure investments are needed, which compete with other national priorities.
2. **Private Sector Engagement:** Corporates require clear returns on investment for sustained involvement.
3. **Geopolitical Coordination:** Diverse national priorities and political strategies among participants may lead to uneven economic development and potential tensions.

How have individual countries contributed to IMEC's progress?

1. **France:** Appointed Gérard Mestrallet, a business leader, to head its IMEC efforts, highlighting the corridor's economic potential.
2. **UAE and Saudi Arabia:** Actively spearheading efforts to strengthen ties with the West through IMEC.
3. **India:** Poised to gain through reduced trade costs, transformed maritime logistics, and strengthened ties with West Asian and European nations.
4. **U.S. A:**
 - a. **Abraham Accords:** The U.S. facilitated these agreements, creating conditions for IMEC's inception.
 - b. **Bipartisan Support:** Both former President Joe Biden and Donald Trump have backed IMEC. Trump's rapport with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi could further bolster the corridor's progress.

What are the environmental implications of IMEC?

1. IMEC aligns with sustainability goals by promoting the development of green hydrogen, particularly in India.
2. The project supports decarbonization, reduces reliance on fossil fuels, and creates opportunities in clean energy sectors, contributing to global climate goals.

Why is the significance of IMEC?

1. IMEC is more than just an infrastructure project—it reimagines regional economic cooperation.
2. By fostering unprecedented coordination among nations, it offers transformative trade opportunities, enhances energy security, and supports global economic diversification.

Need of Distinguished Jurists as Judges

This post on **Need of Distinguished Jurists as Judges** has been created based on article **"We need distinguished jurists as judges"** Published in The Hindu on 21st January 2025.

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS paper 2- Polity

Context: This article explores the pressing issue of vacancies and backlogs in the Indian judiciary, which are undermining the timely and effective delivery of justice. It highlights the alarming vacancy rates across High Courts, including the Allahabad High Court operating at 50% of its sanctioned strength, leading to over 60 lakh pending cases nationwide as of January 2025. The author emphasizes the urgency of addressing these gaps and suggests innovative solutions to enhance the judiciary's efficiency and output.

What is the current state of vacancies and backlogs in the Indian judiciary?

1. **Vacancies:** As of January 1, 2025, 371 of the 1,122 sanctioned posts across High Courts remain vacant. The Allahabad High Court functions at only 50% of its sanctioned strength.
2. **Backlogs:** About 60 lakh cases are pending across High Courts, undermining public faith in the judiciary.
3. **Impact:** Judges are overburdened with high caseloads, reducing the time and depth of engagement with cases.

How has the appointment process affected the judiciary?

1. While the pace of Collegium recommendations and appointments has increased, it has not kept up with retirements and rising case filings.
2. This mismatch between appointments and demand has strained the judiciary, emphasizing the need for a near-complete staffing of sanctioned positions.

What role do Articles 124(3)(c) and 217(2)(c) of the Constitution play in judicial appointments?

1. **Article 124(3)(c):** Allows the appointment of 'distinguished jurists' as judges of the Supreme Court.
2. **Article 217(2)(c):** Previously permitted similar appointments in High Courts but was repealed without explanation.
3. **Underutilization:** No jurist has been appointed under Article 124(3)(c), and the repealed Article 217(2)(c) is no longer in use.

Why should 'distinguished jurists' be appointed as judges?

1. **Global Practice:** Countries like the U.S., Poland, Kenya, Spain, and Italy appoint legal academics to judiciary roles, benefiting from their expertise.
2. **Advantages in India:**
 - a. Access to specialized knowledge, research-based insights, and critical thinking.
 - b. Enhanced judicial understanding of complex socioeconomic and legal cases.
 - c. Bridging the gap between academia and practice.

What challenges exist in appointing jurists as judges?

1. **Procedural Gaps:** Lack of courtroom experience and procedural knowledge.
2. **Resistance:** Institutional hesitancy and status quo bias.
3. **Training Needs:** Jurists would require orientation in judicial power limits and courtroom dynamics.

What broader message would this reform send?

1. Reintroducing Article 217(2)(c) would signal support for academia and its integration into the judiciary.
2. It would strengthen the judiciary by combining practical judicial work with academic expertise, enriching judicial discourse.

What steps can be taken to address the judiciary's challenges?

1. **Timely Appointments:** The government must adhere to strict timeframes for implementing Collegium recommendations.
2. **Reforms:**
 - a. Reintroduce Article 217(2)(c) to appoint distinguished jurists as High Court judges.
 - b. Provide procedural training to academic appointees.
3. **Benefits:**
 - a. Reduce backlogs and vacancies.
 - b. Infuse the judiciary with diverse, research-driven perspectives, making it dynamic, robust, and constitutionally grounded.

How can academia enhance judicial decision-making?

1. Jurists from academia can provide fresh perspectives on complex legal issues.
2. They can bridge the gap between theoretical research and practical legal challenges, improving judicial quality.
3. This synergistic approach could lead to transformative outcomes for the judiciary.

Need for Revitalizing Rural Sports

This post on **Need for Revitalizing Rural Sports** has been created based on article **“Go, kho kho, go”** published in The Hindu on 21st January 2025.

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS paper 2- Sports and affairs

Context: The article argues that India needs to invest more time and resources into promoting rural sports like kho kho, alongside other underrepresented sports, to improve its international sporting achievements.

How popular is kho kho globally and in India?

1. Kho kho is not widely popular globally, and even in India, where it originated, it has limited recognition.
2. India is not a major global sporting power, although it excels in cricket and chess.

What recent achievements have been made in kho kho and why it is significant?

1. India won both the men's and women's titles at the inaugural Kho Kho World Cup in New Delhi, led by Pratik Waikar and Priyanka Ingle, respectively.
2. These victories highlight India's dominance in kho kho, a rural-centric game, but also underline the need for its broader global recognition.

What are recent notable achievements in other games?

- Cricket: India won the T20 World Cup last year, despite its current struggles.
- Chess: D. Gukesh became World Chess Champion, and Koneru Humpy regained the Women's World Rapid Chess Championship.
- However, despite historic achievements like the double gold at the Chess Olympiad, chess has not received sufficient acclaim or support.

How did India perform at the Paris Olympics and What does this indicate about Indian sports?

1. India won six medals but failed to meet expectations, finishing 71st, below Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan.
2. It highlights systemic issues in sports management and the need for federations to review their functioning.

What can other sports learn from cricket in India?

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has improved infrastructure, shared revenue growth with players, and successfully managed the sport despite criticism.

What steps can governments take to promote diverse sports?

1. Develop better infrastructure for varied sports like kho kho.
2. Nurture underrepresented sports at both central and state levels.
3. Evaluate whether initiatives like Khelo India justify their large budgets.

Modernizing Indian Agriculture for Sustainable Growth 2047

Source: The post Modernizing Indian Agriculture for Sustainable Growth 2047 has been created, based on the article “7 imperatives to build a viksit agri economy by 2047” published in “**Indian Express**” on 21st January 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Agriculture

Context: The article discusses modernizing Indian agriculture to achieve sustainability and technology-driven growth by 2047. It highlights seven key areas: AI, regenerative farming, robotics, alternative proteins, digital twins, blockchain, and climate-smart techniques, emphasizing adaptation for India's unique challenges and small farmers.

For detailed information on **India's progress and challenges in agriculture** read [Article1](#), [Article2](#), [Article3](#)

What are the ways to modernize Indian agriculture to achieve sustainability and technology-driven growth by 2047?

1. Adopt AI for Precision Farming:

- AI can optimize weather forecasting, pest control, and crop yields.
- In the US and Europe, generative AI offers real-time agronomic insights using large datasets.
- India should develop vernacular AI platforms for small farmers, partner with AgTechs for affordable AI tools, and integrate AI-based advisory services in government schemes.

2. Promote Regenerative Farming:

- Soil degradation and biodiversity loss are major concerns due to monoculture and chemical overuse.
- France and the US use structured policies and incentives to support sustainable practices.

- India needs a national regenerative farming policy and private sector R&D to promote cost-efficient agro-ecological practices.

3. Expand Robotics and Automation:

- Basic tools like seeders and sprayers are common; advanced robotics are less accessible due to cost.
- Create affordable robotic solutions for small farms, establish AgTech hubs, and encourage public-private partnerships.

4. Develop the Alternative Protein Market

- India's sector is driven by startups but faces scalability and affordability issues.
- The EU supports alternative proteins through government-backed R&D.
- India should collaborate globally to improve production techniques and increase public awareness.

5. Utilize Digital Twin Technology

- Field trials in India are manual, costly, and slow.
- The US uses digital twins to reduce trial costs and speed up innovation.
- India should partner with AgTechs, train researchers, and offer tax incentives for digital twin investments.

6. Scale Blockchain in Agriculture

- Blockchain improves food traceability and transparency.
- China uses it to ensure quality and boost farmer incomes.
- India can focus on export crops and infrastructure to enhance market access and reduce fraud.

7. Scale Climate-Smart Farming Techniques:

- Renewable energy initiatives exist but need more widespread adoption.
- Promote micro-irrigation, invest in climate-resilient seeds, and leverage AI for localized climate advisories.

