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logical . simple . targeted
analysis & explanation
of relevant news

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Coverage from
varied
sources

ESSAYS OF THE MONTH

Selected essays
from Rau's
GSI students

**MAY
2023**



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Doctrine of Basic Structure turns 50

Kesavananda Bharati Case, officially known as Kesavananda Bharati Sripadagalvaru and Others v. State of Kerala and Another, is **one of the most significant legal battles in the history of Indian jurisprudence**. This case, heard by the Supreme Court of India from 1970 to 1973, established the doctrine of the **"basic structure"** of the Constitution and **played a crucial role in shaping the democracy of India**. This essay aims to provide a detailed and analytical analysis of the Kesavananda Bharati Case and its profound impact on Indian democracy.

Background of Kesavananda Bharati Case:

The case originated from the **Kerala Land Reforms Act of 1963**, which sought to impose limitations on the rights of property ownership. Kesavananda Bharati, the head of a Hindu matha (monastic organization) in Kerala, **challenged the constitutional validity of the Act, claiming that it violated the fundamental right to property enshrined in Article 19(1)(f) of the Indian Constitution**.

Doctrine of Basic Structure:

The **crux** of the Kesavananda Bharati Case revolved around the **interpretation of Article 368**, which grants the Parliament the power to amend the Constitution. The fundamental question before the court was whether the **amending power of the Parliament was absolute or subject to implied limitations**.

In a landmark decision, the Supreme Court ruled that while **Parliament had the power to amend the Constitution, it could not alter its "basic structure"**. The court held that the basic structure consists of the essential features and

framework that give the Constitution its identity and character. The judgment emphasized that any amendment that destroys or abrogates the basic structure would be deemed unconstitutional.

Impact on Democracy:

Judicial Supremacy: The Kesavananda Bharati Case firmly established the principle of judicial supremacy, which means that the judiciary has **the ultimate authority to interpret the Constitution and determine the validity of legislative actions**. This empowered the judiciary to serve as a guardian of the Constitution, protecting it from arbitrary changes by the legislative and executive branches.

Checks and Balances: By recognizing the basic structure doctrine, the Supreme Court introduced a vital mechanism for maintaining the delicate balance of power between the three branches of government. **It ensured that the Parliament's amending power did not undermine the democratic and constitutional principles enshrined in the Constitution**. The doctrine acted as a safeguard against potential abuse of power and protected citizens' fundamental rights.

Fundamental Rights Protection: The Kesavananda Bharati Case fortified the protection of fundamental rights in India. **The judgment emphasized that certain core principles, such as the right to equality, freedom of speech, and the right to life and personal liberty, formed an integral part of the Constitution's basic structure**. Consequently, these rights acquired a higher level of protection, making it challenging for any government to undermine or dilute them through constitutional amendments.

Evolving Constitution: The case acknowledged that the Constitution is a living document that should adapt to the changing needs and aspirations of society. While the basic structure remains inviolable, **the court recognized that other provisions could be amended to reflect the changing social, economic, and political dynamics.** This interpretation ensured that the Constitution remained relevant and flexible, striking a balance between stability and progress.

Judicial Activism: The Kesavananda Bharati Case sparked a period of judicial activism in India. **The Supreme Court, emboldened by its newfound authority to interpret the basic structure, took an active role in protecting fundamental rights and ensuring constitutional governance.** It enabled the court to intervene in cases where the executive or legislative actions were perceived as unconstitutional, promoting transparency, accountability, and good governance.

Check against majoritarianism: Democracies suffer from pathology of majoritarianism. Majoritarian and authoritarian people often electoral wins to make laws and amend constitutions to suit their evil agenda and target constituencies. There is a need for a check on this majoritarianism for democracy to thrive and be inclusive. Doctrine of basic structure does the same in Indian constitutional context. Constitutional ideals such as **democracy, federalism, secularism** have been read as part of basic structure and hence, remain guarantee for future generations.

Despite being a standout evolution in India's constitutional history, various scholars have criticised it on grounds that the doctrine of basic structure read into the Indian Constitution a concept which was alien, abstract and a judicial innovation, not found in the original Constitution. Also, this doctrine has made future generations of Indian polity caged as they cannot overturn certain constitutional provisions even if an overwhelming majority want a different political ideal as compared to our forefathers. The problem accentuates in the Indian context as the judiciary is often appointed by collegium of judges and is elitist in nature and its application of doctrine of basic structure against democratically enacted constitutional amendments seems like preserve the hold of a narrow social class on the Constitution. Also, Supreme Court has not clearly spelt out what all constitutes the basic structure, this ambiguity keeps the legislature second guessing and handicapped by judicial pronouncements. Also, there often have been inconsistencies in the application of this doctrine on various occasion. This often leads to criticism of this doctrine.

However, overall Kesavananda Bharati case and doctrine of basic structure is perhaps the most important constitutional case not only in Indian jurisprudence but across the world. This case made the Indian Supreme Court among the most powerful constitutional courts among all democracies with the powers to even overturn constitutional amendments. Despite its wide powers, this doctrine has helped preserve constitutional ideals and high moral India's public life and guarded against majoritarianism and ultimately keeping India a democratic and inclusive society.

**NAGENDRA PRATAP
&
JAIKRIT VATSAL**
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focus

CRITICAL NOTES FOR THE PREPARATION OF GENERAL STUDIES PAPERS

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The purpose of Focus is to expound the applied nature of General Studies to Civil Services aspirants thereby making them aware of the real demand of UPSC exam.

The sources relied for selection and analysis of issues are:

1. The Hindu, The Hindu (Sunday)
2. The Indian Express
3. The Times of India
4. Asian Age
5. The Tribune
6. The Economic Times
7. Hindu Business Line
8. Frontline
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The publication, as the name suggests, focuses solely on issues which are relevant to the **factual** as well as **applied** aspects of the General Studies' syllabus. That is how Focus covers all anticipated issues and themes for the upcoming Civil Services Examination (CSE).

Features

PART ONE | CURRENT AFFAIRS ANALYSIS

- **This month edition covers analysis of news from the immediately preceding month.**
- All news/issues are categorized and clubbed syllabus-wise (International Relations, Polity & Governance, Science & Technology, Ethics, Integrity & Aptitude and so on) for efficient study.
- Background information has been added to provide context.
- Related and Additional information-dimensions have been explained to add depth to your understanding.
- Maps and figures have been provided for associative and retentive learning.
- Practice Questions

PART TWO | ETHICS, INTEGRITY & APTITUDE

- Coverage from varied sources

PART THREE | ESSAYS FOR YOU

- Selected essays from Rau's GSI students

For further understanding or discussion in any topic, please consult your respective professors.

Good Luck!

RAU'S IAS STUDY CIRCLE

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**logical .simple .targeted
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of all relevant news of the month**

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GS PAPER (PRELIMS) & GS PAPER III (MAIN)

Raja Kumar



Ankit Singh



FOREIGN TRADE POLICY, 2023

#EXTERNALSECTOR

PRIMARY
SOURCE

pib

SECONDARY
SOURCE

mint

The government has unveiled its new Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) which came into force on 1 April. The previous policy, launched in 2015, had to be extended several times due to the pandemic and geo-political developments.

ABOUT FOREIGN TRADE POLICY (FTP), 2023

Foreign Trade Policy (2023) is a policy document which is based on continuity of time-tested schemes facilitating exports as well as a document which is nimble and responsive to the requirements of trade. It is based on principles of 'trust' and 'partnership' with exporters.

WHAT IS THERE A NEED FOR A NEW FTP?

- Under the Foreign Trade Development and Regulation Act, 1992, the government is required to formulate, implement and monitor trade policies to boost exports, facilitate imports and maintain a favourable balance of payments.
- The first five-year export-import (EXIM) policy of 1992 and the second in 1997-2002 aimed to remove many of the post-independence trade protectionist measures and promote India's integration with the global economy.
- In 2004, the EXIM Policy was renamed FTP to adopt a comprehensive approach to India's foreign trade. Later, FTPs were issued for 2009-14 and 2015-20.
- In the FTP 2015-20, changes were done subsequent to the initial release even without announcement of a new FTP responding dynamically to the emerging

situations. Hereafter, the revisions of the FTP shall be done as and when required.

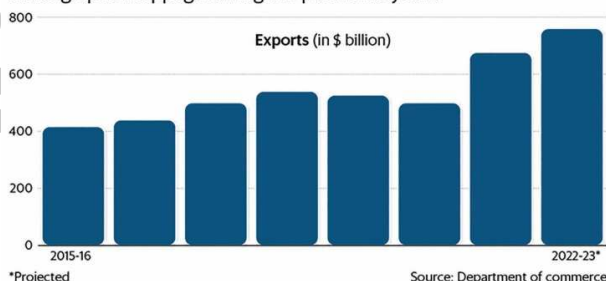
- New FTP will incorporate feedback from Trade and Industry and this feedback will also be continuous to streamline processes and update FTP, from time to time.

DID THE PREVIOUS FTP MEET ITS OBJECTIVES?

- FTP 2015-20 aimed to boost India's exports from \$465 billion in 2013-14 to \$900 billion by 2019-20. It introduced a new Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS) to provide rewards to exporters to offset infrastructural inefficiencies and associated costs and a services export from India scheme to encourage the exports of notified services.
- At the conclusion of the policy's initial term in 2019-20, exports of goods and services reached \$526.55 billion. Export momentum was derailed in 2020-21 by the pandemic and geopolitical tensions. Exports for 2022-23 are projected at \$760 billion.

Big leap

India's merchandise and service exports have seen significant rise making up for slippage during the pandemic years.



WHAT IS THE DURATION OF FTP 2023?

- The government has broken away from the conventional practice of setting a five-year cycle.

- The new policy is intended to be responsive to changing circumstances and will be modified as and when required.
- Additionally, the government will consistently gather input from relevant stakeholders to enhance and revise the policy.

WHAT ARE ITS KEY THRUST AREAS?

- It has four pillars.
- These are (i) Replacing the incentive-based system of promoting exports with remission and entitlement-based regimes; (ii) Facilitating enhanced collaboration among exporters, states, districts and Indian missions; (iii) Reducing transaction costs and introducing e-initiatives for ease in business operations; and (iv) Developing additional export hubs.
- It also intends to simplify the export process for items falling under the Special Chemicals, Organisms, Materials, Equipment, and Technologies (SCOMET).

WHAT ARE THE GOALS AND TARGETS?

- The government aims to increase India's overall exports to \$2 trillion by 2030, with equal contributions from the merchandise and services sectors.
- The government also intends to encourage the use of the Indian currency in cross-border trade, aided by a new payment settlement framework introduced by the RBI in July 2022. This could be particularly advantageous in the case of countries with which India enjoys a trade surplus.

FEATURES OF FTP, 2023

- **Process Re-Engineering and Automation:** The policy aims at process re-engineering and automation to facilitate ease of doing business for exporters. Greater faith is being reposed on exporters through automated IT systems with risk management systems for various approvals in the new FTP. The policy emphasises export promotion and development, moving away from an incentive regime to a regime which is facilitating, based on technology interface and principles of collaboration. Ongoing schemes like Advance Authorisation, EPCG etc. under FTP 2015-20 will be continued along with substantial process re-engineering and technology enablement for facilitating the exporters. FTP 2023 codifies implementation mechanisms in a paperless, online environment, building on earlier 'ease of doing business' initiatives. Reduction in fee structures and

IT-based schemes will make it easier for MSMEs and others to access export benefits. Duty exemption schemes for export production will now be implemented through Regional Offices in a rule-based IT system environment, eliminating the need for manual interface.

- **Towns of Export Excellence:** Four new towns, namely Faridabad, Mirzapur, Moradabad, and Varanasi, have been designated as Towns of Export Excellence (TEE) in addition to the existing 39 towns. The TEEs will have priority access to export promotion funds under the MAI scheme and will be able to avail Common Service Provider (CSP) benefits for export fulfilment under the EPCG Scheme. This addition is expected to boost the exports of handlooms, handicrafts, and carpets.
- **Recognition of Exporters:** Exporter firms recognized with 'status' based on export performance will now be partners in capacity-building initiatives on a best-endeavour basis. Similar to the 'each one teach one' initiative, 2-star and above status holders would be encouraged to provide trade-related training based on a model curriculum to interested individuals. This will help India build a skilled manpower pool capable of servicing a \$5 Trillion economy before 2030. Status recognition norms have been re-calibrated to enable more exporting firms to achieve 4 and 5-star ratings, leading to better branding opportunities in export markets.
- **Promoting export from the districts:** The FTP aims at building partnerships with State governments and taking forward the Districts as Export Hubs (DEH) initiative to promote exports at the district level and accelerate the development of a grassroots trade ecosystem. Efforts to identify export worthy products & services and resolve concerns at the district level will be made through an institutional mechanism – State Export Promotion Committee and District Export Promotion Committee at the State and District level, respectively. District specific export action plans to be prepared for each district outlining the district specific strategy to promote export of identified products and services.
- **Streamlining SCOMET Policy:** India is placing more emphasis on the "export control" regime as its integration with export control regime countries strengthens. There is a wider outreach and understanding of SCOMET (Special Chemicals, Organisms, Materials, Equipment and Technologies)

among stakeholders, and the policy regime is being made more robust to implement international treaties and agreements entered into by India. A robust export control system in India would provide access of dual-use High end goods and technologies to Indian exporters while facilitating exports of controlled items/technologies under SCOMET from India.

- **Facilitating E-Commerce Exports:** E-commerce exports are a promising category that requires distinct policy interventions from traditional offline trade. Various estimates suggest e-commerce export potential in the range of \$200 to \$300 billion by 2030. FTP 2023 outlines the intent and roadmap for establishing e-commerce hubs and related elements such as payment reconciliation, book-keeping, returns policy, and export entitlements. As a starting point, the consignment wise cap on E-Commerce exports through courier has been raised from ₹5 Lakh to ₹10 Lakh in the FTP 2023. Depending on the feedback of exporters, this cap will be further revised or eventually removed. Integration of Courier and Postal exports with ICEGATE will enable exporters to claim benefits under FTP. Extensive outreach and training activities will be taken up to build capacity of artisans, weavers, garment manufacturers, gems and jewellery designers to onboard them on E-Commerce platforms and facilitate higher exports.
- **Facilitation under Export Promotion of Capital Goods (EPCG) Scheme:** The EPCG Scheme, which allows import of capital goods at zero Customs duty for export production, is being further rationalised. Some key changes being added are: (i) Prime Minister Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel Parks (PM MITRA) scheme has been added as an additional scheme eligible to claim benefits under CSP(Common Service Provider) Scheme of Export Promotion capital Goods Scheme(EPCG). (ii) Dairy sector to be exempted from maintaining Average Export Obligation – to support the dairy sector to upgrade the technology. (iii) Battery Electric Vehicles (BEV) of all types, Vertical Farming equipment, Wastewater Treatment and Recycling, Rainwater harvesting system and Rainwater Filters, and Green Hydrogen are added to Green Technology products – will now be eligible for reduced Export Obligation requirement under EPCG Scheme
- **Facilitation under Advance authorization Scheme:** Advance authorisation Scheme accessed by DTA units provides duty-free import of raw materials for

manufacturing export items and is placed at a similar footing to EOU and SEZ Scheme. However, the DTA unit has the flexibility to work both for domestic as well as export production. Based on interactions with industry and Export Promotion councils, certain facilitation provisions have been added in the present FTP such as Special Advance Authorisation Scheme extended to export of Apparel and Clothing sector under para 4.07 of HBP on self-declaration basis to facilitate prompt execution of export orders – Norms would be fixed within a fixed timeframe. Benefits of Self-Ratification Scheme for fixation of Input-Output Norms extended to 2 star and above status holders in addition to Authorised Economic Operators at present.

- **Merchanting trade:** To develop India into a merchanting trade hub, the FTP 2023 has introduced provisions for merchanting trade. Merchanting trade of restricted and prohibited items under export policy would now be possible. Merchanting trade involves shipment of goods from one foreign country to another foreign country without touching Indian ports, involving an Indian intermediary. This will be subject to compliance with RBI guidelines, and won't be applicable for goods/items classified in the CITES and SCOMET list. In course of time, this will allow Indian entrepreneurs to convert certain places like GIFT city etc. into major merchanting hubs as seen in places like Dubai, Singapore and Hong Kong.
- **Amnesty Scheme:** The government is introducing a special one-time Amnesty Scheme under the FTP 2023 to address default on Export Obligations. This scheme is intended to provide relief to exporters who have been unable to meet their obligations under EPCG and Advance Authorizations, and who are burdened by high duty and interest costs associated with pending cases. All pending cases of the default in meeting Export Obligation (EO) of authorizations mentioned can be regularised on payment of all customs duties that were exempted in proportion to unfulfilled Export Obligation. The interest payable is capped at 100% of these exempted duties under this scheme. However, no interest is payable on the portion of Additional Customs Duty and Special Additional Customs Duty and this is likely to provide relief to exporters as interest burden will come down substantially. It is hoped that this amnesty will give these exporters a fresh start and an opportunity to come into compliance.

CONCLUSION

- While this policy comes at a time of considerable uncertainty across the world, as India accounts for a minuscule portion of global trade (its share in global merchandise exports stands at around 1.8 per cent, while that in services is roughly 4 per cent), there is considerable scope for improvement for the country on this count.
- The new policy needs to be supplemented with other measures to boost the country's trade performance. These range from lowering import tariffs and ensuring a competitive exchange rate to signing broader and deeper free trade agreements.

FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS (FTAs)

#EXTERNALSECTOR

PRIMARY SOURCE

INDIAN TRADE PORTAL

SECONDARY SOURCE

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

India and the United Kingdom have agreed to expedite the progress to resolve "outstanding issues" in the India-UK free trade agreement (FTA) negotiations.

WHAT ARE FTAs?

- FTAs are arrangements between two or more countries or trading blocs that primarily agree to reduce or eliminate customs tariff and non tariff barriers on substantial trade between them.
- FTAs normally cover trade in goods (such as agricultural or industrial products) or trade in services (such as banking, construction, trading etc.). FTAs can also cover other areas such as intellectual property rights (IPRs), investment, government procurement and competition policy, etc.

STAGES OF TRADE INTEGRATION

- Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA): In a PTA, two or more partners agree to reduce tariffs on an agreed number of tariff lines. The list of products on which the partners agree to reduce duty is called a positive list. India MERCOSUR PTA is such an example. However, in general PTAs do not cover substantially all trade.
- Free Trade Agreement (FTA): In FTAs, tariffs on items covering substantial bilateral trade are eliminated between the partner countries; however, each maintains an individual tariff structure for non-

members. India Sri Lanka FTA is an example. The key difference between an FTA and a PTA is that while in a PTA there is a positive list of products on which duty is to be reduced; in an FTA there is a negative list on which duty is not reduced or eliminated. Thus, compared to a PTA, FTAs are generally more ambitious in coverage of tariff lines (products) on which duty is to be reduced.

- Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA)/Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA): These terms describe agreements which consist of an integrated package on goods, services and investment along with other areas including IPR, competition etc. The India-Korea CEPA is one such example and it covers a broad range of other areas like trade facilitation and customs cooperation, investment, competition, IPR etc.
- Custom Union: In a Customs union, member countries may decide to trade at zero duty among themselves, however they maintain common customs duty against the rest of the world. Example: Southern African Customs Union (SACU) - South Africa, Lesotho, Namibia, Botswana and Swaziland.
- Common Market: Integration provided by a Common market is one step deeper than that by a Customs Union. A common market is a Customs Union with provisions to facilitate free movements of labour and capital, harmonise technical standards across members etc. The European Common Market is an example.
- Economic Union: Common Market extended through further harmonisation of fiscal/monetary policies and shared executive, judicial and legislative institutions among the member countries. The European Union (EU) is an example.

EARLY HARVEST PACKAGE

- The UK has recently stated that it wants an early harvest trade package with India prior to finalisation of a full-fledged free trade agreement.
- Early harvest scheme is a precursor to a free trade agreement (FTA) between two trading partners. This is to help the two trading countries to identify certain products for tariff liberalisation before the conclusion of FTA negotiation.
- The EHS has been used as a mechanism to build greater confidence amongst trading partners to prepare them for even bigger economic engagement.

HOW IS CECA/CEPA DIFFERENT FROM FTA?

- A Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) or a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) is different from a traditional Free Trade Agreement (FTA) on two counts:
 - Firstly, CECA/CEPA are more comprehensive and ambitious than an FTA in terms of coverage of areas and the type of commitments. While a traditional FTA focuses mainly on goods; a CECA/CEPA is more ambitious in terms of a holistic coverage of many areas like services, investment, competition, government procurement, disputes etc.
 - Secondly, CECA/CEPA looks deeper at the regulatory aspects of trade than an FTA. It is on account of this that it encompasses mutual recognition agreements (MRAs) that cover the regulatory regimes of the partners. An MRA recognises different regulatory regimes of partners on the presumption that they achieve the same end objectives.

RATIONALE FOR SIGNING FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS

- By eliminating tariffs and some non-tariff barriers FTA partners get easier market access into one another's markets.
- Exporters prefer FTAs to multilateral trade liberalisation because they get preferential treatment over non-FTA member country competitors. For example in the case of ASEAN, ASEAN has an FTA with India but not with Canada. ASEAN's custom duty on leather shoes is 20% but under the FTA with India it reduced duties to zero. Now assuming other costs being equal, an Indian exporter, because of this duty preference, will be more competitive than a Canadian exporter of shoes. Secondly, FTAs may also protect local exporters from losing out to foreign companies that might receive preferential treatment under other FTAs.
- Possibility of increased foreign investment from outside the FTA: Consider 2 countries A and B having an FTA. Country A has a high tariff and a large domestic market. The firms based in country C may decide to invest in country A to cater to A's domestic market. However, once A and B sign an FTA and B offers a better business environment, C may decide to locate its plant in B to supply its products to A.
- Such occurrences are not limited to tariffs alone but it is also true in the case of non-tariff measures.

Especially when a Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) is reached between countries A and B. Some experts are of the view that slow progress in multilateral negotiations due to complexities arising from large numbers of countries to reach a consensus on polarising issues, may have provided the impetus for FTAs.

- Connecting India with Global Value Chains (GVCs): FTAs have the potential to accelerate economic integration among countries thus making India a vital cog in the Global Supply Chain.
- Opportunities in post-Covid world offer a potential to increase low-skilled labour based exports: especially in sectors like clothing, footwear and leather.

HOW IS INDIA PLACED GLOBALLY IN TERMS OF ITS BILATERAL PTAS/FTAS/ CECAS/CEPAS?

- India has preferential access, economic cooperation and Free Trade Agreements (FTA) with about 54 individual countries. India has signed bilateral trade deals in the form of Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)/ Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA)/ FTA/ Preferential Trade Agreements (PTAs) with some 18 groups/ countries.
- India is a late, and cautious, starter in concluding comprehensive preferential tariff agreements covering substantially all trade with some of its trading partners.

LIST OF FTAs SIGNED BY INDIA

- PTAs in Force: Asia Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA); India- Afghanistan; India-Mercosur; India-Chile.
- FTAs in force India- Sri Lanka; SAARC FTA; India - ASEAN FTA; India - South Korea CEPA; India - Japan CEPA; India - Malaysia CECA; India-Singapore CECA; India-Nepal; India-Bhutan. India-Australia ECTA (They are negotiating to upgrade it to a CEPA).
- FTAs in Negotiation: India -EU BTIA; India- Canada FTA; India- Australia FTA etc.

ARE THERE PROVISIONS FOR REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION OF FTAs?

- Yes, the FTAs have provisions for review and implementation. This is normally done at specified intervals and there is an institutional mechanism to undertake such a review.
- It is important for stakeholders to provide regular feedback on the operation of the FTAs for this mechanism to be effective. For example, problems

faced in SPS/TBT measures or other NTMs need to be highlighted.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MULTILATERALISM AND FTAS?

- Article 1 of GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) which enunciates the most favoured nation (MFN) principle of World Trade Organisation (WTO) states that "any advantage, favour, privilege, or immunity granted by any contracting party to any product originating in or destined for any other country shall be accorded immediately and unconditionally to the like product originating in or destined for the territories of all other contracting parties."
- However, exemptions from this MFN principle are permitted for forming FTAs under specific conditions as per the following provisions of the WTO Agreements:
 - Article XXIV of GATT for goods.
 - Article V of GATS (General Agreement on Trade in Services) for services.
- The specific conditions under Article XXIV of the GATT permitting FTAs, are:
 - FTA members shall not erect higher or more restrictive tariff or non-tariff barriers on trade with non-members than existed prior to the formation of the FTA.
 - Elimination of tariffs and other trade restrictions be applied to "substantially all the trade between the constituent territories in products originating in such territories."
 - Elimination of duties and other trade restrictions on trade within the FTA to be accomplished "within a reasonable length of time," meaning a period of no longer than 10 years
- Moreover, the "Enabling Clause, 1, allows developing countries to form preferential trading arrangements without adhering to the conditions under Article XXIV.

INDIA'S EXPERIENCE WITH FTAS

- At the time when India is negotiating FTAs with a number of countries/groups, including the European Union, United Kingdom and Australia, it is pertinent to examine the progress of trade between India and its key FTA partners.
- The major FTAs that India has signed and implemented so far include South Asia Free Trade

Agreement (SAFTA), India-ASEAN Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA), India-Korea Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) and India-Japan CEPA.

- A broad analysis of trade between India and its major FTA partners, mentioned above, shows a significant increase in trade since the agreements have become operational.
- **SAFTA:** The bilateral trade between India and other SAFTA member countries has increased from US\$ 6.8 billion in 2005-06 to US\$ 28.5 billion in 2018-19. India's trade with SAFTA has grown faster than its total trade with the world. As a result, the share of SAFTA countries in India's international trade rose from 1.6% in 2005-06 to 2.5% in 2018-19. During the same time, the Indian exports to SAFTA countries have increased faster than its imports from them leading to a significant rise in trade surplus with these economies from about US\$ 4 billion to US\$ 21 billion. The maximum growth in exports to the SAFTA region has been recorded with Bangladesh and Nepal.
- **ASEAN:** The bilateral trade between the two sides has surged from about US\$ 43 billion in 2009-10 to US\$ 97 billion in 2018-19. As in case of India's trade with SAFTA, the bilateral trade between India and ASEAN has also increased faster than that of India's overall trade with the world, leading to an increase in ASEAN's share in India's global trade from 9.4% to 11.5%. However, contrary to India-SAFTA trade India's imports from ASEAN have increased at a significantly higher rate than Indian exports to ASEAN. Another important point is that the imports from ASEAN grew much faster than India's imports from the world. The faster growth in imports has resulted in a significant increase in India's trade deficit with ASEAN from less than US\$ 8 billion in 2009-10 to about US\$ 22 billion in 2018-19. The share of ASEAN in India's total trade deficit has increased from about 7% to 12% during the same period.
- **India-Korea CEPA:** Since it became operational from January 01, 2010. During 2009-10 to 2018-19, the bilateral trade between the two countries has increased from about US\$ 12 billion to US\$ 21.5 billion and grew at a pace more or less similar to that of India's trade with the world. However, Indian imports from Korea have surged much faster than the exports to that country. While India's imports increased at a CAGR of around 8%, the exports to Korea rose at a

CAGR of less than 4%. Also, while the imports from Korea have grown faster than imports from the world, the growth rate of exports to Korea has been much slower than India's exports to the world. This again has led to a considerable increase in India's trade deficit with Korea from US\$ 5 billion in 2009-10 to US\$ 12 billion 2018-19 and a sizable increase in the share of Korea in India's overall trade deficit from 4.7% to 6.5% during the same period.

- **India-Japan CEPA:** The bilateral trade between the two countries witnessed sharp growth in the year of its implementation e.g. 2011-12 compared to that in the previous year, 2010-11. However, the bilateral trade flow has not only contracted afterwards but witnessed a lot of volatility during 2011-12 to 2018-19. Also, while exports to Japan continued to increase during the year of implementation e.g. 2011-12, they have contracted afterwards. Imports from Japan, on the other hand, have increased but witnessed a lot of fluctuations. As in the case of ASEAN and Korea, however, India's trade deficit with Japan has not only increased during 2011-12 to 2018-19 but grown faster than India's trade deficit with the world.
- Overall, **with the exception of SAFTA, India's experience intrade with its major FTA partners has not been very encouraging.** While India has gained substantially in terms of exports from its FTA with SAFTA countries, CEPA with Korea and CECA with ASEAN have been more beneficial to those economies. In the case of CEPA with Japan, however, bilateral trade has either declined or stagnated after the 1st year of implementation but there has been a substantial rise in trade deficit with that country also.
- Apart from a **range of domestic factors that have dragged the competitiveness of Indian exports** and prevented India from leveraging the preferential market access in these partner countries, there exist a number of FTA related issues that are seen to be responsible for less than favourable development in India's trade relations with ASEAN, Korea and Japan. Some of these issues include **faulty commitments, stricter rules of origin, lack of awareness about the FTAs and high cost of compliance.**

CONCLUSION

- It is important, therefore, that India should not remain satisfied with the just signing of FTAs but the existing provisions of CEPAs with ASEAN, Korea and Japan should also be evaluated to make them more trade

and business-friendly. It is equally important, however, for India to simultaneously take all the necessary measures to remove the obstacles that hinder the overall competitiveness of exports in the country.

MONETARY POLICY

#MONETARYPOLICY

PRIMARY
SOURCE

Reserve Bank
of India

SECONDARY
SOURCE

The Indian
EXPRESS

The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), in its first bi-monthly monetary policy of 2023-24, kept the repo rate unchanged at 6.50 per cent, and maintained its stance on "withdrawal of accommodation."

ABOUT MONETARY POLICY

- Monetary policy is a set of tools used by a nation's central bank to **control the overall money supply and promote economic growth** and employ strategies such as revising interest rates and changing bank reserve requirements.
- Under the Reserve Bank of India, Act, 1934 (RBI Act, 1934) (as amended in 2016), RBI is entrusted with the responsibility of conducting monetary policy in India with the primary objective of maintaining price stability while keeping in mind the objective of growth.

THE MONETARY POLICY FRAMEWORK

- In May 2016, the RBI Act, 1934 was amended to provide a statutory basis for the implementation of the flexible inflation targeting framework.
- **Inflation Target:** Under Section 45ZA, the Central Government, in consultation with the RBI, determines the inflation target in terms of the Consumer Price Index (CPI), once in five years and notifies it in the Official Gazette.
- Accordingly, the Central Government notified in the Official Gazette **4 per cent Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation as the target** for the period from August 5, 2016 to March 31, 2021 with the upper tolerance limit of 6 per cent and the lower tolerance limit of 2 per cent. On March 31, 2021, the Central Government retained the inflation target and the tolerance band for the next 5-year period – April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2026.
- Section 45ZB of the RBI Act provides for the constitution of a six-member Monetary Policy

Committee (MPC) to determine the policy rate required to achieve the inflation target.

FAILURE TO MAINTAIN INFLATION TARGET

- The Central Government has notified the following as the factors that constitute failure to achieve the inflation target:
 - The average inflation is more than the upper tolerance level of the inflation target for any three consecutive quarters; or
 - The average inflation is less than the lower tolerance level for any three consecutive quarters.
- Where the Bank fails to meet the inflation target, it shall set out in a report to the Central Government:
 - The reasons for failure to achieve the inflation target;
 - Remedial actions proposed to be taken by the Bank; and
 - An estimate of the time-period within which the inflation target shall be achieved pursuant to timely implementation of proposed remedial actions.
- The operating framework of monetary policy aims at aligning the operating target – the weighted average call rate (WACR) – with the policy repo rate through proactive liquidity management to facilitate transmission of repo rate changes through the entire financial system, which, in turn, influences aggregate demand – a key determinant of inflation and growth.

MONETARY POLICY COMMITTEE

- **Section 452B of the amended RBI Act, 1934** provides for an empowered **six-member monetary policy committee (MPC)** to be constituted by the Central Government by notification in the Official Gazette. The first such MPC was constituted in September, 2016. The present MPC members, as notified by the Central Government in the Official Gazette of October, 2020, are as under:
 - Governor of the Reserve Bank of India—Chairperson, ex officio
 - Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India, in charge of Monetary Policy—Member, ex officio
 - One officer of the Reserve Bank of India to be nominated by the Central Board—Member, ex officio
 - Prof. Ashima Goyal, Professor, Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research —Member

- Prof. Jayanth R. Varma, Professor, Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad—Member
- Dr. Shashanka Bhide, Senior Advisor, National Council of Applied Economic Research, Delhi—Member

- Last three persons are to be appointed by the central government. This category of appointments must be from “persons of ability, integrity and standing, having knowledge and experience in the field of economics or banking or finance or monetary policy”. (Section 452C)
- The MPC determines the policy repo rate required to achieve the inflation target.
- The MPC is required to meet at least four times in a year. The quorum for the meeting of the MPC is four members.
- Each member of the MPC has one vote, and in the event of an equality of votes, the Governor has a second or casting vote.
- Each Member of the Monetary Policy Committee writes a statement specifying the reasons for voting in favour of, or against the proposed resolution.

INSTRUMENTS OF MONETARY POLICY

There are several direct and indirect instruments that are used for implementing monetary policy.

- **Repo Rate:** The interest rate at which the Reserve Bank provides liquidity under the liquidity adjustment facility (LAF) to all LAF participants against the collateral of government and other approved securities.
- **Standing Deposit Facility (SDF) Rate:** The rate at which the Reserve Bank accepts non collateralized deposits, on an overnight basis, from all LAF participants. The SDF is also a financial stability tool in addition to its role in liquidity management. The SDF rate is placed at 25 basis points below the policy repo rate. With introduction of SDF in April 2022, the SDF rate replaced the fixed reverse repo rate as the floor of the LAF corridor.
- **Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) Rate:** The penal rate at which banks can borrow, on an overnight basis, from the Reserve Bank by dipping into their Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR) portfolio up to a predefined limit (2 percent). This provides a safety valve against unanticipated liquidity shocks to the banking system. The MSF rate is placed at 25 basis points above the policy repo rate.

- **Liquidity Adjustment Facility (LAF):** The LAF refers to the Reserve Bank's operations through which it injects/absorbs liquidity into/from the banking system. It consists of overnight as well as term repo/reverse repos (fixed as well as variable rates), SDF and MSF. Apart from LAF, instruments of liquidity management include outright open market operations (OMOs), forex swaps and market stabilisation scheme (MSS).
- **LAF Corridor:** The LAF corridor has the marginal standing facility (MSF) rate as its upper bound (ceiling) and the standing deposit facility (SDF) rate as the lower bound (floor), with the policy repo rate in the middle of the corridor.
- **Main Liquidity Management Tool:** A 14-day term repo/reverse repo auction operation at a variable rate conducted to coincide with the cash reserve ratio (CRR) maintenance cycle is the main liquidity management tool for managing frictional liquidity requirements.
- **Fine Tuning Operations:** The main liquidity operation is supported by fine-tuning operations, overnight and/or longer tenor, to tide over any unanticipated liquidity changes during the reserve maintenance period. In addition, the Reserve Bank conducts, if needed, longer-term variable rate repo/reverse repo auctions of more than 14 days.
- **Reverse Repo Rate:** The interest rate at which the Reserve Bank absorbs liquidity from banks against the collateral of eligible government securities under the LAF. Following the introduction of SDF, the fixed rate reverse repo operations will be at the discretion of the RBI for purposes specified from time to time.
- **Bank Rate:** The rate at which the Reserve Bank is ready to buy or rediscount bills of exchange or other commercial papers. The Bank Rate acts as the penal rate charged on banks for shortfalls in meeting their reserve requirements (cash reserve ratio and statutory liquidity ratio). The Bank Rate is published under Section 49 of the RBI Act, 1934. This rate has been aligned with the MSF rate and changes automatically as and when the MSF rate changes alongside policy repo rate changes.
- **Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR):** The average daily balance that a bank is required to maintain with the Reserve Bank as a percent of its net demand and time liabilities (NDTL) as on the last Friday of the second preceding fortnight that the Reserve Bank may notify from time to time in the Official Gazette.
- **Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR):** Every bank shall maintain in India assets, the value of which shall not be less than such percentage of the total of its demand and time liabilities in India as on the last Friday of the second preceding fortnight, as the Reserve Bank may, by notification in the Official Gazette, specify from time to time and such assets shall be maintained as may be specified in such notification (typically in unencumbered government securities, cash and gold).
- **Open Market Operations (OMOs):** These include outright purchase/sale of government securities by the Reserve Bank for injection/absorption of durable liquidity in the banking system.

MONETARY POLICY PROCESS

The Reserve Bank has notified the Reserve Bank of India Monetary Policy Committee and Monetary Policy Process Regulations, 2016 which consists of the following:

- **Meeting schedule:** The schedule of monetary policy voting/decision meetings for the entire fiscal year is announced in advance.
- **Meeting notice:** Ordinarily, not less than fifteen days' notice is given to members for meetings of the Committee. Should it be found necessary to convene an emergency meeting, 24 hours' notice is given to every member to enable him/her to attend, with technology enabled arrangements for even shorter notice period for meetings.
- **Meeting duration:** The duration of monetary policy meetings is as decided by the Committee. The policy resolution is publicly released after the conclusion of the MPC meeting keeping in view the functioning and timing of financial markets.
 - The MPC in its meetings reviews the surveys conducted by the Reserve Bank to gauge consumer confidence, households' inflation expectations, corporate sector performance, credit conditions, the outlook for the industrial, services and infrastructure sectors, and the projections of professional forecasters.
 - The MPC also reviews in detail the staff's macroeconomic projections, and alternative scenarios around various risks to the outlook. Drawing on the above and after extensive discussions on the stance of monetary policy, the MPC adopts a resolution.

- **The MPC Resolution:** The Bank publishes, after the conclusion of every meeting of the MPC, the resolution adopted by the said Committee. The resolution includes the MPC's decision on the policy repo rate.
- **Minutes of the MPC meeting:** On the 14th day after every meeting of the MPC, the minutes of the proceedings of the MPC are published which include: (a) the resolution adopted by the MPC; (b) the voting of each member on the resolution; and (c) short written statements of individual members justifying the vote, consistent with the provisions of Section 45ZL of the RBI Act. Minutes shall be released at 5 pm on the 14th day from the date of the policy day (or next earliest working day, if a holiday in Mumbai).
- **The Monetary Policy Report:** Once in every six months, the Reserve Bank publishes the Monetary Policy Report containing the following elements:
 - Explanation of inflation dynamics in the last six months and the near term inflation outlook.
 - Projections of inflation and growth and the balance of risks.
 - An assessment of the state of the economy, covering the real economy, financial markets and stability, fiscal situation, and the external sector, which may entail a bearing on monetary policy decisions.
 - An updated review of the operating procedure of monetary policy.
 - An assessment of projection performance.

MONETARY POLICY STANCE

The MPC indicates its broader policy approach by guiding the markets with policy stances.

- **Accommodative:** means the central bank is prepared to expand the money supply to boost economic growth. The central bank, during an accommodative policy period, is willing to cut the interest rates. A rate hike is ruled out. The central bank typically adopts an accommodative policy when growth needs policy support and inflation is not the immediate concern.
- **Neutral:** suggests that the central bank can either cut rate or increase rate. This stance is typically adopted when the policy priority is equal to both inflation and growth. During neutral policy, the central bank doesn't commit to hiking rates or cuts. The interest rate can move to either side depending on incoming data. The guidance indicates that the market can expect a rate action on either way at any point.

- **Hawkish:** indicates that the central bank's top priority is to keep the inflation low. During such a phase, the central bank is willing to hike interest rates to curb money supply and thus reduce the demand. A hawkish policy also indicates tight monetary policy. A rate cut is nearly certain during such a period. When the central bank increases rates or 'tightens' the monetary policy, banks too increase their rate of interest on loans to end borrowers which, in turn, curbs demand in the financial system.
- **Calibrated tightening:** means during the current rate cycle, a cut in the repo rate is off the table. But, the rate hike will happen in a calibrated manner. This means the central bank may not go for a rate increase in every policy meeting but the overall policy stance is tilted towards a rate hike. This can happen outside the policy meetings as well if the situation warrants.

OBJECTIVE OF MONETARY POLICY: INFLATION TARGETING

- Inflation Targeting is a monetary policy framework wherein the Central Bank of a country focuses only on maintaining the rate of Inflation within a targeted range. It is believed that increasing prices in an economy creates uncertainties in decision making, adversely affecting savings and encouraging speculative investments (such as buying Gold). Inflation targeting brings in more predictability and transparency in deciding monetary policy.
- Inflation targeting was first adopted by New Zealand and subsequently, a large number of countries including India have been following Inflation Targeting as their core element of monetary policy.
- In case of India, the Inflation targeting was introduced through the Monetary Policy Framework Agreement signed between the RBI and Government in 2015. As per terms of the agreement, RBI's primary objective would be to maintain price stability, while keeping in mind the objective of growth. The RBI is required to maintain a rate of inflation of 4% with a deviation of 2% i.e. inflation has to be maintained between 2% to 6%.

BENEFITS OF INFLATION TARGETING

- **Enhanced Transparency:** The Inflation targeting explicitly states as to what would be the targeted rate of Inflation in an economy. Such explicitly mandated targets bring in more clarity and predictability with respect to the rate of Inflation and monetary policy formulation.

- **Promote Growth:** A high rate of inflation leads to decrease in the purchasing power of currency, reduces the savings and investment rate, increases the unemployment and leads to overall decrease in the GDP growth rate. Further, high rate of inflation is accompanied by higher levels of Fiscal Deficit and Current Account Deficit leading to an adverse impact on the macro-economic stability of the country. Hence, low and moderate level of inflation would incentivise the investors to undertake the investment in the economy leading to the promotion of higher growth and development.
- **Autonomy and Accountability of RBI:** As per the Monetary policy framework agreement, the RBI has been given complete autonomy in maintaining the rate of inflation within the mandated targets. If the RBI fails to maintain the Inflation within the target, then it would be required to submit in writing the reasons for its failure. Such a provision enables the RBI to enjoy autonomy and at the same time, enables the Government to have enhanced accountability over the actions of the RBI.
- **Empirical Evidence:** Inflation targeting has been quite successful in some of the advanced economies such as the UK, New Zealand etc. These advanced economies have been able to maintain moderate rates of inflation for a much longer time leading to increased macro-economic stability.

PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES WITH INFLATION TARGETING

- **Disregards the Multi-faceted role of RBI:** In a developing country like India, it is not practical for the central bank to focus exclusively on inflation without taking into account the larger development context. The RBI needs to balance between growth, price stability and financial stability.
- **No Clear link between Price Stability and Financial Stability:** Prior to 2008 Global Financial Crisis, advanced economies were able to maintain moderate rate of inflation for a long term mainly due to adoption of Inflation Targeting. It was believed that Inflation targeting was responsible for overall macroeconomic stability of the country. However, the 2008 Global Financial Crisis has clearly proved that price stability alone cannot lead to financial stability and the excessive focus of the Central banks on price stability may lead to neglect of other crucial functions such as regulation leading to the economic crisis. In this regard, former RBI Governor Subbarao has highlighted that there is a trade-off between price stability and financial stability, and that the more successful a central bank is with price stability, the more likely it is to imperil financial stability.
- **Empirical Evidence against Inflation Targeting in India:** The RBI was able to maintain a stable rate of Inflation within the mandated range before pandemic. However, in spite of a stable rate of Inflation, the Indian economy faced challenges on multiple fronts. The GDP growth rate reduced to 25 quarter low of 5% for the first quarter of financial year 2019-20. The unemployment increased to a 45-year high of 6.1%. There was a contraction in the manufacturing activity as evident in declining IIP. The agriculture sector stared at agrarian distress. All these clearly highlight that the inflation targeting has failed to promote growth and development.
- **Poor Monetary Policy Transmission:** The Inflation targeting is more suited to the developed economies since the monetary policy transmission in such economies is quite efficient. However, in case of India, the monetary policy transmission is quite inefficient and this can in turn reduce the effectiveness of Inflation Targeting.
- **Hinder GDP Growth:** In order to contain Inflation, the RBI would be required to increase the rate of Interest by following the contractionary monetary policy. However, such a policy would lead to increase in the rate of interest on the loans leading to decrease in investment and consumption expenditure leading to decline in the GDP growth rates. For example, during 2013-2015, the higher interest rates in the country on account of higher rate of inflation had led to decrease in the GDP growth rates.
- **Does not address the Supply Side Inflation:** Inflation in India may take place due to supply side bottlenecks such as increase in global crude oil prices, poor monsoon, floods etc. For instance, the recent increase in the prices of Tomato and Onions is mainly on account of supply side disruptions. Under such circumstances, RBI would have a limited role to play in easing the rate of inflation. Rather, the Government of India would be required to address these supply side disruptions in order to moderate the prices of such commodities.

WAY FORWARD

- Post-Global Financial crisis, the dominant view around the world is that flexible inflation targeting, rather than pure inflation targeting is more efficient for Monetary policy formulation.
- According to the Flexible inflation targeting, the role of the Central Bank would depend on the prevailing rate of inflation in the country. If the rate of inflation is way off target, the primary emphasis of the central Bank would be to bring the rate of inflation within an acceptable range. On the other hand, if the rate of inflation is within the range, the central Bank should focus on its other core objectives.
- Thus, it is being said that the Central banks should focus on flexible inflation targeting rather than pure inflation targeting. In this aspect, there is a need for greater debate around the kind of Inflation targeting in India.

DEPOSITOR EDUCATION AND AWARENESS (DEA) FUND

#MONETARYPOLICY

PRIMARY SOURCE	Reserve Bank of India
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Development of Centralised Web portal for Public to Search Unclaimed Deposits. In order to improve and widen the access of depositors / beneficiaries to such data, RBI has decided to develop a web portal to enable search across multiple banks for possible unclaimed deposits based on user inputs. The search results will be enhanced by use of certain AI tools.

WHY THE NEED FOR PROTECTION OF DEPOSIT PROTECTION?

- The deposits remaining unclaimed for 10 years in a bank are transferred to the "Depositor Education and Awareness" (DEA) Fund maintained by the Reserve Bank of India.
- Depositors' protection being an overarching objective, RBI has been taking various measures to ensure that newer deposits do not turn unclaimed and existing unclaimed deposits are returned to the rightful owners or beneficiaries after following due procedure.

On the second aspect, banks display the list of unclaimed deposits on their website.

THE DEPOSITOR EDUCATION AND AWARENESS FUND SCHEME

- The fund was created by RBI as per Section 26A of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.
- The amounts to be credited to the Fund by banks shall be deposited in the specified account maintained with the RBI.
- The amounts to be credited to the Fund shall be the credit balance in any deposit account maintained with banks which have not been operated upon for ten years or more, or any amount remaining unclaimed for ten years or more, which include:-
 - Savings bank deposit accounts
 - Fixed or term deposit accounts
 - Cumulative/recurring deposit accounts
 - Current deposit accounts
 - Other deposit accounts in any form or with any name
 - Cash credit accounts
 - Loan accounts after due appropriation by the banks
 - Margin money against issue of Letter of Credit/Guarantee etc., or any security deposit
 - Outstanding telegraphic transfers, mail transfers, demand drafts, pay orders, bankers cheques, sundry deposit accounts, vostro accounts, inter-bank clearing adjustments, unadjusted National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT) credit balances and other such transitory accounts, unreconciled credit balances on account of Automated Teller Machine (ATM) transactions, etc.
 - Undrawn balance amounts remaining in any prepaid card issued by banks but not amounts outstanding against travellers cheques or other similar instruments, which have no maturity period
 - Rupee proceeds of foreign currency deposits held by banks after conversion of foreign currency to rupees in accordance with extant foreign exchange regulations and
 - Such other amounts as may be specified by the Reserve Bank from time to time.
- Any amount payable in foreign currency under an instrument or a transaction, that has remained

unclaimed for ten years or more, shall at the time of transfer to the Fund be converted into Indian Rupees at the exchange rate prevailing on that date and in the event of a claim, the Fund shall be liable to refund only the Indian Rupees received by the Fund with respect to such instrument or transaction.

- The Fund shall be utilised for promotion of depositors' interests and for such other purposes which may be necessary for promotion of depositors' interest as may be specified by the RBI. All expenditure incurred for the promotion of depositors' education, awareness, interests and other purposes that may be specified by the RBI under Section 26A (4) of the Act, shall be charged to the Fund.

COMMITTEE TO ADMINISTER THE FUND

- There shall be a Committee to administer and manage the Fund in accordance with the Scheme which shall consist of an ex-officio Chairperson (a Deputy Governor of RBI, nominated by Governor) and not more than six members as decided by the RBI.
- The Committee may from time to time lay down a list of activities, the criteria and procedure, etc. for incurring expenditure and achieving the objectives of the Fund.
- The Committee shall administer the Fund and shall exercise all powers on behalf of the Fund, including incurring of all expenditure that may be charged to the Fund, and keeping the corpus of the Fund invested.
- The expenses of the Committee and other expenses for administration of the Fund shall be charged to the Fund as decided by the Committee.
- For facilitating the RBI for determination of the rate of interest payable by the Fund to the depositors, the Committee shall provide to the Reserve Bank such information on the income and expenditure of the Fund as may be required.
- For the promotion of depositors' interests, the Committee may register/recognise from time to time various institutions, organisations or associations, engaged in activities relating to depositor awareness and education, including those proposing to conduct programmes for depositors of banks, organising seminars and symposia for depositors and undertaking projects and research activities relating to these areas.
- Institutions, organisations or associations registered/recognized by the Committee may be

considered for grant of funds as a grant-in-aid either as one time measure or in stages or by way of reimbursement, depending upon the nature of the activity proposed.

REFUNDS AND INTEREST

- In case of demand from a customer/ depositor whose unclaimed amount/deposit had been transferred to the Fund, banks shall repay the customer/depositor, along with interest if applicable, and lodge a claim for refund from the Fund for an equivalent amount paid to the customer/depositor.
- The interest payable, if any, from the Fund on a claim shall accrue only from the date on which the balance in an account was transferred to the Fund to the date of payment to the customer/depositor. No interest shall be payable in respect of amounts refunded from the Fund, in respect of which no interest was payable by the bank to its customer/depositor.
- Rate of interest, if any, payable on the principal amount transferred to the Fund shall be specified by the RBI from time to time.

TEXTILE, APPAREL EXPORTS DECLINE 14%

#EXTERNALSECTOR

PRIMARY
SOURCE

THE HINDU

SECONDARY
SOURCE

ECONOMIC
SURVEY

Textile and apparel exports contracted 14% in 2022-2023 compared with the previous year. At \$41.3 billion exports in 2021-2022, textiles and apparel constituted 9.79% of total goods exports. However, in 2022-2023, the segment recorded exports of \$35.5 billion and constituted just 7.95% of goods exports.

REASONS FOR INDIA'S UNDERPERFORMANCE IN EXPORTS

- **Low Level of Participation in Global Value Chains (GVCs).**
- **Limited diversification of India's export basket:** The top 10 principal exports in terms of commodity groups account for 78% of total merchandise exports.
- **Low competitiveness of Indian products:** on account of Lacklustre infrastructure, complex land and labour laws and fragmented and unregulated logistics sector.

- **Inability to exploit comparative advantage in lower-skilled and labour-intensive exports:** India has seen its share of world trade in textiles, garments and footwear decline in recent years while Bangladesh has almost caught up to India, and Vietnam has overtaken it.
- **Regional Disparities:** 70% of India's export has been dominated by 5 states.
 - Intra- and inter-regional disparities in export infrastructure as coastal states have performed extremely well compared to the landlocked states in developing export promotion parks and hubs.
 - Poor trade support and growth orientation among states: There is an absence of strong support towards the exporters from many state governments in improving their quality or quantity.
 - Poor research & development infrastructure to promote complex and unique exports curbing the innovative tendencies at the subnational level.

WHY INDIA NEEDS AN EXPORT-LED GROWTH?

Economic Survey 2019 has advocated an export-led growth model for India for reasons:

- Exports can help India to achieve the target of making India a developed economy by focusing on '**Atma Nirbhar Bharat**'.
- **Economic Growth:** Higher exports draw more foreign remittances, create more jobs and lower the current account deficit, creating demand and infrastructure.
 - Major economies around the world are also major exporters. To corroborate this claim, it is to be noted that China is the world's leading exporter of goods.
- **Becoming a part of Global Value Chains:** Exports give domestic sellers increased access to the market that helps in presenting a golden opportunity to capture a good chunk of global market share.
- **Mitigate Regional Disparities:** Improving the export competitiveness of states can mitigate regional disparities through export-led growth and the consequent rise in standard of living.
 - The Economic Survey established that states which engage with the world markets as well as with the other states within the country are richer.

INITIATIVES TO ENHANCE TRADE

- **Focus on Agricultural Products:** Pro-active support of export promotion agencies including Export Inspection Council, Plantation Boards, and Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), and export facilitating measures like online issuance of certificates required for exports, aided growth of agricultural exports.
- **Interest Equalisation Scheme:** This Scheme was formulated to give benefit in the interest rates being charged by the banks to the exporters on their pre- and post-shipment rupee export credits.
- **Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) scheme:** The scheme seeks remission of Central, State and Local duties/taxes/levies at different stages at the Central, State, and local level, which are incurred in the process of manufacturing and distribution of exported products, but are currently not being refunded under any other duty remission scheme.
- **Export Credit Guarantee:** The Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (ECGC) supports Indian exporters and banks by providing export credit insurance services. ECGC provides insurance cover on the export consignment to protect exporters from the consequences of the payment risks. It also provides Export Credit Insurance to Banks (ECIB) to protect the Banks from losses on account of export credit given to exporters due to the risks of insolvency and/or protracted default of the exporter borrower.
- **Krishi Udan Scheme:** Krishi Udan Scheme was launched in August 2020 on international and national routes to assist farmers in transporting agricultural products so that it improves their value realisation. Krishi Udan 2.0 was launched in October 2021 enhancing the existing provisions, mainly focusing on transporting perishable food products from the hilly areas, North-Eastern states, and tribal areas.
- **Trade Infrastructure for Export Scheme:** The Scheme provides financial assistance in the form of grant-in-aid to Central/State Government owned agencies for setting up or for up-gradation of export infrastructure as per the guidelines of the Scheme
- **Districts as Export Hubs – One District One Product (ODOP) Initiative:** The Districts as Export Hubs-ODOP initiative is aimed at targeting export promotion, manufacturing, and employment generation at the

grassroots level, making the States and Districts meaningful stakeholders and active participants in making India an export powerhouse. The initiative is also aimed at fostering balanced regional development across all districts of the country. It seeks to select, brand, and promote products/services from each district of the country for enabling holistic socioeconomic growth across all regions, and attract investment in the district to boost manufacturing and exports.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF HIGH LEVEL ADVISORY GROUP (HLAG) BY MINISTRY OF COMMERCE

- **Technology:** has a profound influence on manufacturing. It will more significantly impact the relative competitiveness of exports. Tools like big data analytics, industry 4.0 must be leveraged.
- **Financial support to industry:** Government should aim for an effective corporate tax rate of 18%. It should also bring down the cost of capital to an average of 10 best performing OECD countries. It should enhance the capital base of EXIM Bank and Export Credit Guarantee Corporation.
- **Good Governance:** Promote evidence based policy making with a well structured Management Information System (MIS). Also, strengthen the investment promotion agency and build an overarching Trade Promotion Organisation.
- **Identify Champion sectors:** This will help overcome challenges of infrastructural deficiency. 12 champion services present comprehensive potential to enhance GDP.
- **Link into Global & Regional Value Chains:** Integrated approach towards trade in goods, services & investments requires a strategy of generally lower & simplified tariffs. Need to identify products & segments where Indian firms can integrate into GVCs.
- **Use of World Trade Organisation:** as part of its overall strategic vision. Constitute an inter-ministerial group to disseminate and evolve national official thinking on WTO related issues.
- **Role of Regional Trade Agreements (RTAs) is crucial:** However, a comprehensive yet selective & inclusive approach is required. Launch 5 year program

for negotiation of FTA - identified based on complementarity & sustainability.

OLD PENSION SCHEME & NEW PENSION SCHEME

#FISCALPOLICY

PRIMARY SOURCE The Indian EXPRESS

Some non-BJP-ruled states, including Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Punjab, have decided to return to OPS, while a few others have been said to be considering the move.

ABOUT OLD PENSION SCHEME (OPS)

- In OPS, the pension to government employees at the Centre as well as states was fixed at 50 per cent of the last drawn basic pay. This entire amount was paid by the Government.
- The attraction of the OPS lay in its promise of an assured or 'defined' benefit to the retiree. It was hence described as a 'Defined Benefit Scheme'.
- In OPS, the pension constituted 50% of the last drawn salary of an employee.

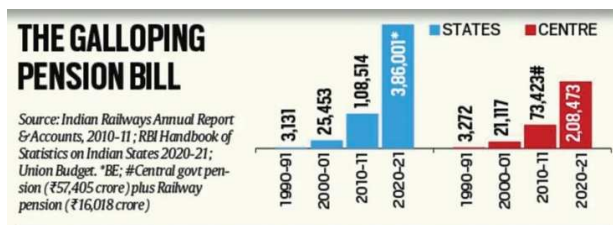
BENEFITS OF REVERTING BACK TO OPS

- Short-term gains for the state government: they save money since they will not have to put the 10 percent matching contribution towards employee pension funds.
- For employees too, it will result in higher take-home salaries, since they too will not set aside 10 percent of their basic pay and dearness allowance towards pension funds.

CONCERNS WITH OPS

- **Pension liability remained unfunded:** There was no corpus specifically for pension, which would grow continuously and could be dipped into for payments.
 - The Government of India budget provided for pensions every year; there was no clear plan on how to pay year after year in the future.
 - The government estimated payments to retirees ahead of the Budget every year, and the present generation of taxpayers paid for all pensioners as on date.

- Overall, pension payments by states eat away a quarter of their own tax revenues. For some states, it is much higher. For Himachal, it is almost 80 per cent (pensions as a percentage of the state's own tax revenues); for Punjab it is almost 35 per cent; for Chhattisgarh 24 per cent; and for Rajasthan 30 per cent.
- The 'pay-as-you-go' scheme created inter-generational equity issues — meaning the present generation had to bear the continuously rising burden of pensioners. Today's taxpayers paying for the ever-increasing pensions of retirees, with Pay Commission awards almost taking the pension of old retirees to current levels, means the pension of someone who retired in 1995 may well be the same as that for someone who retires in 2025.
- **Unsustainable:**
 - Firstly, pension liabilities would keep climbing since pensioners' benefits increased every year; like salaries of existing employees, pensioners gained from indexation.
 - Secondly, better health facilities would increase life expectancy, and increased longevity would mean extended payouts.
 - Over the last three decades, pension liabilities for the Centre and states have jumped manifold. In 1990-91, the Centre's pension bill was Rs 3,272 crore, and the outgo for all states put together was Rs 3,131 crore. By 2020-21, the Centre's bill had jumped 58 times to Rs 1,90,886 crore; for states, it had shot up 125 times to Rs 3,86,001 crore.



ABOUT NEW PENSION SCHEME (NPS)

- The New Pension System proposed by the Project OASIS report became the basis for pension reforms - what was originally conceived for unorganised sector workers, was adopted by the government for its own employees.
- The government thus replaced this PAYG system with the national pension scheme (NPS) or contributory pension scheme which was made mandatory for employees who joined on or after April 1st, 2004.
- **NPS** is a tax-efficient fund which gets accumulated throughout the career of a person and acts as an income after their retirement.
- **Regulation:** under the PFRDA (The Pension Fund Regulatory & Development Authority) Act, 2013
- **Who Can Join?** Any citizen of India (both resident and Non-resident) and Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) in the age group of 18-70 years. Earlier, the maximum age for entry was 65. In Aug 2021, PFRDA increased the maximum age limit to 70.
- **Different Sectors**
 - Government Sector
 - Central Government: Introduced with effect from January 1, 2004 (except for armed forces).
 - State Government: Almost all the State Governments (except few such as West Bengal) have also adopted NPS through their own notifications.
 - Private Sector (Non-Government Sector):
 - Corporates
 - All Citizens of India: Any individual not being covered by any of the above sectors has been allowed to join NPS 2009 onwards.
- **Contribution:** Every government employee has to mandatorily contribute 10% of pay and dearness allowance to the pension fund, which is matched by the government. This money can then be invested by fund managers. After the latest amendment, in 2019, the government share of the contribution has been raised to 14% from 10%. The State Governments have also been given an option to increase their contribution to 14% through their own gazette notification.
- **What happens to the contribution?** Invested in certain pension funds which in turn invest in different asset classes such as G-secs, shares, bonds etc. to generate higher returns.
- **Returns:** NPS is designed on a Defined contribution basis wherein the subscriber contributes to his account. However, there is no defined benefit that would be available at the time of exit from the system. The accumulated wealth depends on the contributions made and the income generated from investment of such wealth.

• **Withdrawals:**

- Upon Normal Superannuation: At least 40% of the accumulated pension wealth of the Subscriber has to be utilised for purchase of annuity providing for monthly pension of the Subscriber and the balance is paid as lump sum to the subscriber.
- Upon Death: The entire accumulated pension wealth (100%) would be paid to the nominee/legal heir of the Subscriber and there would not be any purchase of annuity/monthly pension.
- Exit from NPS Before the age of Normal Superannuation – At least 80% of the accumulated pension wealth of the Subscriber should be utilised for purchase of an annuity providing the monthly pension of the Subscriber and the balance is paid as a lump sum to the Subscriber.
- The basic difference is that the NPS is a contribution-based pension system. Under the old system, pension was fixed as 50% of the last basic salary drawn, along with other benefits. Hence, the benefit due was defined beforehand. However, in the case of the NPS, the pension benefit is determined by factors such as the amount of contribution made, the age of joining, type of investment, and the income drawn from that investment.
- Over the last eight years, the NPS has built a robust subscriber base, and its assets under management have increased.
 - As on October 31, 2022, the Central government had 23,32,774 subscribers, and states had 58,99,162 subscribers.
 - The corporate sector had 15,92,134 subscribers, and the unorganised sector 25,45,771.
 - There were 41,77,978 subscribers under the NPS Swavalamban scheme. The total assets under management of all these subscribers stood at Rs 7,94,870 crore as on October 31, 2022.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF NPS ACCOUNTS

Criteria	Tier-1 Account	Tier-2 Account
Purpose	Pension account	Investment account
Eligibility	Any citizen between 18-70	NRI/OCIs are not eligible

	years	
Nature	Compulsory	Optional: Person needs to have a tier-1 account to open a tier-2 account.
Min. contribution per year	Rs.1000	Rs.250
Tax Benefits available	Yes	No
Withdrawals allowed?	Restricted as per rules and regulations.	Unrestricted withdrawals.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN NEW PENSION SCHEME AND OLD PENSION SCHEME

Criteria	New Pension System (NPS)	Old Pension Scheme
Nature of Scheme	Defined Contribution	Defined benefit
Contribution	Both by Government and Employee	Only the Government
Benefit	No Defined benefit as the accumulated wealth depends upon the contribution made.	Defined benefit. Pension of 50% of the last drawn salary.
Pension Amount	Depends upon the number of years of service. Longer the years of service. Higher Contribution. Higher Pension.	Depends upon the last drawn salary. Pension is equal to 50% of last drawn salary.

COMPETITION (AMENDMENT) ACT, 2023

#INCLUSIVEGROWTH

PRIMARY
SOURCE

Competition
Commission of India

SECONDARY
SOURCE

PRS

- Parliament cleared the Competition (Amendment) Bill, 2023, paving the way for the government to enact some significant changes to the country's antitrust regime, including swifter clearances for mergers and acquisitions (M&As).

ECONOMIC RATIONALE FOR COMPETITION

- Competition is the best means of ensuring that the common man has access to the broadest range of goods and services at the most competitive prices.
- With increased competition, producers will have maximum incentive to innovate and specialise. This would result in reduced costs and wider choice to consumers.
- Fair competition in the market is essential to achieve this objective. The goal is to create and sustain fair competition in the economy that will provide a 'level playing field' to the producers and make the markets work for the welfare of the consumers.

THE COMPETITION ACT

- The Competition Act, 2002, as amended by the Competition (Amendment) Act, 2007, follows the philosophy of modern competition laws.
- The Act prohibits anti-competitive agreements, abuse of dominant position by enterprises and regulates combinations (acquisition, acquiring of control and M&A), which causes or likely to cause an appreciable adverse effect on competition within India.

COMPETITION COMMISSION OF INDIA

- The objectives of the Competition Act are sought to be achieved through the Competition Commission of India, which has been established by the Central Government with effect from 14th October 2003.
- CCI consists of a Chairperson and 6 Members appointed by the Central Government.
- It is the duty of the Commission to eliminate practices having adverse effects on competition, promote and sustain competition, protect the interests of consumers and ensure freedom of trade in the markets of India.

- The Commission is also required to give opinion on competition issues on a reference received from a statutory authority established under any law and to undertake competition advocacy, create public awareness and impart training on competition issues.

THE COMPETITION (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2023: KEY FEATURES

- Regulation of combinations based on transaction value:** The Act prohibits any person or enterprise from entering into a combination which may cause an appreciable adverse effect on competition. Combinations imply mergers, acquisitions, or amalgamation of enterprises. The prohibition applies to transactions where parties involved have: (i) cumulative assets of more than Rs 1,000 crore, or (ii) cumulative turnover of more than Rs 3,000 crore, subject to certain other conditions. The Bill expands the definition of combinations to include transactions with a value above Rs 2,000 crore.
- Time limit for approval of combinations:** The Act requires the CCI to pass an order on an application for approval of combinations within 210 days. The Bill reduces this time limit to 150 days.
- Definition of control for classification of combinations:** For classification of combinations, the Act defines control as control over the affairs or management by one or more enterprises over another enterprise or group. The Bill modifies the definition of control as the ability to exercise material influence over the management, affairs, or strategic commercial decisions.
- Anti-competitive agreements:** Under the Act, anti-competitive agreements include any agreement related to production, supply, storage, or control of goods or services, which can cause an appreciable adverse effect on competition in India. Any agreement between enterprises or persons, engaged in identical or similar businesses, will have such adverse effect on competition if it meets certain criteria. These include: (i) directly or indirectly determining purchase or sale prices, (ii) controlling production, supply, markets, or provision of services, or (iii) directly or indirectly leading to collusive bidding. The Bill adds that enterprises or persons not engaged in identical or similar businesses shall be presumed to be part of such agreements, if they actively participate in the furtherance of such agreements.

- **Settlement and Commitment in anti-competitive proceedings:** Under the Act, CCI may initiate proceedings against enterprises on grounds of: (i) entering into anti-competitive agreements, or (ii) abuse of dominant position. Abuse of dominant position includes: (i) discriminatory conditions in the purchase or sale of goods or services, (ii) restricting production of goods or services, or (iii) indulging in practices leading to the denial of market access. The Bill permits CCI to close inquiry proceedings if the enterprise offers: (i) settlement (may involve payment), or (ii) commitments (may be structural or behavioural in nature). The manner and implementation of the framework of settlement and commitment may be specified by CCI through regulations.
- **Decriminalisation of certain offences:** The Bill changes the nature of punishment for certain offences from imposition of fine to penalty. These offences include failure to comply with orders of CCI and directions of Director General with regard to anti-competitive agreements and abuse of dominant position.

NPCI'S CIRCULAR ON LEVY CHARGES

#FINANCIALINCLUSION

PRIMARY
SOURCE

THE HINDU

SECONDARY
SOURCE

NPCI

ABOUT NPCI

- National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), an umbrella organisation for operating retail payments and settlement systems in India, is an initiative of Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and Indian Banks' Association (IBA) under the provisions of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007, for creating a robust Payment & Settlement Infrastructure in India.
- Considering the utility nature of the objects of NPCI, it has been incorporated as a "Not for Profit" Company under the provisions of Section 25 of Companies Act 1956 (now Section 8 of Companies Act 2013), with an intention to provide infrastructure to the entire Banking system in India for physical as well as electronic payment and settlement systems.
- NPCI is focused on bringing innovations in the retail payment systems through the use of technology for

achieving greater efficiency in operations & widening the reach of payment systems.

- The ten core promoter banks are State Bank of India, Punjab National Bank, Canara Bank, Bank of Baroda, Union Bank of India, Bank of India, ICICI Bank Limited, HDFC Bank Limited, Citibank N. A. and HSBC.
- In 2016 the shareholding was broad-based to 56 member banks to include more banks representing all sectors. In 2020, new entities regulated by RBI were inducted, consisting of Payment Service Operators, payment banks, Small Finance Banks, etc. The shares were allotted pursuant to issuance of equity shares on private placement basis in compliance to the applicable provisions of the Companies Act, 2013.

WHAT IS UPI?

- UPI is an instant real-time payment system developed by National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI). The mobile-based fast payment system is built over the IMPS infrastructure.
- **Features:**
 - The payments can be made round-the-clock and in real time.
 - It eliminates the risk of sharing bank account details by the remitter as customers are not required to enter the details such as Card no, account number, IFSC etc.
 - UPI supports both Person-to-Person (P2P) and Person-to-Merchant (P2M) payments and it also enables a user to send or receive money.
 - It enables the use of a single mobile application for accessing different bank accounts.
 - Transactions are carried out through mobile devices with two factor authentication using device binding and a UPI PIN as security.
 - Registration of Beneficiary is not required for transferring funds through UPI as the fund would be transferred based on using a Virtual Payment Address (VPA) created by the customer.

THE CIRCULAR ON LEVY CHARGES

- National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), which governs UPI - intimated banks and payment service providers that they can now levy charges on merchant transactions made through Prepaid Instrument wallets using UPI. For using prepaid payment instruments (PPIs) such as gift cards, wallets etc for

transactions on UPI, an interchange fee of up to 1.1% has been levied from April 1, 2023.

- It also issued a clarification stating that normal bank-to-bank UPI transactions will not be charged and that customers will not have to pay for transactions made via PPI on UPI.
- New interchange charges are only applicable for Prepaid Payment Instruments' (PPI) merchant transactions. The interchange fee, generally associated with card payments to cover the transaction cost, has now brought PPI wallets also under its fold.

WHAT ARE PPIs?

- Prepaid Payment Instruments (PPIs) are payment methods that can be used to purchase goods and services and send/receive money by using the stored value in the wallet.
- Users have to pre-load the wallet with a desired amount.
- The amount can be loaded/reloaded against cash or through debit to bank account, or by using credit/debit cards, UPI, or any other approved payment method in India. PPIs can only be used in Indian rupees.
- PPIs can be in the form of mobile wallets, physical smart cards, secure tokens, vouchers, or any other method that allows access to prepaid funds.

WHAT IS PPI INTEROPERABILITY?

- Previously, to use PPI at any merchant, it was necessary that the concerned merchant was engaged directly by the specific PPI issuer (specific network). All PPIs with which the merchant did not have a direct tie-up would get rejected.
- The most prevalent form of PPI used in the country is the mobile wallet, and this restriction meant that customers of one specific mobile wallet could spend the money in the wallet only at specific merchant locations which were directly tied up with the same PPI wallet provider.
- For example, if you had a Paytm or Mobikwik wallet, you could only use it at merchants that accepted Paytm or Mobikwik QR codes.
- To overcome this limitation of PPIs, the RBI has mandated interoperability among different PPI issuers.
- Subsequently, PPI issuers tied-up with NPCI for issuing

- interoperable RuPay PPI cards
- creating interoperable wallets on UPI rails.

- Prepaid instruments in the form of wallets can now be linked to UPI, thus creating interoperable wallets on UPI rails.

HOW DOES PPI INTEROPERABILITY THROUGH UPI WORK?

- After linking one's PPI wallet to UPI, customers can transact using Scan and Pay on all UPI interoperable QR codes. This will enable the use of PPI wallets at all merchant locations.
- The user can also send/receive money to any other wallet user. Similarly, a merchant with any UPI QR code can now accept payments from any PPI issuer or mobile wallet.
- PPI on UPI will speed up the growth of merchant transactions in rural areas and further deepen digital financial inclusion by catering to use cases such as healthcare, transit, education, utility bills, etc.

DO MERCHANTS HAVE TO PAY FOR ACCEPTING WALLET TRANSACTIONS ON UPI?

- The PPI enabled merchants were already paying charges to the PPI issuer for acceptance of mobile wallets or prepaid cards. Now the charges are aligned at a network level with some standardisation. However, each merchant can work with their preferred acquiring entity.
- Now, for using prepaid payment instruments (PPIs) such as gift cards, wallets etc for transactions on UPI, an interchange fee of up to 1.1% has been levied from April 1, 2023.
 - The charges are applicable if the transaction is more than ₹2,000.
 - If you are a merchant and accepting UPI payments from a customer's bank account, then there are no charges applicable.
 - Charges are applicable only if you have accepted or consented for the transactions made using PPI Wallet.

ARE THERE ANY CHARGES TO BE PAID BY CONSUMERS HOLDING WALLETS FOR PPI ON UPI TRANSACTIONS?

- Officially there are no charges to be paid by the customer. However, merchants may pass on the additional burden to customers by way of price increase or some other means.

POVERTY ESTIMATES IN INDIA

#INCLUSIVEGROWTH



- According to Arvind Panagariya's new paper, it is only during the strict lockdown period of April-June 2020 that rural poverty saw a "modest rise". But it fell for the full year 2019-20, even if at a significantly lower rate. It witnessed a sharp decline in 2020-21 as in the pre-Covid year of 2018-19.

WHAT IS POVERTY?

- Poverty refers to lack of enough resources to fulfil the necessities of life—food, clean water, shelter and clothing. The World Bank defines extreme poverty as living on less than US\$1.90 per day

POVERTY ESTIMATES IN INDIA

- Estimates of poverty and inequality in India have been deeply contested.
- Differences exist among economists on data which forms the basis of their estimation & on trends over past decades.
- In the absence of official data for recent years — the last consumption expenditure survey, which forms the basis of poverty and inequality estimates, was for 2011-12
- There are **sharp differences of opinion** even on the extent to which the pandemic exacerbated poverty and inequality. In the absence of official data, several economists have put forth their estimates based on different data sources.
 - Arvind Panagariya and Vishal More used PLFS data - found that rural poverty "saw a modest rise" only during the strict lockdown period of April-June 2020, and then declined as sharply as in the pre-Covid period. And that while urban poverty also saw a "modest rise" in 2020-21, by April-June 2021 its decline had resumed.
 - While, as per the "State of working India 2021" report based on CMIE data - economists at Azim Premji University found that the pandemic led to a "sudden increase in poverty". As per the report, over an eight month period (March to October 2020), average incomes of the bottom 10 percent of

households were lower by Rs 15,700. This income shock caused an increase in the poverty rate (below the national minimum wage threshold) by 15 percentage points in rural areas and nearly 20 percentage points in urban areas.

- Research by Arpit Gupta, Anup Malani and Bartosz Woda - also based on CMIE data - found that income poverty, applying the World Bank's \$1.9 cutoff, rose from 7.6 per cent in November 2019 to 50.5 per cent in April 2020. And that while poverty did fall subsequently, it did not recover to pre-pandemic levels.
- Other indicators suggest that more workers fell back on agriculture indicating the absence of non-farm employment. More individuals worked under MGNREGA than in the pre-pandemic period. Regular real wages witnessed a decline. And, sales of two-wheelers remain subdued.
- Other existing estimates:
 - Tendulkar committee (2011): 21.9% of the population under BPL.
 - Rangarajan committee (2014): 29.5% of the population under BPL.
 - Global Multidimensional Poverty Index, 2020: India is 62nd among 107 countries with an MPI score of 0.123. India is home to 228.9 million poor people.

POVERTY ALLEVIATION PROGRAMMES IN INDIA

- Integrated Rural Development Program:** Launched on 2 October 1980, aims to provide a self-employment program to poor rural families to help them increase their income and cross the poverty line
- PM Gramin Awas Yojana:** to provide housing for the rural poor in India. A similar scheme for urban poor was launched in 2015 as Housing for All by 2022. So far, 1.26 crore houses have already been built across the country under the scheme (June 2021)
- National Rural Livelihood Mission:** a poverty alleviation project to organise the poor into SHG (Self Help Groups) groups and make them capable of self-employment
- National Urban Livelihood Mission:** to reduce poverty and vulnerability of the urban poor households by enabling them to access gainful self-employment and skilled wage employment opportunities

- **MGNREGA:** provides a legal guarantee for one hundred days of employment in every financial year to adult members of any rural household willing to do public work-related unskilled manual work at the statutory minimum wage
- **National Food Security Act, 2013:** The Act legally entitled upto 75% of the rural population and 50% of the urban population to receive subsidised food grains under Targeted Public Distribution System
- **National Social Assistance Programme:** To provide support to aged persons, widows, disabled persons and bereaved families on death of primary breadwinner, belonging to below poverty line households

WAY FORWARD

- In the absence of official consumption expenditure data, reliance on alternate data sources has only risen, giving rise to conflicting trends.
- As understanding the trends in poverty and inequality, and their underlying reasons, is critical for designing government policies and programmes, the scenario of absence of relevant data is harmful for policy formulation.
- The absence of timely and reliable data, especially during times of uncertainty, needs to be addressed.
- While some steps have been taken — employment surveys are now carried out with greater regularity — more needs to be done. The country's statistical system needs to be strengthened.

AGRITECH STARTUP FOR SMALLHOLDER FARMERS

#AGRICULTURE

CHALLENGES FACED BY SMALLHOLDERS FARMERS

PHASE	VALUE CHAIN LEVEL	CHALLENGES
FARM INPUTS	Seed	Lack of access to quality seeds at reasonable prices, dependent on local stores for seed quality.
	Fertiliser	High price of fertilisers, non-availability of fertilisers.
	Credit	No credit, limited access to formal credit from formal sources, often dependent on input suppliers for credit.

PRIMARY SOURCE NITI Aayog

Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) under the NITI Aayog has released a report on agritech startups

ABOUT AGRITECH STARTUPS

- Startups in developing and emerging economies have experienced rapid growth and successfully provided digital solutions to address several developmental challenges. Agritech startups are startups engaged in various stages of the agriculture sector.
- The Indian agritech start-up sector, even though it has not unlocked its full potential, is way ahead of many countries. More than 330 well-funded matured agritech start-ups spread across sub-sectors like supply chain, e-commerce, precision agriculture, quality management, and financial services. The business models of these start-ups are built around smallholder farmers.
- Examples of startups: Boomitra, Ecozone, Skymet, Agrosonic, and Satsure have a presence in different needs,

CHARACTERISTICS OF SMALLHOLDER FARMERS

- Small and fragmented landholdings
- Sustenance of small market surplus & distress selling
- Traditional production system
- Poor access to market and often dependent on middlemen and multiple intermediaries.
- Limited/No access to formal & productive finance.
- Limited diversification and mechanisation.
- Low productivity and low quality produce.
- High risk of crop loss.
- Post-harvest loss due to poor supply chain.
- Low value capture and lower net realisation of farmers.

	Farm machinery	Traditional equipment used for farm operations.
	Pesticides	Quality pesticides or insecticides not available
PRE-HARVEST	Knowledge	Employ traditional methods of production. Not aware of scientific production method.
	Disease	Not able to identify diseases and pests or do not know solutions to overcome it.
	Crop-selection	Limited varietal knowledge, no know-how about climate smart agriculture, what everyone grows.
	Harvest	Unscientific harvesting leads to poor quality of produce (Underripe or overripe produce with low quality and low shelf life).
HARVEST	Post-harvest losses	Loss in transportation & storage.
	Access to market	Sell-their produce to local middlemen.
	Access to agriculture infrastructure	Limited facilities for storing and primary processing of their produce.
	Access to credit	No access to credit to meet their post-harvest requirement. Often result in distress selling.
	Processing	No linkage with processors for assured markets.
CLIMATE CHANGE	Risk management	Low uptake of crop and livestock insurance, lack of awareness about insurance products.
	Climate change	Low adoption of climate smart agriculture like zero-tillage or natural farming to manage climate risks.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR AGRITECH STARTUPS

- **Large number of smallholdings:** Agritech startups can create a disproportionate impact in the lives of smallholder farmers by providing access to credit, insurance, inputs and market linkage at reduced cost with greater linkage. These start-ups can interact with millions of farmers across diverse geographies.
- **Impact of climate change:** With the rise of AI and ML tools coupled with satellite imagery, weather predictions have become increasingly accurate. Thus, climate change allows agritech companies to mitigate weather related risks and advise on climate resilient agriculture practices.
- **Increased mobile internet & smartphone penetration:** The number of mobile internet users and smartphone users have increased significantly particularly among younger generations, but affordability remains an issue. This can be exploited by agritech startups to digitally connect with smallholder farmers and offer their unique and innovative solutions.
- **Consumer behaviour:** Consumer preference for clean, chemical-free and sustainably sourced food has

increased with urbanisation and income with consumers willing to pay the premium. Agritech startups can solve issues related to producing clean and chemical free products, supply chain issues and traceability. This will also help smallholder farmers to produce sustainably by adopting best technology and assure consumers that their products are clean, fresh and sourced sustainably.

- **Increased support from government & incubators:** Governments and other stakeholders are increasingly offering support to startups with various schemes and other support.

AGRITECH SOLUTIONS IN VARIOUS AREAS OF AGRICULTURE

VALUE CHAIN	TECHNOLOGY
Inputs	Digital platform based livestock & farm management – centralises, manages and optimises production activities. Digital app based procurement aggregation to reduce fixed costs and customer service. Data-driven marketplace linkage price discovery. App based expert agronomy advice. Remote and proximity sensing for crop monitoring. Satellite based estimation of harvesting time & period. Digitising production, procurement & cold chain management through IoT. Automatically adjust irrigation volume based on soil moisture, climatic conditions and volume. Drone/UAV surveillance. Digital finance in agriculture.
Farm Production	Standard package of practices; Alert log & management (pest infestation, diseases) Soil testing; Satellite & weather input based advisory; Real time crop reports & insights; Geotag based accountability, predictability; Adherence to compliance & certification; Livestock & farm management software.
Post-harvest/Proc	Satellite based yield estimation sensor, data-driven harvesting time; Mobile

essing	quality testing devices; Proactive AI-driven shipping information management.
Agriculture marketing	Digital finance in Agriculture; Buyer-seller digital marketplace; Digitally enabled value chain integration; Market access (off-taker) integration; E-marketplaces/input e-marketplace; Brand-certification & management; Pay-as-you-go agricultural machinery.
Supply chain	Blockchain-based supply chain management; Farm to fork traceability of commodities; Precision shipping forecast management software; Shipping information managementQuality/compliance certifications; Affordable quality check tools.
Climate Change	Greenhouse systems, indoor/outdoor farming, aquaponicsReclamation of degraded, saline & alkaline landClimate-smart agriculture; Residue management; Waste management /water management technology; Risk management.

CHALLENGES FOR AGRITECH START-UPS

1. Agritech market related issues

- High cost of infrastructure and devices is a significant barrier to scaling of agritech solutions and subsequent adoption by smallholders.
- Lack of digital literacy & cost of device resulting in low adoption of agritech solutions
- High cost of customer acquisition due to fragmented landholdings, lack of connections between farmers and agritech startups and lack of trust among farmers towards agritech startups
- Inadequate farm and farmer level data set like access to digitalised land records, agricultural and horticulture output
- Challenges in cross-border expansion

2. Challenges specific to growth phase

- Lack of human quality resources
- Lack of availability of funding or grant support

- Tremendous competition in early-stage startups
- Scalability of start-ups

WAY FORWARD

- **Improving Last Mile Connectivity:** Due to fragmented landholdings and lack of digital literacy most agritech startups depend on local institutions like FPOs and NGOs to roll out their solutions. The success of interventions by FPOs depend on the quality and capacity of these local institutions. Thus, for agritech startups to be effective, significant effort needs to be put into building local institutions.
- **Access to public data:** Government has vast data on farmers, land records, financial health, weather reports, meteorological data, price etc. This data is critical for AI-based start-ups or those start-ups that require maps and data related to land records and soil types. Government should ensure that startups are able to access these data sources to scale up their solutions. Also, at the national level efforts should be made to improve data collection, storage and processing. The Karnataka government has implemented e-Sahamathi to solve the 15 issues of data privacy, consent, and data sharing with an interested third party.
- **Promoting local level of infrastructure for farm-level processing:** Startups depend on local infrastructure like warehouses for storage or grading and sorting centres for primary commodities processing. Therefore, the government should promote the creation of local agriculture-related infrastructures by incentivising and providing financing from formal financial institutions.
- **Digitalisation of licensing regime:** Many agritech startups working in agriculture inputs often face licence related challenges, which are often cumbersome due to opaqueness in processes and limits their scaling. Thus, there is a need for creating transparency around the licensing process by digitising the entire process.
- **State-specific Agritech policy to promote agriculture based start-ups:** Only a few states like Delhi and Maharashtra have start-up policies to promote and nurture start-ups. However, agritech startups need different kinds of support from other startups. Thus, there is a need for states to formulate separate agritech policies.