Conclusion

India must modernize agriculture through innovations like AI, robotics, and blockchain, while adopting sustainable practices like regenerative and climate-smart farming. Custom solutions tailored to India's context, along with investments and policies, will uplift smallholder farmers and build a prosperous agricultural future.

Question for practice:

Discuss the ways India can modernize its agriculture to achieve sustainability and technology-driven growth by 2047.

India effectively handles HMPV with preventive measures

Source: The post India effectively handles HMPV with preventive measures has been created, based on the article “HMPV virus – its not the pandemic” published in “Indian Express” on 21st January 2025

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

Context: The article explains that HMPV is a common respiratory virus causing mild symptoms. It is not a cause for alarm in India. The health system can handle it, but precautions, improved surveillance, pandemic preparedness, and addressing air pollution are crucial.

For detailed information on **India’s Response to the HMPV Virus** [read this article here](#)

What is HMPV and how does it spread?

1. HMPV (Human Metapneumovirus) is a respiratory virus from the Pneumoviridae family, first detected in 2001.
2. However, it has circulated in humans for decades. It spreads through: Droplets from infected people, Contact with infected surfaces, Handshakes or close interactions
3. The incubation period is 3–6 days. Symptoms include nasal congestion, cough, fever, and sore throat. Severe symptoms may affect infants, the elderly, and people with weak immunity.

Is HMPV a major concern in India?

1. HMPV is not a major concern in India as it causes mild illness in most cases.
2. The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) found HMPV caused only 3% of Influenza Like Illness (ILI) and Severe Acute Respiratory Illness (SARI) cases.
3. Most respiratory illnesses in India are due to SARS-CoV-2, Influenza A and B, and RSV.
4. No evidence suggests HMPV has mutated into a more dangerous form.
5. India’s health system is equipped to handle HMPV cases effectively, including tracking trends through surveillance.

For detailed information on **India’s Concern Over Human Metapneumovirus Outbreak** [read this article here](#)

How can HMPV be prevented and managed?

1. Prevention measures:

- Wear masks during flu season to reduce respiratory illnesses.
- Wash hands frequently and avoid touching the face.
- Avoid crowded places, especially for infants, the elderly, and vulnerable groups.

2. Management methods:

- Stay hydrated, take warm fluids, and rest.
- Use paracetamol for high fever.
- Seek medical help for severe symptoms like difficulty breathing or persistent fever.

What should India prioritize for the future?

- 1. Strengthen Pandemic Preparedness:** Implement Niti Aayog's 2024 framework report on emergency response and preparedness.
- 2. Increase R&D Investments:** Develop vaccines and countermeasures for high-priority pathogens identified by WHO.
- 3. Enhance Surveillance Systems:** Use ICMR and NCDC's lab-based networks to monitor virus trends effectively.
- 4. Address Air Pollution:** Tackle air pollution, a major driver of respiratory illnesses like ILI and SARI, through a multi-sectoral approach.

Question for practice:

Examine how India can effectively prevent and manage HMPV while prioritizing future preparedness measures.

Challenges in Death Penalty and Sentencing Decisions

Source: The post Challenges in Death Penalty and Sentencing Decisions has been created, based on the article "Mitigating circumstances: Why RG Kar rape case convict was not given death penalty" published in "Indian Express" on 21st January 2025

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

Context: The article discusses the RG Kar rape case verdict, life imprisonment for Sanjoy Roy, and debates on imposing the death penalty. It explains the "rarest of rare" doctrine, factors influencing sentencing, and challenges in ensuring fair hearings for mitigating circumstances.

For detailed information on **Execution of death penalty in India** [read this article here](#)

What is the "Rarest of Rare" Doctrine?

1. The Supreme Court in *Bachan Singh v. State of Punjab (1980)* upheld the death penalty but restricted it to "rarest of rare" cases.
2. Courts must assess **aggravating circumstances** (e.g., extreme brutality, premeditation) and **mitigating circumstances** (e.g., emotional disturbance, potential for reform) before imposing death.

3. The “rarest of rare” doctrine has evolved to focus on both the crime and the convict. Initially, decisions like *Machhi Singh (1983)* emphasized shocking society's conscience. Later cases, such as *Santosh Bariyar (2009)*, highlighted reform potential.

For detailed information on **Death penalty: Deciding the rarest of the rare** [read this article here](#)

What Are Aggravating and Mitigating Circumstances?

1. Aggravating Circumstances

- Crimes involving **extreme brutality** or **pre-planned acts**, as in *Machhi Singh v. State of Punjab (1983)*.
- Murder of public servants, such as police officers, during duty.
- Acts showing **exceptional depravity**, shocking society's conscience.

2. Mitigating Circumstances

- **Emotional or mental disturbance** during the crime (*Bachan Singh v. State of Punjab*).
- **Age**: Young (below 30) or old convicts (*Ramnaresh v. State of Chhattisgarh, 2012*).
- Potential for **reformation**: Must be proven irredeemable (*Santosh Bariyar v. State of Maharashtra, 2009*).

What are current challenges in death penalty cases?

1. Subjective Application of the “Rarest of Rare” Doctrine: In *Shankar Kisanrao Khade v. State of Maharashtra (2013)*, the Supreme Court noted inconsistent sentencing in similar cases. Some convicts received the death penalty, while others were spared, highlighting **judge-centric outcomes**.

2. Imbalance Between Aggravating and Mitigating Factors: The SC, in suo motu proceedings (2022), noted that aggravating factors are part of the case record, but mitigating factors are introduced only after conviction. This creates a **“hopeless disadvantage” for the convict**.

3. Inadequate Sentencing Hearings: The SC in *Dattaraya v. State of Maharashtra (2020)* commuted a death sentence to life imprisonment because the convict was denied a “real, effective and meaningful hearing” during sentencing.

4. Limited Focus on Reform: In *Santosh Bariyar v. State of Maharashtra (2009)*, the SC emphasized that the prosecution must provide clear evidence proving the impossibility of reform. Lack of such evidence undermines objectivity in sentencing.

5. Overemphasis on Shocking Society's Conscience: In *Machhi Singh v. State of Punjab (1983)*, the SC allowed death sentences in cases where the “collective conscience” of society is shocked. The Law Commission later criticized this approach for neglecting the convict's circumstances.

6. Inconsistent Use of Age as a Mitigating Factor: The SC in cases like *Ramnaresh v. State of Chhattisgarh (2012)* considered youth (below 30) a reason for leniency. However, in *Shankar Khade*, the SC found age inconsistently applied across similar cases.

Question for practice:

Examine the challenges associated with ensuring fair sentencing hearings in death penalty cases.

Improving National Green Tribunal's Role and Efficiency

Source: The post Improving National Green Tribunal's Role and Efficiency has been created, based on the article "Re-imagine the National Green Tribunal for superior outcomes" published in "Live mint" on 21st January 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper2- Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies.

Context: The article discusses the National Green Tribunal's role, achievements, and challenges. It highlights issues of jurisdiction, suo motu powers, and controversies over decisions. It emphasizes the need for clearer guidelines to balance environmental protection with sustainable development.

For detailed information on **National Green Tribunal (NGT)** [read this article here](#)

What is the National Green Tribunal (NGT)?

- 1. Establishment:** The National Green Tribunal (NGT) was set up following several writs filed by advocate M.C. Mehta, which led to significant Supreme Court decisions and the establishment of a specialized green bench. This advocacy culminated in the NGT Act of 2010.
- 2. Jurisdiction:** The NGT is a quasi-judicial body with exclusive jurisdiction over all civil environmental cases, established to provide focused attention and expertise on environmental issues.
- 3. Procedural Autonomy:** Unlike traditional courts, the NGT is not bound by the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908. It is authorized to develop its own rules of procedure based on principles of natural justice.
- 4. Powers:** While the NGT can craft its own procedural rules, the NGT Act does not grant it explicit suo motu powers to initiate cases independently.

What are the challenges faced by the NGT?

- 1. Jurisdiction Limits:** The Supreme Court overturned the NGT's decision to reopen the Sterlite Copper plant, stating the NGT lacked jurisdiction over state government actions.
- 2. Allegations of Overreach:** The NGT was criticized for exceeding its statutory mandate in cases like the stalling of Shimla's development plan and penalizing Grasim Industries Ltd, decisions which were later reversed.
- 3. Policy Challenges:** The NGT's directive requiring central approval for real estate projects challenges state authority and complicates the federal structure, impacting land use decision-making at the state level.

What reforms are needed for the NGT?

- 1. Define Jurisdiction Clearly:** The NGT needs explicit clarification on its powers to prevent jurisdictional conflicts.

2. Legislate Suo Motu Powers: Establish clear legislative backing for suo motu actions to ensure they are used responsibly and focus on societal benefits, as recommended by the Supreme Court in the Municipal Corporation of Bombay vs Ankita Sinha case.

3. Transparent Procedures: Establish clear criteria for actions, focusing on societal benefits.

4. Foster Collaborative Governance: Strengthen the cooperative relationship between the NGT, state, and central governments to balance environmental protection with developmental needs, ensuring sustainable progress.

Conclusion

The NGT has been a pioneer in addressing environmental issues but must refine its processes. By balancing environmental protection with sustainable development, it can strengthen public trust and deliver effective justice.

Question for practice:

Examine the challenges faced by the National Green Tribunal (NGT) in exercising its jurisdiction and the reforms needed to enhance its effectiveness.

India's potential to leverage global trends for its growth.

Source: The post India's potential to leverage global trends for its growth has been created, based on the article "We should grab opportunities held out by uncertainty" published in "Live mint" on 21st January 2025

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

Context: The article highlights five global trends shaping 2025: digital transformation, reduced globalization, advanced AI, decentralized organizations, and India's demographic advantage. It emphasizes adapting to uncertainty, fostering innovation, and leveraging opportunities for growth, especially in technology, workforce, and economic resilience.

For detailed information on **India's potential to become a tech-driven economy in 2025** [read this article here](#)

What are the five major trends reshaping the world and how India can leverage them?

1. Dematerialization:

- Physical objects are being replaced by digital solutions, transforming industries.
- **UPI processes over 14 billion monthly transactions**, reducing cash usage. The healthcare startup **Dozee** uses AI to turn ordinary beds into remote health monitors, making diagnostics affordable.
- **Opportunity for India:** Promote digital solutions in industries like healthcare and financial technology to drive growth and innovation.

2. De-globalization:

9 PM Compilation [Third Week] January 2025

- Trade disruptions and geopolitical shifts are reducing globalization.
- India's ₹76,000 crore semiconductor incentive supports domestic production, reducing import dependence. The Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative aligns with global trends like friend-shoring, making India a significant player in global supply chains.

- **Opportunity for India:** Strengthen domestic manufacturing and reduce dependency on imports.

3. Agentic AI:

- Advanced AI allows seamless interactions, replacing traditional applications.
- Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella envisions AI agents directly handling tasks like taxes.
- **Opportunity for India:** Develop AI-based solutions to transform services like governance and customer care.

4. Decentralization of Organizations

- Technology disrupts hierarchical systems, enabling faster decisions.
- Bayer CEO Bill Anderson highlights the need for decentralized decision-making. This approach enables faster responses and innovation within organizations.
- **Opportunity for India:** Adopt decentralized models to foster innovation and efficiency.

5. India's Demographic Advantage

- 65% of Indians are below 35, offering a massive workforce.
- Programs like PM Kaushal Vikas Yojana aim to address unemployment.
- Women-led startups are growing, but barriers like pay gaps and safety need attention.
- **Opportunity for India:** Leverage its demographic dividend to drive economic growth through skills and gender inclusivity.

Conclusion

India must use innovation, adaptability, and foresight to thrive in a changing world. Embracing uncertainty can unlock extraordinary opportunities for growth.

Question for practice:

Examine how India can leverage the five major global trends reshaping the world to drive its economic growth and innovation.

UGC Regulations and State University Laws

This post on UGC Regulations and State University Laws has been created based on article “UGC regulations or State university laws?” published in The Hindu on 21st January 2025.

UPSC Syllabus topic- GS Paper 2- Issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

Context: The article addresses the ongoing dispute between the Union Government, represented by the University Grants Commission (UGC), and State Governments concerning the appointment of Vice Chancellors (VCs) in State universities. At its core, the conflict highlights the constitutional and legislative tensions between central regulations and State autonomy in the governance of higher education institutions.

What is the core issue in the dispute between UGC regulations and State University Acts?

3. The central dispute lies in whether UGC regulations, framed by the UGC's Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and 10 members, can override State University Acts, which are plenary laws passed by State legislatures and assented to by the Governor or President.
4. This conflict reflects broader tensions between Centre-State relations and the scope of delegated legislation.

What is the current situation in Tamil Nadu's State universities?

3. **Vacancies:** Six State universities in Tamil Nadu lack Vice Chancellors (VCs), with some positions vacant for over a year.
4. **Reason for Stalemate:** The Governor (ex-officio Chancellor) insists on including a UGC nominee in VC selection committees as per Regulation 7.3 of UGC Regulations, 2018. The State government, adhering to State University Acts, opposes this on grounds of protecting State autonomy.

How do UGC Regulations and State University Acts differ on VC selection?

3. **UGC Stance:** Regulation 7.3 mandates a UGC nominee on the VC search committee.
4. **State Acts:** Committees typically comprise one nominee each from the Chancellor, syndicate, and senate, without UGC involvement.

What complications arise from conflicting Supreme Court judgments?

3. **Support for UGC:** Some judgments (e.g., Annamalai University and Gambhirdan K. Gadhvi) hold that UGC regulations are mandatory and can override State laws.
4. **Support for States:** Other judgments (e.g., Kalyani Mathivanan and P.J. Dharmaraj) declare UGC regulations merely advisory unless adopted by the State.

What constitutional principles are at stake?

The issue underscores critical constitutional principles:

3. **Article 254(1):** Governs conflicts between Central and State laws, prioritizing plenary Central laws over State laws in the Concurrent List.
4. **Delegated Legislation:** Supreme Court rulings assert that subordinate legislation (like UGC regulations) cannot override plenary State laws unless explicitly provided by Parliament.

What are the judicial precedents on delegated legislation?

3. **Key Cases:**
 - a. Ch. Tika Ramji v. State of UP (1956): Subordinate legislation cannot repeal plenary State laws.
 - b. Indian Express v. Union of India (1984): Subordinate legislation must conform to its parent Act and yield to plenary legislation.
 - c. J.K. Industries v. Union of India (2007): Similar reaffirmation of subordinate legislation's limitations.
4. **Principle:** Only Parliament can repeal or override State laws, not Central agencies via delegated legislation.

Is the UGC overreaching its mandate?

4. **Legal Limits:** The UGC Act, 1956, does not explicitly address VC appointments. UGC's authority under Sections 26(1)(e) and 26(1)(g) applies to teaching staff and coordination standards but not to university officers like VCs.
5. **Judicial View:** The Supreme Court in University of Delhi v. Raj Singh (1994) affirmed that UGC regulations are advisory, not binding, unless adopted by the State.
6. **Policy Shifts:** The UGC's fluctuating rules on VC selection (introduced in 2010, withdrawn in 2013, reinstated in 2018) reflect a focus on administrative control rather than academic standards.

What are the inconsistencies in recent Supreme Court rulings?

3. **Mandatory Interpretation:** Some judgments assert that UGC regulations, once laid before Parliament, integrate into the UGC Act under Article 254(1).
4. **Counterview:** Others argue that subordinate legislation remains advisory and does not acquire plenary status unless approved through an affirmative resolution procedure, as highlighted in Chief Inspector of Mines v. Karam Chand Thapar (1961).

What are the procedures for laying subordinate legislation?

3. **Three Methods:**
 - a. **Without further procedure:** Subordinate legislation takes effect immediately, with no legislative oversight.
 - b. **Negative resolution:** Takes effect but can be annulled or modified within a limited time.
 - c. **Affirmative resolution:** Becomes valid only after explicit legislative approval.
4. **Significance:** Courts should recognize only affirmative resolution procedures as integrating rules into parent legislation.

What is the way forward?

3. **Need for Clarity:** A definitive Constitutional Bench ruling is essential to resolve ambiguities and affirm:
 - a. Article 254(1) applies only to plenary Central and State laws.
 - b. Delegated legislation remains advisory unless laid through affirmative resolution.
 - c. UGC regulations are not binding on State universities unless adopted by the State.
4. **Outcome Desired:** Such clarity will restore normalcy in State universities and uphold the federal balance of power between the Centre and States.

IMEC: A Strategic Partnership for a Balanced Global Economic Future

This post on IMEC: A Strategic Partnership for a Balanced Global Economic Future has been created based on article "Prioritising IMEC is in America's best interest" published in The Hindu on 21st January 2025.

UPSC Syllabus topic- GS Paper 2-International relations

Context: The article emphasizes the strategic and economic importance of the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC). It highlights how IMEC serves as a viable alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and discusses the diplomatic and geopolitical implications of the corridor, underscoring the role of the United States and India as key drivers of the project.

What is the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)?

4. IMEC is an ambitious initiative announced in 2023 to establish an integrated economic network linking India, the Middle East, and Europe through advanced physical and digital infrastructure.
5. It aims to enhance trade connectivity, lower transportation costs, diversify global supply chains, and promote economic integration.
6. Key infrastructure includes railways, shipping networks, pipelines for electricity and hydrogen, and digital communication systems.

Which countries and organizations are participating in IMEC?

3. The participating entities include India, the United States, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Italy, France, Germany, and the European Commission.
4. Countries like Greece and Turkey have also initiated related trade agreements, complementing the corridor.

How is IMEC different from China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)?

3. IMEC seeks to provide an alternative to China's BRI by promoting a balanced global economic architecture based on democratic values and market principles.
4. It emphasizes transparency, sustainability, and multilateral cooperation.

What challenges does IMEC face?

4. **Investment Demands:** Substantial infrastructure investments are needed, which compete with other national priorities.
5. **Private Sector Engagement:** Corporates require clear returns on investment for sustained involvement.
6. **Geopolitical Coordination:** Diverse national priorities and political strategies among participants may lead to uneven economic development and potential tensions.

How have individual countries contributed to IMEC's progress?

5. **France:** Appointed Gérard Mestrallet, a business leader, to head its IMEC efforts, highlighting the corridor's economic potential.
6. **UAE and Saudi Arabia:** Actively spearheading efforts to strengthen ties with the West through IMEC.
7. **India:** Poised to gain through reduced trade costs, transformed maritime logistics, and strengthened ties with West Asian and European nations.