- **Establishment of facilitation centre for Agritech start-ups at local and global level:** A state level facilitation centre as one-stop centre should be created to ensure that agritech startups can access public resources or leverage government's infrastructure. This centre can apprise startups about government policies and help agritech startups meet investors.

FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESERVES

#EXTERNALSECTOR



Reserves have fallen from an all-time high of \$645 billion in October 2021 to \$575.27 billion in February 2023. However, India's forex reserves increased by \$6.306 billion to \$584.755 billion for the week ended April 7.

WHAT ARE FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESERVES?

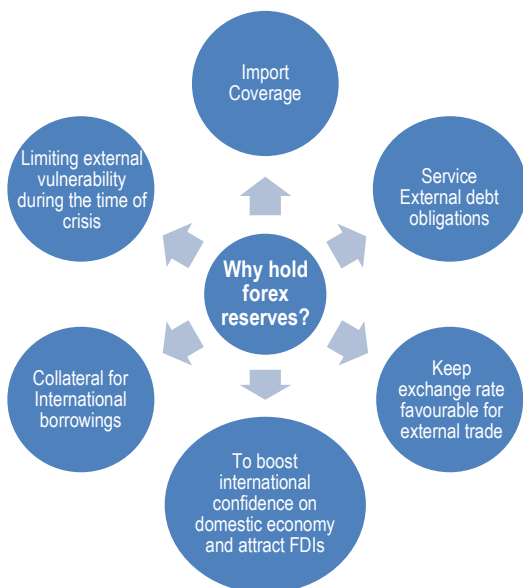
- Foreign exchange reserves refers to the reserves of the RBI kept in the form foreign currency assets, gold, SDR and reserve tranche position with the IMF.
- The forex reserve is kept as a cushion against any potential balance of payment related crisis. In India, the Reserve Bank of India Act 1934 enables the RBI to act as the custodian of foreign reserves.

COMPOSITION OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESERVES

- Forex reserves in India comprise of Foreign Exchange assets (FEAs), Gold, Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) and Reserve Position in the IMF.
- Foreign Exchange assets (FEAs): Consists of major global currencies + Investments in US Treasury bonds, bonds of other selected governments, deposits with foreign central and commercial banks. Even though, Foreign Exchange assets (FEAs) are maintained in major currencies, the foreign exchange reserves are denominated and expressed in US dollar terms.
- Reserve Position in the IMF: Subscription of quota consists of two components: (i) foreign exchange component and (ii) domestic currency component. Under the foreign exchange component, a member is required to pay 25% of its quota in SDRs or in foreign currencies. This is termed as "reserve position in the

IMF or reserve tranche" and is part of the member country's reserve assets.

- Foreign Currency Assets (88%) > Gold (8%) > SDR (3.2%) > RTP (0.8%)



REASONS FOR DECLINE

- FPI outflows: mainly due global inflation post Russia-Ukraine war and hike of interest rates by US Federal Reserve.
- Rupee depreciation: by around 10% against the US dollar and became the worst performing Asian currency in 2022. As a result, RBI had to intervene in the forex market to defend the rupee thereby declining forex reserves.
- Valuation loss: Foreign exchange reserves are maintained as a multi-currency portfolio comprising major currencies such as the US dollar, Euro, Pound sterling, and Japanese yen, among others, but are valued in terms of US dollars. When the dollar strengthens, the valuation of other currencies vis-à-vis the US currency declines, leading to notional fall in the overall reserves position.

ARGUMENTS FOR MAINTAINING HIGH FOREX RESERVES

- It helps reduce the risk from external vulnerabilities like volatile crude oil prices and meet external obligations and liabilities on high outflow of hot money (FPIs).
- Enables efficient exchange rate management: by allowing occasional RBI intervention to curb excessive

volatility in forex and helps in growth of currency market.

- Generates Investors Confidence: by helping to finance India's Current Account Deficit and minimise the impact of lower credit rating and a negative NIIP (Net International Investment Position)
- Help India emerge as Regional Leader: Expands the ability to open currency swap lines for our neighbours like SAARC nations.
- Offers cushion against withdrawal of monetary stimulus in West

ARGUMENTS AGAINST MAINTAINING HIGH FOREX RESERVES

- Present Indian Forex reserves are: India's foreign exchange reserves stood at US\$ 532.7 billion as of end-September 2022, enough to cover more than 8 months of our projected 2022-23 imports and our external debt obligations.
- It may lead to several other issues like: (a) High opportunity and fiscal costs of sterilisation of liquidity, i.e. unused excessive cash despite development needs, poverty & large population; and (b) High Forex reserves shows lack of confidence from government on resilience of its economy, measures to raise capital or exports and soundness of macroeconomic management.

HOW MUCH FOREX RESERVES ARE SUFFICIENT?

- Though there is no objective formula/criterion to arrive at a specific amount, there are few factors that are considered to determine the adequacy of foreign exchange reserves of an economy, which include:
 - Import Cover: Number of months of imports that could be paid for by Forex Reserves.
 - Greenspan-Guidotti rule: Forex reserves should be sufficient to pay the short-term External Debt.
 - Level of short-term debt: IMF suggests that a country's reserves should equal short-term external debt (one-year or less maturity), suggesting a ratio of reserves-to-short term debt of one.
 - Source of accretion of reserves: Whether the forex reserves are made up of export or foreign investments (FDI & FPI) or external borrowings.

- Levels of Current account deficit: To what extent the CAD can be financed by the existing foreign reserves.

LOGISTICS PERFORMANCE INDEX (LPI) 2023

#INFRASTRUCTURE #PRELIMSNUGGETS

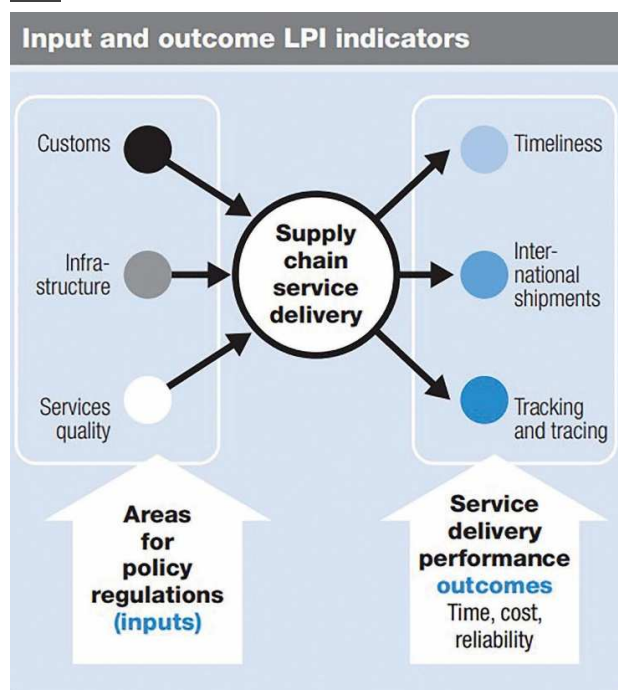
PRIMARY SOURCE | WORLD BANK

Recently, the Logistics Performance Index 2023 was released by the World Bank. India's ranking on the LPI improved by 6 places to reach 38th place in 2023 edition of LPI as compared to 2018 edition of LPI.

ABOUT LOGISTICS PERFORMANCE INDEX

- It is an index compiled by the World Bank to help countries identify challenges and opportunities they face in their performance on trade logistics and what they can do to improve their performance.
- 139 countries are ranked in the 2023 edition of LPI.
- The 2023 edition of LPI only conducted a survey on the international component of LPI. Earlier editions of LPI, focused on both domestic & international surveys.

COMPONENTS OF LOGISTICS PERFORMANCE INDEX (LPI)



- Efficiency of customs & border management clearance
- Quality of trade and transport related infrastructure
- Ease of arranging competitively priced international shipments
- Competence and quality of logistics services
- Ability to track & trace consignments
- Frequency with which shipments reach consignees within the scheduled or expected delivery time.

METHODOLOGY OF LOGISTICS PERFORMANCE INDEX

- **For Logistics Performance Index:** Worldwide survey of international logistics operators on the ground (global freight forwarders & express carriers), providing feedback on logistics 'friendliness' of countries with which they trade.
- **For Key Performance Indicators measuring actual speed of trade:** Granular high frequency information on maritime shipping and container tracking, postal & air freight activities, collected & made available to LPI by several data partners. These KPIs are not yet included in the construction of main LPI indicators.

RANKINGS IN LOGISTICS PERFORMANCE INDEX 2023

- India's ranking improved by 6 places to reach 38th place on the Logistics Performance Index 2023 as compared to the last edition in 2018.
- Singapore was the best ranked country on the LPI 2023.

DEFINITION OF LOGISTICS

- Logistics is understood as a network of services that support physical movement of goods, trade across borders and commerce within borders.
- It comprises transportation, warehousing, brokerage, express delivery, terminal operations and related data & information management.

REASONS FOR INDIA'S IMPROVEMENT IN LOGISTICS PERFORMANCE INDEX

- Since 2015, Government of India has invested in trade related soft and hard infrastructure connecting port gateways on both coasts to the economic poles in the hinterland.
- Enhancing port productivity: Port productivity can be improved by increasing private sector participation in terminal operations, implementing electronic port community systems

- Tracking & Tracing solutions: NICDC Logistics Data Services limited applied radio frequency identification tags to containers and offers consignees end-to-end tracking of their supply chain. With the introduction of cargo tracking, dwell-time in eastern Visakhapatnam port fell from 32.4 days to 5.3 days in 2019. On an average dwell time for containers came down to 2.6 days for India.

MAHARISHI INITIATIVE

#AGRICULTURE #PRELIMSNUGGETS

PRIMARY SOURCE G20

G20 Meetings of Agricultural Chief Scientists (MACS) 2023 in Varanasi under India's Presidency saw the launch of MAHARISHI Initiative.

ABOUT MAHARISHI

- MAHARISHI stands for Millets And other Ancient Grains International Research Initiative.
- MAHARISHI secretariat shall be housed at Indian Institute of Millets Research (IIMR), Hyderabad with technical support from ICRISAT, One CGIAR Centres and other International organisations.

FOCUS AREAS OF MAHARISHI

- Establish mechanisms to connect researchers and institutions working in identified grain crops to enhance the dissemination of research findings and identify research gaps and needs.
- Establish web platforms to connect researchers, exchange data, share communication products and thematic briefs to encourage research & information sharing.
- Organise capacity building activities and international workshops & conferences.
- Performance identification and recognition to scientists.

MAHILA SAMMAN SAVINGS CERTIFICATE, 2023

#FINANCIALINCLUSION #PRELIMSNUGGETS

PRIMARY SOURCE THE ECONOMIC TIMES

Union Budget 2023-24 announced a one-time new small savings scheme, Mahila Samman Savings Certificate which will be made available for a two-year period up to March 2025. This will offer deposit facility up to Rs 2 lakh in the name of women or girls for a tenure of 2 years at fixed interest rate of 7.5% with partial withdrawal option. To operationalise this scheme, the Department of Economic Affairs has now notified the Mahila Samman Savings Certificate Scheme.

ABOUT MAHILA SAMMAN SAVINGS CERTIFICATE

- Application for opening an account:** Application for opening an account under MSSC Scheme shall be made by a woman for herself, or by her guardian on behalf of a minor girl on or before 31st March, 2025. The account will be a single holder type account.
- Deposits:** A maximum limit of two lakh rupees can be deposited in an account or accounts held by an account holder. An individual may open any number of accounts subject to the maximum limit for MSSC and a time gap of three months shall be maintained between existing account and opening another account. Minimum amount for opening an account is thousand rupees and any sum in multiples of one hundred rupees and no subsequent deposit shall be allowed in that account.
- Interest:** Deposits made under this scheme shall bear interest rate of 7.5% per annum compounded on quarterly basis.
- Payment of maturity:** Deposit shall mature on completion of two years from the date of deposit.
- Withdrawal from account:** Account holder shall be eligible to withdraw maximum up to 40% of Eligible Balance once after expiry of one year from the date of opening of account but before maturity of account.
- Premature closure of account:** The account can be closed prematurely only after completion of 6 months since the opening of account in the following cases: (a) Death of account holder; (b) If post office or bank concerned is satisfied, in cases of extreme compassionate grounds such as medical support in life threatening diseases, death of guardian.
- Administrative control of the scheme:** Department of Economic Affairs under Ministry of Finance has notified Mahila Samman Savings Certificate Scheme, 2023 under the Government Savings Promotion Act, 1873.

CREDIT GUARANTEE SCHEME FOR MICRO & SMALL ENTERPRISES (CGTMSE) SCHEME

#INDUSTRY #PRELIMSNUGGETS

PRIMARY
SOURCE

pib

The Ministry of MSME has issued guidelines for revamping the Credit Guarantee Scheme for Micro & Small Enterprises with effect from 1st April 2023. CGTMSE created a landmark by touching the milestone approving guarantees worth Rs 1 lakh crore during FY 2022-23. In the Union Budget, announcement was made for infusion of additional capital of Rs 9,000 crore in CGTMSE for enabling additional collateral free guaranteed credit of Rs 2 lakh crore. Also, the cost of credit will be reduced by 1%.

ABOUT CGTMSE SCHEME

- Guarantees are provided for extending collateral free lending to Micro & Small Enterprises through banks and financial institutions (including NBFCs).
- The Scheme covers collateral free credit facilities (term loan and/ or working capital) extended by eligible lending institutions to new and existing micro and small enterprises up to Rs. 500 lakh per borrowing unit.
- The guarantee cover provided under this scheme varies from 75 % to 85 % depending upon the quantum of loan and type of beneficiary.
- A nominal amount towards an Annual Guarantee Fee for the credit facility sanctioned is charged on the outstanding loan amount.
- Aims to encourage first generation entrepreneurs to venture into self-employment opportunities by facilitating credit guarantee support for collateral free/third party guarantee free loans to Micro & Small enterprises (MSEs), especially in absence of collateral.
- To operationalise the scheme, Government of India and SIDBI set up the Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE).
- **Guarantee coverage** ranges from 85% for Micro enterprises up to Rs 5 lakhs to 75% for others. 50% coverage for retail activity.
- **Reduction of Annual Guarantee Fee** for loans up to Rs 1 crore from a peak rate of 2% p.a. to as low as 0.37% per annum. This will reduce the overall cost of credit to Micro & Small Enterprises to a great extent.
- **Limit on ceiling for guarantees has been enhanced** from Rs 2 crore to 5 crores. Hence, the scheme provides credit guarantee for loans up to Rs 5 crore, without collateral and third-party guarantee.
- **No legal proceedings up to Rs 10 lakhs:** For settlement of claims in respect of guarantees for loan outstanding up to Rs 10 lakh, initiation of legal proceedings will no longer be required.
- **Lending Institutions through which CGTMSE Scheme is eligible:** Scheduled Commercial Banks, select Regional Rural Banks, Selected NBFCs and Small Finance Banks, NSIC, NEDFI, SIDBI and The Tamil Nadu Industrial Investment Corporation (TNIIC).

SATHI PORTAL FOR SEED QUALITY ASSURANCE

#AGRICULTURE #PRELIMSNUGGETS

PRIMARY
SOURCE

pib

ABOUT SATHI PORTAL

- SATHI stands for Seed Traceability, Authentication and Holistic Inventory.
- SATHI is a centralised online system for seed traceability, authentication & inventory designed to deal with challenges of seed production, quality seed identification & seed certification.
- This portal will ensure seed quality assurance and identify the source of seed in the seed production system.
- SATHI portal will consist of integrated 7 verticals of seed chain: Research Organisations, Seed Certification, Seed Licensing, Seed Catalogue, Dealer to Farmer Sales, Farmer Registration and Seed DBT.
- Seeds with valid certification can only be sold by a valid licensed dealer to centrally registered farmers who will receive subsidy through DBT directly into their pre-validated bank accounts.
- There will be QR code under this system, through which the seeds can be traced.

NEED FOR SATHI PORTAL

- Goods Quality Seeds are critical inputs for a robust agriculture. However, inferior quality or spurious seeds affects the agriculture sector output and causes loss to farmers.
- It is expected that if farmers have access to newer and quality seeds having resistance against climate change and new types of pests, agricultural production can be increased by 20%.

'PRAVAAH' (PLATFORM FOR REGULATORY APPLICATION, VALIDATION AND AUTHORISATION)

#MONETARYPOLICY #PRELIMSNUGGETS

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

ABOUT PRAVAAH

- Various entities are required to obtain licence / authorization to carry out activities regulated by RBI. Further, regulated entities are required to seek certain regulatory approvals from RBI under various statutes / regulations periodically.
- Currently, the application and approval processes for the same take place in varied on-line and off-line modes.
- The Union Budget for 2023-24 has announced the need to simplify, ease and reduce cost of compliance by financial sector regulators within laid down time limits to decide the applications under various regulations.
- It has been decided to develop a secured web based centralised portal named as 'PRAVAAH' which will gradually extend to all types of applications made to RBI across all functions.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

MCQS

Q1. With reference to the 'Foreign Trade Policy, 2023', consider the following statements:

1. The trade policy targets \$2 trillion worth of exports of goods and services.
2. The policy shows a shift from remission-based to incentives-based regime.
3. The policy's end-date is 2030.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) 1 and 2 only (d) 2 and 3 only

Q2. With reference to the Free Trade Agreement (FTA), consider the following statements:

1. In FTAs, partner countries maintain individual tariff structures for non-members.

2. In a FTA, there is a positive list of products on which duty is to be reduced.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q3. Consider the following statements related to Forex Reserves in India:

1. The Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) enables the RBI to act as the custodian of foreign reserves.
2. Rupee depreciation is likely to decrease India's Forex Reserves.
3. The adoption of Fed Tapering by the US Federal Reserve is likely to increase India's Forex Reserves.

Which among the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
(c) 2 and 3 only (d) 1 and 3 only

Q4. With respect to Emergency Credit line guarantee scheme (ECLGS), consider the following statements:

1. The scheme provides credit guarantee for loans up to Rs 2 crore, without collateral and third-party guarantee.
2. For settlement of claims in respect of guarantees for loan outstanding up to Rs 50 lakh, initiation of legal proceedings is not required.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only

Q5. With reference to the Mahila Samman Saving Certificates, consider the following statements:

1. Duration of the saving certificate would be five years.
2. Interest rate paid on the saving certificate would be market determined.
3. Deposits up to 2 lakh could be made in the name of a woman or girl.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 1 and 3 only
(c) 2 and 3 only (d) 3 only

DESCRIPTIVE QUESTIONS

- Q1.** Elaborate the policy taken by the Government of India to meet the challenge of increasing India's share of exports in global merchandise trade.
- Q2.** Identify challenges faced by smallholder farmers and elaborate upon how agritech startups offer an opportunity to deal with these challenges?

Answers: 1-a, 2-a, 3-b, 4-d, 5-d

CONSTITUTION, POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

GS PAPER (PRELIMS) & GS PAPER II (MAIN)

Vaibhav Mishra



PUBLIC INTEREST LITIGATION (PIL)

#JUDICIAL ACTIVISM #JUDICIARY

PRIMARY SOURCE

The Indian EXPRESS

SECONDARY SOURCE

Legal Services India

PILs are often in the news in India because they are frequently used to address issues of public concern and significance. PILs allow any individual or organization to approach the court for the protection of public interest, and they can be used to address a wide range of issues that affect society, such as corruption, environmental degradation, human rights violations, and consumer protection, among others.

PUBLIC INTEREST LITIGATION (PIL)

Public Interest Litigation is a type of legal action taken in a court of law for the protection of public interest. The allows individuals or organizations to **approach the court to seek legal remedies on behalf of public at large**, where there may be a violation of rights or harm caused to the community.

The concept of **PIL was first introduced in India in the 1980s** as a means of promoting access to justice for the poor and marginalized sections of society. **It has become an essential tool for social activists**, NGOs, and other concerned citizens to seek legal remedies for issues that affect the larger public, such as environmental degradation, human rights violations, corruption, and consumer rights, among others.

PIL has played a crucial role in shaping India's legal landscape and promoting social justice by providing a

platform for the common citizen to raise their voice against injustice and inequality.

EMERGENCE OF PIL

- Public Interest Litigation (PIL) emerged in the Indian jurisprudence in the 1980s as a means of providing access to justice to the poor and marginalized sections of society.
- In the early 1970s, a group of social activists and lawyers in **India began to challenge the traditional legal system's formalities and complexities**, which made it difficult for ordinary people to approach the courts for justice. These activists advocated for the creation of a legal mechanism that would allow individuals or organizations to approach the court to seek legal remedies on behalf of the public at large.
- Supreme Court of India, in its landmark judgment in the case of **S.P. Gupta v. Union of India (1981)**, recognized the concept of PIL and **expanded the scope of locus standi** (the right to appear before a court) to include anyone who seeks to enforce public rights or interests. This judgment paved the way for the growth of PIL in India, and since then, PIL has become an important tool for social activists, NGOs, and other concerned citizens to seek legal remedies for issues that affect the larger public.
- Over the years, Indian judiciary has **played a proactive role in expanding the scope of PIL and has used it** to address a wide range of issues, such as environmental degradation, human rights violations, corruption, consumer rights, and the protection of heritage sites, among others. PIL has become an essential part of India's legal landscape and has helped to promote social justice and equality by providing a

platform for the common citizen to raise their voice against injustice and inequality.

WHO CAN FILE A PIL?

Under **Article 32** of Indian Constitution, in the supreme court, **Article 226** in the High Court, and **Section 133** of the **Criminal Procedure Code** in the magistrate court, any citizen can file a public case by filing a petition. However, the petitioner must prove to the court's satisfaction that the petition is being filed in the public interest and not as a frivolous litigation by a busybody. The court may take cognizance of the matter and proceed with *Suo motu*, or any public-spirited individual may file a petition.

The concept of "Locus Standi" has been relaxed in the case of PILs to enable the Hon'ble Court to look into grievances that are filed on behalf of those who are poor, illiterate, deprived or disabled and are unable to approach the courts themselves. **A PIL can only be brought against the Central, state, or municipal governments and not against any individual.** The Governmental and Parliament of India, each State's Government and Legislature, and all local or other authorities within the territory of India or under the control of the Government of India are all included in the definition of a state.

Public Interest Litigations (PILs) cases with significant impact on India's legal landscape and society:

Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan (1997): This PIL was filed to address the issue of sexual harassment of women in the workplace. Supreme Court of India laid down guidelines for the prevention of sexual harassment of women at the workplace, which became known as the Vishaka Guidelines.

MC Mehta v. Union of India (1986): This PIL was filed to address the issue of pollution in River Ganga. Supreme Court of India issued several orders to stop industries from dumping effluents into the river and to improve the water quality of the river.

Olga Tellis v. Bombay Municipal Corporation (1985): This PIL was filed to address the issue of slum eviction in Mumbai. Supreme Court of India held that the right to livelihood is a fundamental right, and slum dwellers cannot be evicted without providing alternative accommodation.

Bandhua Mukti Morcha v. Union of India (1984):

This PIL was filed to address the issue of bonded labor in India. Supreme Court of India laid down guidelines for the abolition of bonded labor and directed the government to take several measures to rehabilitate bonded laborers.

Common Cause v. Union of India (2017): This PIL was filed to address the issue of passive euthanasia. The Supreme Court of India held that individuals have the right to die with dignity and laid down guidelines for the administration of passive euthanasia.

These cases are just a few examples of the many famous PILs in India that have had a significant impact on the country's legal and social landscape. PILs have been used to address a wide range of issues, from environmental degradation and human rights violations to corruption and consumer protection.

SIGNIFICANCE OF PIL

- **Affordable legal remedy** – In Public Interest Litigation (PIL) vigilant citizens of the country can find an inexpensive legal remedy because there is only a nominal fixed court fee involved in this.
- **Accessibility of justice** – This is done by relaxing the traditional rule of locus standi. Any public-spirited citizen or social action group can approach the court on behalf of the oppressed classes.
- **Addressing larger public issues** – through the so-called PIL, the litigants can focus attention on and achieve results pertaining to larger public issues, especially in the fields of human rights, consumer welfare and environment.
- **Instrument of social change** – PIL is working as an important instrument of social change. It is working for the welfare of every section of society. PIL has been used as a strategy to combat the atrocities prevailing in society. It is an institutional initiative towards the welfare of the needy class of the society. In Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan Supreme court has laid down exhaustive guidelines for preventing sexual harassment of working women in place of their work.
- **Monitoring of state institutions** – such as jails, women's protective homes, juvenile homes, mental health facilities, and the like. Through judicial invigilation, the court seeks gradual improvement in their management and administration.
- **Checks and balances** – Provide a tool in the hands of the judiciary along with enhanced participation of the

public to keep tab on executive and administrative actions.

- **Devising new kind of reliefs and techniques of fact finding** – By fashioning new kinds of reliefs under the court's writ jurisdiction. For example, the court can award interim compensation to the victims of governmental lawlessness. In most of the cases the court has appointed its own socio-legal commissions of inquiry or has deputed its own official for investigation. Sometimes it has taken the help of National Human Rights Commission or Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) or experts to inquire into human rights violations.

CHALLENGES

- **Disturbing the constitutional balance of power** – Although the Indian Constitution does not follow any strict separation of power, it still embodies the doctrine of checks and balances, which even the judiciary should respect. However, the judiciary on several occasions did not exercise self-restraint and moved on to legislate, settle policy questions, take over governance, or monitor executive agencies.
- **Frivolous use** – PIL has become a tool for harassment because of the large number of insignificant cases that are filed by people with the minimal court fee. Numerous false PILs have been filed to obtain publicity for unworthy causes. Even chief justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud noted that PIL has become tool for harassment and several experts are of opinion that the letter 'P' has been substituted for publicity and private as against the original intention of Public.
- **Primacy to PIL cases over other cases** – The debates over the limits of Judicial Activism in PIL, have been vigorous. A private members bill entitled "Public Interest Litigation (Regulation) Bill, 1996" was tabled in the Rajya Sabha. The statement of objectives and reasons stated that PIL was misused in the name of providing justice to the poor sections of the society and that PIL cases were given more priority over other cases which led to pending of several "general section cases" in the court for years. However, the bill was not passed.
- **Pendency of PIL cases** – Adjudication takes several years as PIL cases further aggravate the challenges of already burdened judiciary.
- **Overuse-induced non-seriousness** – PIL should not be the first step in redressing all kinds of grievances

even if they involve public interest. To remain effective, PIL should not be allowed to become a routine affair which is not taken seriously by the Bench, the Bar, and most importantly by the masses. The overuse of PIL for every conceivable public interest might dilute the original commitment to use this remedy only for enforcing human rights of the victimised and the disadvantaged groups. If civil society and disadvantaged groups lose faith in the efficacy of PIL, that would sound a death knell for it.

CONCLUSION

PIL has an important role to play in the civil justice system in that it affords a ladder to justice to disadvantaged sections of society, some of which might not even be well-informed about their rights. Furthermore, it provides an avenue to enforce diffused rights for which either it is difficult to identify an aggrieved person or where aggrieved persons have no incentives to knock at the doors of the courts. PIL could also contribute to good governance by keeping the government accountable. Finally, PIL enables civil society to play an active role in spreading social awareness about human rights, in providing voice to the marginalized sections of society, and in allowing their participation in government decision making.

Plausible solution lies in introspection and exercise of rationality by the various stake holders. Firstly, judiciary must exercise caution and restrain while entertaining the PILs, i.e., PILs should be admitted only when they comply with the guidelines of the SC. Frivolous PILs should be discouraged and penalised. There is need for sensitization of the lawyers and social activists too. Finally executive inaction creates space for such judicial activism so if the concern is blurring of the separation of power, executive must also act proactively.

PANCHAYATI RAJ

#LOCAL GOVERNMENT #73RD AND 74TH
CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT



This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Constitution Amendments that led to the three-tier Panchayati Raj structures. Three decades ago, in 1992, the Constitution 73rd (on Panchayat Raj) and 74th Amendment Acts (on Nagarpalika or urban local bodies) were enacted. These were

the first definitive steps to extend and establish political democracy as the bulwark of governance across the country. These amendments were to give expression to Article 40 of the Constitution which enshrines one of the Directive Principles of State Policy, which requires the State to take steps to organise village panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government.

COMMITTEES RECOMMENDING

INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF PANCHAYATI RAJ

Balwant Rai Mehta Committee:

• Recommendation:

- The Committee recommended a scheme for “**democratic decentralisation**,” as well as a three-tier system with directly elected members at the village level.
- District Collector to be made as the chairman of the Zila Parishad.

Ashok Mehta Committee:

- The committee was appointed in 1977 to suggest measures to revive and strengthen the declining Panchayati Raj system in India.

• Recommendation:

- 3 tier PRI should be replaced with a 2 tier PRI with Zila Parishad at the district level and Mandal panchayat below it.
- Committee also recommended for Nyaya panchayat.

G V K Rao Committee:

- The committee was appointed by the planning commission in 1985.

• Recommendation:

- The committee recommended reducing the developmental role of the district collector and giving a major role to PRI.
- A post of district development commissioner should be created.

L.M Singhvi Committee:

- The committee was appointed by Government of India in 1986 with the main objective to recommend steps to revitalise the Panchayati Raj systems for democracy and development.

• Recommendation:

- It suggested that constitutional status must be given to PRI.
- Thus 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment act was passed by Parliament in 1992 and got assent on 20th April 1993.

IMPORTANT FEATURES OF THE ACT FOR RURAL AREAS

Three-tier system:

- The base level is the ‘**Gram Panchayat**’.
- The intermediary level is the **Mandal**
- At the apex is the **Zilla Panchayat**
- **Gram Sabha:** Gram Sabha is the primary body of the Panchayati Raj system.
- **Election of members and chairperson:** The members to all the levels of the Panchayati Raj are elected directly and the chairpersons to the intermediate and the district level are elected indirectly from the elected members and at the village level the Chairperson is elected as determined by the state government.

Duration of Panchayat: The Act provides for a five-year term of office to all the levels of the panchayat. However, the panchayat can be dissolved before the completion of its term.

State election commission: The commission is responsible for superintendence, direction and control of the preparation of electoral rolls and conducting elections for the panchayat

They are:

- the **preparation of plans for economic development and social justice**.
- the implementation of schemes for economic development and **social justice** as may be entrusted to them, including those in relation to the 29 matters listed in the Eleventh Schedule.

Reservation of seats:

- Reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and women (not less than one-third of seats). The seats are to be reserved for SCs and STs in proportion to their population at each level. Out of the Reserved Seats, 1/3rd must be reserved for the women of the SC and ST. Out of the

total number of seats to be filled by the direct elections, 1/3rd must be reserved for women.

Finances: The state legislature may –

- authorize a panchayat to levy, collect and appropriate taxes, duties, tolls and fees.
- assign to a panchayat taxes, duties, tolls and fees levied and collected by the state government.
- provide grants-in-aid to the Panchayats from the state's consolidated fund.
- provide for the establishment of funds to credit all money of the Panchayats.

Finance Commission: The state finance commission reviews the financial position of the panchayats and provides recommendations for the necessary steps to be taken to supplement resources to the panchayat.

Audit of Accounts: State legislatures can make provisions regarding the maintenance and auditing of panchayat's accounts.

Exempted states and areas: The Act does not apply to the states of Nagaland, Meghalaya and Mizoram and certain other areas. These areas include,

- The scheduled areas and the tribal areas in the states
- The hill area of Manipur for which a district council exists
- Darjeeling district of West Bengal for which Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council exists.
- However, Parliament can extend this part to these areas subject to the exception and modification it specifies.
- The Parliament enacted the "Provisions of the Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas Act", 1996, under this provision, also known as the PESA Act or the Extension Act.

Bar to interference by courts:

- The act prohibits courts from interfering in panchayat elections.
- It declares that the constitutionality of any law relating to the delimitation of constituencies or the allocation of seats to such constituencies cannot be challenged in any court.

Eleventh Schedule (Subjects Devolved to Panchayats)

Agriculture, including agricultural extension.

Land improvement, implementation of land reforms, land consolidation and soil conservation.

Minor irrigation, water management and watershed development.

Animal husbandry, dairying and poultry.

Fisheries.

Social forestry and farm forestry.

Minor forest produces.

Small scale industries, including food processing industries.

Khadi, village and cottage industries.

Rural housing.

Drinking water.

Fuel and fodder.

Roads, culverts, bridges, ferries, waterways and other means of communication.

Rural electrification, including distribution of electricity.

Non-conventional energy sources.

Poverty alleviation programme.

Education, including primary and secondary schools.

Technical training and vocational education.

Adult and non-formal education.

Libraries.

Cultural activities

Markets and fairs.

Health and sanitation, including hospitals, primary health centres and dispensaries.

Family welfare.

Women and child development.

Social welfare, including welfare of disabled people and mentally retarded.

Welfare of the weaker sections, and, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.

Public distribution system.

Maintenance of community assets.

CONSTITUTION, POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

MAJOR ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH THE PRIs

- **Devolution of 3Fs:** funds, functions, and functionaries are the major challenge.
- **Functions – Overlap of functioning of Panchayats and Municipalities** with state government with respect to implementing various developmental schemes. Only minor civic functions are exclusively assigned to the local government.
- **Funds –**
 - Local governments can either raise their own revenue through **local taxes or receive intergovernmental transfers**. The 73rd Amendment recognized both forms of public finance but did not mandate either.
 - **Impact of GST:** Introduction of the GST has taken away critical sources of tax revenue such as octroi, local body tax, entry tax and advertisement tax for urban local governments.
 - **Inability to borrow from market sources:** Most municipal bodies require the state governments' permission to borrow from market sources. Growth in market financial instruments such as Municipal bonds has largely been inadequate.
- **Functionaries: Lack of staff:**
 - In most States, Panchayats do not have the power to recruit their staff and determine their salaries, allowances and other conditions of service.
 - Under various State Panchayati Raj Acts, the respective State Government or their nominated functionaries command considerable power about review and revision of actions taken by PRIs.
- **Sarpanch Pati (Ineffective Women's Participation in Decision-making):** Men relatives (mostly husbands) of elected women run office in place of them.
- **Hidden Urbanization due to unplanned urbanization** in India and many settlements becoming part of urban agglomerations beyond the municipal boundaries.
- **Improper Maintenance of Accounts:** CAG reports on local governments point out several lacunae in the preparation of municipal accounts related to lack of budget preparation etc.

2nd ARC recommendation for rural governance.

- **Size:** Gram Panchayats should be of an appropriate size.
- **Recruit staff:** Panchayats should have power to recruit personnel and to regulate their service conditions.
- **Budget:** The provisions in some State Acts regarding approval of the budget of a Panchayat by the higher tier or any other State authority should be abolished.
- **Resolution:** State Governments should not have the power to suspend or rescind any resolution passed by the PRIs or act against the elected representatives.
- **Activity mapping:** States must undertake comprehensive activity mapping about all the matters mentioned in the Eleventh Schedule.
- **Revenue base of local governments:** A comprehensive exercise needs to be taken up regarding broadening and deepening of the revenue base of local governments.

NAGALAND REPEALS LAW RELATED TO LOCAL BODIES

Recently Nagaland government repealed the Nagaland Municipal Act of 2001. This led to the cancellation of the State Election Commission's March 9 notification for holding elections to Nagaland's 39 urban local bodies (ULBs) with 33% of the seats reserved for women. The apex court has, however, stayed the notification cancelling the civic body polls.

WHY IS THERE OPPOSITION TO ULB POLLS?

- Nagaland is arguably the only State where ULB seats are not reserved for women as mandated by clause IV of the 74th Amendment to the Constitution of India.
- Most of the traditional tribal and urban organisations oppose the 33% reservation of seats for women as they argue that such reservation would violate the special provisions granted by Article 371A of the Constitution to Nagaland.
- The Hohos (apex tribal bodies) point out that women have traditionally not been part of decision-making bodies.

ARTICLE 371A

- The Article states that no Act of Parliament

would apply to the religious or social practices of the Nagas, Naga customary law and procedure, administration of civil and criminal justice involving decisions according to Naga customary law, and ownership and transfer of land and its resources.

HAVE SUCH POLLS EVER BEEN HELD IN NAGALAND?

- The first and only civic body election in Nagaland was held in **2004 without any reservation of seats for women.**
- The State government amended the 2001 Municipal Act in 2006 to include 33% reservation for women in line with the 74th Amendment.
- This triggered widespread opposition forcing the government to indefinitely postpone the ULB polls in 2009.

WHY DID THE GOVERNMENT DECIDE ON ULB POLLS THIS TIME?

- Under pressure from the Supreme Court, the Naga government laid the ground for holding ULB polls after consultations with various stakeholders, including churches, NGOs, and tribal bodies in March 2022.

In conclusion, Panchayati Raj is a significant milestone in India's political history, which aimed to strengthen grassroots-level democracy and decentralize power to the rural communities. The system has been successful in empowering local communities, providing them with a platform to voice their concerns, and encouraging their participation in decision-making processes. With the 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Indian Constitution, Panchayati Raj institutions have been given constitutional status and strengthened further. However, there are still some challenges that need to be addressed, such as the lack of financial and administrative autonomy, inadequate resources, and the dominance of certain social groups in decision-making. Addressing these issues is crucial to ensure that Panchayati Raj institutions serve their intended purpose of promoting local democracy, participation, and development. Overall, Panchayati Raj is a vital part of India's democratic fabric, and its success depends on the commitment and participation of all stakeholders, including local communities, elected representatives, and government authorities.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

#PARLIAMENT#LEGISLATURE

PRIMARY
SOURCE

THE HINDU

SECONDARY
SOURCE

PRS

Parliament has the primary responsibility of making laws and holding the government responsible for its actions. As representatives of citizens, Parliament passes laws, oversees the working of the government and the efficient allocation of public funds. Parliamentary Committees function as a mechanism that helps in improving the effectiveness of Parliament.

Over the years, **responsibilities of the government have increased significantly.** Government expenditure and legislation have become technical and complex in nature. While a significant amount of Parliament's work gets done on the floor of the House, it is difficult for Parliament to scrutinise all government activities in the House in a limited time.

Thus, Parliamentary Committees were constituted to examine proposed legislation, government policies and expenditure in detail. They also examine petitions from the public, check whether rules framed by the government are in consonance with Acts of Parliament and help manage the administration of Parliament. Deliberations in Committees present several advantages.

Committees can get inputs from experts and stakeholders on various matters. Their ability to devote more time on each item allows them to examine matters in greater detail. They also help parties reach consensus on various issues.

However, there are several areas where Committees need strengthening. For example, all Bills are not referred to Committees. They are thinly staffed and do not have full-time technical expert support. Some Committees may not seek evidence from experts on important Bills. Further, attendance of MPs in Committee meetings is about 50%, which is lower than the 84% attendance seen during the Parliament sittings.

WHY ARE PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES NEEDED?

Parliamentary committees are an integral part of the legislative process in India, and they serve several important functions. Here are some key reasons why parliamentary committees are needed in India:

- **Detailed examination of bills:** and other matters referred to them by the Parliament. This allows for a thorough review of legislation, including its various aspects such as legal, technical, financial, and policy implications. The committees can also seek inputs from experts and stakeholders, which helps in making informed decisions about the proposed legislation.
- **Oversight of executive actions:** They review the policies, programs, and actions of government departments and agencies to ensure that they are being implemented effectively and efficiently, and to hold the government accountable for its actions. This helps in ensuring transparency and accountability in the functioning of the government.
- **Examination of budgetary allocations:** They examine the estimates of expenditure, proposals for new spending, and the outcomes of past spending to ensure that public funds are being utilized efficiently and effectively. This helps in ensuring that taxpayer money is being spent wisely and in the best interests of the public.
- **Public participation:** They often invite inputs from the public, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders, and conduct public hearings on important issues. This allows for a diverse range of perspectives to be considered in the decision-making process and promotes participatory democracy.
- **Expertise and specialization:** This allows for in-depth examination of complex issues, as the committees can draw on the knowledge and experience of their members. It also helps in bridging the gap between legislation and implementation, as the committees can provide valuable insights and recommendations for effective implementation of laws.
- **Efficient and specialized functioning:** Parliamentary committees are smaller and more focused than the full Parliament, which allows for more efficient and specialized functioning. Committees can delve into issues in detail, conduct hearings, and interact with stakeholders, which may not be possible in the larger forum of Parliament. This leads to a more comprehensive and informed decision-making process.

Overall, parliamentary committees play a crucial role in the Indian legislative process by providing a platform for detailed examination, oversight, public participation, and specialized expertise. They contribute to the effective functioning of democracy by ensuring that legislation is thoroughly reviewed, government actions are scrutinized, and public interests are represented.

TYPES OF COMMITTEES

There are various types of **Parliamentary Committees** in India which look at matters such as government expenditure, legislation, government policies and schemes, and administration of Parliament.

They can be categorised into Departmentally Related Standing Committees, financial committees, administrative committees, accountability committees, and ad hoc committees.