8. U.S. A:

- a. **Abraham Accords:** The U.S. facilitated these agreements, creating conditions for IMEC's inception.
- b. **Bipartisan Support:** Both former President Joe Biden and Donald Trump have backed IMEC. Trump's rapport with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi could further bolster the corridor's progress.

What are the environmental implications of IMEC?

3. IMEC aligns with sustainability goals by promoting the development of green hydrogen, particularly in India.
4. The project supports decarbonization, reduces reliance on fossil fuels, and creates opportunities in clean energy sectors, contributing to global climate goals.

Why is the significance of IMEC?

3. IMEC is more than just an infrastructure project—it reimagines regional economic cooperation.
4. By fostering unprecedented coordination among nations, it offers transformative trade opportunities, enhances energy security, and supports global economic diversification.

Need of Distinguished Jurists as Judges

This post on **Need of Distinguished Jurists as Judges** has been created based on article **"We need distinguished jurists as judges"** Published in The Hindu on 21st January 2025.

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS paper 2- Polity

Context: This article explores the pressing issue of vacancies and backlogs in the Indian judiciary, which are undermining the timely and effective delivery of justice. It highlights the alarming vacancy rates across High Courts, including the Allahabad High Court operating at 50% of its sanctioned strength, leading to over 60 lakh pending cases nationwide as of January 2025. The author emphasizes the urgency of addressing these gaps and suggests innovative solutions to enhance the judiciary's efficiency and output.

What is the current state of vacancies and backlogs in the Indian judiciary?

4. **Vacancies:** As of January 1, 2025, 371 of the 1,122 sanctioned posts across High Courts remain vacant. The Allahabad High Court functions at only 50% of its sanctioned strength.
5. **Backlogs:** About 60 lakh cases are pending across High Courts, undermining public faith in the judiciary.
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How has the appointment process affected the judiciary?

3. While the pace of Collegium recommendations and appointments has increased, it has not kept up with retirements and rising case filings.
4. This mismatch between appointments and demand has strained the judiciary, emphasizing the need for a near-complete staffing of sanctioned positions.

What role do Articles 124(3)(c) and 217(2)(c) of the Constitution play in judicial appointments?

4. **Article 124(3)(c):** Allows the appointment of 'distinguished jurists' as judges of the Supreme Court.

5. **Article 217(2)(c):** Previously permitted similar appointments in High Courts but was repealed without explanation.
6. **Underutilization:** No jurist has been appointed under Article 124(3)(c), and the repealed Article 217(2)(c) is no longer in use.

Why should 'distinguished jurists' be appointed as judges?

3. **Global Practice:** Countries like the U.S., Poland, Kenya, Spain, and Italy appoint legal academics to judiciary roles, benefiting from their expertise.
4. **Advantages in India:**
 - a. Access to specialized knowledge, research-based insights, and critical thinking.
 - b. Enhanced judicial understanding of complex socioeconomic and legal cases.
 - c. Bridging the gap between academia and practice.

What challenges exist in appointing jurists as judges?

4. **Procedural Gaps:** Lack of courtroom experience and procedural knowledge.
5. **Resistance:** Institutional hesitancy and status quo bias.
6. **Training Needs:** Jurists would require orientation in judicial power limits and courtroom dynamics.

What broader message would this reform send?

3. Reintroducing Article 217(2)(c) would signal support for academia and its integration into the judiciary.
4. It would strengthen the judiciary by combining practical judicial work with academic expertise, enriching judicial discourse.

What steps can be taken to address the judiciary's challenges?

4. **Timely Appointments:** The government must adhere to strict timeframes for implementing Collegium recommendations.
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4. Jurists from academia can provide fresh perspectives on complex legal issues.
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This post on **Need for Revitalizing Rural Sports** has been created based on article "Go, kho kho, go" published in The Hindu on 21st January 2025.

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS paper 2- Sports and affairs

Context: The article argues that India needs to invest more time and resources into promoting rural sports like kho kho, alongside other underrepresented sports, to improve its international sporting achievements.

How popular is kho kho globally and in India?

3. Kho kho is not widely popular globally, and even in India, where it originated, it has limited recognition.
4. India is not a major global sporting power, although it excels in cricket and chess.

What recent achievements have been made in kho kho and why it is significant?

3. India won both the men's and women's titles at the inaugural Kho Kho World Cup in New Delhi, led by Pratik Waikar and Priyanka Ingle, respectively.
4. These victories highlight India's dominance in kho kho, a rural-centric game, but also underline the need for its broader global recognition.

What are recent notable achievements in other games?

- Cricket: India won the T20 World Cup last year, despite its current struggles.
- Chess: D. Gukesh became World Chess Champion, and Koneru Humpy regained the Women's World Rapid Chess Championship.
- However, despite historic achievements like the double gold at the Chess Olympiad, chess has not received sufficient acclaim or support.

How did India perform at the Paris Olympics and What does this indicate about Indian sports?

3. India won six medals but failed to meet expectations, finishing 71st, below Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan.
4. It highlights systemic issues in sports management and the need for federations to review their functioning.

What can other sports learn from cricket in India?

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has improved infrastructure, shared revenue growth with players, and successfully managed the sport despite criticism.

What steps can governments take to promote diverse sports?

4. Develop better infrastructure for varied sports like kho kho.
5. Nurture underrepresented sports at both central and state levels.
6. Evaluate whether initiatives like Khelo India justify their large budgets.

Trump's Second Term Reshapes America and World

Source: The post Trump's Second Term Reshapes America and World has been created, based on the article "C Raja Mohan writes: Not just a change of regime, Trump is reshaping post-War America" published in "Indian Express" on 22nd January 2025

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 second term as U.S. president and his efforts to reshape post-War America. It highlights his rejection of liberal values, focus on sovereignty, trade reforms, and a distinct approach to foreign policy. These actions challenge the entrenched liberal hegemony in both domestic and global affairs.

For detailed information on **Trump's America First Policy and Global Impact** [read this article here](#)

What is the focus of Trump's second term?

Trump's second term aims to reshape America's domestic and international policies. He calls this a "revolution of common sense." Liberals see it as a counter-revolution, while conservatives call it a counter-counter-revolution against the "deep state" disrupting his first-term agenda.

What are the domestic policy changes?

- 1. Free Speech and Traditional Values:** Trump plans to reverse gender-identity politics, diversity regulations, and liberal educational norms. He promises to restore traditional values and free speech rights.
- 2. Immigration Reforms:** He emphasizes U.S. territorial sovereignty by tightening borders and deporting illegal immigrants, countering liberal policies on open borders.

What are the economic priorities?

- 1. Rebalancing Trade:** Trump rejects the global trade framework under the WTO. He aims to introduce "fair trade" and "reciprocity" instead of free trade.
- 2. Tariff Strategies:** Trump initiated a tariff policy review and signaled potential action against countries to achieve economic goals.

How is foreign policy evolving?

- 1. Focus on Peace:** Trump aims to prioritize U.S. interests over foreign conflicts. He advocates better relations with Russia and China and a reduction in global interventions.
- 2. Mixed Cabinet Views:** His cabinet includes members with varying stances on global issues like Taiwan, Ukraine, and Gaza, signaling possible internal debates on foreign policy decisions.

What symbolic actions did Trump take?

- 1. Protester Pardons:** Trump pardoned 1,500 January 6 protestors, contrasting Biden's pardons for family members.
- 2. Capitol Swearing-In:** His swearing-in at the Capitol symbolized defiance against establishment narratives about the January 6 protests.

What challenges does Trump face?

Trump's movement faces internal contradictions and external opposition. Balancing these will be crucial for building a lasting coalition and redefining America's post-War liberal policies. His success or failure will have global consequences.

Question for practice:

Examine how Donald Trump's second term aims to reshape America's domestic and international policies.

US withdrawal from the WHO and its potential impacts

Source: The post US withdrawal from the WHO and its potential impacts has been created, based on the article "Under Trump, US withdraws from WHO: Impact, what this means for India" published in "Indian Express" on 22nd January 2025

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 US President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw from the WHO, citing funding issues, lack of reforms, and political influence. It highlights the financial, operational, and global health impacts, urging nations like India to step up leadership.

For detailed information on **Trump's Re-election and India US Relations** [read this article here](#)

Why Did the US Withdraw from the WHO?

1. The US withdrew due to WHO's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, lack of reforms, political influence by member states.
2. The US also objected to its high financial contributions compared to other countries, like China. 3. Trump had previously threatened withdrawal and officially notified the UN in 2020.
4. While the WHO's constitution does not have a withdrawal provision, the US Congress set a condition in 1948 allowing withdrawal with a one-year notice and settlement of financial obligations.

What Does the Executive Order Say?

1. **Funds and Resources:** All US funding and resources to WHO will be paused.
2. **Personnel Withdrawal:** US government staff and contractors working with WHO will be recalled.
3. **New Partnerships:** The US will identify other global and domestic partners to handle WHO's activities.
4. **Pandemic Treaty Exit:** The US will stop negotiating the WHO pandemic treaty aimed at global pandemic response.

What is the Financial Impact?

1. The US contributes **22.5%** of WHO's assessed contributions (USD 138 million of USD 578 million).

2. The US also provides **13%** of voluntary contributions (USD 356.3 million).
3. China, with three times the US population, contributes far less: USD 87.6 million (assessed) and USD 3.9 million (voluntary).
4. WHO faces a major funding gap, as its assessed contributions cover less than 20% of its budget.

How Will the Withdrawal Affect India?

1. **Health Programs:** WHO supports India's immunization efforts, neglected disease programs, and tuberculosis and HIV control. Funding cuts may reduce WHO's effectiveness.
2. **Expertise Loss:** WHO guidelines, developed by global experts (including US experts), will face challenges.
3. **CDC Collaboration:** Ending US-WHO collaboration will affect global disease surveillance and response.

What Role Can India and the Global South Play?

1. **Filling the Vacuum:** India and other global south countries can lead, with China also expected to step up.
2. **India's Contribution:** India's health initiatives and leadership, under PM Modi, can inspire other nations.
3. **Global Partnerships:** Philanthropies like the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation may fill some gaps, alongside Europe and other countries.

Question for practice:

Examine the reasons behind the US withdrawal from the WHO and its potential impacts.

India's ethanol program progress and challenges

Source: The post India's ethanol program progress and challenges has been created, based on the article "**Blending dilemma: Conflicting priorities on flex-fuel need clear policy**" published in "**Business Standard**" on 22nd January 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3-Infrastructures- Energy

Context: The article discusses India's ethanol-blending program aimed at reducing fossil fuel dependence, emissions, and crude oil imports. It highlights achievements, challenges like food security, water stress, and limited adoption of flex-fuel vehicles, and suggests alternative feedstocks and solutions.

For detailed information on **Ethanol Blending Programme (E20 Blending)** [read this article here](#)

What is India's ethanol-blending program?

India's ethanol-blending program aims to reduce fossil fuel dependence, cut carbon emissions, and enhance energy security.

By blending ethanol with petrol, the country saved ₹1.1 trillion in foreign exchange and reduced 50 million tonnes of CO₂ emissions over a decade.

What progress has India made in ethanol blending?

- 1. Increased Blending Ratio:** Achieved 14.6% ethanol blending and aims for 20% by 2025.
- 2. Enhanced Production Capacity:** Ethanol-production capacity more than doubled in four years, reaching 16,230 million litres.
- 3. Investments in Infrastructure:** Invested ₹40,000 crore since 2014 to set up ethanol distilleries.
- 4. Policy Support:** Government notified a lower price for rice supplied to ethanol producers to boost production.

What are the key challenges in achieving higher ethanol blending?

- 1. Food security vs. fuel security:** Ethanol in India is mainly derived from sugarcane, which is water-intensive. Increasing sugarcane use for ethanol raises sugar prices and depletes groundwater, especially in Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Uttar Pradesh. Rising maize demand has made India a net importer of maize.
- 2. High ethanol prices:** Food crop-based ethanol production, supported by price subsidies for farmers, leads to high ethanol prices. Policymakers need to address this issue for sustainable growth.
- 3. Reluctance in the automobile sector: Flex-fuel vehicles (FFVs),** which use ethanol and petrol, have seen slow adoption. Reasons include poor infrastructure for ethanol distribution, low consumer awareness, and higher costs of FFVs. Without FFVs, ethanol targets may fall short.

What solutions can improve ethanol blending?

1. There is a need to shift to alternative feedstocks, such as agricultural waste, non-edible oils, and second-generation biofuels.
2. These options are less resource-intensive and do not harm food security or water availability.
3. Improving FFV adoption is also critical to meeting blending.

Question for practice:

Discuss the progress, challenges, and potential solutions related to India's ethanol-blending program.

[CRR below 4% might be risky for India's banking system](#)

Source: The post CRR below 4% might be risky for India's banking system has been created, based on the article "**Managing liquidity: No case for CRR cuts**" published in "**Business Standard**" on 22nd January 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Economy-Banking

Context: The article explains the current liquidity deficit in India's banking system, the role of the CRR in managing liquidity, and why further reduction in CRR is risky. It suggests alternative methods to address liquidity without reducing CRR below 4%.

Why is there a liquidity deficit in the banking system?

1. The banking system entered a liquidity deficit in December 2024, with the shortfall reaching ₹2.36 trillion by January 20, 2025.
2. Government cash balances with the RBI increased, reducing liquidity.
3. In December 2024, the RBI reduced the cash reserve ratio (CRR) in two tranches of 25 basis points each, bringing it to 4% of net demand and time liabilities (NDTL). This move released ₹1.16 trillion into the banking system. However, bankers have since suggested further CRR reductions, which require caution.
4. Net surplus durable liquidity fell from ₹4.20 trillion (July 26, 2024) to ₹64,350 crore (December 27, 2024).
5. Forex reserves dropped by \$14 billion between December 27, 2024, and January 10, 2025, likely causing a durable liquidity deficit.

What is the role of the CRR in liquidity management?

The CRR serves two main purposes:

1. Stabilizing short-term interest rates:

- CRR balances help banks settle payment obligations and reduce overnight liquidity pressure.
- It mitigates volatility in the inter-bank call money rate.

2. Addressing sudden liquidity shocks:

- CRR is a tool to address liquidity needs quickly, especially during financial upheavals, as seen during the 2008 financial crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic.

Why should the CRR not be reduced further?

1. **CRR is already at a critical level (4%):** Historically, the CRR has not fallen below this level except during crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, when it was briefly reduced to 3%.
2. **Temporary liquidity issues:** The current deficit of ₹2.36 trillion is partly due to short-term factors like increased government cash balances and RBI's forex interventions.
3. **Alternative tools exist:** The RBI can use the Liquidity Adjustment Facility (LAF) to address short-term liquidity needs instead of reducing the CRR. Additionally, durable liquidity can be injected through Open Market Operations (OMOs), though cautiously, as large OMOs may distort bond yields and increase interest rate volatility.
4. **Market stability risks:** Reducing CRR further could destabilize short-term interest rates and reduce banks' flexibility in managing reserves.

Question for practice :

Evaluate why reducing the CRR below 4% might be risky for India's banking system, considering the current liquidity deficit and alternative tools available.

The Draft Data Protection Rules, 2025

Source: This post on **The Draft Data Protection Rules, 2025** has been created based on article "What do draft data protection rules state?" published in The Hindu on 22nd January 2025.

UPSC Syllabus topic: GS Paper 3- Technology

Context: This article discusses the draft rules released by the Indian government on January 3, 2025, to implement the **Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023**.

What are the Draft Data Protection Rules, 2025?

1. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology released draft rules for implementing the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023, on January 3, 2025.
2. These rules aim to establish a framework for data privacy and localisation but have been criticized as inadequate for a comprehensive data protection regime.
3. Feedback on the draft rules is being collected through a fiduciary process, which precludes public disclosure and counter-comments.

What is the Data Localisation Mandate?

1. **Definition:** Data localisation restricts the flow of data within a country's borders.
2. **Scope:** The draft rules expand the Act's provisions, proposing a government-appointed committee to identify data categories that cannot be exported from India.
3. **Impact:** This applies to significant data fiduciaries (SDFs), which process large volumes of sensitive personal data. Major tech companies like Meta, Google, Apple, Microsoft, and Amazon are expected to fall under this category.

Why is Data Localisation Introduced?

1. **Purpose:** To address challenges faced by law enforcement in accessing cross-border data for investigations.
2. **Precedent:** A similar mandate by the Reserve Bank of India in 2018 required localisation of payment data.
3. **Sectoral Collaboration:** The proposed central committee will work with ministries and regulators to prevent ad hoc localisation mandates and ensure smooth industry operations.

What Challenges Do Companies Face?

1. **Operational Issues:** Companies, including start-ups, may struggle to segment data for localisation, increasing costs and restricting operations.
2. **Timeline:** The government plans to provide a two-year compliance period.

How Does Rule 22 Enhance Section 36 of the DPDP Act?

1. **Broad Powers:** Section 36, along with Rule 22, allows the government to demand any information from data fiduciaries or intermediaries in the interest of sovereignty, integrity, or national security.
2. **Lack of Transparency:** Companies cannot disclose government requests if such disclosure could harm state interests.

What Are the Concerns Over Executive Overreach?

1. **Potential Misuse:** Experts warn that discretionary powers could lead to surveillance and suppression of dissent.
2. **End-to-End Encryption:** Social media intermediaries, like WhatsApp, could be forced to compromise encryption under Rule 22. WhatsApp previously challenged similar provisions under the IT Rules, 2021.

Are There Any Checks and Balances?

1. **Criticism:** The provisions lack adequate safeguards, contrasting the 2012 A.P. Shah Committee recommendations, which advocated notifying individuals subject to data interception.
2. **Expert View:** Legal experts highlight the risk of misuse by politically influenced agencies and call for safeguards similar to those under the Information Technology Act, 2000.

U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Deal

Source: This post on U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Deal has been created based on article "Time to seize the promise of the U.S.-India nuclear deal" **published in** The Hindu on 22nd January 2025.

UPSC Syllabus topic: GS Paper 3- International relations

Context: The article explores the history, potential, and challenges of the **U.S.-India civil nuclear deal**, which was finalized in 2008 after a lengthy negotiation process.