Departmentally Related Standing Committees (DRSCs)

- DRSCs were constituted in 1993 to assist Parliament in scrutinising funds allocated to Ministries. They also examine Bills referred to them by Parliament and analyse other relevant policy issues.
- There are 24 DRSCs that oversee the working of a Ministry or group of Ministries.
- They are composed of 31 members: 21 from Lok Sabha and 10 from Rajya Sabha. These DRSCs are constituted for a period of one year. Financial Committees Parliament regulates government expenditure to ensure that public finances are used efficiently.
- Such financial oversight is a complex and technical task. Financial committees facilitate this task for Parliament.
- They are the:
 - Committee on Public Accounts, Committee on Public Undertakings, and Estimates Committee.
 - The Committee on Public Undertakings and Public Accounts consist of 22 members: 15 from Lok Sabha and seven members from Rajya Sabha.
 - The Estimates Committee is composed entirely of Lok Sabha MPs. It has 30 members who are elected by the House. Members are elected for a period of one year.

CONSTITUTION, POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

FINANCIAL COMMITTEES

Name of the Committee	No. of Members	Tenure	Members Nominated or Elected
Estimates Committee	30	1 year	Elected by the Lok Sabha
Public Accounts Committee	22(15LS+7RS)	1 year	Elected by the two House(s)
Committee on Public Undertakings	22(15LS+7RS)	1 year	Elected by the two House(s)

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEES

Both Houses of Parliament also require significant administrative support for their day-to-day functioning. The Houses have set up different Committees, such as the Business Advisory Committee which helps decide the daily agenda of Parliament. Table 1 provides a list of administrative Committees in Parliament.

Committees	Functions
Business Advisory Committee	Recommends time to be allocated for the discussion of Bills and other business
Committee on Private Members' Bills and Resolutions	Examines all Private Members' Bills after their introduction.
Committee on Government Assurances	Scrutinises the assurances, promises, and undertakings given by Ministers.
Rules Committee	Considers matters of procedure and conduct of business in the House
Committee of Privileges	Examines questions involving breach of rights, privileges, and immunities enjoyed by MPs
Committee on Ethics	Oversees the moral and ethical conduct of MPs
Committee on Absence of Members from the	Examines leave applications of MPs.

Sittings of the House	
Joint Committee on Offices of Profit	Examines the composition of other committees and recommends what offices may disqualify a person from becoming an MP.
Joint Committee on Salaries and Allowances of MPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examines salaries and allowances of MPs.
Committee on the Welfare of SCs and STs	Examines measures taken by the government to improve the status of Scheduled Castes and Tribes
Committee on Empowerment of Women	Recommends measures to improve the status and conditions women.
Library Committee	Advises on the improvement of Parliamentary library.
House Committee	Advises on matters related to residential accommodation of MPs.
General Purposes Committee	Advises on matters concerning the affairs of the House referred to it by the Chairperson.

Accountability Committees: Apart from financial Committees and DRSCs, three other Committees ensure government accountability towards Parliament and citizens. These are the Committee on Government Assurances, the Committee on Subordinate Legislation, and the Committee on Petitions.

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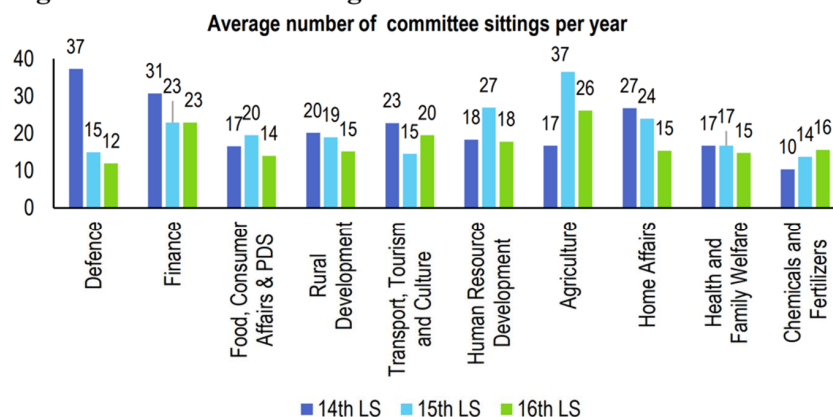
AD HOC COMMITTEES

- Ad Hoc Committees are appointed by either House or the presiding officers from time-to-time for a specific purpose. They cease to exist when they finish the task assigned to them and submit a report. Some Ad Hoc Committees include: the Railway Convention Committee, and Select Committees formed to examine specific Bills.

- DRSCs meet to examine the expenditure of all Ministries, Bills referred to them, and policies or issues selected by them. These meetings are conducted while Parliament is in session or during inter-session periods. While it is difficult to analyse the quality of deliberations in these sittings, the number of sittings held by various DRSCs can be used as an indicator to measure the quantity of work done by them.

HOW IS THE FUNCTIONING OF THE COMMITTEES ?

Figure 1: Number of sittings has declined for most Committees



Sources: Study Material on Parliamentary Practices and Procedures, Lok Sabha Secretariat; PRS.

Note that the Committees on Defence, Finance, and Home Affairs have seen a decrease in average number of sittings from the 14th to the 16th Lok Sabha, whereas the Committee on Chemicals and Fertilizers has seen an increase.

EXAMINING DEMANDS FOR GRANTS

- After the Budget is presented, the DRSCs examine the Demands for Grants of all Ministries under its purview. Demands for Grants refer to the detailed estimates of expenditure of each Ministry. DRSCs study allocations

to schemes and programmes, spending by the Ministry, and the policy priorities of the Ministry.

- After this examination, the Committee compiles its recommendations in the form of a Report which is laid in both Houses of Parliament. These recommendations help MPs understand the implications of financial allocations. They also allow for a more informed debate and analysis of Demands for Grants in Lok Sabha.

Table: Days between report tabled date and voting on demands

Committee	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Defence	-146	12	-139	3	1	-152	2	0	7	1
Finance	-132	8	-138	9	8	-146	5	5	3	5
Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution	-150	4	-141	0	0	-152	2	0	0	5

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Rural Development	-147	6	-157	1	0	-149	9	1	0	8
Transport, Tourism & Culture	NA	7	NA	-4	-3	NA	1	4	3	8
Human Resource Development	NA	7	NA	0	5	NA	4	6	-1	5
Agriculture	-154	5	-165	8	7	-148	5	1	5	8
Home Affairs	NA	0	NA	2	5	NA	5	6	2	1
Health & Family Welfare	NA	-1	NA	1	4	NA	5	6	0	6
Chemicals & Fertilizers	-145	1	-140	1	0	-140	3	5	0	1

Sources: Statistical Handbook 2019, Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs; Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha websites; PRS.

Negative numbers suggest that the report was presented after the Demand for Grants were voted upon. In 2009 and 2014, all reports on the Demands were presented a few months after they were voted in the House. Note that these were election years, and in these years the budget presented by the new government was passed in the month of July.

The new DRSCs were not formed by then. The primary objective of reports on Demands for Grants is to help MPs examine government expenditure better. **Therefore, it is necessary for MPs to have sufficient time to study these reports before the discussion in the House.** The data suggests that in many cases MPs do not have sufficient time to study these reports.

EXAMINING BILLS

- DRSCs were given the responsibility of scrutinising Bills because Parliament does not have the time and expertise to analyse each Bill in detail, on the floor of the House. However, the trend shows that fewer Bills are being referred to Committees as compared to previous Lok Sabha.

EXAMINATION OF ISSUES

- Every year, DRSCs select subjects for detailed examination. These subjects could be on existing or potential issues that could come up in the sectors that the DRSC looks at, or implementation of programmes by the relevant Ministry. For example, some of the subjects identified for examination by DRSCs constituted for 2019-20 include: state of the Indian economy, implementation of the Ayushman Bharat

Yojana, and digital payment and online security measures for data protection.

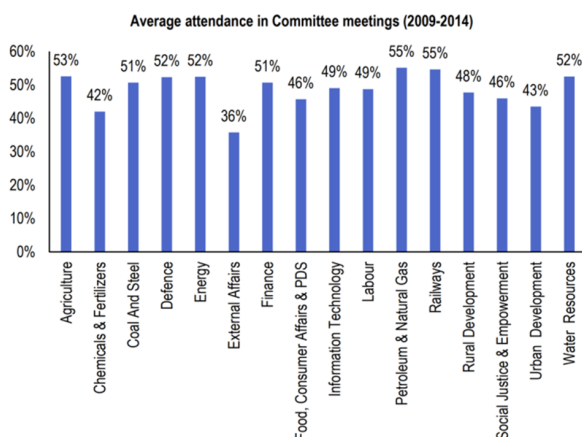
EXPERT WITNESSES AND RESEARCH SUPPORT

- To aid in their study, members of DRSCs can consult with expert witnesses, stakeholders, and government officials. Engaging with experts and stakeholders enables Committee members to better understand the details of complicated issues, and the potential impact of a policy or legislation.
- Note that Committees invite witnesses to testify before them at their own discretion.**
- For instance, the DRSC that examined the Right to Education Bill, 2008, which guarantees free education to all children ages six to 14, did not invite any expert witnesses.
- Apart from consulting experts, Committees can also invite comments from the wider public.**
- For example, the Committee on Labour and Employment published a press release inviting public comments on the Occupational, Safety, Health and Working Conditions Bill, 2019. Public comments help Committees consider the wider implications of a Bill or policy.
- However, it is up to the discretion of the Committee whether or not they chose to invite public comments.
- Currently, the technical support available to Parliamentary Committees is limited to a secretariat that helps with matters such as scheduling meetings and note taking.**

- The National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (2002) had highlighted the lack of research support and specialist advisors with the DRSCs.⁴ It recommended that funds should be secured to assist these Committees in conducting inquiries, holding public hearings, and collecting data. Note that Committees in other countries such as the UK, USA, and Canada can retain specialist advisors (such as lawyers, economists, and statisticians) to assist in specific inquiries.

ATTENDANCE OF MEMBERS

Parliamentary Committees hold several meetings to conduct in-depth analysis of various issues through extensive deliberations among Members. Success of the Committee system depends on the participation of Members in these meetings. Though Committee meetings are conducted in a closed-door environment, Lok Sabha publishes the attendance of Members in these meetings. Sixteen of the 24 DRSCs are administered by Lok Sabha and other eight by Rajya Sabha. Figure 7 shows the attendance of members during 2009-14 for the 16 DRSCs serviced by Lok Sabha. On average, 49% members were present for meetings of these Committees between this period.



WAY FORWARD

- **Diverse and Competent Membership:** which brings a wide range of expertise and perspectives. This ensures that the committee can effectively address the issues at hand and make informed decisions.
- **Transparent and Inclusive Processes:** including clear rules of procedure, open meetings, and opportunities for public input. This promotes accountability, fairness, and wider stakeholder engagement.
- **Adequate Resources and Support:** including budgetary allocations, administrative assistance, and access to relevant information and data. This enables committees to function effectively and efficiently.
- **Timely Completion of Work:** Committees should have a defined timeline for completing their work and submitting their recommendations or reports. This prevents undue delays and ensures that the committee's work is timely and relevant.
- **Implementation of Recommendations:** should be seriously considered and implemented by the relevant authorities. This helps ensure that the committee's efforts result in tangible outcomes and real impact.
- **Regular Monitoring and Evaluation:** Committees' performance should be regularly monitored and evaluated to assess their effectiveness and identify areas for improvement. This helps in continuously enhancing the functioning of committees and making necessary adjustments.
- **Capacity Building and Training:** to enhance their skills, knowledge, and understanding of the committee's mandate and processes. This helps in improving their performance and overall effectiveness.
- **Review and Revision of Committee Structures:** Periodic review and revision of committee structures, mandates, and processes can help identify gaps and areas for improvement. This may involve restructuring or redefining committees to align with changing needs and priorities.
- **Utilization of Technology:** Committees can leverage technology for better communication, coordination, and documentation. This may include the use of online platforms for meetings, document sharing, and data analysis, which can streamline committee processes and enhance efficiency.

By implementing these measures, committees in India can be improved to function more effectively and contribute positively to decision-making and policy formulation processes.

EXECUTIVE CONTROL OVER LEGISLATION IN STATES

#FEDERALISM

PRIMARY
SOURCE

THE HINDU

SECONDARY
SOURCE

The Indian
EXPRESS

Supreme Court has given a timely reminder to Governors that the Constitution expects that a decision to return a Bill to the State Assembly for reconsideration should be made "as soon as possible." It has drawn attention to the phrase found in the first proviso to Article 200, seeking to convey a sense of immediacy in the matter of returning a Bill. "The expression 'as soon as possible' contains significant constitutional content and must be borne in mind by constitutional authorities," the Court observed. This effectively means it would be constitutionally impermissible for Governors to hold on to Bills indefinitely without communicating their decision to the House.

Power and function of the Governor pertaining to giving assent to a bill falls under category of legislative powers.

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS

Article 163 - Another constitutional provision of importance is Article 163 which states that there shall be a Council of Ministers with the Chief Minister at the head to aid and advise the Governor in the exercise of his functions, except in so far as he is by or under this Constitution required to exercise his functions or any of them in his discretion. However, the discretionary powers of the Governors have not been explicitly defined in the constitution and can only be ascertained by going through certain constitutional provisions.

Article 200 - When a Bill has been passed by the Legislative Assembly of a State or, in the case of a State having a Legislative Council, has been passed by both Houses of the Legislature of the State, it shall be presented to the Governor and the Governor shall have following options

- He may give his assents to the Bill; thus, the bill becomes an Act.
- He may withhold assent, the bill thus ends and does not become an Act.
- He may return the bill for the reconsideration of House or houses. If the bill is passed again with or without amendments and presented to Governor for

his assent, the governor must give his assent to the bill.

- He may reserve the Bill for the consideration of the President.

Article 201 - When a Bill is reserved by a Governor for the consideration of the President, the President shall have following options

- He may give his Assent.
- He may withhold his Assent.
- He may direct the Governor to return the bill to the House or.

The Governor's power to withhold assent or return a Bill, with a message, for reconsideration is seen as discretionary.

CONCERNS

There are three clear problems associated with Article 200, which deals with assent to Bills:

- The absence of a time limit for acting on Bills
- The scope for reserving a Bill for the President's consideration against the express advice of the Cabinet
- The claim that the Governor can kill any Bill by declining assent.

The mischief lies in Article 163, which hedges the primary rule that the Governors function on the 'aid and advice' of the Cabinet, with a clause that prohibits any inquiry into whether a particular matter fell within their discretion or not. These provisions give abundant scope for conflict between the government and Raj Bhavan.

WAY AHEAD

IMPORTANT SUPREME COURT JUDGEMENTS

Shamsher Singh v. State of Punjab (1974) - Supreme Court said: "The Governor has no right to refuse to act on the advice of the Council of Ministries. Such a position is antithetical to the concept of 'responsible government'."

B.P. Singhal v. Union of India (2010) Five Judge Bench of Supreme on removal of governors mentioned about the dual role of governor: **1.** Agent of the Centre & **2.** Head of the state. SC also held that there may be instances of conflict between Centre and states where the *governor must act neutrally*.

SARKARIA COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION W.R.T ASSENT TO THE BILLS

- Normally, in the discharge of the functions under Article 200, the **Governor must abide by the advice of his Council of Ministers.**
- In dealing with a State Bill presented to him under Article 200, **the Governor should not act contrary to the advice of his Council of Ministers merely because, personally, he does not like the policy embodied in the Bill.**
- **Needless reservation of Bills for President's consideration should be avoided.**
- Normally, when a Bill passed by the State Legislature is presented to the Governor with the advice of the Council of Ministers that it be reserved for the consideration of the President, then the **Governor should do so forthwith.** If, in exceptional circumstances, the Governor thinks it necessary to act and adopt, in the exercise of his discretion, any other course open to him under Article 200, **he should do so within a period not exceeding one month from the date on which the Bill is presented to him.**
- **State Governments often consult the Government of India at the drafting stage of a Bill. This is a healthy practice and should continue.**
- As a matter of salutary convention, a **Bill reserved for consideration of the President should be disposed of by the President within a period of 4 months** from the date on which it is received by the Union Government.
- As a matter of convention, **the President should not withhold assent only on the consideration of policy differences on matters relating, in pith and substance, to the State List.**
- **President's assent should not ordinarily be withheld on the ground that the Union is contemplating a comprehensive law in future on the same subject.** To the extent feasible, the reasons for withholding assent should be communicated to the State Government.

For further readings regarding the details of Article 200 and Article 201 refer to the following links

Need for Politically Neutral Governor – Sarkaria Commission's Recommendation

- **Sarkaria Commission on Centre-State Relations, the National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution and Punchhi Commission** has reiterated the need for politically neutral governor.
- **Neutrality of governor is best displayed when he uses his discretionary powers as per the constitution.** However, the use of discretionary power by the Governor also leaves certain space for its misutilisation.
- **Sarkaria Commission has recommended the following criteria which must be considered while appointing Governors of state:**
 - He should be eminent in some walk of life.
 - He should be a person from outside the State.
 - He should be a detached figure and not too intimately connected with the local politics of the State; and
 - He should be a person who has not taken too great a part in politics generally and particularly in the recent past.
 - In selecting a Governor in accordance with the above criteria, persons belonging to the minority groups should continue to be given a chance.

CONCLUSION

Therefore, the Governors need to follow the recommendations made by the Sarkaria Commission regarding assent to Bills, such as abiding by the advice of the Council of Ministers, avoiding unnecessary reservations of Bills for the President's consideration, and disposing of the Bill reserved for the President within four months. Additionally, as a salutary convention, the President should not withhold assent based on policy differences relating to the State List, and the reasons for withholding assent should be communicated to the State Government.

It is also essential to have politically neutral Governors to avoid conflicts between the government and Raj Bhavan. Therefore, the Governors' discretionary powers should be explicitly defined in the Constitution to prevent any ambiguity or conflict. The Governors should follow the

advice of the Council of Ministers to maintain the concept of "responsible government."

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCHEDULED CASTES (NCSC)

#CONSTITUTIONAL BODIES

PRIMARY
SOURCE *The Indian
EXPRESS*

National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) issued a notice to Punjab government, seeking an action taken report on the alleged sexual misconduct by Lal Chand Katarachak, a Minister in the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government.

ABOUT NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCHEDULED CASTES (NCSC)

National Commission for Scheduled Castes is an Indian constitutional body established with a view to provide safeguards against the exploitation of Scheduled Castes and Anglo-Indian communities to promote and protect their social, educational, economic and cultural interests, special provisions were made in the Constitution. Article 338 of the Indian constitution deals with National Commission for Scheduled Castes.

Institutions are often distinguished by whether they perform a protective or a promotional role. The NCSC is clearly more of a protective institution, though it does monitor the progress of promotional policy initiatives emanating from other state agencies. While its creation was mandated by the Constitution, neither the responsibility of promoting the welfare of the scheduled castes nor that of protecting them against injustices has been vested exclusively in this institution. Indeed, though it enjoys constitutional status, the recommendations of the Commission are advisory rather than mandatory.

MAINS

GENERAL STUDIES- II: Governance, Constitution, Polity, Social Justice and International relations.

- **2020:** Which steps are required for constitutionalizing of a commission? Do you think imparting constitutionality to the National Commission for Women would ensure greater gender justice and empowerment in India? Give

reasons.

- **2018:** Whether National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) can enforce the implementation of constitutional reservation for the Scheduled Castes in the religious minority institutions? Examine.

The National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) is an Indian constitutional body established under Article 338 of the Constitution of India. It was set up in 2004 to investigate and monitor all matters relating to the constitutional safeguards provided for the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and to protect their rights.

FUNCTIONS OF THE NCSC ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- To investigate and monitor all matters relating to the safeguards provided for Scheduled Castes under the Constitution or under any other law for the time being in force.
- To inquire into specific complaints with respect to the deprivation of rights and safeguards of the Scheduled Castes.
- To participate and advise in the planning process of socio-economic development of the Scheduled Castes.
- To evaluate the progress of the development of the Scheduled Castes under the Union and any State.
- To make recommendations for the effective implementation of safeguards for the Scheduled Castes.

FOUR AREAS OF FUNCTIONING

Of the four core areas of the Commission's functioning – viz., service safeguards, education, economic development and atrocities – the Services Safeguards Wing is the most active. These complaints relate mostly to promotions, discrimination and harassment on various counts, institution of disciplinary proceedings on flimsy grounds, the conduct of departmental enquires in an unfair manner, adverse entry in the annual confidential reports, transfers to far off places or insignificant positions, delay in payment of retirement benefits, delay in the completion of departmental inquires, and so forth. It has also succeeded in institutionalizing the system of liaison officers and special SC and ST cells in all central ministries and public sector enterprises for the speedy and effective resolution of the grievances of employees of these communities.

The NCSC also has the power of a civil court and can summon witnesses, record evidence, and issue orders. It submits annual reports to the President and the Parliament on its performance and recommendations. The NCSC plays an important role in protecting the rights and interests of the Scheduled Castes, which are one of the most vulnerable and marginalized sections of the Indian society. It ensures that the constitutional safeguards provided for them are effectively implemented and any violations are addressed promptly.

EVALUATION OF THE PERFORMANCE OF THE COMMISSION

- There are a variety of conflicts that characterise the functioning of the Commission. **Firstly, there has historically prevailed a conflict between the Commission and its nodal ministry**, the Ministry of Social Welfare (now the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment), which has often taken the form of conflict between the Minister and the Chairman of the NCSCST. **Conflict between the Chairperson and members has also tended** to characterise the Commission, because of the politicised nature of appointments to it.
- By choosing to **interpret its constitutional mandate narrowly**, the Commission has laid itself open to the charge of **elite bias**. The fact that it is most effective in service-related safeguards speak for itself.
- The Commission's competence in settling service-related grievances may be contrasted with **its inability to reduce the incidence of atrocities and violence against Dalits**, or to effectively fight the persistent scourge of untouchability.
- **A particular Commission seems to be only as good as its members**, and especially its chairperson, are. The lack of institutionalisation in the procedures of appointment to the Commission has meant that competent and committed members are less likely to be appointed, especially in a political and policy environment where membership of the Commission becomes a convenient sinecure for unemployable politicians or a temporary shelf for bureaucrats belonging to these groups.
- **The most significant handicap of the Commission is the fact that its decisions are not binding, but recommendatory.** Though this is not explicitly stated

in the Constitution (as amended), Article 338, with all its sub-clauses, is deeply ambiguous on this issue. It gives the Commission quasi-judicial powers of investigation but does not mention the form in which the Commission's judgement of a particular issue would be delivered and implemented.

- The quality of reports in terms of the data they contain, and the way the data is organized, has also been declining over the years.
- The Commission is supposed to prepare an Annual Report for presentation to Parliament. **Reports are often tabled two or more years after they have been** submitted to the President.
- Even when Reports are tabled in Parliament, they are frequently not discussed. There is no evidence in the Lok Sabha debates of a discussion on any of the first four reports. Of the four Special Reports, only one has an all-India scope and this is about service safeguards.

WAY FORWARD

It is often argued that the Commission is a paper tiger which needs to be armed with greater powers.

This argument is premised on an inadequate appreciation of the location of the Commission in the existing constitutional setup. To give the Commission additional powers, in the matter of criminal investigation for instance, would require it to follow prevailing rules and procedures pertaining to evidence and prosecution. These may in fact retard the effectiveness of the Commission by rendering it vulnerable to litigation in the form of appeals to higher judicial bodies, and thereby nullifying its

operational effectiveness and diluting its moral stature.

- An amendment is required either in Article 338 itself, or in the rules by which the President may fix a period for the discussion of the Report in Parliament.
- It would be appropriate for the Commission to undertake qualitative studies, commission social anthropologists and other social scientists to undertake such studies, and to institutionalize mechanisms by which contemporary changes and transitions in the social structure can be mirrored, recorded and acted upon.
- The process of appointment to the Commission should be made more autonomous of the government of the day.

It would be desirable for the Commission to engage in an internal evaluation of its priorities on an ongoing basis, and to redefine them in a substantively more egalitarian way to accomplish its mandate in the spirit in which it was intended.

FRATERNITY

#CONSTITUTIONAL VALUES

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

The Constitution of India was drafted by the Constituent Assembly and adopted on November 25, 1949. B.R. Ambedkar, who presided over the Drafting Committee, pointed out the need for recognition of the principle of fraternity in the Preamble. Fraternity, linked to social solidarity and public empathy, was added to the principles of liberty, equality, and justice in the Preamble. However, the duties arising from fraternity were not sufficiently elaborated upon, except for the duty of every citizen to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood among all people of India. There is a need to excavate the moral values embedded in the Constitution and to identify the coherent or not-so-coherent worldviews contained within it. In a lecture in December 1952, B.R. Ambedkar listed certain general characteristics and specifics necessary for the successful working of democracy, including a functioning moral order in society and a public conscience.

The term fraternity is provided in the Preamble of the Indian constitution. **In the words of Dr Ambedkar**, it means a sense of common brotherhood of all Indians — if Indians are one people. It is the principle that gives unity and solidarity to social life. The idea of fraternity is based on the view that people have responsibilities to each other. It was defined after the French Revolution in the following terms: 'Do not do to others what you would not want them to do to you; do constantly to others the good which you would wish to receive from them. It is generally seen as an emotion rather than a principle because it denotes a feeling of attachment to nationals.

India is a land of Diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, religion, caste and culture. To ensure unity and integrity of the nation we need to follow the concept of fraternity. It is the Fundamental duty of every citizen of India 'to promote harmony and the spirit of commonality among all the people of India, transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities. In the words of

Ambedkar, these principles of liberty equality and fraternity are not to be treated as separate items in a trinity. They form a union of trinity in the sense that to divorce one from the other is to defeat the very purpose of democracy. Fraternity assures the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation.

CHALLENGES BEFORE FRATERNITY

- **Social inequalities:** There are widespread inequalities in our society based on caste, gender, religion race and culture etc.
- **Political inequalities:** Political inequalities are visible in the fact that only 10.5% of MPs are female in our parliament.
- **Economic inequalities:** top 10% of the Indian population holds 77% of the total national wealth and 73% of the wealth generated in 2017 went to the richest 1% while 670 million Indians who comprise the poorest half of the population saw only a 1% increase in their wealth.
- **Regional inequalities:** it can be seen in the case of South Indian states vis a vis North Indian states specially BIMARU states (Bihar, MP, Rajasthan, UP)
- **Communalism:** Communalism is growing in India it can be seen in the communalisation of religious festivals like recent Ramanavami processions, Cow vigilantism, Love Jihad etc.

Every citizen should follow their constitutional duty of harmony. State agencies should follow the principle of secularism while implementing the law. Religious and political leaders should avoid divisive politics. Civil society can play a crucial role in resistance against state-sponsored discrimination. Institutions' autonomy should be promoted so that they can perform their duty effectively.

HIGHER JUDICIARY APPOINTMENT IN INDIA

#JUDICIARY

PRIMARY SOURCE The Indian EXPRESS

"The expectation from the judiciary, to safeguard the rights of the citizens of this country, can only be ensured, by

keeping it absolutely insulated and independent, from the other organs of governance".

Centre seems to be forcing Collegium to recall its recommendations by inaction. In recalling its recommendation to appoint Justice S. Muralidhar as Chief Justice of the Madras High Court, the Supreme Court collegium has let the Union government, which did not act on the decision for eight months, have its way.

SELECTION OF CHIEF JUSTICE AND SUPREME COURT JUSTICES

The selection is governed by **Article 124** of the Indian Constitution. To appoint justices, the collegium procedure is utilized. Every Supreme Court Judge should be chosen by order under the President's signature, after taking opinion with 'Supreme Court and High Court Judges' in states deemed appropriate for the objective by the President.

Qualifications

The individual must be an Indian citizen and have served as a Judge of a High Court or 2 or additional such Courts in succession for at least five years, or even as a lawyer of a High Court or 2 or additional such Courts in succession for at least 10 years or be a significant jurist in the President's perception.

CONTROVERSY AND APPOINTMENT OF JUDGES

Given the fact that it is not stated explicitly, **the seniority principle has always been respected** in the selection of Judges. The President appointed justices after consulting with the Chief Justice and other judges. But, the nomination of **"Justice A.N. Ray" as Chief Justice of India in April 1973** created a huge political fight since he was selected, bypassing senior judges.

The principles of law relating with nomination and transfer of judges were reviewed in **"S.P. Gupta vs. Union of India", 1981** wherein the Supreme Court held that Chief Justice's opinion did not have supreme authority so Union Govt was not really obligated to act in accordance with the opinion of judiciary since the Executive was responsible. This was one of the first instances where the court ruled against itself.

This point of view was concerned with clarity; **the phrase "consultation" was not at all confusing**. It is also noteworthy that the court reached this conclusion only eight years after Kesavananda Bharati. The judiciary acted with restraint. It should be emphasized that the verdict was issued in December 1981, after Indira Gandhi

reclaimed power with an overwhelming majority following two short-lived and weak regimes.

EMERGENCE OF COLLEGIUM SYSTEM IN APPOINTMENT OF JUDGES

The Collegium System is one where the CJI and a forum of four senior-most judges of the Supreme Court recommend appointment and transfer of judges of higher judiciary. The collegium system evolved through three different judgments which are collectively known as the **Three Judges Cases**.

- **First Judges Case – S.P. Gupta vs Union of India (1982) – (In favour of Executive)**

- **SC held** – opinions of Chief Justice of India (CJI) and Chief Justice of respective High Courts were merely **"consultative"** and the power of appointment resides solely and exclusively with the Central Government.
- **Central government "could" override the opinions given by the Judges**. Thus, the opinion of Chief Justice of India in matters of appointment was not given primacy in matters of judicial appointments under Article 217(1).

- **Second Judges case – S.C advocates on record association vs Union of India (1993) – (Primacy of Judiciary) – (Decided by nine judge constitution bench)**

- The Court considered the question of "Primacy of opinion of CJI in regard to appointment of Supreme Court Judges."
- Referring to 'Consultative Process' as envisaged in Article 124(2), SC emphasized that **Government does NOT enjoy primacy or absolute discretion** in matters of appointment of Supreme Court judges.
- Court said that provision for consultation with Chief Justice was introduced as CJI is best equipped to know and assess the worth and suitability of a candidate and it was also necessary to eliminate political influence.
- SC held that initiation of the proposal for appointment of a Supreme Court Judge must be by the Chief Justice.

- **Third Judges case – RE: Presidential reference (Emergence of collegium system)**

- Supreme Court on a reference made by the

President under Article 143 has laid down the following proposition with respect to appointment of Supreme Court judges:

- While making recommendation, **CJI shall consult four seniormost Judges** of Supreme Court. This led to the emergence of present Collegium System.
- The opinion of all members of collegium regarding their recommendation shall be in writing.
- The views of the senior-most Supreme Court Judge who hails from the High Court from where the person recommended comes must be obtained in writing for Collegium's consideration.
- If majority of the Collegium is against the appointment of a particular person, that person shall not be appointed.
- Even if two of the judges have reservation against appointment of a particular Judge, CJI would not press for such appointment.
- A High Court Judge of outstanding merit can be appointed as Supreme Court Judge regardless of his standing in the seniority list.
- Supreme Court opined that in case of the appointment of **high court judges**, the chief justice of India should **consult a collegium of two senior-most judges** of the Supreme Court.
- **Supreme Court Advocates-on-record Association vs. Union of India**
 - This landmark judgment has come to be known as the 'Fourth Judges Case.'
 - It stemmed from a group of petitions challenging the validity of the Constitution (Ninety-Ninth Amendment) Act, 2014 (99th Amendment) along with the National Judicial Appointments Commission Act, 2014 (NJAC Act). These Acts sought to replace the prevailing collegium system used for making appointments to the higher judiciary with the National Judicial Appointments Committee (NJAC).
 - The NJAC proposed a greater role for the executive in making judicial appointments. This was allegedly to introduce transparency and accountability in the selection process. **However,**

the Court found the NJAC to be in violation of the principles of separation of power and independence of judiciary that formed part of the basic structure of the Constitution, and a five Judge Constitution Bench struck down the 99th Amendment and consequently the NJAC Act by a majority of 4:1, declaring the Acts unconstitutional.

MERITS OF COLLEGIUM SYSTEM

- Ensures Independence of Judiciary as mandated in Article 50 – from interference of the Executive.
- Views of SC & HC Judges taken in writing.
- Prevalence Majority favours process appointment.
- Reservations of even two Judges of Collegium taken seriously and halts appointment process for doubtful candidates.
- Allows talented lawyers from the bar to be appointed as Judges of HC/SC.

DEMERITS OF COLLEGIUM SYSTEM

- **Lack of transparency and Accountability in the appointment process** – The decision of the Collegium is published on website of Supreme Court but does not reveal:
 - methodology or reasons provided for transfer or promotion of judges.
 - ground to select senior lawyers for appointment as Judges of SC or HC.
- **Lack of Consensus** among members of Collegium results in delay or even reversal of decisions at times.
- **Nepotism** – Accusations of favouritism and preferential treatment to members from judicial fraternity.
- **Nepotism** impacting Quality of Judgment – especially in High Courts.
- **Politicization of judiciary:** Lack of transparency in selection criteria especially for High Courts leads to politically motivated appointments.
- **Absence of Permanent Commission:** Law Commission's 121st Report proposed to set up a National Judicial Service Commission for appointment of Judges. Even NCRWC in its 2002 Report highlighted the need for National Judicial Commission for the purpose of appointments to higher judiciary.

Till the time government produces legislation for National Judicial Appointment Commission, appointment through Collegium system must be reformed by providing criteria for appointment of judges in the public domain. This will help to improve transparency and accountability in the system of Collegium based appointment for Judges.

MERCY PETITIONS

#PARDONING

PRIMARY
SOURCE THE HINDU

Supreme Court has directed States and other authorities not to delay their decision on mercy petitions filed by death row convicts, to avoid the condemned persons from gaining any advantage or benefit from the holdup.

In Pardon, it affects both the punishment prescribed for the offence and guilt of the offender. A full pardon may completely erase the guilt.

'Reprieve' means a temporary suspension of the punishment awarded by a court of law. For example: Putting a stay order on the death sentence of a convict for certain temporary period.

'Respite' means postponement of the sentence of punishment or reducing the sentence due to certain special circumstances such as disability, pregnancy etc.

Commutation means changing the punishment from one category to another, such as changing the death sentence to life imprisonment.

Remission is the reduction of the amount of a sentence without changing its character. Example: A person is imprisoned for 14 years in solitary confinement. In Remission, his sentence might be reduced to 10 years but the nature i.e., solitary confinement will not change.

Can Judicial Review be applied for clemency power?

In the case of **Peru Sudhakar v. Government of Andhra Pradesh**, the Supreme Court laid down that judicial review under Articles 72 and 161 is available on the following grounds:

- That the order has been passed without application of mind.
- That the order is mala fide.
- That the order has been passed on extraneous or wholly irrelevant considerations.

- That the order suffers from arbitrariness.

The Court also held that pardon obtained based on **manifest mistake or fraud can also be rescinded or cancelled**. The Court further elaborated that if power under Article 72 is exercised **on irrational, irrelevant, discriminatory grounds or in bad faith**, then in such cases Court can examine the case and intervene if necessary.

Do the President/Governor have discretion while exercising clemency powers?

- Power to pardon vested in the President under **Article 72 shall not be exercised independently without the aid and advice of Home Minister**.
- In the case of **Maru Ram v. Union of India**, Supreme Court held that under Article 72, **the President cannot take an independent decision, direct release, or refuse release on his own choice**.
- This has been done to avoid any decision made on arbitrary grounds or on some partial grounds of religion, caste, colour or political loyalty.

MERCY PETITION

- **Appeal beyond SC**– If the Supreme Court turns down the appeal against capital punishment, a condemned prisoner can submit a mercy petition to the President of India and the Governor of the State.
- **Powers of the President & the Governors under Articles 72 and 161** – “to grant pardons, reprieves, respites or remissions of punishment or to suspend, remit or commute the sentence of any person convicted of any offence.
- **Decision Based on Aid & Advice of Council of Ministers**– The power to be exercised under Article 72 & 161 respectively by President and Governors need to be exercised in conformity with the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers under Articles 74 and 163.
- **Decision not constrained by time** – Clemency powers of President and Governor under Articles 72 and 161 respectively can be exercised before, during or after the trial.
- **Final Opportunity for the Convict** –It also allows both executive and judiciary to investigate the matter with compassionate ground.

- **USA** – Indian President's power of pardon is almost like that in America or Britain. The American President has power to grant reprieves and pardons for offences committed against United States except in cases of impeachment.
- **In Britain**, the Crown enjoys a prerogative to grant pardon to any criminal but the prerogative is exercised on ministerial advice.

Power of Remission Under Cr.Pc Different from Constitutional Powers of Pardon

- **Suspend or Remit** – Criminal Procedure Code (Cr.PC) under Section 432 empowers central and state government to suspend or remit a sentence, in whole or in part, with or without conditions.
- **Commutation** – Section 433 empowers central and state governments to commute death sentence, imprisonment for life and rigorous imprisonment to a lesser degree.

State Government to Consult the Centre– Section 435 of Cr.PC states that powers of state government to suspend, remit or commute a sentence must be done in consultation with the central government in cases where the investigation was conducted using provisions of a central Act or investigating agency of the centre.

ELECTION SYMBOLS (RESERVATION AND ALLOTMENT) ORDER, 1968

#ELECTORAL RULES #POLITICAL SYMBOLS



Election commission using its power under The Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968 withdrew the National Party Status of Trinamool congress (TMC), Nationalist congress party (NCP) and Communist party of India (CPI). However, it also accorded the status of national party to the Aam Admi Party (AAP).

ELECTION SYMBOLS (RESERVATION & ALLOTMENT) ORDER, 1968

The Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968, is a crucial document that outlines the conditions for recognition as a State or National party in India. The

order specifies the requirements that a political party must meet to be recognized as a state or national party, along with the benefits and privileges that come with such recognition. In the latest review by the Election Commission of India, six parties currently hold the status of recognized national parties. This article will delve into the various conditions that must be fulfilled by political parties to gain recognition and the significance of being recognized as a state or national party.

Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 198

- **Para 6A** deals with Conditions for recognition as a **State Party**.
- **Para 6B** deals with the Conditions for recognition as a **National Party**
- **Para 6C** deals with Conditions for **continued recognition as a National or State party**.

*As per the Election Commission of India's latest review, at present, there are **Six political parties which are the status of recognised National Parties**.*

1. Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)
2. Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)
3. Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI-M)
4. Indian National Congress (INC)
5. National People's Party (NPP)
6. Aam Admi Party (AAP)

CONDITIONS FOR RECOGNITION AS A STATE PARTY (6A)

A political party shall be eligible for recognition as a State party in a State, if, and only if, any of the following conditions is fulfilled

1. At the last general election to the Legislative Assembly of the State, the candidates set up by the party have **secured not less than six percent of the total valid votes polled in the State**; and, in addition, the party has returned **at least two members to the Legislative Assembly** of that State at such general election; or
2. At the last general election to the House of the People from that State, the candidates set up by the **party have secured not less than six percent of the total valid votes polled in the State**; and, in addition, the party has returned **at least one member to the House of the People from that State** at such general election; or

3. At the last general election to the Legislative Assembly of the State, **the party has won at least three percent of the total number of seats in the Legislative Assembly, or at least three seats in the Assembly**, whichever is more, or
4. At the last general election to the House of the People from the State, the party **has returned at least one member to the House of the People** for every 25 members or any fraction thereof allotted to that State, or
5. At the last general election to the House of the People from the State, or at the last general election to the Legislative Assembly of the State, the **candidates set up by the Party have secured not less than eight percent of the total valid votes polled in the State.**

Conditions for recognition as a National Party (6B)

A political party shall be eligible to be recognized as National party, if, and only if, any of the following conditions is fulfilled

1. The candidates set up by the party, in any four or more States, at the last general election to the House of the People, or to the Legislative Assembly of the State concerned, **have secured not less than six percent of the total valid votes polled** in each of those States at that general election; and, **in addition, it has returned at least four members to the House of the People** at the aforesaid last general election from any State or States; or
2. At the last general election to the House of the People, **the party has won at least two percent of the total number of seats in the House of the People**, and the party's candidates have been elected to that House from not less than three States: or
3. **The party is recognized as State party in at least four States.**

CONDITIONS FOR CONTINUED RECOGNITION AS A NATIONAL OR STATE PARTY (6C)

- If a political party is recognised as a State party under paragraph 6A, or as a National party under paragraph 6B, the question whether it shall continue to be so recognised after any subsequent general election to the House of the People or, as the case may be, to the Legislative Assembly of the State concerned, **shall be dependent upon the fulfilment by it of the conditions specified in the said paragraphs on the results of that general election.**

Significance of being recognised as National or State Parties

- Apart from those recognised as state or national party, **the other parties are simply declared as registered-unrecognised parties.**
- **RPA allows political parties to accept contributions voluntarily offered** to it by any person or company other than a government company.
- Candidates of **registered parties get preference in allotment of election symbols.** Other Candidates are identified as independents and do not get preference in symbol allocation.
- If a party is recognised as a State Party, it is entitled for **exclusive allotment of its reserved symbol** to the candidates set up by it in the State in which it is so recognised.
- If a party is recognised as a 'National Party' it is entitled for **exclusive allotment of its reserved symbol to the candidates set up by it throughout India.**
- Recognised 'State' and 'National' parties **need only one proposer for filing the nomination** and are also entitled for **two sets of electoral rolls free of cost at the time of revision of rolls** and their candidates get one copy of electoral roll free of cost during General Elections.
- They get broadcast/telecast facilities over Akashvani/Doordarshan during general elections.
- A recognized National or State party can have a maximum of 40 "Star campaigners" and a registered un-recognised party can nominate a maximum of 20 "Star Campaigners". The travel expenses of star campaigners are not to be accounted for in the election expense accounts of candidates of their party.

In conclusion, the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968 outlines the conditions for recognition as State or National party, as well as the conditions for continued recognition. The recognition of political parties as State or National parties holds great significance in the Indian electoral process, as it comes with several privileges such as exclusive allotment of reserved symbols, preferential treatment in symbol allocation, and free electoral rolls. Being recognized as a National or State party also allows parties to nominate more "star campaigners" for their candidates without adding to their campaign expenses. Overall, the order

plays a crucial role in shaping the electoral landscape of India and ensuring that only serious contenders with substantial voter support gain recognition and influence in the country's political scene.

POLICE REFORMS IN INDIA

#POLICE REFORMS

PRIMARY
SOURCE THE HINDU

Supreme Court has stated that it will decide "once and for all" the legal issue of whether the earlier apex court judgement laying down procedures for the appointment of the Director General of Police (DGP) in states will also be applicable to Delhi and other cities.