When was the U.S.-India civil nuclear deal finalized, and why was it significant?

1. The U.S.-India civil nuclear deal was finalized in late 2008 after years of negotiations beginning in 2005.
2. It marked a watershed moment in defense and strategic cooperation between the two democracies, building trust to collaborate on advanced and potentially destructive technologies.
3. The Coalition for Partnership with India, consisting of businesses, Indian-Americans, and academics, advocated for the deal, overcoming opposition that feared it would promote nuclear proliferation.

What were the anticipated benefits of the deal?

1. The deal was expected to enhance India's civil nuclear sector with new plants using U.S. technology, creating jobs in both countries.

2. It aimed to generate more electricity for Indian industries, reduce reliance on fossil fuels, and contribute to climate goals by producing clean energy.
3. Despite high expectations, the energy and commercial promises have not materialized. For example, plans for six nuclear plants announced by President Obama in 2016 remain unrealized.

What is the U.S. Entity List, and how does it relate to the deal?

1. The U.S. Entity List identifies entities with which U.S. companies are restricted from conducting business.
2. After the deal, most Indian entities were removed from the list, except a few involved in sensitive nuclear research.
3. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan announced that the U.S. is finalizing measures to remove longstanding regulatory barriers, potentially enabling greater collaboration between U.S. and Indian nuclear entities.

What is the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, and why is it problematic?

1. It was enacted in 2010. The Act deviates from international norms by placing major liability obligations on suppliers rather than operators.
2. This has deterred major U.S. suppliers like GE and Westinghouse from participating in India's nuclear projects.

How has India tried to address supplier liability concerns?

1. The Indian government introduced a 20-year insurance scheme through public sector companies to cover supplier liability.
2. Russian companies accepted this arrangement due to government ownership and geopolitical interests, but U.S. firms have remained reluctant.

How has technology evolution impacted the deal's implementation?

1. Rapid advancements in nuclear technology require U.S. companies to offer cutting-edge solutions.
2. These must also be cost-competitive to avoid burdening Indian consumers with high electricity prices.
3. Indian officials are cautious of cost overruns that have plagued recent U.S. nuclear projects, leading to increased electricity costs without substantial improvements.

What needs to be done to overcome the remaining challenges?

1. Resolving liability concerns, regulatory hurdles, and cost barriers will require joint efforts from U.S. companies, the Biden administration, and Indian authorities.
2. Collaboration on technology and competitive pricing is crucial.
3. Addressing these challenges could unlock tremendous benefits, including enhanced energy security, economic growth, and deeper U.S.-India strategic ties.

4. However, time is running out to realize the full promise of the deal.

Kerala's Rising Maternal Mortality Ratio

Source: This post on **Kerala's Rising Maternal Mortality Ratio** has been created based on article “**The price of success – Kerala’s rising maternal mortality ratio is not yet a cause for concern**” published in The Hindu on 22nd January 2025.

UPSC Syllabus topic: GS Paper 3- Issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

Context: The article discusses the implications of demographic transitions, with a focus on Kerala's rising maternal mortality ratio (MMR) and its relation to broader demographic trends.

Why is Kerala experiencing a rise in maternal mortality despite its achievements?

1. Kerala, known for its exemplary progress in demographic transition, has seen a rise in its maternal mortality ratio (MMR).
2. This increase is attributed to the declining fertility rate, which reduces the number of live births.
3. Consequently, even a small number of maternal deaths appears significant when measured per 1,00,000 live births, distorting the MMR.

What milestones has Kerala achieved in demographic transition?

1. Kerala was the first Indian state to reach the **replacement-level fertility rate (TFR of 2.1)** in 1987-88, ensuring that the population size remains stable across generations.
2. This achievement set the stage for other southern states, which achieved this milestone by the mid-2000s.

What is demographic transition, and what are its phases?

Demographic transition describes the historical shift from high birth and death rates to low birth and death rates, driven by advancements in education, economic development, and technology. It occurs in four phases:

1. **Stable population** (high birth and death rates).
2. **Rapid population growth** (declining death rates while birth rates remain high).
3. **Population leveling out** (declining birth rates).
4. **Population decline** (low birth and death rates).

How does Kerala's demographic transition compare globally?

1. Kerala's demographic pattern mirrors that of developed nations like South Korea, where fertility rates have dropped significantly.
2. Despite efforts such as incentivizing childbirth, these nations struggle to revive population growth, indicating the irreversible nature of advanced demographic transitions.

What challenges arise from demographic transitions?

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Demographic transitions lead to long-term consequences, such as:

- A **declining working-age population** and an **increasing elderly population**, resulting in higher dependency ratios.
- Strain on **public resources**, particularly healthcare and social support systems.
- Economic challenges due to a shrinking labor force.

What are the broader implications for Kerala and similar regions?

Kerala, like other regions experiencing advanced demographic transitions, must prepare for the economic and societal effects of an aging population. Key measures include:

- **Strengthening public finances** to manage rising healthcare costs.
- Expanding **social support systems** for the elderly.
- Promoting **equal household participation** to balance work and caregiving responsibilities.

How should governments respond to these transitions?

Governments must focus on:

- **Improving healthcare financing** to address the needs of an aging population.
- Creating policies that support **gender equality in caregiving** and encourage workforce participation.
- Proactively addressing the long-term effects of population decline to ensure sustainable development.

Environmental Change: How Is Chennai Reflecting Global Challenges?

Source: This post on Environmental Change: How Is Chennai Reflecting Global Challenges? **has been created based on article** "The world has been changing for a while" **published in** The Hindu on 22nd January 2025.

UPSC Syllabus topic: GS Paper 3- Environment

Context: This article explores the ongoing global transformations across various dimensions such as the environment, politics, technology, and international relations. It provides a historical perspective on the dynamic nature of change and reflects on its implications for the future.

What major environmental challenges has Chennai faced in recent years?

1. Chennai has experienced drastic environmental changes. In 2019, the city declared "Day Zero" due to severe water shortages.
2. However, in the following years, unseasonal storms and torrential rains caused devastating floods, displacing residents due to excessive water.
3. Chennai demonstrates the need to prepare for both extremes—droughts and floods—highlighting the necessity of adaptive water management systems in a world undergoing significant climatic shifts.

How does the current climate compare to historical conditions?

1. Humans today face unprecedented environmental conditions, with record-high global temperatures and carbon dioxide levels.
2. Half of all fossil fuels have been burned since Sachin Tendulkar's Test debut, illustrating the rapid pace of industrial and environmental change.

What role does technology play in shaping the modern world?

1. New technologies are revolutionizing communication and connectivity.
2. While they enable better sharing of ideas, they also polarize political discourse, incite tensions, and exacerbate societal divisions.
3. The 2024 elections saw record-high voter turnout globally, with political parties struggling to retain power or maintain majorities.
4. This reflects widespread demand for solutions to modern challenges and opportunities.

What challenges does India face in the evolving global landscape?

India's strategy of balancing multiple alliances, such as being part of both BRICS and the Quad, will face pressure. Trump's leadership style might complicate India's efforts to maintain diverse partnerships and strategic autonomy.

How does the current geopolitical environment affect India's position?

1. The global scenario is marked by a weakened Iran, a destabilized Russia due to the Ukraine invasion, and significant shifts in China's global stance.
2. India will need to navigate these dynamics carefully under Trump's transactional diplomacy.
3. Historians argue that significant shifts, like environmental and political changes, have been underway for some time.
4. Change is often gradual and unnoticed, making it critical to recognize and adapt to these transformations proactively.

Urbanization affecting groundwater

Source: The post urbanization affecting groundwater has been created, based on the article "Address India's worsening urban groundwater crisis" published in "Live mint" on 23rd January 2025

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

Context: The article highlights India's groundwater crisis, with contamination and over-extraction worsening due to urbanization, fertilizer use, and poor sewage management. It calls for sustainable water management through advanced technologies, decentralized wastewater treatment, rainwater harvesting, and circular water economy initiatives.

For detailed information on **India's Annual Groundwater Quality Report 2024** [read this article here](#)

Why is groundwater important?

1. Groundwater is a critical source of urban water supply worldwide, supporting nearly half the urban population.
2. Aquifers store larger water volumes than artificial reservoirs, ensuring water availability during droughts.
3. For example, the Ogallala Aquifer in the US supplied 500 cubic kilometers of water in 40 years, exceeding Egypt's Lake Nasser.
4. Groundwater is often cleaner than surface water, as aquifers naturally protect it from contamination.
5. It ensures reliable water supply, especially in regions with limited surface water resources or during periods of irregular rainfall.

How is urbanization affecting groundwater?

1. Urbanization is drastically impacting groundwater due to increased water demand and inadequate sewage treatment infrastructure.
2. By 2036, India's urban population is expected to surge to 600 million, intensifying the strain on groundwater resources.
3. Urban areas, contributing 70% to India's GDP, face significant water management challenges.
4. Of 712 surveyed districts, 102 are overexploited with groundwater extraction rates exceeding 100%.
5. Specifically, urban centers in Punjab, Delhi, Haryana, and Karnataka are experiencing nearly depleted groundwater levels, highlighting the critical need for improved water management and conservation practices.

What are the main causes of groundwater contamination?