All social, human and economic development depends on the rule of law and maintenance of law and order is a critical function of the government. In this backdrop, the need for police reform is ever more imperative because of the pace with which our society is moving. There is need to upgrade the skills of our policeman to effectively tackle challenges of 21st century such as cyber-crime and economic offences.

NEED FOR POLICE REFORMS IN INDIA

- **The Colonial Legacy:** Even at present Indian Police is based on colonial law, we all know that most of time British rule used police as their instrument to suppress the voice of freedom fighter and for their personal gain. Our police still functions on feudal style and is still governed by the Police Act 1861 of British times which was authoritarian in nature as it was made in the aftermath of the 1857 Sepoy Mutiny.
- **Vacancies and an overburdened force:** Currently, there are significant vacancies within the state police forces and some of the central armed police forces. **Vacancies have been around 24%-25%** in state police forces since 2009. While the United Nations recommended standard is **222 police per lakh persons, India's sanctioned strength is 181 police per lakh persons**. After adjusting for vacancies, the actual police strength in India is at 137 police per lakh persons. Therefore, an average policeman ends up having an enormous workload and long working hours, which negatively affects his efficiency and performance.
- **Crime Investigation:** Crime investigation requires skills and training, time and resources, and adequate forensic capabilities and infrastructure. However, the **Law Commission and the Second Administrative Reforms Commission have noted that state police officers often neglect this responsibility** because they are understaffed and overburdened with various kinds of tasks. They also have insufficient legal knowledge and the forensic and cyber infrastructure available to them is both inadequate and outdated. **In India, crime rate has increased by 28%** over the last decade, and the nature of crimes is also becoming more complex (e.g., with emergence of various kinds of cybercrimes and economic fraud). **Conviction rates (convictions secured per 100 cases) however have been low.**
- **Police infrastructure:** Modern policing requires a strong communication support, state-of-art or modern weapons, and a high degree of mobility. The CAG and the BPRD have noted shortcomings on several of these fronts.
- **Weaponry:** The CAG has found that weaponry of several state police forces is outdated, and the acquisition process of weapons slow, causing a shortage in arms and ammunition.
- **Police vehicles:** Audits have noted that police vehicles are in short supply. New vehicles are often used to replace old vehicles, and there is a shortage of drivers too. This affects the response time of the police, and consequently their effectiveness.
- **Police-public relations:** Police requires the confidence, cooperation and support of the community to prevent crime and disorder. For example, **police personnel rely on members of the community** to be informers and witnesses in any crime investigation. Therefore, police-public relations are an important concern in effective policing. The Second Administrative Reforms Commission has noted that police-public relations are in an unsatisfactory state because people view the police as corrupt, inefficient, politically partisan and unresponsive.
- **Custodial Death:** A total **4,484 death in custody** have been in the last two years and 233 in alleged in police encounter across India, Stated Minister of State for Home, Custodial death is perhaps one of the worst crimes in a civilized society governed by the Rule of Law. It is a crime against humanity and violation of human rights, so there is need of reforms for much more accountability.

CONSTITUTION, POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

IMPORTANT STEPS TAKEN IN INDIA ON POLICE REFORMS

- **Gore Committee on police training (1971-73)**– recommended enlarging the content of police training from law and order and crime prevention to greater sensitivity and understanding of human behaviour.
- **National police commission 1977** – recommended insulating the police from illegitimate political and bureaucratic interference.
- **Padmanabhaiah Committee 2000** – recommended that constables, and the police force in general, should receive greater training in soft skills (such as communication, counselling and leadership) given they need to deal with the public regularly.
- **The Police Act Drafting Committee (or Soli Sorabjee Committee)**– drafted a new Model Police Act to replace the colonial 1861 Police Act.
- **Malimath Committee (2003)**: suggested the setting up of state security commission , to insulate the police from political pressure. The Malimath Committee was given mandate to review the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) 1973.
- **Prakash Singh Judgement – 2006**: Supreme Court directed states and UTs to comply with seven binding directives on police reforms.
- Constitution of a **State Security Commission** – as a watchdog body to oversee the functioning of the police, with its recommendations being binding on the State Government.
- Selection of State **DGP from out of a panel prepared by UPSC**, and provision for a minimum tenure of two years for the DGP so selected, irrespective of his date of superannuation.
- **A minimum two-year tenure** for other police officer, except under specified circumstances.
- **Separation of investigation from law and order**, duly ensuring full coordination between the two wings.
- Creation of Police Establishment Boards to deal with transfers, postings and other service-related matters of police officers, including disposal of their appeals on being subjected to illegal or irregular orders.

- Constitution of Police Complaints Authorities at the State and District levels to investigate complaints against police officers.
- Constitution of a National Security Commission at the Union level to prepare panels for selection of Chiefs of Central Police Organisations and to review measures to upgrade their effectiveness, etc.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

- Government has reviewed **Model Police Act, 2006 and accordingly has drafted Draft Model Police Bill, 2015**. The drafting committee has tried to incorporate the essence for making police more responsive, efficient and citizen friendly.
- Most of the states passed new laws or amended their existing laws considering Model Police Act, 2006 drafted by Soli Sorabjee Committee.
- In 2018, **Supreme Court restrained state governments from appointing Director-General of Police (DGP) without first consulting the UPSC**. The State government concerned must send to UPSC the names of the probable officers to be appointed as DGP three months before the incumbent DGP is to retire. This judgment was in line with the recommendations given in Prakash Singh Judgment.
- In 2020 – A five-member Committee for Reforms in Criminal Law has been set up by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs chaired by the vice-chancellor of National Law University, Delhi. The mandate of the committee is to recommend reforms in the criminal laws of the country in a principled, effective and efficient manner, which ensures the safety and security of the individual, the community and the nation and which prioritizes the constitutional values of justice, dignity and inherent worth of the individual.

At this time, we need an act which can make police friendly to the public. Police play important role for maintain Rule of law in the state. Hence Police reform aims to transforms the old cultures, policies and practices of police organization so that police can perform their duties with respect of democratic values, human rights. 15 years after the Supreme Court judgment in Prakash Singh case, we must ask what is holding up police reforms? The priority of the Government should be the reform of the police in India.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

MCQS

Q1. Consider the following committees:

1. Balwant Rai Mehta Committee
2. Ashok Mehta Committee:
3. G V K Rao Committee
4. Rohini Committee

Which of the above committees have been associated with recommending Local Governance in our country:

- (a) 1, 2 and 3 Only (b) 1, 3 and 4 Only
(c) 1, 2 and 4 Only (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Q2. Consider the following statements regarding Public Interest Litigations (PIL)

1. The concept of "Locus Standi" has been relaxed in the case of PIL
2. A PIL can only be brought against the Central, state, or municipal governments and not against any individual.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 Only (b) 2 Only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q3. Consider the following statements regarding Departmentally Related Standing Committees (DRSCs)

1. DRSCs were constituted in 1993 to assist Parliament in scrutinising funds allocated to Ministries.
2. There are 23 DRSCs that oversee the working of a Ministry or group of Ministries.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 Only (b) 2 Only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q4. Which of the following statements is incorrect with reference to Indian Polity

- (a) Article 163 states that there shall be a Council of Ministers with the Chief Minister at the head to aid and advise the Governor
- (b) The Governor's power to withhold assent or return a Bill, with a message, for reconsideration is seen as discretionary.
- (c) Governor can recommend the imposition of President's rule in the state.
- (d) The Chief Minister shall be appointed by the Governor and the other Ministers shall be appointed by the Chief Minister.

Q5. Consider following statements about the public accounts committee:

1. The members of the committee are chosen from both the houses of Parliament.
2. There are 30 members in the committee out of which 20 belong to Lok Sabha and 10 from Rajya Sabha.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) None of the above.

DESCRIPTIVE QUESTIONS

- Q1.** Public Interest Litigation has played a large role in democratisation and preservation of rights of the marginalised sections. Comment.
- Q2.** A well functioning panchayati raj system is plagued with issues of structure. How do we make panchayats more effective?

Answers: 1-a, 2-c, 3-b, 4-d, 5-a

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS & SECURITY

GS PAPER (PRELIMS) & GS PAPER II & III (MAIN)

Ankit Kaul



INDIA-MYANMAR RELATIONS

#INDIA'S NEIGHBOURS

PRIMARY SOURCE	THE HINDU	SECONDARY SOURCE	Bloomberg
	SECONDARY SOURCE	RAU'S IAS MAINS COMPASS	

Myanmar junta, notorious for its attacks on civilians, carried out air strikes on an opposition gathering in the rebel-held Sagaing region, killing over 100, including women and children. The National Unity Government (NUG), the parallel administration formed by opposition groups, as well as witnesses, said a fighter jet and a combat helicopter bombed the gathering, which was celebrating the opening of an administrative office of the NUG; the regime, led by Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, calls it a "terrorist entity".

- Further the tacit support of Russia and China and silence from India, Gen. Min Aung Hlaing does not face any regional pressure either. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) had earlier proposed a five-point peace plan, urging an end to hostilities and starting inclusive dialogue. But the generals have refused to talk to the opposition and are not ready to share power
- India has confronted Myanmar in recent months with intelligence showing that China is providing assistance in building a surveillance post on a remote island in the Bay of Bengal Chinese workers helping to construct what appears to be a listening post on the Coco Islands in the Indian Ocean.



Puneet Ghumman

INDIA MYANMAR RELATIONS

India shares a long land border of over 1600 Km with Myanmar as well as a maritime boundary in the Bay of Bengal. Four north-eastern states viz. Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram share boundary with Myanmar. Both countries share a heritage of religious, linguistic and ethnic ties. Further, Myanmar is the only ASEAN country adjoining India and, therefore, our gateway to South East Asia with which we are seeking greater economic integration through India's 'Look East' and now 'Act East' Policy. Business opportunities that emerge from a surging economy in Myanmar also provide new vistas for engagement.

INDIA'S APPROACH TOWARDS MILITARY COUP

- Calibrated approach of India India has followed a calibrated approach since the military coup. Initially it followed a wait and watch approach, only now has called for a return to democracy. It is reflective of the regional realities. It is different from the West's approach of condemnation, threats and sanctions.
- China had close relations with Su Kyi government has tried to expand its cooperation with Junta.
- Myanmar has refused to cooperate with the ASEAN five-point formula.
- India has assisted Myanmar through capacity-building programs for strengthening the transition to democracy. However, it is not an offer of mediation by India in the military-NLD conflict.
- Myanmar has renewed the previous pledge that its nation's territory would not be allowed to be used for any activities inimical to India.

- Foreign secretary was received by General Min Aung Hlaing (who is Chairman of SAC and Prime Minister) which is departure from the past visits of foreign secretaries from India. Such special gesture clearly shows that China is not the only Friend of Myanmar.

IMPLICATION OF MYANMAR'S MILITARY COUP

- **Border security:** Refugees fleeing military crackdown are entering Mizoram. This has led to disagreement between centre & Mizoram which supports refugees. Centre's instruction of sealing border with Myanmar has irked ethnically and culturally connected communities on both sides. Ex – Chin community.
- **Strategic concern:** India cannot upset the Myanmar junta by providing refuge to the officials fleeing military crackdown.
- **Containing China:** Myanmar being crucial in containing China, India will have to take a calculated steps to not push Myanmar closer to China.
- **Insurgency:** Several ethnic armed organisations are active within Myanmar. Being opposed to Junta, EAOs can lead to escalation in violence across the border.
- **Indian Investments:** Instability would threaten India's investments in Myanmar. Ex. Kaladan Project, Sittwe port, IMT trilateral Highway, Special economic zone in Rakhine.
- **Opportunity to reduce influence of China:** Myanmar army has enjoyed a relatively strong relationship with India. It played a key role in handling the insurgency and Hot Pursuits of India. Su Kyi led democratic government was closer to China. China supported it on Rohingya crisis.
- **Drug trafficking:** Drug production has shot up exponentially in Shan Province of Myanmar. The region was earlier large producers of heroine. However, currently it is world's largest producer & exporter of meth (more potent & profitable). Most key individuals controlling the drug trade are pro-junta businessman as well as ethnic militia.

INDIA'S MYANMAR POLICY

1. **Non-interference in internal politics:** Since 1990s, India has supported democratization of Myanmar, driven from within the country.
2. **Engagement rather than criticising:** India is cognizant of geopolitical dimension of Myanmar's democratization. For Delhi, engaging rather than criticizing is most practical approach.

3. Balancing influence of China

- There was inauguration of liaison office of Embassy of India in Naypyidaw recently. This is significant as only a few countries have set up such office in Myanmar. Interestingly, China was first country to establish a liaison office in 2017.
- Myanmar's growing closeness with China and China Myanmar Economic Corridor is a cause of concern for India amidst growing India-China tension.
- India also has taken significant step towards establishing its embassy in Nay Pyi Taw. India has its embassy in Yangon, the former capital.

4. Strategic Infrastructure development

- India has also proposed to build a petroleum refinery in Myanmar that would involve an investment of \$6 billion. It shows India's competitive dynamic with China.
- Commitment has been made to operationalise of the crucial Sittwe port in Myanmar's Rakhine state by March 2021.
- The two sides are collaborating on ongoing Indian assisted infrastructure projects such as the India-Myanmar-Thailand trilateral highway and the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project. The project will link Kolkata to Sittwe in Myanmar and then from Myanmar's Kaladan river to India's north-east.
- Border security and development: Both countries believe in mutual commitment not to allow respective territories to be used for activities inimical to each other. Both have been collaborating in the development of border areas with the understanding that it is the best guarantee to secure their borders.

IMPORTANCE OF MYANMAR FOR INDIA

- India shares a long and porous border with Myanmar.
- Myanmar is key link between South Asia to Southeast Asia. It is a member of both ASEAN as well as BIMSTEC which bridges South and South-East Asia.
- Myanmar stands at confluence of India's Neighbourhood First and Act East Policy. India-Myanmar partnership is at heart of India's vision to create a connected and cooperative neighbourhood.
- Connectivity projects through Myanmar help India overcome its Chicken-neck dilemma (Siliguri Corridor). Myanmar is necessary for development of North-Eastern India.

- Good relations with Myanmar are central to keep North-eastern states peaceful. Often insurgent groups and rebels seek refuge in Myanmar territory.
- Land border with Myanmar is crucial for narcoterrorism (Golden Triangle- border areas of Laos, Thailand & Myanmar) and illegal weapons. Shan State of Myanmar is the largest producer of illegal drugs within the Golden Triangle. Illegal production and trafficking of drugs poses multi-faceted problems of law & order, social problems of increased addiction and transnational crimes with illicit money fuelling insurgent activities.

WAY FORWARD

A peaceful resolution in Myanmar is essential for the stability of Southeast Asia, and, hence, ASEAN and regional powers such as Russia, China and India should not see the civil strife as an internal problem of Myanmar. They should use their economic and political clout to force the generals to stop the violence and enter into talks with the opposition. The only sustainable, long-term and just solution for Myanmar's myriad woes is the restoration of its democracy under a federal constitutional order. The first step to achieve this goal is to end the violence.

INDIA-BHUTAN RELATIONS

#INDIA'S NEIGHBOURS

PRIMARY SOURCE | THE HINDU

During the recent visit by Bhutan's King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck to Delhi.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bhutanese King discussed the latest situation along the India-Bhutan border as well as the progress in boundary talks between China and Bhutan, particularly above the Doklam trijunction point. Following things were discussed upon during the recent visit

- **Security:** The two countries remain in close touch and close coordination relating to our shared national interests including security interests. Further New Delhi has reiterated its position that any questions over the trijunction between India, China and Bhutan would be resolved "trilaterally".
- **Transformative Roadmap:** Apart from the boundary talks the two leaders also discussed Bhutanese King's "Transformation Initiatives and Reforms Process", and India's support for Bhutan's development plans,

including the 13th Five Year Plan that starts from next year.

- As Bhutan is set to graduate from the list of Least Developed Countries in 2023, and its 21st century Economic Roadmap aims to turn the Himalayan kingdom into a developed country with a per-capita income of \$12,000 in the next 10 years.
- **Financial Support:** India has also agreed to extend Bhutan a third additional standby credit facility. The financial support will be for reforms and institutional capacity building, infrastructure and connectivity projects, energy cooperation including hydropower and solar energy projects, as well as space cooperation including the recent launch of the India-Bhutan satellite.
- **Hydro-cooperation:** On hydropower, the government has agreed to a long pending demand from Thimphu to increase the power tariffs for the Chhukha hydro-electric project, which began operations with India's help in 1986. India has also agreed to discuss buying power from the Basochhu hydel project that was built in 2008.

BORDER ISSUE BACKGROUND

Cause of concern

In October 2021, Bhutan and China signed a Memorandum of Understanding for a "three-step roadmap" to expedite border resolution talks.

The discussion centres on two valleys to Bhutan's north and the Doklam area to the west of Bhutan, close to the trijunction with India, which was the site of a stand-off between Indian and Chinese forces in 2017.

India has been particularly watchful of any possibility of a "swap agreement" between the two countries that could affect its security at the trijunction.

In January 2023, Bhutan and China held talks in Kunming, and reached a "positive consensus" on how to move forward with the talks.

Earlier Bhutanese PM has in an interview to a Belgian newspaper has explained that he hoped to complete boundary demarcation talks on disputed areas in the next "one or two more meetings" and that a visit by a Chinese "technical team" was expected shortly in Bhutan.

The Bhutanese PM's comments on discussing the Doklam trijunction dispute "trilaterally", with Bhutan, India and China as "equal" interlocutors, set off a storm in Delhi

BORDER DISPUTE BETWEEN BHUTAN AND CHINA



Like the Sino-Indian border, the entire 477-km Bhutan-China border is also disputed. Significant Chinese claims range from three areas in western Bhutan, including Doklam, three regions in the north

Border talks between the two sides (Bhutan and China) began in 1984, and from the seventh round in 1990, China has continued to push a "package proposal", which would see it concede its northern claims with an area of 495 sq km, in exchange for Bhutan agreeing to China's western claims, including 89 sq km of Doklam.

WHY CHINA IS PUSHING FOR PACKAGE DEAL

There were two reasons for this.

- First, adding territory in the west would help enlarge the narrow and strategic Chumbi Valley.
- Second, possession of Doklam would give it a military advantage over India. The Doklam area is not of particular strategic significance for Bhutan, but it is important for India since it gets the Chinese to the Zompelri (Jampheri) ridge, which gives them a commanding view of India's Northeastern jugular, also known as the Siliguri Corridor.

BREAKDOWN OF TALKS

- The two sides were very near for the finalisation of deal during the 10th round of talks, however when the two sides met for their 11th round in November 1996, Bhutan backed off, and many believe that India played a role in this. So in 1998, China and Bhutan signed an agreement to freeze the border as of 1998, pending further talks
- The problem for the tiny Himalayan kingdom is that, unlike, its neighbourhood, it is not very populous, with just some 750,000 people in an area of 38,000 sq km — a little smaller than Denmark but with one-seventh of its population. Its capacity to police its disputed

borders is limited, as has been evident over the years that it has dealt with China.

- In Asia, China sees Bhutan, where it does not yet have an embassy, as the last frontier. Having made inroads into Indian pre-eminence in Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, Beijing would like to challenge New Delhi's special relationship with Bhutan as well. Recent events, including Doklam and the revival of its claim in the eastern region, can be seen as systematic Chinese pressure to push the Bhutanese to comply with its demands.
- Beijing's surprise move came during a virtual conservation meeting in June, when it laid claim for the first time to Sakteng Wildlife sanctuary, which spans about 740 sq km (285 sq miles) in eastern Bhutan. Chinese foreign ministry explained that "the boundary between China and Bhutan is yet to be demarcated, and the middle, eastern and western section of the border are disputed". The eastern section was an obvious reference to the Sakteng reserve.
- Scholars believe that inclusion of Sakteng as a disputed territory by China, was an effort by the Chinese diplomacy to strong arm Bhutan, to bring it back on negotiation table and the diplomatic effort has yield a positive result for China.

WHY BHUTAN AND INDIA ARE INTERDEPENDENT?

- Bhutan is not just a neighbour, but a very important and strategic one.
- Its border with India is over 600 km long, and it plays the role of a buffer between China and India. The relationship between the two has strengthened from the time of our independence
- India is Bhutan's biggest development partner. India is the largest source of imports for Bhutan.
- India has managed to create this bond not only through rhetoric, but by harnessing hydroelectricity for which the rivers in Bhutan, which come down from the Himalayas to India, have been used.
- There are joint agreements whereby India buys power generated in Bhutan. Hydroelectricity has become one of the biggest revenue earners of Bhutan, which makes Bhutan the country with the highest per capita income in South Asia today.
- Further a significant feature of this relationship has been the regularity of high-level visits. When Prime Minister Narendra Modi came to power, the first

country which he visited was Bhutan. The visit of the King of Bhutan was planned far in advance.

CHINA AS THE MUTUAL DISCORD

- China has been seeking a toehold in Bhutan for decades.
- Bhutan is fully conscious of India's strategic needs. As per their 2007 Treaty of Friendship, India and Bhutan consult at a high level in order to be able to maximise or reinforce their mutual strategic interests.
- Bhutan has been having talks with China on the boundary question for years, and there has been no decision yet.
- Similarly, India and China have frequently had boundary talks without any agreement being reached.
- China has been offering major concessions on the north in order to obtain a much smaller territory, which is in Doklam, for years. Bhutan has resisted this offer consistently because it understands India's security concerns and will not decide its border with China without taking into account India's interests.
- Bhutan is also aware that China is a menacing power, that China's build-up in that disputed area is considerable, and there is also some incremental encroachment beyond the boundary dispute into Bhutanese territory.
- Thus we can conclude that India-Bhutan relationship has crystallised over the decades into such a mammoth edifice of mutually beneficial interaction that it is difficult to dismantle. The key to strengthening it for the future is for India not to show any insecurity about this relationship, or in any way attempt to stifle differing voices, whether on social media or otherwise, but to pursue this relationship with trust and complete faith.

RUSSIA-CHINA BONHOMIE TO RESHAPE GLOBAL WORLD ORDER

#REGIONALGROUPINGS #INDIARUSSIARELATIONS

**PRIMARY
SOURCE**

THE HINDU

**SECONDARY
SOURCE**

REUTERS

Russia and China hope that exploiting the divisions within the West will help them transform the global order. The Sino-Russian dream of building a post-Western order has resonance in many parts of the world, including India.

- This is not the first time that Moscow and Beijing have talked of upending the world order. The history of international communism in the 20th century was about building a post-Western order
- The two leaders talked of "once-in-a-century changes" and have a understanding that by pooling their strengths — the former's military/nuclear power and vast natural resources and the latter's growing economic weight — they can put the West on the defensive. They also bet that with geopolitical coordination of their policies in Europe and Asia, Russia and China can bury 400 years of western hegemony. However, The success of this strategy rests on the Moscow-Beijing axis successfully leveraging America's internal fissures and divisions between the US and Europe.
- For the process Moscow's focus is on America's political fractures, Beijing on the other hand is deploying it's market power to undermine Washington's strategy. After all, China is the world's second-biggest economy and has massive economic interdependence with the US.

ON EUROPE

Both Russia and China views Europe as keystone in framing the new architecture for global order.

- The Russia's latest version of foreign policy doctrine issued recently singles out the US as "the main instigator, organiser and executor of the aggressive anti-Russian policy of the collective West". Russia further criticises Europe for abandoning its strategic autonomy
- China's love for Europe's "strategic autonomy" is equally passionate (much like Beijing's enthusiasm for India's "non-alignment"). The Sino-European engagement circles around two issues. Europe wants Xi to put pressure on Putin to end the war in Ukraine. Beijing would like Europe to distance itself from the US on its China policy.
- Further Europe is also convinced that Xi is the only leader who can nudge Putin towards peace. Europe does have real incentives to develop a China policy different from the American one. If the Ukraine war has compelled it to reduce its commercial ties with Russia, Europe is loath to lose access to the massive Chinese market because of the deepening Sino-US conflict. After all, total trade between the two economic giants was close to \$850 billion in 2022.

WHAT RUSSIA WANTS?

- **Economic support:** Russia needs China to help bolster his economy, which has been battered by Western sanctions. China has increasingly become a lifeline for investment and trade. After Western countries restricted their purchases of Russian crude oil and natural gas last year, China helped offset the decline by buying more energy from Russia.
- **Military support:** Russia has earlier asked China for military equipment and economic assistance. U.S. officials have recently said that China is considering giving weapons to Russia for use in Ukraine.
- **Diplomatic support:** China has refrained from condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine, even though China's foreign policy is rooted around the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity. China has endorsed Russian narratives, blaming the U.S. and NATO for starting the conflict.

WHAT CHINA WANTS?

- Russia to China as a like-minded ally in confronting U.S. and Western dominance. It wants the two countries to cooperate to overcome challenges to their security, including "damaging acts of hegemony, domination and bullying."
- China has been buying more advanced weapons from Russia to modernize its military, and the two nations have increased their joint military exercises.

COOPERATION BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES

- The main form of cooperation is the economic relations between Russia and China is trade. From 2003 until 2013, mutual trade increased 7.7 times; in 2014 the scale of bilateral operations increased even more. The aggravation of relations between Russia and Western countries contributed to the expansion of economic ties with China.
- The two countries entered into \$400bn gas deal to supply 38 billion cubic meters of gas annually to China for next 30 years
- The two countries again signed an agreement in 2022 for Power of Siberia 2.
- The trade between the two countries have almost tripled from the levels of 2016 and China has now emerged as the largest trading partner for Russia.
- The countries are also in advance stages of formally linking Chinese belt and road Initiative and Russia's Eurasian Economic Union.

- Russia has reaffirmed its support to One-China principle and opposed any sort of independence for Taiwan. China has also backed Russia's stand on expansion of western military alliance in Europe.
- Russia sold advanced fighter aircraft and missile systems to the Chinese (which includes advanced weapons like the S-400 missile-defence system and Su-35 fighter jets)
- China has continued buying discounted Russian energy and aiming to make transactions in rubbles or Chinese renminbi owing to western sanctions post Russia-Ukraine war.
- Many Russian regions have set new trade records with neighbouring Chinese provinces, a dependence that looks set to grow in the future.

ISSUES THAT LIMITS THE PARTNERSHIP

- There is no-formal security alliance between China and Russia and the ideological affinity is also transactional
- Russia's position has further weakened after Ukraine war and its economy is one tenth the size of Chinese economy, thus compromising its position as equal partners.
- China has still not ratified Crimea's accession to Russia and further Russia wants to regain its lost glory of USSR days and will not willing to subscribe to junior partner status.
- China is the EU's largest trading partner and will not compromise on its economic interest and similarly it goes for Russia, wherein its trade with Europe is much more rewardable.

The Ukraine war has further complicated the relationship between China and Russia

- Ukraine forms a critical part of Chinese BRI jig-saw and thus will not compromise its larger geo-economic interest in the region.
- Russia's victory in Europe would have had a dramatic impact on Asia too. It would have reinforced the sentiment that America is in terminal decline, weakened US alliances in Asia, and boosted China's ambition to radically reshape its periphery.
- It has facilitated the resurrection of Western unity under American leadership.
- War triggered the fear of Chinese territorial expansionism in Asia. This has led to the strengthening of US bilateral alliances with Australia and Japan.

- Berlin and Tokyo are also now committed to raising their defence spending to cope with the security challenges from Moscow and Beijing.
- Chinese firms aren't too excited about stepping up business with Russia as they fear that secondary sanctions could be applied, and Chinese firms don't want to take risks.

IMPACT ON INDIA

- The Sino-Russian alliance puts India in a terrible predicament: China can ramp up, at will, the military pressure on the disputed border with India and Delhi depends on Russian military supplies which in turn is a junior partner of China.
- The Russian partnership was long seen as the key to India's "strategic autonomy", Delhi's arms dependence on Moscow is now the biggest constraint on India's freedom of action.
- Russia also opposes QUAD and align itself with Chinese claim, of Quad being aimed at containing China by calling Quad as ASIAN NATO
- Russia is also critical of term INDO-PACIFIC and believes it as step back towards cold war mentality, a way contain Russia and China.
- India's alliance with the US and its allies to restore the regional balance of power and new Sino-Russian alliance has further complicated the relationship.

WORLD BANK (FRAMING THE NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER)

#INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION

PRIMARY
SOURCE

THE HINDU

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman attended the Development Committee Meeting of the World Bank-IMF in Washington DC. The Finance Minister stressed that the World Bank should continue to work for its vision of 'A World Free of Poverty' and 'ending extreme poverty' and promoting shared prosperity in a manner that is inclusive, resilient and sustainable. She also suggested that global public goods should also be brought into focus as the third goal.

The World Bank primarily provides loans to developing countries for capital programmes and aims to reduce poverty. However despite with the objectives with which World bank was established along with IMF (collectively

called as Bretton Wood Twins), the bank has been marred by several challenges

ISSUES THAT WORLD BANK CURRENTLY FACES

LOW REPRESENTATION OF GLOBAL SOUTH:

One of the strongest criticisms of the institution has been about the way they are governed.

World Bank represent 186 countries, each is run by just a small number of economically powerful countries. These countries choose the leadership and senior management, and so their interests dominate, despite the fact that the main borrowers from the World Bank are developing countries.

Further another criticism of the World Bank relates to the political power imbalances in their governance structures where, as a result of voting shares being based principally on the size and 'openness' of countries' economies, poorer countries (the major loan takers) are Structurally Underrepresented in decision-making processes.

UNDERMINING DEMOCRATIC OWNERSHIP

The issue of political power imbalances is exacerbated by another long-standing critique of the Bank i.e. that the economic policy conditions it promotes – often attached or 'recommended' as part of loans, projects, technical assistance, or financial surveillance – undermine the sovereignty of borrower nations, limiting their ability to make policy decisions and eroding their ownership of national development strategies.

WEAK ABILITY TO LEARN FROM PAST MISTAKES

The World Bank, the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) was created in 2006, integrating several individual accountability mechanisms, and is charged with evaluating the activities of the entire World Bank Group and determining what works, what doesn't and why. However, the Bank has been criticised for failing to implement the recommendations of the IEG

HUMAN RIGHTS

Another stream of longstanding critiques has focused on the content of the policies, programmes and projects that the bank promote and enforce and how they have undermined a broad spectrum of human rights, with the Bank even being labelled a "human rights-free zone"

Most typically, these are fiscal consolidation measures (or austerity), and include reducing the public wage bill, introducing or increasing VAT and other indirect regressive taxes in particular, labour flexibilization,

rationalising (cutting) and privatising social services, and targeting social protections and subsidies, while maintaining low levels of inflation, corporate taxation rates and trade tariffs.

World Bank was also silent when its developing-country clients' access to life-saving medications was being restricted. Developing countries were forced to sign the onerous Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights agreement at the World Trade Organization. For example AIDS crisis was ravaging Sub-Saharan Africa and also under patent regime sanctions were imposed on several developing countries, from Chile to India, accused of failing to strengthen patent protections sufficiently

ENVIRONMENT

The approach to development and economic policy, as well as their financing decisions, have generated long-standing and ever-more pressing criticisms related to the protection of the environment and staving off climate change.

The growth-based approach to poverty reduction that the World Bank promote has immense environmental consequences, as is evidenced by the deepening climate crisis.

Further another major concern is the planned mega corridor in developing regions are predicated on building a new generation of carbon-intensive infrastructure.

Following are the Reforms needed to ensure effectiveness of the World bank:

- **Address the uptick in extreme poverty due to COVID and conflict:** The World Bank should devote as much as possible of its lending and advisory might to social protection and tackling the immediate shortfalls in food, energy, and raw materials that are driving higher inflation and exacerbating poverty. At the same time, it should work to support longer-term recovery and resilience, including through data, infrastructure, governance, and economic reform.
- **Turning the tide on climate-related and other thematic issues:** The reform should also make the institution fit to respond to global climate emergency, both on facing the impacts of climate change and on decarbonising the global economy.
- **Fostering coordination within and outside the Bank:** The Bank puts forward its ambition to "strengthen the One WB approach", while developing "new regional approaches", and also "broadening its

country-based model". These suggestions interestingly point to the need for the Bank to look for more coherence in its own institutional set up while also strengthening its impact at regional and country level.

- **Use independent organisations to help governments in a more flexible way:** Many governments need help to define and structure the kind of support they need and to engage and negotiate with the international community. This is often better done by independent organisations who have the experience and the flexibility to play this role.
- **Harness strengths from different specialist areas:** The Bank needs to demonstrate it can connect and harness different professional groups in addressing problems, identifying bottlenecks and advancing innovative solutions. Its vertical professional strength now needs to be enhanced with horizontal engagement.
- **Embrace Unpredictability:** As the fragility in the world is unpredictable ex. Covid or War, therefore the Bank needs to ensure that its contracts generate this flexibility and responsiveness, and that its monitoring, reporting and evaluation frameworks support – and do not penalise – adaptive working.

MAOIST ATTACK IN DANTEWADA

#LEFTWINGEXTREMISM #EXTERNAL&NON-STATEACTORS&SECURITY



Ten security personnel returning from a counter-insurgency operation and a civilian driver were killed when Maoists blew up their vehicle in Dantewada of Chhattisgarh

The deceased jawans were members of the District Reserve Guard (DRG), a locally-raised force designed to carry out anti-Maoist operations.

The tri-junction of Chhattisgarh, Telangana and Odisha located right at the southern tip of Sukma district in the south Bastar region is an area that witnesses the highest number of such incidents including the deadly 2010 Maoist ambush in Dantewada where 75 CRPF and one Chhattisgarh police personnel were killed.

CURRENT TRENDS IN LEFT WING EXTREMISM IN INDIA

- The influence of Maoists and associated violence has been falling consistently in the country because of multiple factors, including a stronger push by security forces in Maoist strongholds, roads and civic amenities reaching the interiors to a greater extent than earlier, and a general disenchantment with the Maoist ideology among the youth, which has deprived the insurgent movement of new leadership.
- Maoist violence in the country has gone down by 77% since 2010. The number of resultant deaths (security forces + civilians) has come down by 90 % from the all-time high of 1,005 in 2010 to 98 in 2022, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)
- The government has cut the number of districts declared to be Naxal-affected from over 200 in the early 2000s to just 90 now, and claims that the geographical spread of violence is actually restricted to just 45 districts.
- The presence of Naxals is said to be minimal to zero in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Odisha, Jharkhand, and Bihar, which were at one time their strongholds.

TIMING OF THE ATTACK?

- The CPI(Maoist) carries out Tactical Counter Offensive Campaigns (TCOCs) between February and June every year, in which the focus of its military wing is to inflict casualties on security forces
- This period is chosen because with the onset of the monsoon in July, it becomes difficult to conduct offensive operations in the jungles. With the onset of the monsoon, both the Maoists and the security forces return to their camps.
- Almost all major attacks by Maoists on security forces, including the 2010 Chintalnar massacre of 76 CRPF personnel, have taken place during the TCOC period.

WHY CHHATTISGARH STILL REMAINS CONTESTED?

- It is the only state in the country where Maoists continue to have a significant presence and retain the capability to mount big attacks. In the last five years (2018- 22), 1,132 “violent incidents[were perpetrated by Left Wing Extremists”, in which 168 security forces personnel and 335 civilians lost their lives.
- Chhattisgarh has accounted for more than a third of all Maoist-related violence in this period but the problem is the share in death is extremely high wherein it had a share of 70%-90% of deaths.
- The violence graph in the state for this period has been up and down. Maoists mounted 275 attacks in 2018; the number fell to 182 in 2019, but rose to 241

in 2020. It then declined to 188 in 2021, but rose to 246 in 2022.

DELAYED RESPONSE

- It is a widely accepted principle in counter-Maoist strategy that the war against Left Wing Extremism can only be won by the state police and not central forces. This is because the state police have local knowledge, understand the language, and have local networks that are essential for the generation of intelligence.
- It was through the active involvement of local police in the leading role that states such as Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Odisha and Jharkhand were able to end their Maoist problem. All these states formed special units of their police forces with personnel and officers drawn from the state, gave them special training, and won the battle with concerted security and development efforts.
- This process, security establishment started late in Chhattisgarh. By this time, police of neighbouring states had pushed Maoists from their states to Chhattisgarh, making it a concentrated zone of Maoist influence.
- The special unit of the Chhattisgarh Police, the DRG, was raised from the local tribal population and trained to fight Maoists only a few years ago, and has become active relatively recently.
- The absence of roads in the interiors of Bastar has stymied the operations of security forces.
- Minimal presence of the administration in the interiors of South Bastar has ensured that Maoists continue to have influence in the region and enjoy local support through a mix of fear and goodwill.
- Further security officials cite the lack of fool proof technology to detect IEDs and the increasing desperation of Maoists, who are avoiding direct combat with the forces, for such incidents.

GOVERNMENT MEASURES TO TACKLE LEFT WING EXTREMISM (LWE)

- Central Government supports the LWE states through Security Related Expenditure (SRE), which focuses on equipping security forces to fight Maoists
- Further the Special Infrastructure Scheme (SIS), which aims to strengthen local police and intelligence set ups
- Special Central Assistance for building infrastructure such as roads in LWE districts, the Centre has maintained a massive presence of the CRPF in the affected states for almost two decades.

- The Centre is also pushing for the erection of mobile towers in the interiors, which would help the local people connect with the mainstream, and also generate technical intelligence
- The Centre has also unleashed the counter-terrorism National Investigation Agency (NIA) and the Enforcement Directorate on CPI(Maoist) cadres, leaders, and sympathisers with the aim to choke their funding.
- The CRPF has also raised a Bastariya Battalion the recruits for which were taken from the local population, who knew the language and terrain, and could generate intelligence. This unit now has 400 recruits and regularly conducts operations in Chhattisgarh.
- Further the CRPF has been consistently enlarging its footprint by opening new camps close to 20 forward operating bases have been set up in Bastar.

VIBRANT VILLAGES PROGRAM IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH

#BORDERSECURITY

PRIMARY
SOURCE

pib

SECONDARY
SOURCE

india.gov.in

Shri Amit Shah will launch 'Vibrant Villages Programme' in Kibithoo, a border village in Arunachal Pradesh on 10th April

Amit Shah will also inaugurate nine Micro Hydel Projects of Arunachal Pradesh government constructed under the "Golden Jubilee Border Illumination Programme" in Kibithoo.

ABOUT VIBRANT VILLAGE PROGRAM

The Government of India has approved the 'Vibrant Villages Programme' (VVP) with central components of Rs.4800 crore including Rs.2500 crore exclusively for road connectivity for the Financial Years 2022-23 to 2025-26.

AIM: Under the scheme job opportunities will be created to curb migration of local population and sustainable economic activities will be encouraged.

- The scheme will provide funds for development of essential infrastructure and creation of livelihood opportunities in 19 districts and 46 border blocks in **four States and one Union Territory** along the "northern land border of the country"

- The states of **Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttarakhand & Himachal Pradesh and UT of Ladakh** have been identified for comprehensive development.
- It is a **centrally sponsored program**.
- The scheme aids to identify and develop economic drivers based on local, natural, human and other resources of the villages on the northern border and development of growth centres on "**Hub and Spoke Model**" through promotion of social entrepreneurship, empowerment of youth and women through skill development and entrepreneurship
- **Vibrant Village Action Plans** will be created by the **district administration** with the help of gram panchayats and 100% saturation of Central and State schemes will be ensured.
- There **will not be an overlap** with the Border Area Development Programme (BADP).

GOLDEN JUBILEE BORDER VILLAGE

Arunachal Pradesh government has launched the Golden Jubilee Border Village Illumination Programme' with a mission to construct 50 micro-hydel projects in remote border villages to provide continuous electricity to the villagers as also the Armed Forces.

The Golden Jubilee Border Illumination Programme is in sync with the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi that border villages are not the last but first to be transformed.

HEADER AND INDIAN CYBERCRIME COORDINATION CENTRE

#CYBERSECURITY

PRIMARY
SOURCE

THE HINDU

SECONDARY
SOURCE

mha.gov.in

Telecom authorities have blocked as many as 120 headers operated by a group linked to a Chinese entity in the past two months based on information provided by the Union Home Ministry.

WHAT IS A HEADER?

- A header, also known as sender ID, is a unique combination of characters or numbers representing the brand or company name of the message sender.

- Headers are used by banks, marketing companies, utility providers and even government offices to send bulk messages (SMS) to consumers and customers.

CURRENT ISSUE?

An investigation by the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) found that the headers were hosted from China.

- The particular example in this case was the header of West Bengal State Electricity Distribution Company Ltd. WBSEDC was compromised and taken over by a Chinese host.
- The header was misused to dupe consumers who received messages pertaining to outstanding electricity bills. These SMS contained malicious links, which when clicked would lead to financial loss for the consumer as the hacker would get access to the person's phone.
- Consumers would fall for it as the header genuinely belongs to the electricity distribution company.
- Further it is for the Threat Analytical Unit (TAU) of the I4C, that analyses the pattern of financial crimes and frauds and sends reports to central agencies such as the National Investigation Agency (NIA), Enforcement Directorate or State police forces.

ABOUT INDIAN CYBERCRIME COORDINATION CENTRE (I4C)

Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C) is an initiative of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India to deal with cybercrime in the country in a coordinated and comprehensive manner.

I4C focuses on tackling all the issues related to Cybercrime for the citizens, which includes improving coordination between various Law Enforcement Agencies and the stakeholders, driving change in India's overall capability to tackle Cybercrime and to improve citizen satisfaction levels.

THE COMPONENTS OF THE I4C SCHEME

- National Cybercrime Threat Analytics Unit (TAU)
- National Cybercrime Reporting
- Platform for Joint Cybercrime Investigation Team
- National Cybercrime Forensic Laboratory (NCFL) Ecosystem
- National Cybercrime Training Centre (NCTC)
- Cybercrime Ecosystem Management Unit
- National Cyber Crime Research and Innovation Centre

ABOUT NATIONAL CYBERCRIME THREAT ANALYTICS UNIT (NCTAU)

- It is a platform for Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs), persons from private sector, academia and research Organisations to work collaboratively in order to analyse all pieces of information relating to Cybercrime.
- This unit collects Cybercrime feeds from open sources, National Cybercrime Reporting Portal, CERT-In, and other agencies working in this field, analyse it and further disseminates it to the concerned agencies for taking further appropriate action.