1. **Excessive Fertilizer Use:** Leads to nitrate contamination; 20% of groundwater samples in India have nitrate levels exceeding 45 mg/l, with some districts over 40%.
2. **Poor Waste Management:** Urban areas lack sewage treatment, as in 2021, only **31,841 MLD** of sewage was treated out of **72,368 MLD** generated.
3. **Arsenic Contamination:** Severe in states like West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, and Assam.
4. **Fluoride Pollution:** Found in over 9% of groundwater samples.
5. **Urbanization Impact:** Impervious surfaces hinder recharge, and untreated sewage pollutes rivers and aquifers.

What solutions can improve groundwater management?

1. Circular water economy:

- Use decentralized wastewater treatment systems at community levels.

- Reclaim water for non-drinking purposes and extract nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus.

2. Technology-driven solutions:

- IoT sensors and AI can monitor water quality and predict contamination trends.
- These tools can streamline water distribution and improve wastewater treatment.

3. Rainwater harvesting and aquifer recharge:

- Cities should adopt rainwater harvesting and artificial aquifer recharge to conserve water.

What are India's existing initiatives for water conservation?

1. The **Jal Shakti Abhiyan** focuses on rainwater harvesting and groundwater recharge.
2. The **AMRUT 2.0 programme** promotes effective urban water management.
3. **Unified and Model Building Bye Laws** prioritize water conservation in urban planning.

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

How can India ensure water sustainability?

1. India should scale up localized strategies like decentralized treatment and rainwater harvesting.
2. Regular monitoring and advanced technologies will enhance the impact of existing initiatives.
3. By adopting innovative solutions, cities can secure safe groundwater and long-term water sustainability.

Question for practice:

Examine the impact of urbanization on groundwater resources in India and suggest sustainable solutions for addressing the challenges.

India lagging behind in AI innovation

Source: The post India lagging behind in AI innovation has been created, based on the article "**Basic technology R&D: Let's wake up before it's too late**" published in "**Live mint**" on 23rd January 2025

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

Context: The article highlights India's missed opportunity in foundational AI research, focusing instead on adapting existing models. It emphasizes the need for bold investment in speculative research to avoid dependency on foreign technology and ensure competitiveness in emerging industries.

For detailed information on **Major concerns of AI use in India** [read this article here](#)

Why is India lagging behind in AI innovation?

1. **Missed foundational research opportunities:** India focused on adapting existing AI models instead of creating new ones, despite having talent and resources when transformer models emerged 2–3 years ago.
2. **Low research output:** India produces only 10% of the AI research papers compared to China or the US.
3. **Dependency on foreign technology:** Heavy reliance on foreign intellectual property leads to costly licensing, cloud fees, and hardware imports.
4. **China's rapid advancements:** Chinese firms developed efficient, versatile models supporting multiple languages, including Indian ones, while India remains focused on local adaptations.
5. **Lack of bold investment:** Limited funding for speculative, foundational research hinders innovation.

Why is foundational research critical for India's future?

1. **Global Competitiveness:** Without foundational breakthroughs, India risks being overshadowed by foreign models, even in local applications like Indian language AI.
2. **Missed Opportunities:** India skipped foundational research in transformer models despite having talent, producing only 10% of China or the US's AI research papers.
3. **High Costs of Dependency:** Relying on foreign technology increases licensing, cloud, and hardware expenses, making AI a forex absorber.
4. **Shaping Future Industries:** Foundational research enables leadership in AI-driven fields like robotics and autonomous vehicles.

What needs to change for India to lead in AI?

1. India must fund speculative research without fixed end goals.
2. Bold experimentation in AI model development can lead to transformative breakthroughs.
3. Visionary leaders and financial backing for foundational research are essential.
4. Investing now will ensure India's leadership in future technologies.

Question for practice:

Examine the reasons behind India's lag in foundational AI research and its implications for the country's future competitiveness.

India lagging behind in AI innovation

Source: The post India lagging behind in AI innovation has been created, based on the article “**Why Neutral Expert’s decision on Indus Waters Treaty is a win for India**” published in “**Indian Express**” on 23rd January 2025

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

Context: The article discusses how the Neutral Expert appointed by the World Bank confirmed his authority to judge the disputes between India and Pakistan concerning two hydroelectric projects under the Indus Waters Treaty. This decision supports India's position that the disputes fall within his jurisdiction.

For detailed information on **Indus Water Treaty** [read this article here](#)

What is the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT)?

1. The Indus Waters Treaty was signed on September 19, 1960, by India and Pakistan after nine years of negotiations arranged by the World Bank.
2. It determines the distribution of the waters of the Indus River and its tributaries.
3. India has “unrestricted use” of the Eastern Rivers (Beas, Ravi, Sutlej), and Pakistan controls the Western Rivers (Indus, Chenab, Jhelum).
4. India gets 30% of the total Indus River System water, while Pakistan gets 70%.

What is the ongoing dispute?

The dispute concerns the design of two hydroelectric projects in Jammu and Kashmir:

1. **Kishenganga Hydroelectric Project (HEP)** on the Kishenganga (a tributary of the Jhelum).
2. **Ratle Hydroelectric Project (HEP)** on the Chenab.
3. Both are “run-of-the-river” projects, meaning they generate electricity without obstructing river flow.
4. Pakistan claims these projects violate the Treaty, but India maintains they comply with IWT provisions.

How was the dispute handled?

1. In 2015, Pakistan requested a **Neutral Expert** but withdrew its request in 2016, opting for arbitration at the **Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA)**.
2. India rejected the PCA mechanism and insisted on resolving differences through the Neutral Expert as per the IWT's graded dispute resolution system.
3. The World Bank initiated both processes in October 2022: appointing a Neutral Expert (Michel Lino) and launching PCA proceedings.

What is the Neutral Expert's role and decision?

1. The Neutral Expert upheld India's position that the differences on the two projects fall under his jurisdiction.
2. He decided to hear the merits of the case after visiting the project sites in June 2023.

3. India boycotts the PCA proceedings, calling them inconsistent with the Treaty, but engages with the Neutral Expert process.

4. It confirms India's stand that the Neutral Expert is competent to resolve the dispute.

5. This outcome is favorable for India at this stage as the matter remains within Treaty-aligned mechanisms.

What is the future of the IWT?

1. India has issued two notices to Pakistan:

- **January 2023 Notice:** Sought modification of the Treaty due to Pakistan's repeated objections.
- **September 2024 Notice:** Cited changes in demographics, environmental challenges, clean energy goals, and cross-border terrorism as reasons to review the Treaty.

2. These notices invoke **Article XII (3)**, which allows the Treaty to be modified by mutual agreement.

Key Takeaway

The Neutral Expert's decision strengthens India's stand in the dispute. However, India's push for Treaty review and modification suggests possible renegotiation in response to modern challenges like clean energy and security concerns.

Question for practice:

Evaluate how the decision of the Neutral Expert supports India's position in the ongoing disputes under the Indus Waters Treaty.

US AI Chip Export Rules Affect India

Source: The post US AI Chip Export Rules Affect India has been created, based on the article "**What is U.S.'s new rule for exporting AI chips?**" published in "**The Hindu**" on 23rd January 2025

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper3- Science and Technology- Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, nano-technology, bio-technology and issues relating to intellectual property rights.

Context: The article discusses new U.S. regulations on exporting advanced AI technology and chips. It divides countries into three tiers with different rules. India and China fall under the second tier, requiring authorization for certain AI-related transactions. The goal is to protect U.S. security.

For detailed information on **US Restrictions on AI Chips and Its Impact on India** read [Article1](#), [Article2](#)

What Technology is Being Regulated by U.S?

1. The U.S. Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) is regulating the following technologies:

- **Advanced Computing Chips:** These are integral for running sophisticated AI operations and data processing.

- **AI Model Weights:** Specific configurations and setups of AI models that dictate how data is processed and the quality of outputs.

2. The regulations update how these technologies are exported, re-exported, or transferred within countries. They categorize countries into three tiers:

Tier 1: Includes 18 allies like the U.K. and Canada, with no restrictions.

Tier 2: Includes China and India, requires authorizations for certain transactions.

Tier 3: Includes countries like North Korea and Iran, which are barred from accessing the technology.

What Are the Concerns About These Regulations?

1. **Impact on U.S. Global Competitiveness:** Critics argue that the regulations might undermine the innovation that has kept the U.S. ahead in the tech sector. For example, Ned Finkle from NVIDIA expressed concerns that controlling widely available technology does not enhance U.S. security.

2. **Availability of Alternative Suppliers:** Ken Glueck of Oracle noted that the rules ignore the existence of non-U.S. chip suppliers. He argues that companies can achieve the same performance by sourcing GPUs from alternative suppliers like Huawei and Tencent, thus undermining the effectiveness of the regulations and impacting U.S. competitiveness in the global market.

How Do These Rules Impact India?

1. **Requirement for Authorization:** Indian companies must obtain Validated End User (VEU) authorization to use exported advanced AI chips for both civilian and military purposes, excluding nuclear applications.

2. **Impact on Data Centers:** Large Indian data centers that want to deploy these advanced technologies will need to navigate these new bureaucratic hurdles to speed up their operations.

3. **Exclusion from Trusted Allies:** India is notably absent from the list of trusted allies and partners, likely due to concerns over past technology leakages to countries like Russia.