PRELIMS SNIPPETS

UN WOMEN

#INTERNATIONALORGANIZATIONS

India has made a generous contribution of \$500,000 (₹4.09 crore) to the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, also known as UN Women.

- UN Women is an organization within the United Nations that focuses on promoting gender equality and empowering women.
- It collaborates with governments and civil society to create laws, policies, programs, and services that enable the implementation of global gender equality standards to benefit women and girls worldwide.

- It was established in July 2010 with headquarters at New York, United States of America.
- UN Women is a member of the United Nations Development Group.

UN DEMOCRACY FUND (UNDEF)

#INTERNATIONALORGANIZATIONS

The recent controversy surrounding UNDEF's decision to give grants to NGOs funded by George Soros has put India's stance under scrutiny.

- UNDEF was created by UN Secretary - General Kofi A. Annan in 2005 as a United Nations General Trust Fund to support democratization efforts around the world.
- UNDEF funds projects that empower civil society, promote human rights, and encourage the participation of all groups in democratic processes. The large majority of UNDEF funds go to local civil society organizations.
- UNDEF subsists entirely on voluntary contributions from Governments.
- **India is its founding member.**

UN STATISTICAL COMMISSION

#INTERNATIONALORGANIZATIONS

India has been elected to the highest statistical body of the United Nations for a four-year term beginning January 1, 2024.

- The United Nations Statistical Commission, established in 1947, by UN Economic and Social Council (UN ECOSOC).
- It is an intergovernmental organization which is the highest decision-making body for international statistical activities, responsible for setting of statistical standards and the development of concepts and methods, including their implementation at the national and international level.
- It consists of 24 member countries of the United Nations **elected** by the United Nations Economic and Social Council on the basis of an equitable geographical distribution.
- Its headquarters is situated at New York, United States of America.

CARICOM

#REGIONALGROUPING

#INTERNATIONALORGANIZATIONS

- The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) is an **intergovernmental** organization consisting of 15 member states.
- Its members include: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia,

Saint Vincent and Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago

- It was **established in 1973** with its secretariat at **Georgetown, Guyana.**
- Its primary objective is to promote economic integration and cooperation among its members, ensure that the benefits of integration are equitably shared, and coordinate foreign policy.

CENTRAL AMERICAN INTEGRATION SYSTEM (SICA)

#REGIONALGROUPING

#INTERNATIONALORGANIZATIONS

- It is the institutional framework of Regional Integration in Central America, created by the States of **Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama.**
- Subsequently, Belize and Dominican Republic joined as a full member.
- SICA's **Secretariat** is located in the **Republic of El Salvador.**
- SICA was established on December 13, 1991, by the signing of the Protocol to the Charter of the Organization of Central American States (ODECA) or **Tegucigalpa Protocol**, and formally came into operation on February 1, 1993.

RACCOON STEALER

#CYBERSECURITY

#INTERNATIONALORGANIZATIONS

Raccoon Stealer, an information-stealing malware, was used to target eight Central government entities, including Central Paramilitary Forces and the Income Tax Department.

- **Raccoon Stealer** is an information stealer malware which is usually delivered through email that retrieves sensitive data from infected machines.
- **Malware as a Service (MaaS)** is a type of cybercrime model where malware is offered for sale or rent by cyber criminals as a service.

- **Malware is malicious software** specifically designed to exploit vulnerabilities in computer systems or networks. These services typically are available on the dark web. They are purchased to carry out various malicious activities, such as stealing sensitive information, disrupting computer systems, or encrypting data and demanding a ransom to unlock it.

INDIAN RANSOMWARE REPORT 2022

- It is **released by CERT-IN**, specific to India's cyber space.
- There is 53% increase in Ransomware incidents reported in 2022 Year over Year.
- IT & ITeS was majorly impacted sector followed by Finance and Manufacturing.
- Variant wise, **Lockbit was majorly seen variant** in the Indian context followed by Makop and DJVU/Stop ransomware.

ANTI-SPYWARE DECLARATION

#CYBERSECURITY

#INTERNATIONALORGANIZATIONS

In a first, US and 10 other nations issue declaration against spyware use

- Countries involved in the declaration are Australia, Canada, Costa Rica, Denmark, France, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States.
- The declaration aims to curb the marketability of spyware by taking concrete measures.
- It commits to preventing the export of software, technology, and equipment to end-users who are likely to engage in malicious cyber activities, including unauthorized intrusion into information systems.
- **Spyware** is a Software designed to collect information about a user's online activities without their knowledge or consent to steal sensitive information (like financial statements and passwords).
- **Zero Click Attack:** Zero-click cyberattacks exploit vulnerabilities in operating systems to compromise a device without the need for any action from the

owner, unlike other attack methods such as phishing or smishing that rely on social engineering tactics to trick people into clicking malicious links or initiating downloads that appear to be legitimate.

BRICS OWN CURRENCY

#REGIONALORGANIZATION

#INTERNATIONALORGANIZATIONS

The BRICS nations are in the process of creating a new medium for payments - established on a strategy that "does not defend the dollar or euro."

- The new currency would be secured by gold and other commodities such as rare-earth elements.
- It could reduce the world's dependence on the US dollar and the Euro.
- **De-dollarization:** This term denotes the trend among nations to decrease their dependence on the US dollar as a currency reserve, means of transaction, and standard of measurement.
- US dollar was given the coveted status by the Bretton Woods system established after the Second World War.

2ND NORTH SEA SUMMIT 2023

#REGIONALGROUPING

#INTERNATIONALORGANIZATIONS

Nine European countries are holding a summit Monday aimed at scaling up wind power generation in North Sea.

- Its aim is to harness the full energy and industrial potential of the North Sea and make it the largest powerhouse of Europe.
- The North Sea countries aim to collectively reach 120 gigawatts (GW) of offshore wind generation capacity by 2030 and 300 GW by 2050.
- Participating Countries: **Denmark, France, Belgium, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Norway, Netherlands and the UK.**
- **1st North Sea Summit** held in 2022 at Esbjerg, Denmark.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

MCQS

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Vibrant Village Program:

1. It is a central sector scheme for development of critical infrastructure and livelihood opportunities.
2. It is applicable in all the border states of the country.

Which of the following statements is/are correct

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| (a) 1 only | (b) 2 only |
| (c) Both 1 and 2 | (d) Neither 1 nor 2 |

Q2. Consider the following statements regarding UN Women:

1. It is a part of UN organisation and has been in existence since its inception.
2. It is also a member of United Nations Development group.

Which of the following statements is/are correct?

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| (a) 1 only | (b) 2 only |
| (c) Both 1 and 2 | (d) Neither 1 nor 2 |

Q3. Consider the following statements regarding Indian Ransomware report:

1. The report has been released by CERT-in.
2. There has been a decline in overall ransomware incidences.
3. Spyware are software designed to collect information about a user's online activities without their knowledge or consent to steal sensitive information.

Which of the following statements is/are correct

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| (a) 1 and 2 only | (b) 2 and 3 only |
| (c) 1 and 3 only | (d) 1, 2 and 3 |

Q4. Abyei region was in news recently, it is located in which country:

- | | |
|----------|-------------|
| (a) Chad | (b) Eritrea |
| (c) Chad | (d) Sudan |

Q5. Port Sudan was in news recently, it opens up in the

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| (a) Mediterranean Sea | (b) Red Sea |
| (c) Gulf of Aqaba | (d) Gulf of Aden |

DESCRIPTIVE QUESTIONS

- Q1. "The recent attack in Dantewada highlights that the problem of Left Wing Extremism still provides formidable challenge to India's internal security". In the light of the statement identify the causes behind the movement and the government steps that have been taken in this regard?
- Q2. "The formalisation of boundary agreement between China and Bhutan will have strategic security impact on India". In the light of the statement identify the challenges posed by such an agreement and also highlight the interdependence of Bhutan and India on each other.

Answers : 1-d, 2-b, 3-c, 4-d, 5-b

SOCIETY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

GS PAPER I & GS PAPER II (MAIN)



Raja Kumar

SURROGACY

#WOMEN ISSUES #HEALTH

PRIMARY SOURCE pib

Recently the High Court of Karnataka has evolved "triple tests" for considering the plea of a couple to have a child through altruistic surrogacy.

SURROGACY (REGULATION) ACT, 2021

- **Definition:** Defines surrogacy as a practice where a woman gives birth to a child for an intending couple with the intention to hand over child after birth to intending couple.
- **Regulation of surrogacy:** Allows only altruistic surrogacy, which involves no monetary compensation to surrogate mother other than medical expenses and insurance coverage during pregnancy.
- **Eligibility criteria for intending couple:** Surrogacy is permitted only for those intending married Indian couples who suffer from proven infertility.
- **Eligibility criteria for surrogate mother:**
 - Surrogate mother has to be a close relative of the intending couple
 - Can surrogate only once in her lifetime
 - Surrogate mother cannot provide her own gametes for surrogacy
- **Parentage and abortion of surrogate child:**
 - A child born out of a surrogacy procedure will be deemed to be biological child of intending couple.
 - An abortion of surrogate child requires written consent of surrogate mother and authorisation of appropriate authority.
- **Regulation of surrogacy clinics:** Surrogacy clinics are mandated to get registered by appropriate authority. Central and State governments shall constitute

National Surrogacy Board (NSB) and State Surrogacy Boards (SSB), respectively to advise govt on policy matters relating to surrogacy and laying down code of conduct for surrogacy clinics.

CONCERNS

- Deny this opportunity to LGBTQ+ persons, live-in couples and single parents.
 - Altruistic surrogacy is paternalistic and doesn't respect the bodily autonomy of women. It expects a woman to go through the physical and emotional tolls of surrogacy free of cost and only out of 'compassion'.
 - Blanket ban on commercial surrogacy may lead to creation of unregulated, exploitative underground / black markets.
 - The act didn't define 'close relative', which is a condition to be fulfilled by the surrogate mother.
 - Restricting surrogacy option to intending couple denies reproductive liberty to them.
 - Intending couple don't have final say in the consent to abort a surrogate child, even if the child being born out of surrogacy arrangement is at the risk of physical or mental abnormalities.
- High Court has evolved the triple tests -- genetic test, physical test, and economic test to help a couple facing legal hurdles to have a surrogate child under Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021.
- Requirement of genetic relation between the surrogate mother and the couple.
 - It shouldn't involve any monetary compensation except for medical expenses.
 - The couple must undergo a physical evaluation to ensure they are physically capable of managing the child.

MENACE OF MANUAL SCAVENGING

#VULNERABLE SECTIONS #WELFARE MECHANISM

PRIMARY
SOURCE

hindustantimes

SECONDARY
SOURCE

EPW

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has taken suo moto cognisance of media reports about the deaths of seven sanitation workers in two different incidents in Jhajjar and Bharuch districts of Haryana and Gujarat, respectively on April 4.

Manual scavenging is the practice of removing human excreta by hand from sewers or septic tanks. India banned the practice under the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 (PEMSR). The Act bans the use of any individual for manually cleaning, carrying, disposing of or otherwise handling in any manner, human excreta till its disposal.

Major features of Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013:

- The Act prohibits the employment of manual scavengers, the manual cleaning of sewers and septic tanks without protective equipment, and the construction of insanitary latrines.
- It seeks to rehabilitate manual scavengers and provide for their alternative employment.
- Each local authority, cantonment board and railway authority is responsible for surveying insanitary latrines within its jurisdiction. They shall also construct a number of sanitary community latrines.
- Each occupier of insanitary latrines shall be responsible for converting or demolishing the latrine at his own cost. If he fails to do so, the local authority shall convert the latrine and recover the cost from him.
- Offences under the act shall be cognizable and non-bailable.

REASONS FOR PERSISTENCE OF MANUAL SCAVENGING:

• **Narrow definition of Manual scavengers:**

- Under the act, "manual scavenger" means a person engaged or employed, at the commencement of this Act or at any time thereafter, by an individual or a local authority or an agency or a contractor,

for manually cleaning, carrying, disposing of, or otherwise handling in any manner, human excreta in an insanitary latrine or in an open drain or pit into which the human excreta from the insanitary latrines is disposed of, or on a railway track or in such other spaces or premises, as the Central Government or a State Government may notify, before the excreta fully decomposes in such manner as may be prescribed, and the expression "manual scavenging" shall be construed accordingly.

- The definition of manual scavengers as per the Act above is narrow and excludes a wide variety of work done by diverse people in terms of numbers employed, gender, and location. The current definition describes them as a single amorphous category, but leaves out other types of sanitation work such as drain cleaning or even the cleaning of toilets by domestic help; septic tank cleaners, sewage treatment plant workers. (It excluded many sanitation workers)
- a person engaged or employed to clean excreta with the help of such devices and using such protective gear, as the Central Government may notify in this behalf, shall not be deemed to be a "manual scavenger".
- **Inadequate rehabilitation:** Though the act mandated rehabilitation of manual scavengers, they were unable to take up non-sanitation related occupations due to social stigma attached to them. Even the mechanisation of sanitation work had little impact as the underlying issue of sanitation work being a caste-based occupation will not be tackled by making descendants of manual scavengers continue the same work in a different form. So, mechanisation can only save them from health risks but may not address the stigma or results in occupational mobility
- **Lack of legal responsibility on the government:** Neither the state nor the centre is mandated under the Bill to provide financial assistance for the conversion of insanitary latrines. This adversely impact implementation of the act.
- **Failure of swachh Bharat to eradicate manual scavenging:** Toilets that are built under SBM are mainly pit based toilets that are not linked to the sewer network. As long as households remain unconvinced about or unmotivated to construct twin

pit latrines, the risky work of manual scavenging (performed largely by Dalits) is likely to continue.

A technical solution to a social problem will have limited impact.

CHILD ADOPTION

#VULNERABLE SECTIONS #WELFARE MECHANISM

PRIMARY
SOURCE

The Indian
EXPRESS

Recently the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) filed an intervention application in the Supreme Court in the matter of **Amburi Roy vs Union of India**, opposing adoption by gay couples.

The petition that the commission has opposed is seeking declaration of unconstitutionality of Section 5(2) and 5(3) of the Adoption Regulations, 2022.

Section 5 of adoption regulations deals with eligibility criteria for prospective adoptive parents, their physical, emotional, mental and financial capability as well as criminal records or records of abuse.

- Section 5(2) A says a child can be adopted only if "there is consent of both the spouses for the adoption in case of a married couple". The regulation goes on to say that a single woman can adopt a child of any gender, but "a single male shall not be eligible to adopt a girl child".
- Section 5(3) says that no child shall be given in adoption to a couple unless they have at least two years of stable marital relationship, except in the case of relatives or step-parent adoption.

CARA

- Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) is a statutory body of Ministry of Women & Child Development.
- CARA attained the status of a Statutory Body in 2016 under JJ Act, 2015.
- It functions as the nodal body for adoption of Indian children and is mandated to monitor and regulate in-country and inter-country adoptions in accordance with the provisions of the Hague Convention on Inter-country Adoption, 1993, ratified by Government of India in 2003.
- CARA is also mandated to frame regulations on adoption-related matters from time to time as per

Section 68 of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015.

- In 2018, CARA has allowed individuals in a live-in relationship to adopt children from and within India.

BENEFITS OF ADOPTION

- Adoption can provide a child with the critical resource needed for a healthy and stable living.
- Allows mother to continue pursuing their goals without putting their education or career on hold.
- Relieves the financial and emotional stress of unplanned pregnancy and single parenting
- Gives an opportunity to help hopeful parents who would not be able to have a child otherwise

NCPCR

- National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) is a statutory body under the Commissions for Protection of Child Rights (CPCR) Act, 2005
- The Commission works under the aegis of Ministry of Women and Child Development, GOI
- The body is mandated to ensure that all Laws, Policies, Programmes, and Administrative Mechanisms are in consonance with the Child Rights perspective as enshrined in the Constitution of India and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

MATERNITY BENEFIT ACT

#VULNERABLE SECTIONS #WOMEN ISSUES

PRIMARY
SOURCE

Ministry of Women &
Child Development

SECONDARY
SOURCE

EPW

Recently Supreme Court agreed to hear a PIL challenging constitutional validity of Section 5(4) of the Maternity Benefit Act (1961).

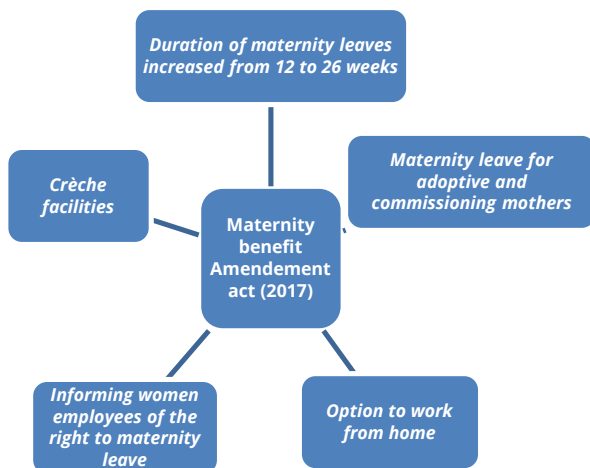
Maternity benefit act provides for maternity benefits to working mothers. The original 1961 legislation did not have specific provisions for mothers who adopt, and these were inserted with the 2017 amendment to the Maternity Benefit Act.

According to **Section 5(4)** of the amended Act, "A woman who legally adopts a child below the age of three months or a commissioning mother shall be entitled to maternity benefit for a period of twelve weeks from the date the child is handed over to the adopting mother or the commissioning mother."

PIL CHALLENGE

The PIL challenges this provision on grounds of being “discriminatory” and “arbitrary” towards adoptive mothers.

MATERNITY BENEFIT (AMENDMENT) ACT (2017)



Although generous maternity leaves make it easier for women to combine work and family care, it can lead employers to discriminate against women in jobs because of high cost of maternity leave.

Gender-balanced measures:

- Childcare shouldn't be treated as sole responsibility of women. So, it is advisable to give non-transferable paternal leaves or combined parental leave.
- Ex:** Iceland gives 9 months parental leave- 3 months for mother, 3 months for father and the rest 3 can be shared between them.
- Companies are less likely to discriminate against women if the govt bears the cost of maternity leave to some extent, especially for start-ups and small firms.
- India largely lacks proper creche facilities and childcare centres. So, both govt and Private investment should be encouraged in early childcare sector.
- Flexible work timings for both sexes can additionally help with work-life balance.

NATIONAL HEALTH ACCOUNTS

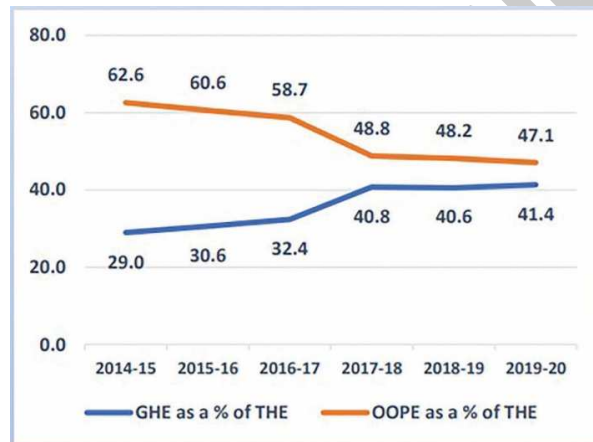
#HEALTH

PRIMARY SOURCE

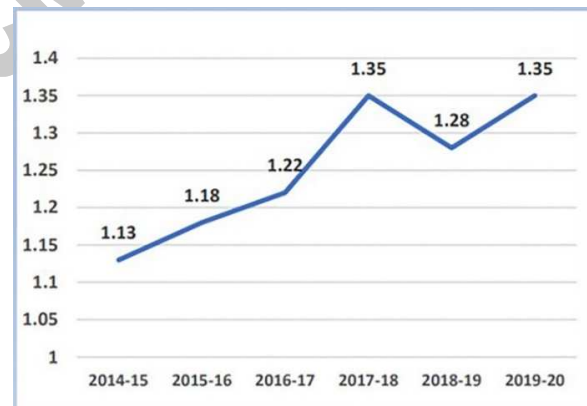
The Health Ministry released the National Health Accounts Estimates for India (2019-20) and noted that there has been significant decline in share of out-of-pocket expenditure (OOPE) in total health expenditure.

NATIONAL HEALTH ACCOUNTS ESTIMATES FOR INDIA (2019-20):

- Total Health Expenditure (THE) for India is estimated to be around 3.3% of GDP and ₹4,863 per capita.
- Share of Out-of-Pocket Expenditure (OOPE) in Total Health Expenditure declined from 62.6% in 2014-15 to 47.1% in 2019-20.
- Share of Government Health Expenditure in Total Health Expenditure increases from 29% (2014-15) to 41.4% (2019-20).
- Government Health Expenditure's share in country's total GDP increases from 1.13% (2014-15) to 1.35% (2019-20).



Government Health Expenditure and Out-of-pocket expenditure as % of Total Health Expenditure (%)



Government Health Expenditure as % of GDP

Despite the significant increase in government expenditure on Health, it is still way below the target of National Health Policy (2017)- 2.5% of GDP.

NEED FOR GOVERNMENT HEALTH EXPENDITURE

- **Preventive Healthcare:** Unlike private Health expenditure, public spending invests heavily on preventive health care services like Immunization and Nutrition which ultimately reduces the expenditure burden on curative Healthcare.
- **Reduce Catastrophic expenditure:** In a country like India whose workforce is predominantly concentrated in informal sector and devoid of social security net, there is more probability for incidence of catastrophic health expenditure on its population. Hence, significant public spending on health is necessary to reduce catastrophic health expenditure and incidence of poverty as a result of it.
- **Limitations of Private participation:**
 - **Affordability:** Since private institutions require heavy investment in infrastructure, advanced equipment and quality professionals, health services are not affordable. This causes heavy out-of-pocket expenditure by households, especially in secondary & tertiary care.
 - **Issues in Private insurance:** Adverse selection (asymmetric information between buyer and insurer) and moral hazard (reckless attitude of insured consumers), lead to higher pay-out by insurance companies. This cost is adjusted by increasing premium prices, which makes health insurance less attractive for the majority of Indians.
 - **Issues with private participation in public-funded health protection schemes:**
 - **Supply-induced demand:** When patients are protected under schemes like PMJAY, private hospitals can resort to over-prescription of medication, non-standardised tests, and a longer duration of therapy to generate additional revenue.
 - **Low-reimbursement tariffs set by the government deter genuine private hospitals to be part of such schemes.**
 - **Overpriced drugs:** Private firms have invested heavily in R&D for new drugs, especially for secondary and tertiary care; hence, the price of patented drugs is passed on to consumers.

Hence, private participation can only complement but can't replace public spending on Health to achieve the goal of Universal Health Coverage.

NATIONAL CREDIT FRAMEWORK

#EDUCATION #HIGHER EDUCATION

PRIMARY SOURCE pib

The Government developed National Credit Framework (NCrF) to integrate learning on all dimensions i.e., academics, vocational skills and experiential learning including relevant experience and professional levels acquired. The National Credit Framework (NCrF) provides for Assignment, Accumulation, Storage, Transfer & Redemption of Credits through Academic Bank of Credits.

PROPOSED BENEFITS FOR VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. **Students:** NCrF will ensure Flexibility in the duration of study/ courses through provisions of multiple entries and exit/work options as well as pave the path for creditisation of all learning hours, including academic, vocational and experiential learning. It will also give the provision for lifelong learning – any time anywhere learning: It will also help students by:
 - Establishing multidisciplinary and holistic education with flexible curricula
 - Removing the hard distinction between the education stream and making study choices respectful, allowing for more than one award in the same period
 - Removing the distinction between arts, science, social sciences, commerce, etc
 - Giving student credits for every academic/ skill/ experience
 - Enhancing the scope of core learning to include foundational and cognitive both
2. **Institutions:** NCrF will bring about a unification of higher education institutions to promote multidisciplinary education, creating a diverse and rich students knowledge base. It will also help in:
 - Promoting stronger collaboration between institutions
 - Making credit mechanism simpler and uniform

- Increasing focus on research and innovation
- Promoting digital learning, blended learning, and open distance learning
- Leveraging the institutional infrastructure

3. Government: NCeF is expected to assist the government to increase the enrolment of students, helping to fulfil the national vision of complementing the demographic dividend and transforming India into the Skill Capital of the World. It will also:

- Making vocational education and training/ skilling aspirational
- Highly educated and trained workforce for Atmanirbhar Bharat

4. Industry: NCeF will allow students to attain NSQF-approved foundational skills developed by industry and be more employable. The provision of micro-credentials will allow integration of quick educational upgradation/ up-skilling. It will also help in:

- Re-Skilling and up-skilling of existing employees/ engineers
- Making students more employable by enabling a more holistic design of the study
- Creating a multi/ cross-sectoral skilled pool of employable youth

National Credit Framework is operationalised through Academic Bank of Credit Scheme.

NEED FOR ACADEMIC BANK OF CREDIT SCHEME

India has a long tradition of holistic and multidisciplinary learning, from universities such as Takshashila and Nalanda, to the extensive literatures of India combining subjects across fields. Integrating the humanities and arts with Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) improves learning outcomes, creativity, innovation, critical thinking, social awareness and responsibility among the students. National Education policy (2020) also suggested the need for Holistic and multi-disciplinary education to lead India into 21st century and 4th Industrial revolution.

However, not every Higher education institution in India can provide such a multidisciplinary education due to **shortage of faculty, limited financial resources and lack of institutional autonomy in setting curriculum.**

To overcome these challenges, National education policy suggested **Academic Bank of credits (ABC)** scheme. UGC has recently notified the scheme.

ACADEMIC BANK OF CREDIT SCHEME

- Academic Bank of Credits (ABC) is a virtual/digital storehouse that contains the information of the credits earned by individual students throughout their academic journey.
- Academic Bank of Credits shall provide to every student the facility to open unique or individual Academic Bank Account in digital form. When a student pursues any course and clears exams, credits will be automatically awarded to them. Institutions need to fill out the details and upload the deposits in the students' Academic Credit Bank's account on the digital portal.
- ABC will allow students of undergraduate and postgraduate degree courses to exit the course and enter within a stipulated period. The student can earn up to 50 per cent credits from outside the college/university where she/he is enrolled for the degree/diploma programme.

Advantages:

- **Option to exit and enter:** If any student needs to get back to education after a break or has to relocate to another city, they can easily 'carry' forward their completed credits.
- **Wider choice to students:**
- As multiple institutes are connected to the ABC portal, one can be formally enrolled in university 'A' but can choose to do some courses from university 'B', some more from university 'C' and so on and all of these would count towards the student's degree.
- Students also can join online courses offered by MOOCs like SWAYAM or NPTEL (National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning) and add these credits to my ABC.
- **Reduces the burden on institutions:** It reduces the burden on any single institute to float an unmanageable number of courses and increases the competition among institutes.

PROBLEMS

- **Grade inflation:** Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) platforms such as SWAYAM and NPTEL are 'supposedly designed' for large enrolments. One of the metrics for success of these courses is student performance in the final assessment. Thus, it would be in the interest of course coordinators to award scores liberally and paint a rosy picture.

- **Dilution of Quality of degrees:** An average student from premier institute like IIT/IISER may find it tempting to opt out of a challenging course in my institute and use the ABC scheme to replace it with an equivalent course from another
 - university where it would be far easier to obtain good grades.
- **Contraction of teaching posts in small institutes:** The ABC scheme specifies that students can avail up to 50% of credits from other institutes. students avail these credits outside the parent college, they need not enrol for the corresponding in-house courses. As the number of teaching posts in any higher education institute are calculated on the basis of student enrolment numbers, when a large fraction of students do not enrol for the courses offered by them it might result in co traction of teaching posts in those institutes.

As a whole, this scheme has all the right and laudable intentions and would probably work well in a society with a more equitable distribution of resources. But in India, where the quality of education varies drastically from one institute to the next, this can lead to unmanageable academic and administrative issues in higher education institutes with brand names, and lead to a contraction in the number of teaching posts in smaller higher education institutes. The UGC must rethink expeditiously how to implement this scheme.

NEW INDIA LITERACY PROGRAM

#EDUCATION



ABOUT THE NEW INDIA LITERACY PROGRAM

- A scheme of the Ministry of Education that aims to promote literacy among non-literates in the age group of 15 and above across the country. It aims to cover 5 crore non-literates during the period from 2022-23 to 2026-27.
- Centrally Sponsored Scheme with contributions from both Centre and State governments. It will replace the SAKSHAR Bharat scheme for adult education.

COMPONENTS OF THE NEW INDIA LITERACY PROGRAM

- **Foundational Literacy and Numeracy**
- **Critical Life Skills:** These will include financial literacy, digital literacy, commercial skills, health awareness, childcare and family welfare education.
- **Vocational Skills Development:** For increasing employment potential.
- **Basic Education:** Includes preparatory, middle and secondary stage equivalency.
- **Continuing Education:** Includes engaging holistic adult education courses in arts, sciences, technology, culture, sports and recreation and other topics of interest or use to local learners.

Salient Features of the New India Literacy Program

- **Volunteerism:** The scheme is mainly based on volunteerism for teaching and learning. Volunteers can also register through a mobile app for this purpose. Involvement of school students, pre-service students of Higher Education Institutions, school teachers, Anganwadi and ASHA workers, NYKS, NSS and NCC volunteers. To implement volunteerism through online mode. However, training, orientation, and workshops for volunteers, may be organized through face-to-face mode.
- **Priority to saturation in literacy:** The age cohort of 15- 35 will be saturated first followed by ages 35 and above. Priority is to be given to girls and women, SC/ST/OBC/Minorities, Persons with special needs/Nomadic/Construction workers etc. who can substantially and immediately benefit from adult education.
- **School to be a unit for implementation of the scheme.** Schools are to be used for conducting surveys of beneficiaries and voluntary teachers (VTs).
- **Use of ICT** and online implementation of the scheme through Online Teaching Learning and Assessment System (OTLAS)
- **All Material and resources through digital modes –** TV, Radio, Cell phone-based free/open-source apps, portals etc.
- **Performance Grading Index (PGI)** for States/UTs and district level to show achievement in the implementation of the scheme giving weight to both physical and financial progress through the UDISE portal.

- Further, other modes like TV, Radio, Samajik Chetna Kendra etc. are also to be used for the dissemination of Foundational Literacy and Numeracy.

Beneficiary identification method

- The beneficiaries under the scheme are identified through a door-to-door survey on Mobile App by the surveyors in the States/UTs.
- The non-literate can also avail of the benefit of the scheme through direct registration from any place through the mobile app.
- All non-literate above 15 years of age can avail the benefits of the scheme.

NATIONAL TELE MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMME OF INDIA

#HEALTH #MENTAL HEALTH



India crosses a significant milestone for the National Tele Mental Health Programme of India: Over 100,000 calls received on the Tele-MANAS Helpline since its launch in October 2022.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL TELE MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMME OF INDIA

- Announced in Budget of 2022-23
- It is aimed at establishing a network of 23 tele-mental health centres of excellence to provide people with better access to quality mental health counselling and care services.
- These centres will function with NIMHANS as the nodal centre for its successful implantation
- The International Institute of Information Technology-Bangalore provides the requisite technological support.
- The Tele-Mental Health Assistance and Nationally Actionable Plan through States (T-MANAS) initiative was announced by the NIMHANS under the NTMHP to provide free round-the-clock tele-mental health services in all parts of the country, particularly to people living in remote or under-served areas.
- The NTMHP also envisions linking tele-mental health services with other health-related schemes and services provided by the government under the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (National digitalization of health records and services) and the e-Sanjivani platform (National teleconsultation service).
- The government launched a mobile app called "MANAS Mitra" aimed at promoting mental well-being among people.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

MCQS

Q1. Which of the following statement/s is /are correct about the National Tele Mental Health Programme of India (NTMHP)

1. It was launched in Budget 2022-23
2. It is aimed at establishing a network of 23 tele-mental health centres
3. Tele-Mental Health Assistance and Nationally Actionable Plan through States (T-MANAS) is one of its components.
4. MANAS Mitra is a mobile app launched under (NTMHP)

Select the answer using the code given below

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| (a) 1 and 2 only | (b) 2 only |
| (c) 1, 2 and 3 only | (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4 |

Q2. 'SWAYAM', an initiative of the Government of India, aims at

- a) promoting Self-Help Groups in rural areas
- b) providing financial and technical assistance to young start-up entrepreneurs
- c) promoting the education and health of adolescent girls

- (d) providing affordable and quality education to the citizens for free

Q3. Which of the following statements is/are correct regarding the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017?

1. The maximum period of maternity leaves of 26 weeks can be availed for up to two children.
2. It is applicable to facilities that employ 10 or more people, including factories, mines, plantations, shops, and establishments.
3. The Maternity Benefit Amendment Act makes creche facility mandatory for every establishment employing 100 or more employees.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- | | |
|------------|------------------|
| (a) 1 only | (b) 1 and 2 only |
| (c) 3 only | (d) 2 and 3 only |

Q4. Consider the following statements about National Health Accounts (2019):

1. Share of Out-of-Pocket Expenditure (OOPE) in Total Health Expenditure of India increased in the last 5 years (2014 to 2019)
2. Share of Government Health Expenditure in Total Health Expenditure increases in the last 5 years (2014 to 2019)

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| (a) 1 only | (b) 2 only |
| (c) Both 1 and 2 | (d) Neither 1 nor 2 |

Q5. Consider the following statements about Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA):

1. CARA is a statutory body
2. It functions as the nodal body for adoption of Indian children both within and outside India

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| (a) 1 only | (b) 2 only |
| (c) Both 1 and 2 | (d) Neither 1 nor 2 |

DESCRIPTIVE QUESTIONS

- Q1.** Critically examine the role of the public expenditure in achieving the goal of Universal Healthcare in India.
- Q2.** Though the Maternity benefit amendment act 2017 intended to make it easier for women to combine work and family care, it has potential to create barriers to women entry in the labour force. Examine

Answers: 1-d, 2-d, 3-a, 4-b, 5-c

GEOGRAPHY, ENVIRONMENT, BIODIVERSITY & DISASTER MANAGEMENT

GS PAPER (PRELIMS) AND GS PAPER I & III (MAIN)



Vidushi Tyagi

SC MODIFIES ORDER ON ESZ AROUND PROTECTED FORESTS

#GENERALSTUDIES III #ENVIRONMENT
#MAINS EXHAUSTIVE

PRIMARY
SOURCE THE HINDU

The Supreme Court modified its judgment to have mandatory Eco Sensitive Zones (ESZ) of a minimum one kilometre around protected forests, national parks and wildlife sanctuaries across the country.

WHAT IS THE CONCEPT OF ECOLOGICALLY SENSITIVE ZONE (ESZ)?

- The 2002 Wildlife Conservation Strategy envisaged lands within 10 km of the boundaries of national parks and wildlife sanctuaries to be notified as ecologically fragile zones under Section 3(2)(v) of the Environment Protection Act 1986.
- Ecologically sensitive zones (ESZ) are intended to protect 'protected areas' – national parks and wildlife sanctuaries – by transitioning from an area of lower protection to an area of higher protection.
- ESZs are effectively insulating layers where humans and nature can be at peace with each other. Thus they act as a buffer and 'shock absorber' to the protected areas.



Gaurav Tripathi

- Besides, in order to protect the biodiversity in areas having ecological significance, Ministry also notifies Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESA), which has unique biological resources, which require special attention for their conservation.

WHAT IS THE PROCEDURE TO NOTIFY ESZ?

- Survey and identification of ESZs are conducted by the respective State Governments for consideration of the Central Government as per the guidelines formulated by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC).
- On the basis of proposals and recommendations of the State Government, Ministry (MoEF&CC) notifies the ESZs under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

EVOLUTION OF THE ESZ IN INDIA

- 2002 - Wildlife Conservation Strategy envisaged lands within 10 km of the boundaries of national parks and wildlife sanctuaries to be notified as ecologically fragile zones under Section 3(2)(v) of the Environment Protection Act 1986 .
- 2005 - National Board for Wildlife decided to delineate site-specific ESZs to regulate specific activities instead of prohibiting them. So it asked the States and UTs to propose ESZs.
- 2006 - Supreme Court directed the MoEF&CC to have the States' and UTs' proposals submitted within four weeks.
- 2010 - No guidelines by MoEF&CC. Supreme court intervened.

- 2011 – Guidelines by MoEFCC came:
 - A committee consisting of the Wildlife Warden, an ecologist, and an official from the local government was to determine the extent of each ESZ, the nature of environmental concerns to be addressed and ways to address them
 - The Chief Wildlife Warden was to then list the activities that were to be prohibited, to be restricted with safeguards and to be permitted.
 - Finally, the state government would submit this, the geographical description of the area and the biodiversity values, the rights and entitlements of local communities, and their economic potential and implications for their livelihoods, as a proposal to the MoEFCC for notification.
 - To monitor compliance with the various provisions of each notification, a State had to set up a monitoring committee for each ESZ; headed by the District Collector as the chairperson.

- 2012 – ESZ notification began.

WHAT WAS THE RECENT SUPREME COURT ORDER?

- The court said that the MoEFCC guidelines are also to be implemented in the area proposed in the draft notification awaiting finalisation and within a 10-km radius of yet-to-be-proposed protected areas.
- It mandated a minimum 1-km eco-sensitive zone around national parks or wildlife sanctuaries
- The Court also allowed States to increase or decrease the minimum width of ESZs in the public interest.
- Court vested the powers to ensure compliance with the guidelines with the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF) and the Home Secretary of the State/UT.
- The court also ordered that no new permanent structure could come up for any purpose within an ESZ.
- All the activities permitted by the guidelines and which are already being carried out can continue only if the PCCF grants permission, and that too within six months of the court's order. This period has already expired.

WHAT IS THE ISSUE NOW?

- These court's directions have put the lives of many people in the hands of the PCCF. Several concerns were sparked regarding the habitation falling under the ESZ zone. Their rights are also protected under Forest rights act 2006 and PESA act 1996.

- If no permanent construction is to be permitted for any purpose, a villager who is desirous to reconstruct his house would not be permitted.
- Similarly, if the government decides to construct schools, dispensaries, anganwadi and other basic structures for improvement of the life of the villagers, the same would also not be permitted."

WHAT IS THE MODIFIED ORDER?

- 2022 order will not be applicable to ESZs in respect to which draft and final notifications have been issued by the MoEFCC, and where proposals for such notifications have been received by the ministry.
- It will also not be applicable where the national parks and sanctuaries are located on inter-state borders or share common boundaries.
- But it underlined that no mining would be allowed, either within national parks and sanctuaries or in a 1-km radius.

FIRST WATERBODIES CENSUS

#GS-I #GEOGRAPHY

#PRE-NUGGETS

PRIMARY
SOURCE

THE HINDU

SECONDARY
SOURCE

The Indian
EXPRESS

As a step towards making policies for the judicious use and conservation of water, the Ministry of Jal Shakti, Department of water resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation has taken the "first census of water bodies (2018-2019)" under the centrally sponsored scheme, "Irrigation Census" in convergence with the 6th Minor Irrigation Census for 2017-18.

- The objective of the census of water bodies is to develop a national database for all water bodies by collecting information on all important aspects of the subject including their size, condition, status of encroachment, use, storage capacity etc

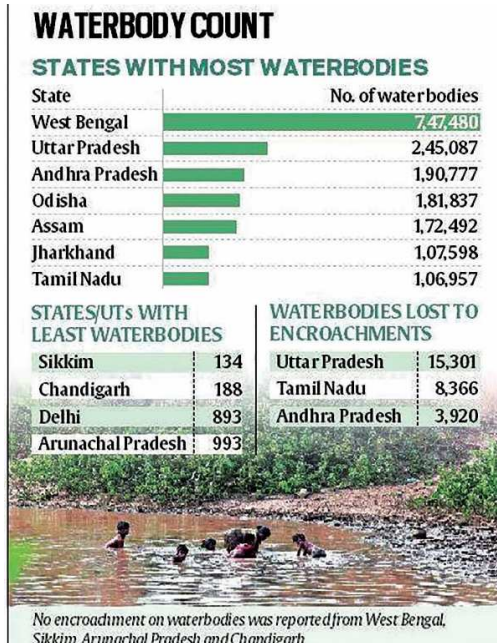
WHAT IS WATERBODY?

- The **census defines a waterbody** as "all natural or man-made units bounded on all sides with some or no masonry work used for storing water for irrigation or other purposes, ex industrial, pisciculture, domestic/drinking, recreation, religious, ground water recharge etc

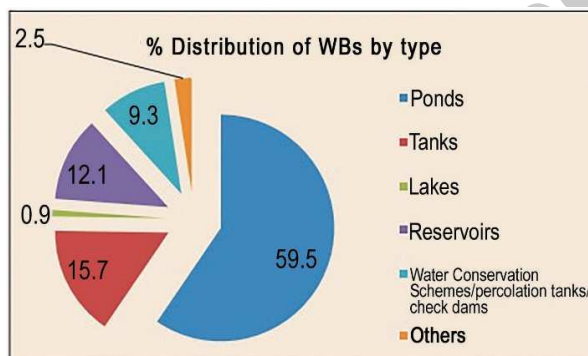
- A structure where water from ice-melt, streams, springs, rain or drainage of water from residential or other areas is accumulated or water is stored by diversion from a stream, nala or river will also be treated as waterbody.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FIRST CENSUS OF WATERBODIES

- India has 24.24 lakh waterbodies like ponds, tanks and lakes, with **West Bengal** accounting for the **most (7.47 lakh)** and **Sikkim** the **least (134)**



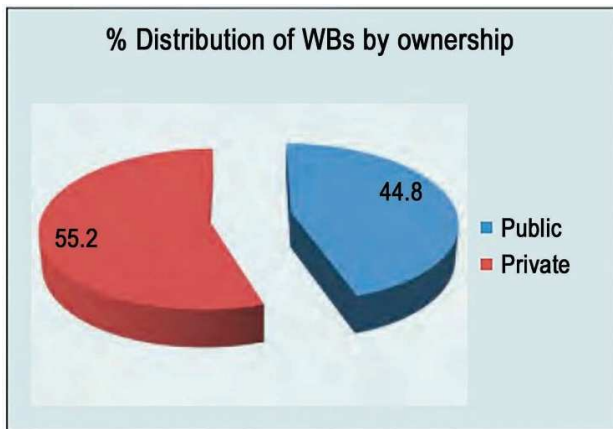
- Out of total number of waterbodies- **97.1% (23,55,055)** are in rural areas and only **2.9% (69,485)** in urban areas.
- 59.5 per cent** (14,42,993) of waterbodies are **ponds**, followed by **tanks** (15.7 per cent i.e. 3,81,805), **reservoirs** (12.1 per cent i.e. 2,92,280), water conservation schemes/percolation tanks/check dams (9.3% i.e. 2,26,217), lakes (0.9% i.e. 22,361) and others (2.5% i.e. 58,884)".