Question for practice:

Discuss how the new U.S. regulations on exporting advanced AI technology and chips impact India's technology sector.

The Rise and Influence of Oligarchy in Modern Democracies

Source: This post on **The Rise and Influence of Oligarchy in Modern Democracies** has been created based on article "[The oligarchy we see today](#)" published in The Hindu on 23rd January 2025.

UPSC Syllabus topic: GS Paper 2 – International relations

Context: The article explores the concept and evolution of oligarchy, emphasizing its contemporary relevance and implications for democracy. It begins by addressing U.S. President Joe Biden's warning about a "tech industrial complex" and a new Gilded Age of oligarchs threatening American democracy.

What warnings have been made about oligarchy in the U.S. recently?

1. In his farewell remarks, U.S. President Joe Biden warned of an emerging oligarchy threatening American democracy.
2. Biden highlighted a "tech industrial complex," akin to Dwight Eisenhower's 1961 warning about the "military-industrial complex."
3. Biden cautioned about a new Gilded Age of "robber barons" eroding freedoms.
4. Theodore Roosevelt, a U.S. President in the early 1900s, combated similar challenges by trust-busting and creating regulatory agencies.

How is oligarchy currently visible in the U.S.?

1. Political and economic power are intertwined, as seen in Donald Trump's cabinet, which included 13 billionaires.
2. Elon Musk, the first individual with a net worth exceeding \$400 billion, supported Trump's campaign with \$200 million and proposed public spending cuts.
3. Billionaires from industries like fossil fuels, tech, and others (e.g., Jeff Bezos, Tim Cook, and Mark Zuckerberg) were prominently present at Trump's inauguration and have federal government contracts.

What is the origin of the term oligarchy? How do oligarchs operate and adapt?

1. The term was coined by Aristotle to describe the rule of a wealthy few "for corrupt and unjust purposes."
2. Oligarchs often gain power through financial means, social standing, or connections in politics, religion, or the military.
3. Jeffrey A. Winters, in his book *Oligarchy* (2011), explained that oligarchs defend their wealth by using power and influence.
4. Their involvement varies depending on threats to their interests.

How has oligarchy evolved over time?

1. Modern oligarchs, like Michael Bloomberg, use private funds to secure political positions, unlike historical oligarchs such as Marcus Licinius Crassus, who sought political power for survival.
2. Oligarchs today focus more on vanity and influence than survival.
3. Oligarchy becomes dangerous when oligarchs:
 - Violate the rule of law.
 - Remove checks and balances on their power.
 - Prioritize personal interests over the people's welfare.

What are some examples of oligarchies globally?

1. **Philippines:** Powerful families dominate due to its colonial past.
2. **China:** Despite calling itself a communist republic, power is concentrated in a few hands.
3. **Russia:** Wealthy businessmen with political influence are often referred to as oligarchs.
4. **United States:** Bernie Sanders pointed out that oligarchs run both Russia and the U.S.

Can democracy counter oligarchy?

1. Aristotle, in *Politics*, argued democracy is safer and less prone to conflict than oligarchy.
2. However, sociologist Robert Michels' "iron law of oligarchy" posits that democracies inevitably transform into oligarchies due to labor division.

What risks does oligarchy pose today?

1. John Adams feared the rise of a "power elite" over 200 years ago.
2. Today, economic power concentrated through technological advancements, like AI, is intensifying oligarchic tendencies globally.

Unlocking India's Critical Minerals Potential

Source: This post on **Unlocking India's Critical Minerals Potential** has been created based on article "[The oligarchy we see today](#)" published in The Hindu on 23rd January 2025.

UPSC Syllabus topic: GS Paper 1- Distribution of Key Natural Resources across the world

Context: The article discusses China's strategic use of export controls on critical minerals, which are essential for advanced technologies like semiconductors, aerospace, and batteries. It highlights China's calculated approach to controlling mineral exports, balancing its economic interests with geopolitical goals. In contrast, the article examines India's challenges in building a robust critical minerals ecosystem despite having significant mineral potential, as evidenced by lithium deposits in Jammu and Kashmir.

What recent export restrictions has China introduced?

1. On January 2, 2025, China's Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) added 28 U.S. entities to its export control list.
2. The restrictions target minerals critical for high-tech applications, including tungsten, gallium, magnesium, beryllium, hafnium, and lithium-6.

How has China historically used its mineral exports as a strategic tool?

1. China has repeatedly weaponized critical mineral exports, targeting minerals essential to Western nations, especially for semiconductors, batteries, and advanced electronics.
2. Examples include:
 - a. The rare earth minerals embargo against Japan (2010).
 - b. Restrictions on antimony, gallium, and germanium exports.
 - c. A ban on rare earth extraction and processing technologies (2023).
3. China avoids controlling minerals heavily reliant on Western raw material imports.
4. It refrains from measures that could harm domestic industries or export-driven sectors.

What is India's current status in critical minerals development?

1. India discovered lithium deposits in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district in 2023, but no company has shown interest in bidding for the resources.

2. Only 48% of the mineral blocks offered for auction have been successfully auctioned.

What steps has the Indian government taken to boost critical minerals development?

1. Identified 30 critical minerals essential for national security.
2. Established Khanij Bidesh India Ltd. (KABIL) to secure overseas investments in critical minerals like lithium and cobalt.
3. Passed the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2023, removing restrictions on certain rare earth elements.

How has the 2023 amendment aimed to improve exploration?

1. Introduced an 'exploration license' to attract specialized exploration firms, including foreign players.
2. Enabled firms to focus on reconnaissance and prospecting without committing to full-scale mining.
3. Promised reimbursement of 50% of exploration expenditure once mining begins.

Why have these reforms not yielded significant results?

1. Only a few exploration licenses for minerals like lithium and rare earth elements have been issued, mostly to public sector firms.
2. Foreign participation remains minimal, and mining license auctions have stalled.
3. Outdated resource classification systems and insufficient geological data make exploration riskier for potential bidders.

How can India improve its critical minerals exploration?

1. Focus on high-quality geological surveys to reduce information asymmetry between the government and mining companies.
2. Offer larger upfront fiscal incentives during the exploration phase instead of reimbursing costs only after production begins.
3. Both sectors involve high upfront costs and long timelines for profitability.
4. India's aggressive capital support for semiconductor fabrication could be replicated for critical minerals exploration to offset early costs and attract investment.

What should India's approach be?

1. India must address systemic issues, including outdated exploration methods and limited fiscal incentives, to unlock the potential of its critical minerals sector.
2. Adopting a semiconductor fabrication-style model for critical minerals could boost domestic exploration, mining, and exports, aligning with the country's strategic goals.

Is the Government Encouraging 'Crosspathy'?

Source: This post on Crosspathy Controversy in India has been created based on article “**Is the Government Encouraging 'Crosspathy'?**” published in The Hindu on 23rd January 2025.

UPSC Syllabus topic: GS Paper 2- Issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

Context: The article examines the Maharashtra Food and Drugs Administration's (FDA) recent directive permitting homeopathic practitioners with a certificate in modern pharmacology to prescribe allopathic medicines. It discusses the challenges to this directive, particularly from the Indian Medical Association (IMA), which argues that it contradicts a Bombay High Court stay order and the Supreme Court's stance on 'crosspathy.' **What directive has the Maharashtra Food and Drugs Administration issued?**

What is the background of this issue?

1. In 2017, the Maharashtra Medical Education and Drug Department permitted homeopathic practitioners holding the Licentiate of the Court of Examiners of Homeopathy (1951-1982) to practise modern medicine.
2. This notification was challenged in the Bombay High Court by the Indian Medical Association (IMA), leading to a stay on the directive.

Why is the directive being opposed?

1. The IMA argues that:
 - a. Even the central regulatory body for homeopathy does not allow its practitioners to prescribe allopathic medicines.
 - b. The Supreme Court has banned 'crosspathy,' categorizing it as medical negligence.
 - c. The FDA lacks the authority to issue such a directive, especially since the court's stay remains in effect.
2. The IMA fears risks to patients' safety if homeopathic practitioners are allowed to prescribe allopathic medicines without proper qualifications.

What has the Supreme Court ruled on crosspathy?

1. In the 1996 *Poonam Verma vs. Ashwin Patel* case, the Supreme Court held a homeopath liable for negligence after prescribing allopathic medicine, leading to a patient's death.
2. The judiciary views cross-system practice as medical negligence unless explicitly authorized by state governments.

Why is the Central government promoting AYUSH medicine?

1. India faces a significant shortage of doctors, particularly in rural areas.
2. AYUSH practitioners are being integrated to fill healthcare gaps and improve accessibility in underserved regions.
3. As of June 2022:
 - a. 13,08,009 allopathic doctors are registered in India.
 - b. 5.65 lakh AYUSH doctors are available.

4. The *Health Dynamics of India 2022-23* report highlights an 80% shortage of specialist doctors in rural community health centres.

What are experts saying about integrating alternative medicine practitioners?

1. Public health experts emphasize the importance of structured integration of mid-level providers.
2. Allowing unregulated cross-system practice may lead to chaos in the healthcare system.
3. While promoting AYUSH practitioners is seen as a solution to doctor shortages, their roles need clear regulations to maintain healthcare standards.