- West Bengal** has the highest number of **ponds and reservoirs**, whereas **Andhra Pradesh** has highest number of **tanks**. **Tamil Nadu** has the highest number of **lakes** and **Maharashtra** is the leading state with **water conservation schemes**.



- West Bengal's South 24 Parganas** has been ranked as the top district having the **highest (3.55 lakh)** number of **waterbodies** across the country
- The census also collected data on **encroachment of waterbodies for the first time**. 1.6% waterbodies out of all the enumerated waterbodies are reported to be encroached, out of which 95.4% are in rural areas and remaining 4.6% in urban areas.
- 55.2%** (13,38,735) water bodies are under **private ownership** whereas **44.8%** (10,85,805) **water bodies** are in the **public domain**.



THE THREAT OF RISING SEA LEVELS

#GENERALSTUDIES III #ENVIRONMENT

#MAINSEXHAUSTIVE

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU **SECONDARY SOURCE** World Meteorological Organization

The World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) has found in a new report, entitled 'State of the Global Climate 2022', that the world's sea level is rising at an unprecedented rate.

WHAT IS AVERAGE SEA LEVEL?

- It is the position of the air-sea interface, to which all terrestrial elevations and submarine depths are referred.
- The sea level constantly changes at every locality with the changes in tides, atmospheric pressure, and wind conditions.
- Longer-term changes in sea level are influenced by Earth's changing climates.
- Consequently, the level is better defined as mean sea level, the height of the sea surface averaged over all stages of the tide over a long period of time.

HOW SEA LEVELS ARE CHANGING NOW?

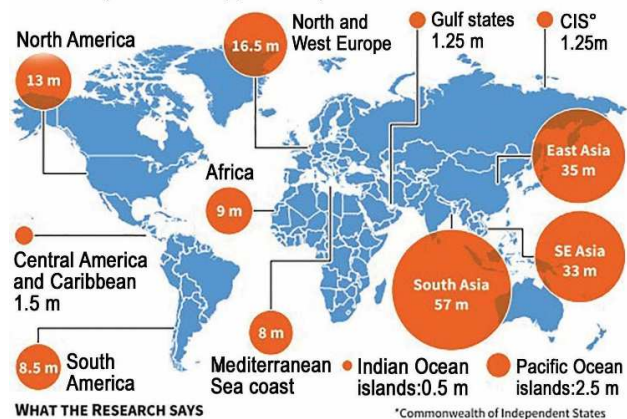
- According to the WMO report, the sea level has been rising in the three decades for which satellite altimeter data is available (1993-2022). But, while the rate of sea-level rise was 2.27 mm/year in 1993-2002, it shot up to 4.62 mm/year in 2013-2022.
- Long-term changes in global mean sea level (GMSL) are predominantly driven by three processes:

- Ice Melt:** Due to the warming atmosphere and ocean, ice sheets and mountain glaciers are melting, resulting in the addition of fresh water into the ocean.
- Thermal Expansion:** Ocean water expands as it absorbs trapped heat, causing sea levels to rise. As increasing concentrations of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases drive global warming, 90% of the 'extra' heat is stored in the oceans. This leads to ocean warming. And as the ocean heats up, it undergoes thermal expansion, which in turn leads to a rise in the GSML
- Land Water Storage:** Water that is either removed from land (through groundwater pumping, for example) or impounded on land (through dam building, for example) can cause a net change in the total water found in the ocean.

Sea level rise could hit two metres by 2100

Global sea levels could rise by more than two metres by the end of the century - resulting in the displacement of almost 200 million people - if global warming continues at its current rate, new research suggests

POPULATION DISPLACED BY 2100: Assuming two-metre rise in sea level (All numbers approximate)



WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS

■ If global temperature increase stays below 2 degree Celsius (target set by Paris Climate Agreement) On average, melting ice sheets would contribute estimated 26 cm to sea level rise by 2100

Worst-case scenario: 5% chance that contribution could be as much as 80 cm. Rise could exceed 1 m if other factors- melting glaciers and expansion of ocean water as it warms-are taken into account

■ If global temperatures increase by 5 degree Celsius (where current trajectory for economic growth continues) On average, melting ice sheets would contribute estimated 51 cm to sea level rise by 2100

Worst-case scenario: 5% chance that global sea level rise could exceed 2m- flooding up to 1.8 million sq km (1.2 % of global land area) and displacing as many as 187 million people

- According to the report, in 2005--2019, loss of glaciers and ice sheets contributed 36% to the GSML rise. Ocean warming — the phenomenon of rising mean

ocean temperatures — contributed 55%, and changes in the storage of land water contributed less than 10%.

STATE OF GLOBAL CLIMATE REPORT 2022

The WMO State of the Global Climate report 2022 focuses on key climate indicators – greenhouse gases, temperatures, sea level rise, ocean heat and acidification, sea ice and glaciers. It also highlights the impacts of climate change and extreme weather.

- Drought, floods and heatwaves affect large parts of the world and the costs are rising
- Global mean temperatures for the past 8 years have been the highest on record
- Sea level and ocean heat are at record levels – and this trend will continue for many centuries
- Antarctic sea ice falls to lowest extent on record
- Europe shatters records for glacier melt

GENERAL FACTORS BEHIND SEA-LEVEL CHANGES

- **Short-term Effects:** Variations of sea level on periods ranging from minutes to weeks that arise from processes like storm surge, wave runup, wave setup, astronomical tides and freshwater input.
- **Variability in Ocean circulation:** This includes large-scale climate signals like the seasonal cycle, El Niño-Southern Oscillation, North Atlantic Oscillation, and Pacific Decadal Oscillation. This also includes longer-term changes in ocean circulation that may occur in the future and global sea level rise associated with long-term warming of the ocean and associated expansion.
- **Glaciers:** Glaciers outside of the ice sheets account for about 1% of total ice trapped on land. These changes are expressed regionally through gravitational, rotational and deformational (GRD) changes that have a characteristic pattern, or fingerprint.
- **Land Water Storage:** Changes associated with the transfer of water between land and ocean. This includes variability in the global water cycle, groundwater withdrawal, and water impoundment.
- **Ice Sheet:** The Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets contribute to global sea level rise.
- **Subsidence:** Movement of the land at the coast (could also be uplift) in response to a range of physical processes including groundwater and hydrocarbon

withdrawal, tectonics, and glacial isostatic adjustment. These changes can vary widely in both time and space and can be associated with human activities.

WHAT CAN BE THE POSSIBLE IMPACTS OF SEA LEVEL RISE?

- **Changes in land – ocean configuration** which in turn can alter the heat absorption rates.
- **Reduced land for human activities** - as rising seas swallow more of the land cover, particularly in coastal areas, coastal communities will face an “acute shortage of land for human use”
- **Increase in cyclones** - As the GSML continues to rise, along with a rise in ocean temperatures, the chances of cyclones could increase, affecting coastal communities and leading to large economic liabilities for tropical countries such as India and South Africa, which have high population densities.
- **Increase in salinity** - more sea water could seep into the ground, leading to the groundwater — which is usually freshwater — turning more and more saline.
- All these factors will affect the **agriculture, infrastructure and Settlements.**

WHAT IS NORMAL MONSOON AND FACTORS WHICH LEAD TO WEAKENING OF MONSOON?

#GS- I #GEOGRAPHY

#MAINS EXHAUSTIVE

PRIMARY SOURCE The Indian EXPRESS

SECONDARY SOURCE THE HINDU

According to the private weather forecasting agency Skymet, India is likely to get “below normal” monsoon rains in 2023 with an increasing likelihood of El-Nino, which typically brings dry weather to Asia.

ABOUT NORMAL MONSOON

- The IMD predicts a “normal”, “below normal”, or “above normal” monsoon in relation to a benchmark “**long period average**” (LPA).
- According to the IMD, the “LPA of rainfall is the rainfall recorded over a particular region for a given interval (like month or season) average over a long period like 30 years, 50 years, etc”.
- The IMD’s prediction of a normal monsoon was based on the LPA of **the 1971-2020 period**, during which India **received 87 cm of rain** for the entire country on average.
- The IMD **maintains five rainfall distribution categories on an all-India scale**. These are:
 - **Normal or near normal**, when the percentage departure of actual rainfall is +/-10% of LPA, that is, between 96-104% of LPA;
 - **Below normal**, when departure of actual rainfall is less than 10% of LPA, that is 90-96% of LPA;
 - **Above normal**, when actual rainfall is 104-110% of LPA;
 - **Deficient**, when departure of actual rainfall is less than 90% of LPA; and
 - **Excess**, when the departure of actual rainfall is more than 110% of LPA.

FACTORS WHICH AFFECTS THE MONSOON

⇒ El Niño:

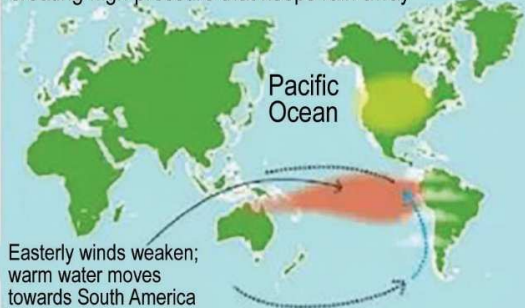
- The warming in the tropical Pacific Ocean because of El Niño **weakens the southeast trade winds** flowing to the **intertropical convergence zone over India**.
- Since these winds are the main driving force of the Indian summer monsoon, El Niño events are associated **with weak monsoons and lower than average rainfall**.
- The location of the El Niño event also influences its effects on the Indian monsoon – warming in the **central Pacific Ocean affects the Indian monsoon more** than if the warming is in the eastern Pacific Ocean.

WHAT ARE EL NINO & LA NINA YEARS

El Nino year

An irregular event of abnormal warming of eastern Pacific waters. Occurs at intervals of two to seven years

Hot it Hits Indian Monsoon | Area of rising warm air/rain shifts towards central / east Pacific. This warm air current subsidies over Indian Ocean/ India's mainland, creating high pressure that keeps rain away



Easterly winds weaken; warm water moves towards South America

La Nina year

A cold episode that usually follows the warm El Nino phenomenon. The warm equatorial ridge cools, between coasts of South America and Oceania

How it helps Indian Monsoon | Warm air/high rainfall region in West Pacific reinforces monsoon winds, invigorating rains over India.

⇒ La Niña:

- The La Niña has the **opposite effect to the El Niño** and is responsible for **stronger monsoons** and above-average rainfall.

⇒ Equatorial Indian Ocean Oscillation (EQUINOO):

- It is thought to arise as an effect of the **Indian Ocean Dipole(IOD)** and refers to **increased and decreased cloud formation** between the western and eastern equatorial Indian Ocean.
- Although the IOD was discovered only in 1999, and the EQUINOO in 2002, both have been recognised as important modulators of the Indian summer monsoon. **Positive Indian Ocean Dipole(IOD) and EQUINOO events** are associated with **more rainfall** as these events increase moisture transport from the south eastern parts of the Indian Ocean.

INDIAN OCEAN DIPOLE (IOD)

- IOD measures differences in **sea surface temperatures between the western and eastern parts of the Indian Ocean**.
- Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) is basically similar to the El Nino weather system that develops in the Pacific Ocean. It is characterized by an irregular oscillation

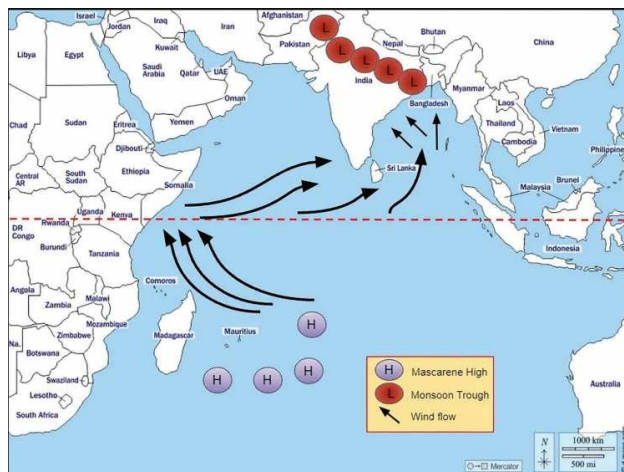
of sea-surface temperatures in the eastern and western Indian Ocean

⇒ **Atlantic sea surface temperature (SST) variability:**

- The Atlantic SST variability affects the Indian summer monsoon in the same way that the ENSO does.
- A **warming of the surface of the Atlantic Ocean weakens the monsoon**, just as cooling of the ocean's surface has the opposite effect.
- The effects of this phenomenon, also known as **the Atlantic Niño on the Indian summer monsoon** is thought to be mediated through perturbations in the jet streams above India.

⇒ **Mascarene High:**

- The Mascarene **High** is a **semi-permanent high-pressure zone** in the south Indian Ocean, about 4,000 km from India, near the Mascarene Islands.
- The Mascarene High begins developing in mid-April and is a major factor in driving the circulation between the northern and southern hemispheres **that powers the summer monsoon winds towards the Indian subcontinent** from the Indian Ocean.



⇒ **Irrigation:**

- One of the rather surprising local factors that affects the Indian monsoon, is irrigation.
- According to a **2019 study in the journal Climate Dynamics**, the trend of **decreasing rainfall over the Indo-Gangetic plains** could be due to the extensive irrigation in this area.
- This is likely because **irrigation affects soil moisture levels and temperature simultaneously**, which

affects atmospheric stability. Since the irrigation is over vast tracts of land, these changes shift the moisture convergence zone to the south, during the active phase of the monsoon.

- The study finds that **winter irrigation** (November-March) actually **strengthens the monsoon rains** over the region for the following year and also reduces intra-seasonal variations in rainfall.
- However, with year-round irrigation, there is a noticeable decrease in the summer monsoon rainfall (June-September).

⇒ **Aerosols and dust:**

- **Aerosols and dust are other local factors** that have been shown to affect the monsoon rainfall in India.
- In a recent study in **2022, researchers at IIT Bhubaneswar** have shown that **dust transported to the Arabian sea from the Middle-Eastern deserts (the Sahara and the Sinai) could increase rainfall in India** and south Asia over short time scales of one or two weeks.
- In a similar study in 2014, scientists showed that dust aerosols likely heat up the atmosphere over north Africa and west Asia, which increases the flow of moisture over India. This results in rainfall, usually within a week of the event, over central India.

HAKKI PIKKI TRIBE

#GS-GS-1 #INDIAN ECONOMIC AND HUMAN
GEOGRAPHY #TRIBES
#PRE-NUGGETS

PRIMARY SOURCE THE ECONOMIC TIMES

The Hakki Pikki tribe has captured national headlines after 31 members of the tribe were left stranded in Sudan where war suddenly broke out. The 31 had reached Sudan on a routine business trip to sell Ayurvedic medicines when fighting broke out among military factions in the country.

ABOUT HAKKI PIKKI TRIBE

- According to **SPPEL (Scheme for Protection and Preservation of Endangered Languages)** established by **Ministry of Education (Government of India)**, **'Hakki-Pikki'** is one of the major tribal communities in **Karnataka**. The population is predominantly found in

Shivamogga, Davanagere and Mysuru districts of Karnataka.

- In Kannada, the word '**Hakki**' stands for '**bird**' and '**Pikki**' stands for the verb '**to catch**'. Therefore, the community is known as the '**bird catcher**,' which is their traditional occupation.
- They are also known for knowledge of **traditional and herbal medicine** in high demand in African countries as they are less expensive than allopathic medicines. The popularity of the medicines turned the once bird-hunters to global traders of herbal medicine.
- The Hakki-Pikkis are said to be a **matriarchal group**.
- Despite being surrounded by Dravidian languages and living in southern India, the community speaks an **Indo-Aryan language**. Their mother tongue was designated '**Vaagri**' by scholars. **UNESCO has listed 'Vaagri' as one of the endangered languages**.
- The community is known for the strange names they give for their children. A father of a newborn often names his child based on the first thing that comes to his mind. The community has members with names such as Congress, Mysore Pak, Cycle etc.

TELANGANA' COOL ROOF POLICY

#COOL ROOF POLICY #ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

#GS III #ENVIRONMENT

#PRE NUGGETS

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU BUSINESS LINE

Recently, the Telangana government announced a one of its kind "Cool Roof Policy" for buildings, to make them heat resilient, besides reducing energy consumption.

MORE ABOUT THE NEWS

- Telangana became the **first state** to introduce a cool roof policy
- It was made **mandatory** for all government, non-residential and commercial buildings irrespective of the size of the area they are built in.

- It has been kept **optional or voluntary** for buildings with a plot area of less than 600 square yards.
- Three different types of material could be used for cool roofs.
 - In the first type, roofs can be coated with a material or paint having **high reflectivity**. These are liquid-applied coatings made of simple materials such as lime wash, an acrylic polymer, or white plastic coating.
 - In the second type, **prefabricated materials** such as polyvinyl chloride (PVC) membranes or bitumen-based sheeting can be used to cover an existing roof to increase the roof surface's solar reflectance and thermal emittance.
 - The third type of cool roof involves the **application of high albedo**, ceramic mosaic tiles, or shingles on top of an existing roof or to a new roof.

ZERO SHADOW DAY IN BENGALURU

#GEOGRAPHY #GS-1

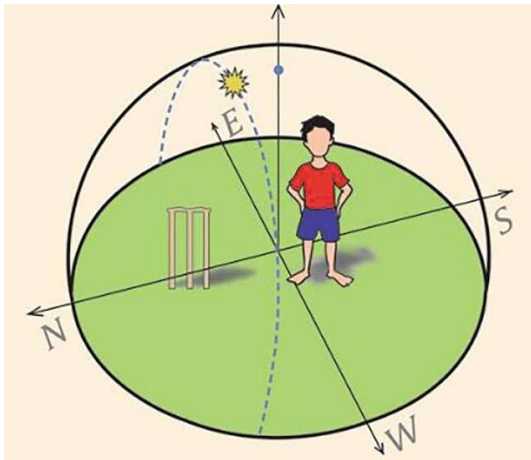
#PRE-NUGGETS

PRIMARY SOURCE The Indian EXPRESS

*Bengaluru witnessed a unique celestial phenomenon called '**Zero Shadow Day**' on April 25. In this all the vertical objects in the city will not have a shadow for a short period of time.*

WHAT IS ZERO SHADOW DAY?

- It is a day on which the **Sun does not cast a shadow of an object** at solar noon, when the sun will be exactly at the **zenith position** (the highest point in the sky).
- The Zero Shadow Day is **restricted to locations between the tropics**, and so places **north of Ranchi in India** are out of it.
- For every point on Earth between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn, there are **two Zero Shadow Days a year**.



WHY DOES A ZERO SHADOW DAY HAPPEN?

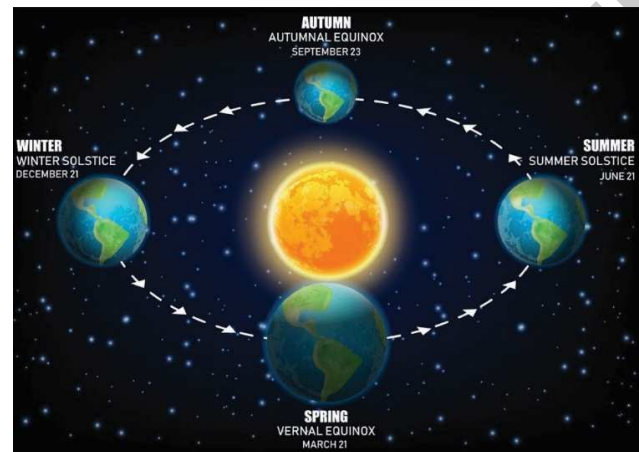
- Movement of the Sun from **south to north** from **winter solstice to summer solstice (Uttarayan)** and back from north to south (**Dakshinayan**) happen because **Earth's rotation axis** is tilted at an **angle of roughly 23.5°** to the axis of revolution around the Sun.
- The Sun's location moves from **23.5°N to 23.5°S of Earth's equator and back**. All places whose latitude equals the angle between the Sun's location and the equator on that day experience zero shadow day, with the shadow beneath an object at local noon.

WHAT IS AN EQUINOX?

- During the equinox, the sun crosses the plane of Earth's equator, making nighttime and daytime (roughly) equal length all over the world.
- In the **Northern Hemisphere**, the **spring equinox, or vernal equinox**, occurs around **March 21**, when the sun moves **northward across the celestial equator**.
- The **autumnal equinox** occurs around **September 22 or 23**, when the sun **crosses the celestial equator going south**.
- In the **Southern Hemisphere**, it's the reverse.

WHAT IS A SOLSTICE?

- A solstice is one of the two times of the year when the positioning and tilt of Earth relative to the sun results in the **most amount of daylight time** or the **least amount of daylight time in a single day**.
- Technically, a solstice is one of the two the exact moments in the year when the sun reaches its **northernmost point (around June 21, when the North Pole tilts closest to the sun)** or **southernmost point (around December 22, during the winter solstice) from Earth's equator**.
- The solstices are traditionally considered to mark the **start of summer and winter**.
- In the **Northern Hemisphere**, the **summer solstice** occurs in **June** and the **winter solstice** occurs in **December**.
- In the **Southern Hemisphere**, it's the **opposite**.



ANIMAL BIRTH CONTROL RULES, 2023

#PRE-NUGGETS

PRIMARY SOURCE | THE HINDU

The Union government has notified the Animal Birth Control Rules, 2023, under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animal Act, 1960. The ABC 2023 rules will supersede the Animal Birth Control (Dog) Rules, 2001.

ABOUT

- As per the new rules, Animal Birth Control (ABC) programme for the sterilisation and immunisation of stray dogs is to be carried out by the respective local bodies/municipalities/Municipal Corporations and Panchayats.

- The cruelty involved in carrying out the ABC programme must be addressed.
- By effectively implementing these Rules, the Animal Birth Control programme can be conducted by the local bodies, which will help reduce the stray dog population by addressing animal welfare issues.
- The Municipal Corporations need to implement the ABC and Anti Rabies Program jointly.
- The Animal Birth Control Programme needs to be carried out by Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) recognised organisation specifically recognised for Animal Birth Control programme.
- The list of such Organizations will be made available on the website of the Board which will also be updated time to time.
- The 2023 Rules require strays to be caught, vaccinated, neutered, and released back.
- The Rules transform stray dogs into a new class of "community animals".
- Resident welfare associations are responsible for caring for stray dogs and feeding them at fixed intervals, away from children and the elderly.

GREAT NICOBAR ISLAND PROJECT

#PRE-NUGGETS

PRIMARY SOURCE: THE HINDU

The eastern bench of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has ordered a stay on the ₹72,000 crore Great Nicobar Island project and constituted a committee to revisit the environmental clearance granted by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC).

ABOUT

- The Great Nicobar Island (GNI) Project is a mega project to be implemented at the southern end of the Andaman and Nicobar islands.
- The project will include, among others, an International Container Transshipment Terminal (ICTT), a Greenfield international airport, a township, and a 450 MVA gas- and solar-based power plant over 16,610 hectares in the Great Nicobar Islands.
- **UNESCO's Man and Biosphere Programme in 2013:**

- The GNI was declared a biosphere reserve in 1989 and included in UNESCO's Man and Biosphere Programme in 2013.
- It has an unparalleled array of microhabitats- sandy and rocky beaches, bays and lagoons, littoral patches with mangrove communities, evergreen and tropical forests, and more.
- These habitats host numerous species, including marine animals, reptiles, birds, mammals, trees, ferns, insects, crustaceans, and amphibians.
- Several of these, like the Nicobari Megapode, are endemic to GNI and found nowhere else in the world.



THE GREAT NICOBAR

- Great Nicobar, the southernmost of the **Andaman and Nicobar Islands**, has an area of 910 sq km.
- The Andaman and Nicobar Islands are a cluster of about 836 islands in the eastern Bay of Bengal, the two groups of which are separated by the 150-km wide **Ten Degree Channel**.
- The Andaman Islands lie to the north of the channel, and the Nicobar Islands to the south.
- **Indira Point** on the **southern tip of Great Nicobar Island** is **India's southernmost point**, less than 150 km from the northernmost island of the Indonesian archipelago.
- The island comprises of unique and threatened tropical evergreen forest ecosystems.
- The region is noted for its rich biodiversity and fosters **several rare and endemic species**.
 - The endemic species comprise of 11 species of mammals, 32 species of birds, 7 species of reptiles and 4 species of amphibians.
 - Of these, the well-known Crab-eating Macaque, Nicobar Tree Shrew, Nicobar Megapode, are endemic and/or endangered.
 - It is home to 650 species of angiosperms, ferns, gymnosperms, bryophytes, among others.

- One of the most unique aspects of Great Nicobar is the southernmost point, the **Galathea Bay, a nesting ground for the Leatherback Turtle**.
- The primary human inhabitants of the island are the **Shompen and Nicobarese tribes** who have been living on the island for countless generations.
 - The **Shompen tribe** are an aboriginal people of about 200 to 300 members who inhabit the interiors of Great Nicobar.
 - This **particularly vulnerable tribal group (PVTG)** is a semi-nomadic hunter-gatherer community, practicing basic horticulture and pig rearing, who probably migrated around 10,000 years ago.
 - They are a unique group, anthropologically completely distinct from the other PVTGs of the Andaman Island as well as from the Nicobarese.
 - Their language, Shompanese, unrelated to any other existing language, seems to have adopted a few words from Nicobarese in the context of an existing, even if very limited, barter system between the two communities.
- The alliance will **strengthen global efforts and partnerships on big cat** conservation while creating a platform for **sharing knowledge and best practices**.
- It will **support existing species-specific inter-governmental platforms** and provide direct support to recovery efforts in potential range habitats.
- The alliance aims to strengthen **global efforts and partnerships to preserve the natural habitats** of big cats, secure ecosystems, and provide food security, livelihood, and sustenance to forest communities.
- **Big cats will now serve as mascots for sustainable development**, leading to environmental resilience and climate change mitigation.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

- The IBCA's governance structure will comprise a General Assembly consisting of all member countries, a council of at least seven but not more than 15 member countries elected by the General Assembly for a term of 5 years, and a Secretariat.
- Upon the recommendation of the Council, the General Assembly will appoint the IBCA Secretary General for a specific term.

FUNDING

- After the first five years, which will be supported by India's "total grant assistance" of \$100 million, the IBCA is expected to sustain itself through membership fees, and contributions from bilateral and multilateral institutions and the private sector.

INTERNATIONAL BIG CAT ALLIANCE (IBCA)

#PRE NUGGETS

#GSIII #ENVIRONMENT

PRIMARY SOURCE: THE HINDU

Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently launched the International Big Cats Alliance (IBCA) during his visit to Karnataka.

OBJECTIVE

- The alliance aims to reach out to **97 range countries** covering the natural habitats of **Tiger, Lion, Snow Leopard, Puma, Jaguar, and Cheetah**.
- It aims to provide a platform for "dissemination of information on benchmarked practices, capacity building, resources repository, research and development, awareness creation", etc., on the protection and conservation of big cats.

SIGNIFICANCE

EUROPEAN COMMISSION GRANTS GI TAG FOR HIMACHAL'S KANGRA TEA

#PRELIMS NUGGETS

PRIMARY SOURCE: THE HINDU BUSINESS LINE

Recently, **Himachal Pradesh's famous Kangra Tea** has been awarded a protected Geographical Indication (GI) tag by the **European Union (EU)**, opening up new opportunities for the tea to enter the European market.

The EC notified granting PGI on March 22 and this will come into effect from April 11, 2023.

THE KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF 'KANGRA TEA'

- It is produced in the **slopes of the Dhauladhar mountain ranges** of the Western Himalayas. The tea is cultivated in various areas, including Palampur, Baijnath, Kangra, Dharmshala, Jogindernagar, and Bhatiyat.
- It is grown at an elevation ranging from **900 to 1,400 metres** above sea level with the annual rainfall being **270-350 cm**.
- This unique tea is derived from the leaves, buds, and tender stems of the **Camellia sinensis species** cultivated in the **Kangra Valley of Himachal Pradesh, India**.
- It is available in green, **oolong, white, and orthodox black types**. While the black tea has a sweet lingering after-taste, the green tea has a delicate woody aroma.
 - The tea has a light colour, high body in liquor, and leaves that contain up to **13% catechins, 3% caffeine, and amino acids such as theanine, glutamine, and tryptophan**.
 - Kangra tea is **a little milder than Darjeeling tea** in terms of flavour and has more body and liquor.
 - Kangra Tea previously received an Indian Geographical Indication tag in 2005, and since 1999, the cultivation and development of the tea have steadily improved in the Kangra region.

BANDIPUR COMPLETED 50 YEARS AS A PROJECT TIGER RESERVE

#PRELIMS NUGGETS

PRIMARY SOURCE

THE HINDU

Bandipur completed 50 years as a Project tiger reserve On Saturday as it was on April 1, 1973, that then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi launched the flagship conservation programme to arrest the big cat's dwindling population.

MORE FROM NEWS

- There were 12 tigers in Bandipur when **Project Tiger** was launched in 1973.
- But thanks to protection measures, the number of tigers utilising the park is 173 while the number of

tigers within the reserve has been pegged at 126 as per the **'Status of Tigers Co-predators and Prey in India, 2018'** published by the **National Tiger Conservation Authority**.

BANDIPUR TIGER RESERVE

- It is a **national park** in Chamarajnagar district in the **Indian state of Karnataka**.
- It is located at the tri-junction area of the States **Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala**.
- Bandipur Tiger Reserve is surrounded by: **Nagarahole Tiger Reserve** (Tamil Nadu) in the North West. **Mudumalai Tiger Reserve** (Tamil Nadu) in the South. **Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary** (Kerala) in the South West.
- Together these **4 areas are part of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve(Since1986)** which is a **UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the largest biosphere reserves in India**.
- The park is flanked by the **Kabini river in the north and the Moyar in the south**. The **Nugu river** runs through the park.
- The highest point in the park is on a hill called **Himavad Gopalswamy Betta**.
- It is located where the **Deccan Plateau** meets the **Western Ghats**. As a result, the park has a variety of biomes including dry deciduous forests, moist deciduous forests and shrublands. The wide range of habitats help support a diverse range of organisms.

FLORA

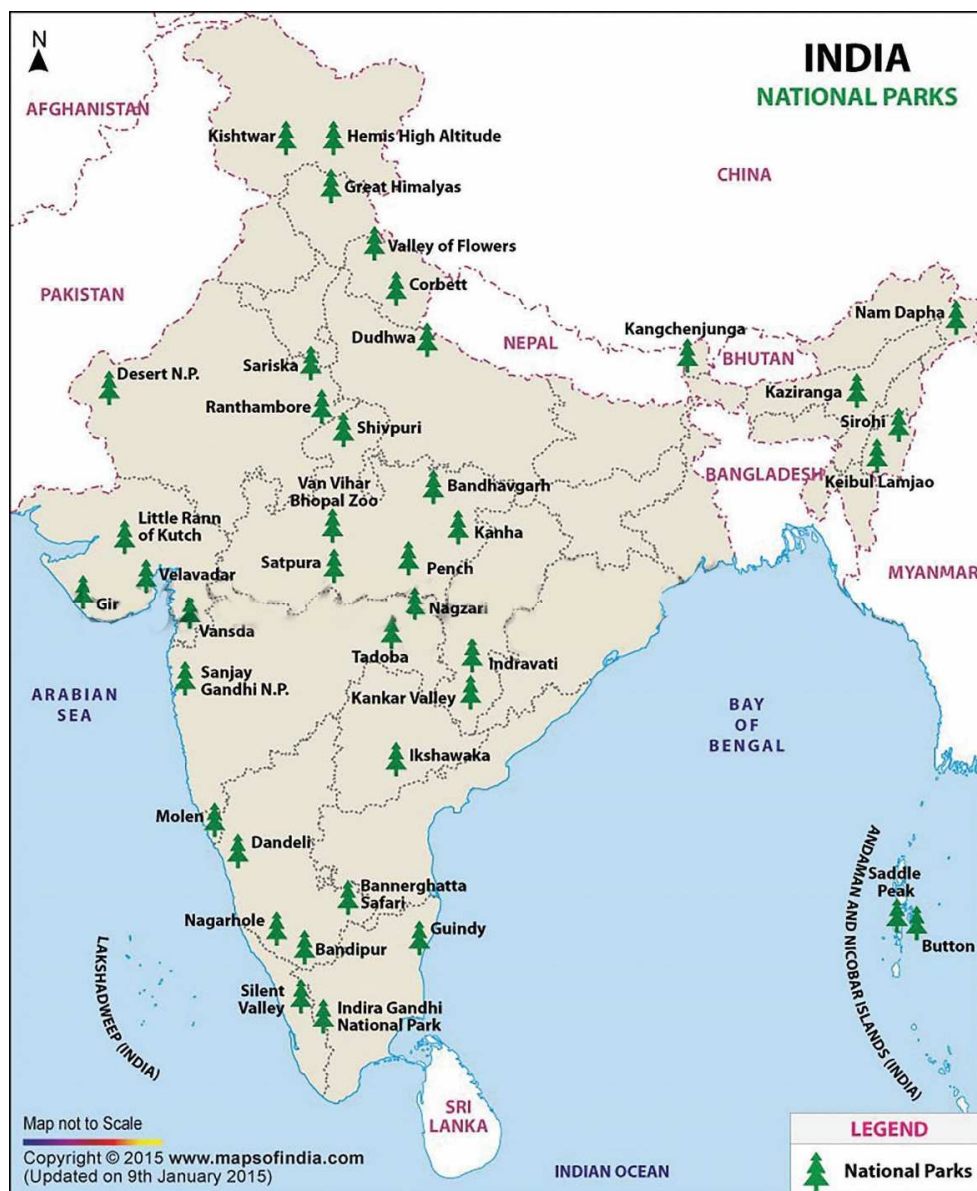
- Bandipur supports a wide range of timber trees including: teak, rosewood, sandalwood, Indian-laurel, giant clumping bamboo etc

Rosewood is used for carving and furniture, while **Sandalwood** is famous for its fragrance and is used for making incense and perfumes

- There are also several notable flowering and fruiting trees and shrubs including: kadam tree, Indian gooseberry, golden shower tree, black cutch etc

FAUNA

- The park is home to a wide variety of animals, including tigers, leopards, Indian elephants, gaur, chital, sambar, barking deer, sloth bear, and many species of birds and reptiles. The reserve is particularly well-known for its tiger population.



A "SEED BANK" OF ARAVALLIS-NATIVE PLANTS IS LOCATED AT THE ASOLA BHATTI SANCTUARY.

#GS III #ENVIRONMENT

#PRE-NUGGETS

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

After several years of efforts to gather seeds from all over the city and other states, a "seed bank," which gathers and stores seeds of species of plants that are native to the Aravallis, is gradually taking shape at a nursery at the Asola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary.

MORE ABOUT NEWS

- It began in **2015** to provide saplings that are native to the city and bring back species that are now difficult to find in the city.
- The project being implemented jointly by the **Forest Department** and the **Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS)**.

- For this project, seeds have been drawn from parts of **Delhi, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Haryana, and Bihar.**
- Species that are specific to the Aravallis are identified by studying model sites that have intact forests with very little disturbance, like **Mangar Bani in Faridabad.** Efforts are then made to replicate these old-growth forests.
- Among the additions to the seed bank are seeds of trees like **salai and phalsa- species** that are difficult to find in Delhi. These seeds were brought from Rajasthan and Haryana.

ABOUT ASOLA BHATTI WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

Location:

- It covers area on the **Southern Delhi Ridge of Aravalli hill range on Delhi-Haryana border** lies in **Southern Delhi** as well as northern parts of **Faridabad and Gurugram districts of Haryana state.**
- It is the part of the **Northern Aravalli leopard wildlife corridor**, an important wildlife corridor which starts from the **Sariska National Park in Rajasthan**, passes through **Faridabad and Gurugram districts of Haryana** and ends at **Delhi Ridge.**

Fauna:

- This is an important habitat for the **Indian leopard**, blackbuck striped hyena, jungle cat, golden jackal, Indian hare, Indian boar, black buck, sambar deer, spotted deer and hog deer among others. **Endangered species** in the sanctuary include red-headed vulture and egyptian vulture. **Near-threatened species** include painted stork, white-faced ibis and european roller.

PERIYAR TIGER RESERVE IN KERALA TOPS 5TH CYCLE OF MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS EVALUATION (MEE)

#GSIII #ENVIRONEMENT

#PRE-NUGGETS

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

According to the **5th cycle of Management Effectiveness Evaluation (MEE)** carried out by the Centre alongside the **Tiger Census**, the **Periyar Tiger Reserve** in Kerala is the best-maintained of all tiger reserves in the country, followed closely by the **Satpura Tiger Reserve** in Madhya Pradesh, **Bandipur** in Karnataka and **Nagarhole** in Karnataka.

MORE FACTS ABOUT REPORT

- The government has been using the **Management Effectiveness Evaluation (MEE)** to assess tiger reserves across the country since its **inception in 2006.**
- The MEE exercise, adopted from the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources' (IUCN's) World Commission on Protected Areas.
- **Periyar reserve** has obtained an MEE score of 94.3%
- Of these 53 tiger reserves, however, only 51, were evaluated as two newly declared tiger reserves, **Ramgarh Visdhari (Rajasthan)** and **Ranipur (Uttar Pradesh)**, have not been included in the current cycle of MEE.
- The report, however, points out that the **headline indicator — 'carbon capture and climate change' —** has received the **lowest score** in the current cycle, as there is **no mandate** for it in Tiger Conservation Plans.

ABOUT PERIYAR NATIONAL PARK AND WILDLIFE SANCTUARY (PNP)

- It is a protected area located in the districts of **Idukki** and **Pathanamthitta** in Kerala, India.
- The park is located high in **the Cardamom Hills** and **Pandalam Hills** of the south **Western Ghats** along the border with Tamil Nadu.
- It forms the major watershed of **two important rivers** of Kerala: The Periyar and the Pamba. (**Pamba River** is the **third longest river** in the Kerala **after Periyar** and **Bharathappuzha**).
- One of the main attractions is the **Periyar Lake**, which was formed by the **Mullaperiyar Dam** across the Periyar River.
- It is notable as an **elephant reserve** and a **tiger reserve.**
- **Fauna:** It is valuable for **Bengal tigers, Asian elephants**, and a few white tigers. Other mammals include the gaur, sambar, wild pig, Indian giant

squirrel, Travancore flying squirrel, jungle cat, Dhole, sloth bear, **Nilgiri tahr** and Nilgiri marten.

- **Flora:** The vegetal cover is **tropical evergreen and deciduous**, with patches of dense forest including jackfruit, teak, and kokam (tropical evergreen [*Garcinia indica*]) trees that produce a dark purple, plumlike fruit). Most of the grassland is now planted with eucalyptus.

ABOUT PERIYAR RIVER

- Periyar is the **longest river** and the river with the **largest discharge potential** in the Indian state of Kerala.
- It originates from **Sivagiri hills** of Western Ghats and flows through the Periyar National Park.
- It flows into **Vembanad Lake** and finally into **Arabian Sea**.
- The **main tributaries** of Periyar are Muthirapuzha, Mullayar, Cheruthoni, Perinjankutti.

TASMANIAN TIGER

#PRE-NUGGETS

PRIMARY SOURCE *The Indian EXPRESS*

- Tasmanian Tiger (*Thylacinus cynocephalus*), **the only animal in the Thylacinidae family** to survive in modern times, was a **marsupial mammal** that raises young ones in a pouch.
- The species earned its nickname Tasmanian Tiger because of the stripes along its back.
- It was a slow-paced carnivorous that usually hunted alone or in pairs at night.
- It is also known as the **Tasmanian Tiger or Tasmanian Wolf**.

FEATURES

- The Thylacine was sandy yellowish-brown to grey in colour and had 15 to 20 distinct dark stripes across the back from shoulders to tail.
- Adult male Thylacine were larger on average than females.
- The sharply clawed animal had a dog-like head and ate kangaroos, other marsupials, small rodents, and birds.

GEOGRAPHICAL PRESENCE

- It was widespread in the grass and woodlands of continental Australia extending north to New Guinea and south to Tasmania.

CONSERVATION

- The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) officially declared the thylacine **extinct in 1982**.

TROPHIC DOWNGRADING

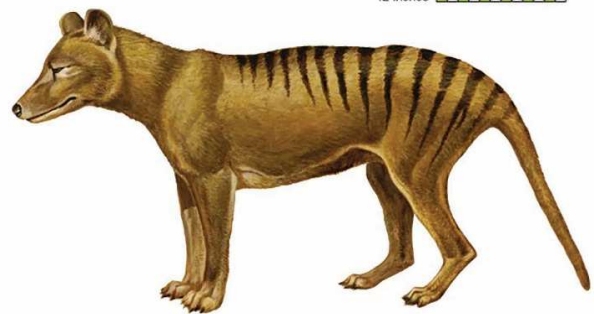
- Trophic Downgrading means causal degradation of an ecosystem that occurs when higher trophic level animals are removed from the food chain, resulting in loss or exponential growth of other species.
- Trophic Downgrading also results in disruption of biogeochemical cycles, wildfires, growth of invasive species, and carbon sequestration, among other effects.

Example- Tasmanian Devil:

- As the thylacine was the only apex predator in its ecosystem, its absence impacted the Tasmanian Devil, which was almost wiped out by a facial tumour disease.
- The thylacine would have prevented this by removing sick and weak animals from the ecosystem, which would have eventually controlled the spread of the transmissible diseases.

thylacine, Tasmanian wolf, Tasmanian tiger
(*Thylacinus cynocephalus*)

30 cm
12 inches



IDU MISHMI AND DIBANG SANCTUARY

#PRE-NUGGETS

PRIMARY SOURCE *THE HINDU*

Recently, the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) said that the Dibang Wildlife Sanctuary in Arunachal Pradesh

would soon be notified as a tiger reserve. The announcement has caused disquiet among the area's Idu Mishmi people, who feel that a tiger reserve would "hinder their access" to the forest.

IDU MISHMI TRIBE

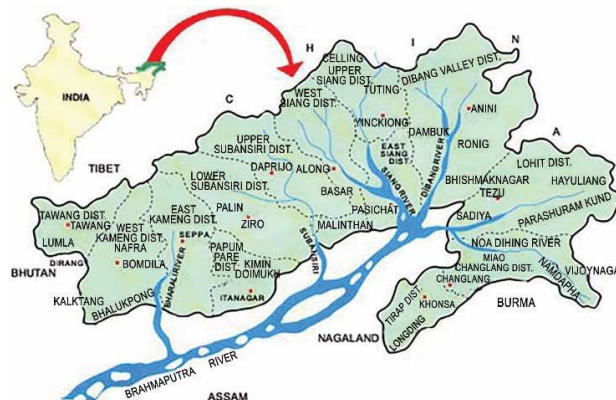
- The Idu Mishmi is a sub-tribe of the larger Mishmi group (the other two Mishmi groups are Digaru and Miju) in Arunachal Pradesh and neighbouring Tibet.
- Known for their weaving and craftsmanship skills, the Idu Mishmis primarily live in Mishmi Hills, bordering Tibet.
- Their ancestral homelands are spread over the districts of **Dibang Valley and Lower Dibang Valley as well as parts of Upper Siang and Lohit**.
- The tribe is estimated to comprise around 12,000 people (as per census 2011), and their language (also called Idu Mishmi) is considered endangered by UNESCO.
- Traditionally animists, the tribe has strong ties with the region's rich flora and fauna.
 - Animals such as the hoolock gibbons and tigers have deep cultural relations with the Idu Mishmi.
 - Tigers are especially important to the Idu Mishmis — according to Idu mythology, they were born to the same mother, and thus, tigers are their "elder brothers".

DIBANG WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

- The Dibang Wildlife Sanctuary is a protected area located in the northeastern state of Arunachal Pradesh.
- The sanctuary derives its name from the Dibang River that flows through it.
- It was notified in 1998.
- **Biodiversity hotspot:**
 - Dibang Wildlife Sanctuary is a biodiversity hotspot home to rare Mishmi takin, musk deer, goral as well as clouded leopards, snow leopards and tigers.
 - It is also home to several bird species such as the Satyr tragopan, Blyth's tragopan, and Temminck's tragopan.
 - It is part of the Eastern Himalayas Endemic Bird Area.
 - The sanctuary has a diverse range of flora, including tropical evergreen forests, subtropical broadleaf

forests, alpine meadows, and subalpine coniferous forests.

- Some of the important tree species found here include oak, rhododendron, bamboo, and fir.



SLOTH BEAR

#GSIII #ENVIRONEMENT

#PRE-NUGGETS

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

A sloth bear that recently fell into a well on a private property at Velland in the Thiruvananthapuram district drowned.

ABOUT SLOTH BEAR

- There are **8 bear species around the world**, from the largest one (Brown Bear) found in Alaska to the smallest one (Sun Bear) found in India.
- In India there are 4 bear species which are **Himalayan black bear, Sloth bear, Sun bear and Himalayan brown bear**.
- Sloth bears have shaggy, dusty-black coats; pale, short-haired muzzles; and long, curved claws which they use to excavate termites and ants.
- Sloth bears are considered **myrmecophagous**.
- They have been called "labiated bears" because of their long lower lip and palate used for sucking insects.

FEATURES

- Sloth bears' nostrils can close completely, protecting the animals from dust or insects when raiding termite nests or beehives.
- They have a keen sense of smell, as well as near-sight similar to that of humans.

- Sloth bears do **not hibernate**.

HABITAT

- Sloth bears live in a variety of dry and moist forests and in some tall grasslands, where boulders, scattered shrubs and trees provide shelter.
- Their range includes **India, Sri Lanka and southern Nepal**.

CONSERVATION

- **IUCN Red List: Vulnerable**
- Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule I
- CITES: Appendix I



SALIM ALI'S FRUIT BAT & INDIAN FLYING FOX

#GSIII #ENVIRONMENT

#PRE-NUGGETS

PRIMARY
SOURCE

THE HINDU

SECONDARY
SOURCE

The Indian
EXPRESS

The Kerala Forest Research Institute (KFRI) is on a mission to dispel myths associated with bats and create awareness about their diversity, ecosystem functions, and threats faced by them.

ABOUT

- Bats play a crucial role in pollination and seed dispersal of over 500 plants of commercial and ecological value, aiding in forest regeneration.

BAT SPECIES

- Globally, there are 1,460 species of bats categorised into 21 families.
- In India, 135 bat species belonging to nine families have been identified, with Kerala home to 48 of the species.

THREATS

- Anthropogenic factors such as habitat loss, poaching, environmental pollution, climate change, and biological invasions have caused the decline of bat population worldwide.
- Due to their low reproductive rate, gregarious lifestyle, and high metabolic rate, most bat species cannot withstand anthropogenic pressures.
- This project aims to map and conserve the roosting sites of Indian flying fox and participatory conservation efforts for Salim Ali's fruit bat.

SALIM ALI'S FRUIT BAT

- It is one of the three rarest bats in the world, is an evolutionarily distinct, monotypic and endangered frugivorous bat species **endemic to the southern Western Ghats of India**.
- It is restricted to montane tropical evergreen forests, coffee and cardamom plantations with an altitude range of 800-1,100m.
- The third is a citizen science programme called the **Indian Fruit Bat Project launched in June 2022**.
- The IUCN Red List -**Endangered category**.

INDIAN FLYING FOX

- The **Indian flying fox** also known as **the greater Indian fruit bat**, is a species of flying fox native to the Indian subcontinent.
- It is **one** of the **world's largest bats**.
- It is nocturnal and feeds mainly on ripe fruits, such as mangoes and bananas, and nectar.
- The Indian flying fox is found across the Indian Subcontinent, including in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Tibet, the Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.
- It is threatened by hunting for meat and cutting down of habitat trees.
- The IUCN Red List -**Least Concerned category**.

IMD LAUNCHES 'HEAT INDEX' TO GIVE 'REAL FEEL' INFORMATION

#PRE-NUGGETS

PRIMARY
SOURCE THE HINDU

India Meteorological Department recently launched heat index.

ABOUT HEAT INDEX

- Heat index is a measure of how hot it feels when humidity is factored in along with the air temperature, and the figures were calculated using data from the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

- In its current form, IMD's heat index will be available as a spatial map of the country giving the "feels like" temperature probabilities in the form of colour codes.
 - Green areas representing heat index temperatures below 35 degrees C at one end and the red areas showing extreme High temperatures exceeding 55 degrees C.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

MCQS

Q1. With respect to "Dibang Wildlife Sanctuary", consider the following statements:

- It is the fourth tiger reserve in Arunachal Pradesh.
- The Idu Mishmi which is a sub-tribe of the Siddi group has strong ties with the region's rich flora and fauna.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2.

Q2. With respect to "EL-Nino", consider the following statements:

- It is a climate pattern that describes the unusual warming of surface waters in the western tropical Pacific Ocean.
- It returns every three years in general.
- During this event severe flood occur in Australia, Indonesia and southern Africa.

Which of the statements given above is/are incorrect?

- (a) 2 only (b) 1 and 2 only
(c) 2 and 3 only (d) All of the above

Q3. Consider the following statements with reference to 'Sloth bear':

- It is endemic to Western Ghats of India.

- It is listed as 'Endangered' on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List.
- Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, provides for its legal protection.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 3 only (b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 only (d) 1 and 3 only

Q4. Consider the following statements with reference to 'Water Bodies: First Census Report':

- 'Water Bodies: First Census Report' has been published by the NITI Aayog.
- The report has surveyed only the natural water bodies in the country.
- Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, West Bengal and Gujarat are the top five states wherein the major use of water bodies is in irrigation.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 3 only
(c) 1 and 2 only (d) 2 only

Q5. "The tribe lives in Arunachal Pradesh and neighbouring Tibet. It is known for their weaving and craftsmanship skills. It is considered endangered by UNESCO. Tigers and

hoolock gibbons are especially important for them. Tigers are considered as their 'elder brothers'

The above statements describe which of the following tribes?

- | | |
|-----------|-------------|
| (a) Gonds | (b) Mishmis |
| (c) Nagas | (d) Lepchas |

Q6. "It is the longest river and the river with the largest discharge potential in the Indian state

of Kerala. It originates from Sivagiri hills of Western Ghats and flows into Vembanad Lake

Its main tributaries of Periyar are Muthirapuzha, Cheruthoni, Perinjankutti."

The above statements describe which of the following rivers?

- | | |
|-------------|-----------------|
| (a) Pamba | (b) Bharatpuzha |
| (c) Periyar | (d) Mullayar |

DESCRIPTIVE QUESTIONS

- Q1.** What do you understand by term normal Monsoon and Explain the factors which lead to weakening of Monsoon?
- Q2.** Discuss the general factors behind sea-level changes and What can be the possible impacts of Sea level rise?

Answers: 1-d, 2-d, 3-a, 4-b, 5-b, 6-c

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

GS PAPER (PRELIMS) & GS PAPER III (MAIN)

Pooja Bhatt



GENOME SEQUENCING AND THE GENOME INDIA PROJECT

#BIOTECHNOLOGY

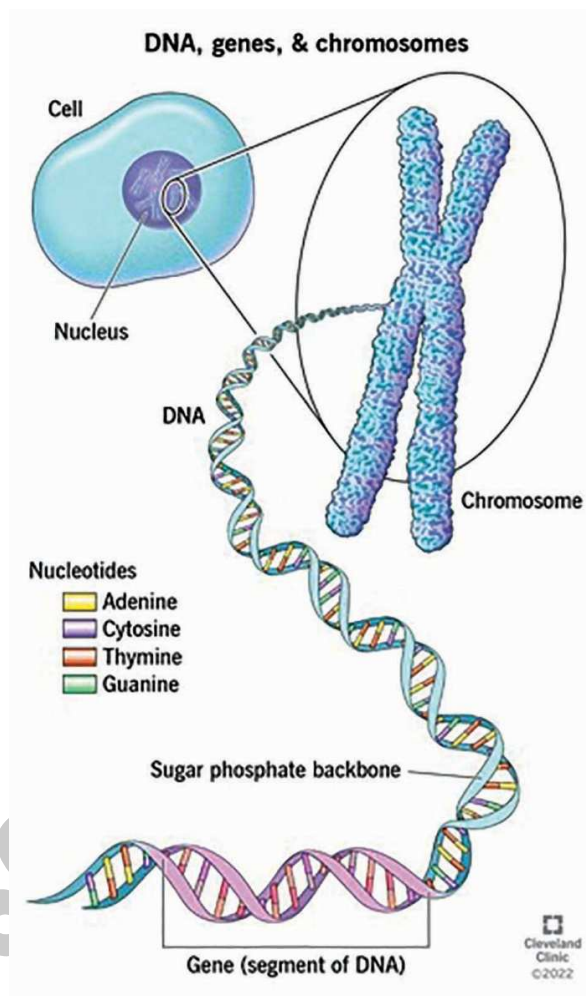
PRIMARY
SOURCE

THE HINDU

Department of Biotechnology has said that the exercise to sequence **10,000 Indian human genomes** and create a database under the Centre-backed **Genome India Project** is about two-thirds complete. About 7,000 Indian genomes have already been sequenced of which 3,000 are available for public access to researchers.

GENOME SEQUENCING

- Human genome is the **entire set of deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA)** residing in the nucleus of every cell of the human body. It carries the **complete genetic information** responsible for development and functioning of an organism.
 - DNA consists of a **double-stranded molecule** built up by **four bases** [adenine (A), cytosine (C), guanine (G), and thymine (T)].
 - While the sequence of base pairs is identical in all humans, there are **differences in the genome** of every human being that make them unique.
- Genome sequencing** is the process of **determining the complete DNA sequence** of an organism's genome. It involves **identifying the order of base pairs** [adenine (A), cytosine (C), guanine (G), and thymine (T)] that make up the DNA molecule in each of the chromosomes of an organism's DNA, to decode the genetic fingerprint of a human.



HUMAN GENOME PROJECT

- Human Genome Project** was an international program that led to the decoding of the **entire human genome**.
- Completed in April 2003, the HGP gave the ability to read human's complete **genetic blueprint**.

APPLICATIONS OF GENOME SEQUENCING

- **Disease Diagnosis and Treatment:** Genome sequencing can **identify genetic mutations** to evaluate rare disorders, preconditions for disorders and even cancer from the viewpoint of genetics.
 - Nearly 10,000 diseases — including cystic fibrosis and thalassemia — are known to be the result of a single gene malfunctioning.
 - Genome sequencing has been used to **read the codes of viruses**. E.g.,
 - Samples of Ebola infected patients were sequenced to show how genomic data of viruses could reveal hidden pathways of transmission.
 - Genome of **novel pathogen** causing infections at the start of the CoVID-19 pandemic was sequenced to understand how to combat the virus, track the mutating variants, and develop a vaccine.
- **Drug Development:** Can identify genetic targets for drug development/testing to develop more effective and personalized drugs.
- **Prenatal screening:** Can be used as a tool for prenatal screening to investigate whether the foetus has genetic disorders/anomalies.
- **Agriculture:** Can help identify genes that contribute to desirable traits in plants and animals, allowing for the selective breeding of crops and livestock.
- **Evolutionary Biology:** Can help trace evolutionary history of species and understand the mechanisms underlying evolution.
- **Forensics:** Genome sequencing can be used to identify suspects in criminal investigations and to establish paternity in cases of disputed parentage.

Genome India Project (GIP):

- GIP is an initiative of **Indian Council of Medical Research** in 2019 to execute **whole genome sequencing** and subsequent data analysis of **10,000 individuals** representing India's diverse population by the end of 2023.
- **Goal of the Genome India Project:** Create a **comprehensive reference database** of genetic variations in the Indian population and **identify genetic variations** that are associated with prevalent common and rare diseases.

NEED & SIGNIFICANCE OF GIP

- India has around 1.3 billion population consisting of **over 4,600 population groups**, many of which are endogamous (disease-causing mutations often amplifies within some of these groups). Despite being a large population with diverse ethnic groups, **India lacks a comprehensive catalogue of genetic variations**.
- Creating a **database of Indian genomes** allows researchers to **learn about genetic variants** unique to India's population groups and **use that to customise drugs**.

FIGHT AGAINST TUBERCULOSIS

#BIOTECHNOLOGY #HEALTH

PRIMARY SOURCE: THE HINDU

India's needs to scale up investment, find new ways and formulate new strategies to meet its goal of Tuberculosis eradication by 2025.

TUBERCULOSIS

- An airborne communicable disease caused by the bacteria **Mycobacterium tuberculosis**. Typically, the bacteria grow in the body where oxygen and blood are in high amounts. As a result, 80% of TB cases are pulmonary which infect the lungs and 20% of cases are extra-pulmonary which infect the brain, uterus, stomach, mouth, kidneys and bones.
- **Mode of transmission:** Airborne- through coughing, sneezing or spitting.
- **High-risk groups:** People weak immunity like those infected with HIV, Under-nutrition, Diabetes, Smoking and Alcohol consumption.
- **TB incidence in India:** India tops the list of 20 TB high-burden countries in the world. India has **more than 25%** of the total TB patients in the world.
- **Treatment:** DOTS strategy (Directly Observed Treatment Short Course) is a WHO-recommended cost-effective strategy to reduce the disease burden of TB.

INDIA'S EFFORTS

- **India's National TB Elimination Programme** (earlier Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme or

RNTCP) was adopted in 1997 after WHO declared TB as a global epidemic in 1993.

- Focus of RNTCP has been Early Diagnosis and Treatment in accordance with DOTS strategy. Under RNTCP about 4 lakh DOTS centres have been established so far. Patients are supported with free diagnostics and medicines.
- The programme has introduced several measures to find, notify and treat TB cases, with case notifications rising from 15.6 lakhs in 2014 to over 24 lakhs in 2022.
- **National Strategic Plan for TB Elimination 2017-2025** was adopted in 2018 in line with TB Elimination Strategy of the WHO and SDG of the UN.
 - It aims to eliminate TB in India by **2025**. Includes 4 strategic pillars: "Detect – Treat – Prevent – Build".
 - Specific targets include:
 - 80% reduction in TB incidence
 - 90% reduction in TB mortality
 - 0% patients having catastrophic expenditure due to TB.
- **Nikshay Portal** to serve as a national online individual-based TB notification and management system. **Nikshay Poshan Yojana** in 2018 to provide free nutritional support of Rs. 500 per month to all the TB patients registered in the Nikshay portal till the completion of treatment.
- **Pradhan Mantri TB Mukht Bharat Abhiyan** campaign was launched in September 2022 where the community is encouraged to adopt TB patients and support them in the form of nutritional support, nutritional supplements, additional investigations, and vocational support for a minimum period of six months or maximum period of up to three years.
- **India had established of centres of excellence** which will facilitate collaboration between Indian Council of Medical Research laboratories and the private sector, which among others, will strengthen and expand research and development efforts for TB.

Concerns:

- **Lack of widespread awareness** about the disease and **lack of access to quality care** continues to be a challenge.
 - Recent **National TB Prevalence Survey** (in India) found that 64% of people with infectious TB did not

seek care. As a result, national-level estimates suggest that for every person notified with TB, we miss detecting almost two more cases.

- Excessive focus on affected patients only while **ignoring the 'potential' patient** who might be in contact with the patients.
- **Gender divide** - There is a significant difference in how males, females and transgenders receive such health care services.
- COVID-19 pandemic has increased the TB burden.

WAY FORWARD

- **Prioritise TB vaccine trials:** Bacille Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccine for TB does not adequately protect adolescents and adults who are at the highest risk for developing and spreading TB. There are currently over 15 TB vaccine candidates in the pipeline; it must be ensured that their clinical trials are prioritised to assess their efficacy in various community settings and for different target groups.
- **Affordable test and trails for TB:** Testing for and diagnosing TB needs to become more accessible and affordable to allow each person with suggestive symptoms or frontline worker get results within minutes, at minimal costs. **E.g., Point-of-Care Tests (POCTs)**, such as home-based tests for COVID-19, allowed decentralised, rapid and low-cost diagnostics to provide results within minutes.
 - New innovations such as nasal and tongue swab-based tests for TB can be game changers by **reducing diagnostic delays**.
 - Handheld **digital X-ray machines** (with artificial intelligence-based software) can be taken to villages and urban settlements to screen large numbers of high-risk individuals, safely and conveniently.
- **Develop new therapeutic models:** Need to invest more in drug discovery, introduction and development of new therapeutic molecules/regimens which are for short time-periods yet effective.
- **Regulatory frameworks and collaboration:** Need to create regulatory and policy frameworks for strengthening the innovation ecosystem and maximising reach to the public. This requires greater collaboration between policymakers, scientists, product developers and clinical researchers across the countries and governments.

- **Harmonisation of standards** and regulatory processes between countries can enable mutual recognition of evidence-based standards/licences and save critical time towards rollout.

NEW INDIA SPACE POLICY 2023

#ASTRONOMY & SPACE TECHNOLOGY



Indian Space Policy 2023 has been approved by the Cabinet Committee on Security and made public recently.

ABOUT NEW INDIA SPACE POLICY 2023

Government seeks to pursue a holistic approach by encouraging and promoting greater private sector participation in the entire value chain of the Space Economy, including in the creation of space and ground-based assets.

Towards this end, the Government shall focus on:

- Encouraging advanced R&D in space sector to sustain and augment the space program.
- Providing public goods and services using space technology for national priorities.
- Creating a stable and predictable regulatory framework to provide a level playing field to Non-Government Entities in the Space sector through IN-SPACE.
- Promoting space-related education and innovation, including support to space-sector start-ups.
- Using space as a driver for overall technology development, nurture scientific temperament in the society, and increase awareness on space activities.

ROLE OF GOVERNMENT ENTITIES

- **ISRO** shall **transition out from manufacturing operational space systems** and focus its energies on R&D in new space technologies and applications and on expanding human understanding of outer space.
- **Department of Space** has been asked to **implement the policy**, interpret and clarify any ambiguities and establish a framework for safe and sustainable space operations and ensure that the different stakeholders are suitably empowered to discharge their respective

functions without overlapping into the others' domains.

- **Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe)** shall function as an **autonomous government organization**, mandated to promote, hand-hold, guide and authorise space activities in the country.
- **New Space India Limited (NSIL)**, as the public sector undertaking under the Department of Space, shall be responsible for **commercialising space technologies** and platforms created through public expenditure. The policy:
 - Mandates NSIL to manufacture, lease or procure space components, technologies, platforms and other assets from the private or the public sector on sound commercial principles.
 - Tasks NSIL to service the space-based needs of users, whether government entities or non-government entities, on sound commercial principles.

ROLE OF PRIVATE COMPANIES

- Private companies, referred to as **non-governmental entities** in the policy, will be allowed to undertake end-to-end space activity — launching and operating satellites, developing rockets, creating ground stations, building spaceports and mobile launch platforms, and providing services like communication, remote sensing and navigation, nationally and internationally.
- Private entities have also been encouraged to **develop space situational awareness capabilities** — a mechanism to track objects in space and avoid collision of satellites and space stations with each other or space debris.
- Private players can engage in the **“commercial recovery”** of asteroids or space resources. The companies will be entitled to “possess, own, transport, use, and sell” such resources in accordance with the law.

EMPOWERS INDIAN CONSUMERS

- Indian consumers of space technology or services -- such as communication, remote sensing, data services and launch services -- shall be **free to directly procure them from any source**, whether from the public or the private sector.

NATIONAL QUANTUM MISSION

#QUANTUM SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

Union Cabinet has approved National Quantum Mission (NQM) at a cost of **Rs 6,003.65 crore**. The mission will have defined milestones that are expected to be achieved over the course of **eight years** (2023-24 to 2030-31).

MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS






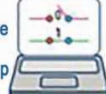


- The new mission targets developing 20-50 physical 'qubits' in three years, 50-100 physical qubits in five years and **intermediate-scale quantum computers with 50-1,000 physical qubits** in 8 years.
 - In classical computing, the smallest and most basic unit of information that can be processed and stored is called a 'bit'.
 - In quantum computing, the basic unit of information is called a 'qubit'.
- Some of the **deliverables** of the Mission are:
 - Developing satellite-based secure quantum communications between ground stations over a range of 2,000 kilometres within India
 - long-distance secure quantum communications with other countries
 - inter-city quantum key distribution over 2000 km
 - multi-node quantum network with quantum memories.
- The mission will **help develop magnetometers** with high sensitivity in atomic systems, and atomic clocks for precision timing, communications and navigation.
- It will **support design and synthesis of quantum materials** such as superconductors, novel semiconductor structures and topological materials for the fabrication of quantum devices.
- Single photon sources/detectors, and entangled photon sources will also be developed for quantum communications, sensing and metrological applications.
- Four Thematic Hubs (T-Hubs)** would be set up in top academic and National R&D institutes on the domains of 'quantum computing', 'quantum communication',

'quantum sensing and metrology' and 'quantum materials and devices'.

- The hubs will focus on the generation of new knowledge through basic and applied research as well as promote R&D in areas that are mandated to them.

QUANTUM TECHNOLOGY

- Quantum computers utilise the **principles of quantum mechanics** to perform certain types of computations much faster than classical computers.
 - Quantum mechanics** is a theory in physics that deals with the behaviour of matter and energy at the most fundamental level (at the scale of atoms and subatomic particles).
- Classical computers process information using bits, which are either 0 or 1, whereas quantum computing uses quantum bits, or qubits, which can be in a superposition of **both 0 and 1 states at the same time**. This property of **superposition** allows quantum computers to perform certain types of calculations much faster than classical computers.
- The power of a quantum computer **scales exponentially** with the number of qubits, unlike classical computers, which scale linearly with the number of bits.

Quantum Computing	Vs.	Classical Computing
 <p>Calculates with qubits, which can represent 0 and 1 at the same time</p>		 <p>Calculates with transistors, which can represent either 0 or 1</p>
 <p>Power increases exponentially in proportion to the number of qubits</p>		 <p>Power increases in a 1:1 relationship with the number of transistors</p>
 <p>Quantum computers have high error rates and need to be kept ultracold</p>		 <p>Classical computers have low error rates and can operate at room temp</p>
 <p>Well suited for tasks like optimization problems, data analysis, and simulations</p>		 <p>Most everyday processing is best handled by classical computers</p>

- **Qubits** are extremely **delicate and prone to errors**, and increasing the number of qubits while **maintaining their stability is a major challenge** in the development of quantum computers.
- The principle is used in semiconductors, lasers, Blu-ray, transistors, mobile phones, USB drives, MRI, electron microscopes, and even the basic light switch.

Significance:

- The mission will **accelerate** the development of Quantum Technologies & Applications and technology-led economic growth in the country. Presently, **only six countries** — US, Finland, Austria, France, China and Canada — have some capability in this domain.
- It would **greatly benefit** communication, health, financial and energy sectors as well as drug design, and space applications.
- It will provide a **huge boost** to “national priorities” like ‘Digital India’, ‘Make in India’, ‘Skill India’, ‘Stand-up India’, ‘Startup India’, ‘Self-reliant India’ and Sustainable Development Goals.
- The technology will **secure the country’s defence communication** but also **act as a deterrent**, preventing the attempt to hack into India’s communication networks.

INDIA'S LIGO PROJECT TO BE BUILT BY 2030

#SPACE TECHNOLOGY

PRIMARY SOURCE | THE HINDU

Union Cabinet has approved a gravitational-wave detector project in Maharashtra costing Rs 2,600 crores, estimated to be built by 2030.

LASER INTERFEROMETER GRAVITATIONAL-WAVE OBSERVATORY (LIGO)

- LIGO is an **international network of laboratories** meant to **detect gravitational waves** — ripples in space-time produced by the movement of large celestial bodies such as stars and planets.

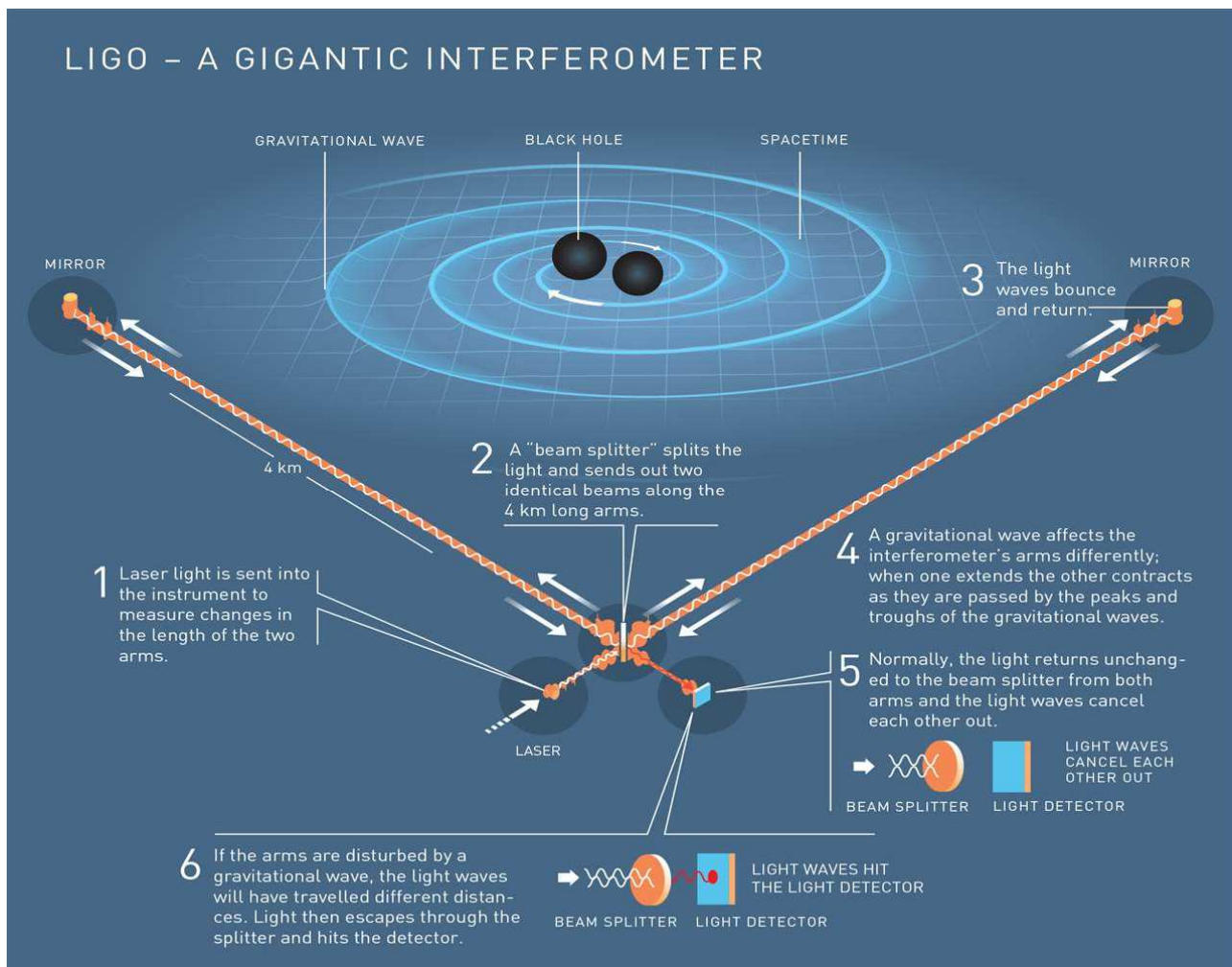
- LIGO comprises **two enormous laser interferometers** located 3000 kilometres apart in **Hanford**, Washington and **Livingston**, Louisiana, the United States.
- The gravitational waves were first discovered in **2015** by two LIGOs based in the United States.

LIGO INDIA PROJECT

- A **third gravitational-wave detection facility** is being built in India as part of LIGO-India collaboration:
 - To **increase chances of detecting gravitational waves** from anywhere in observable universe.
 - To **improve the detectors’ collective ability** to pinpoint sources of gravitational waves in the sky.
- Will be located in **Hingoli** district of Maharashtra, LIGO-India is scheduled to begin its scientific runs in 2030.
- Department of Atomic Energy and the Department of Science and Technology are building LIGO-India in **partnership** with the U.S. National Science Foundation and various national and international research institutions.

MECHANISM

- LIGO observatory comprises **two 4-km-long vacuum chambers**, built **perpendicular** to each other. Highly reflective mirrors are placed at the end of the vacuum chambers.
- Light rays are **fired simultaneously** in both the vacuum chambers. They **hit the mirrors**, get reflected, and are captured back.
 - In normal circumstances, the light rays in both the chambers would return simultaneously.
 - But when a gravitational wave arrives, one of the chambers gets a little elongated, while the other one gets squeezed a bit. In this case, **light rays do not return simultaneously**, and there is a **phase difference**. The presence of a phase difference marks the detection of a gravitational wave.



NEED FOR THE PROJECT

- While two LIGOs can detect gravitational waves, a third observatory is required for **better triangulation** of the location of a source of gravitational waves in the sky. A more ideal setup requires four observatories to record the same wave. To this end, researchers are setting up and upgrading detectors in **Italy and Japan**.
 - Triangulation** refers to analysing the results of the same study using different methods of data collection to enhance the validity, reliability, and comprehensiveness of research findings.

Significance:

- LIGO India project will help in better understanding **astronomical objects** like neutron stars and black holes and for the **in-depth study** of gravitational waves.

- India could become a **global site of gravitational physics research**, aiding training and the handling of precision technologies and sophisticated control systems, ultimately, cementing a reputation for successfully running an experimental Big Science project.
 - However, the requirement is the **timely release of funds** for construction, followed by issuing the allocated resources without delay.

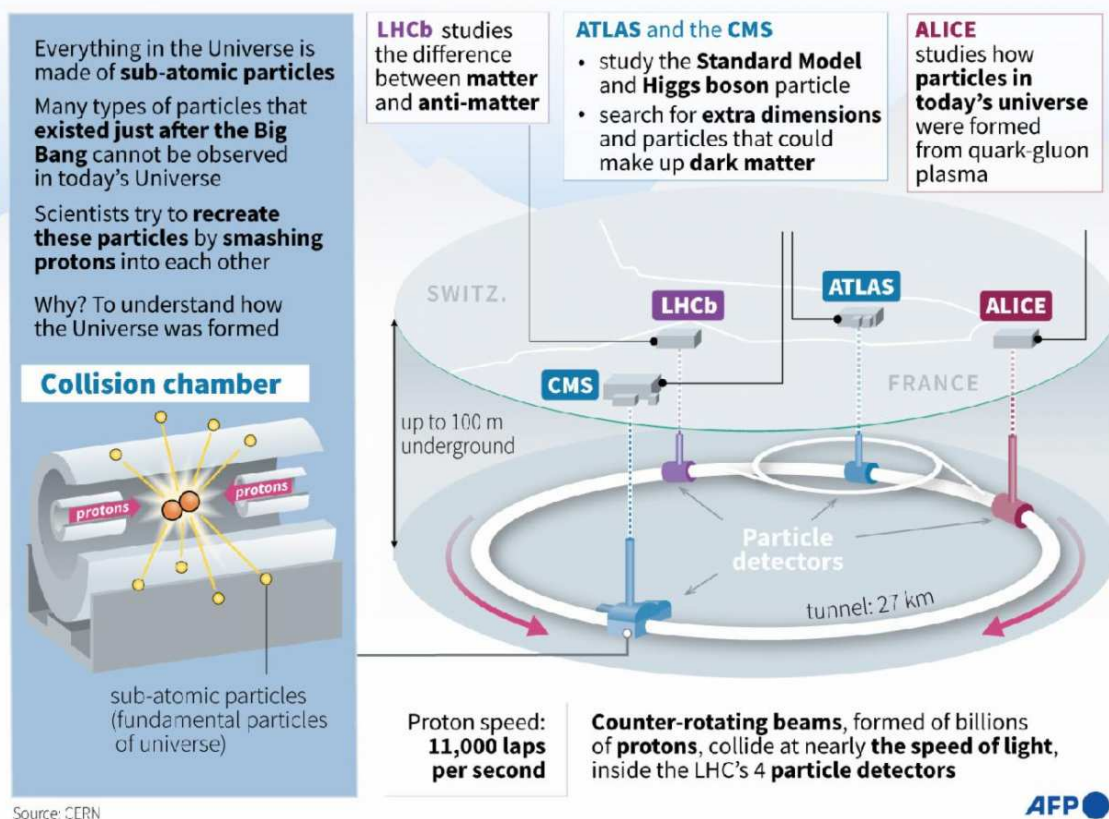
GRAVITATIONAL WAVES

- Gravitational waves are **ripples in space-time** caused when massive objects move with **extreme accelerations** (like ripples in a water pond).
- The waves are invisible, **travel at the speed of light** and squeeze and stretch anything in their path as they pass by.

- Gravitational radiation is exceedingly difficult to detect because gravity by nature is much **weaker than electromagnetic radiation**.
 - Gravity is the **weakest** of the four fundamental forces of nature i.e., electromagnetic force, strong nuclear force and weak nuclear force.
 - Due to the extremely low strength of gravitational waves, a high-precision instrument like LIGO is required for their detection.
- The most powerful gravitational waves are created when objects move at very high speeds. **Some examples** of events that could cause a gravitational wave are:
 - when a star explodes asymmetrically (called a supernova)
 - when two big stars orbit each other
 - when two black holes orbit each other and merge.

The Large Hadron Collider (LHC)

World's largest particle collider restarts at record energy levels in its study of fundamentals of universe



LARGE HADRON COLLIDER

- LHC is the world's largest and most powerful **particle accelerator**. European Organisation for Nuclear

LARGE HADRON COLLIDER

#NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

The third season of operations for the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) started on 22 April 2022. The LHC is set to run for close to four years at a record energy of 13.6 trillion electronvolts (TeV).

WHAT ARE HADRONS?

- Hadrons are **subatomic particles** composed of two or three fundamental particles known as quarks, which are held together by strong interaction (strong nuclear force). **E.g.**, Protons, Neutrons.
 - Sub-atomic particles are the smallest known units of matter and the building blocks of all things.

Research (CERN) built LHC between 1998 and 2008 in collaboration with over 10,000 scientists from hundreds of universities and laboratories.

- It lies in a tunnel **27 kilometres** in circumference and as deep as 175 metres beneath the France-Switzerland border near Geneva.
- Inside LHC, **two high-energy particle beams of protons** are directed at each other at nearly the speed of light and **made to collide** in the 27-kilometre ring of superconducting magnets.
 - They are guided around the accelerator ring by a **strong magnetic field** maintained by superconducting electromagnets.
 - The magnetic field created by the superconducting electromagnets **keeps the protons in a tight beam** and guides them along the way as they travel through beam pipes.
- These **collisions generate new particles** and using detectors scientists study their properties and interactions, which are used to study fundamental particles, dark matter, dark energy and get insights into the fundamental laws of the universe.
 - The ATLAS and CMS detectors of LHC helped to **discover the Higgs boson** in 2012 and confirmed their findings in 2013.

ISSUES

- LHC has not been able to find — ‘new physics’, the collective name for particles or processes that can explain the **nature of dark matter** or **why gravity is such a weak force**, among other mysteries.
- The LHC has tested some of the predictions of theories that try to explain what the Standard Model cannot and has found them inadequate/ incomplete.

FUTURE GOALS

- It is being planned to improve the **LHC’s luminosity** (a measure of the machine’s ability to produce particle interactions of interest) by 10x by 2027 through upgrades.
- Also, it is envisioned to build a **bigger version of the LHC**, based on the hypothesis that such a machine will be able to find ‘new physics’ at even higher energies.

3D PRINTING TECHNOLOGY

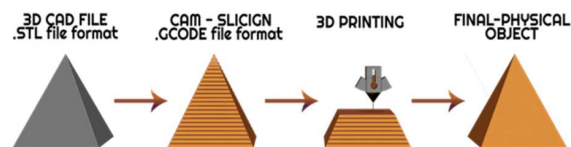
#NEW EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES



Bengaluru will soon have India's first post office constructed using **3D printing technology**. The project is being implemented by Larsen & Toubro, which has experience in constructing 3D-printed buildings.

ADDITIVE MANUFACTURING

- Additive manufacturing or 3D printing uses **computer-aided designing** to make prototypes or working models of objects by **laying down successive layers of materials** such as plastic, resin, thermoplastic, metal, fibre or ceramic. With the help of software, the model to be printed is first developed by the computer, which then gives instructions to the 3D printer.



ADVANTAGES

- **Low wastage:** Enables production of components and parts while utilizing significantly less material than traditional manufacturing.
- **Efficient:** Reduces production costs and saves time.
- **Boosts Innovation:** Enables new design engineering possibilities.
- **Localised manufacturing:** Localized, on-demand production, reducing the logistical burden
 - **E.g.,** Facilitates the creation of novel material combinations for armour, self-heating military clothing, and ammunition.
- **Supply chain resilience:** Alternative source of supply, reducing dependence on traditional suppliers and increasing supply chain resilience. This is particularly relevant in times of disruptions, such as natural disasters, geopolitical tensions, or pandemics.

APPLICATIONS

- **Aerospace and Defence:** Manufacture and repair spare parts of aircraft and weapons.
- **Automotive and Electronics parts:** Creation of complex geometries and lightweight structures, 3D printing spare parts like engines, interior and exterior parts of luxury vehicles, turbine blades etc.
- **Construction and Manufacturing** purposes.

- **Consumer Goods** like food items, wearables, jewellery, sportswear etc.
- **Healthcare:** Used for creation of **patient-specific replicas** of bones, organs, and blood vessels, dental prosthetics, surgical planning, regenerative medicine and organ transplantation.
- **3D bioprinting** is being used in healthcare for the **creation of living human cells** or tissue for use in regenerative medicine and tissue engineering. Enables the creation of functional organs that can be transplanted into patients in need, reducing the dependence on donor organs and addressing the issue of organ shortages.

DISADVANTAGES OF 3D PRINTING

- **Restricted Build Size:** Chamber size integrated into 3D printers is usually relatively small, thereby restricting the part sizes one can print. Therefore, any larger item needs to be printed separately and later assembled after its production, which can increase cost of production.
- **Limited Materials:** Materials needed during the manufacturing process are limited.
- **3D Printing Machines are Expensive:** Initial capital required to embark on using 3D printing technology is prohibitively expensive.
- **Post-processing challenges** as the 3D printed products requires finishing.
- **Copyright issues** and risk of counterfeit products.
- **Security:** Can be used to manufacture small arms and weapons.

CHALLENGES

- **High cost of imports:** There are few 3D printers produced domestically. The cost associated with importing industrial-grade 3D printers is too huge for medium and small-scale industries.
- **Lack of Awareness:** Reach of AM is limited due to a lack of awareness among manufacturing companies for design-prototyping-manufacturing assistance.
- **Lack of AM Standards:** In absence of a proper national strategy, private players have refrained from investing in AM sector.
- **Inadequate Research:** Lack of a centralised approach to AM constraints Indian institutions from undertaking intense research on AM-related technologies.

- **Risks Employment:** Large-scale use of AM in India may risk the employment of poor assembly workers.

NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR ADDITIVE MANUFACTURING, 2025

- National Strategy for Additive Manufacturing aims to increase India's share in global additive manufacturing to 5% by 2025 with the hope to likely add \$1 billion to the gross domestic product by that time.
- India will aim to achieve certain targets such as 50 India-specific technologies for material, machine and software, 100 new startups for additive manufacturing, and 500 new products and employ at least 1 lakh new skilled workers over the next three years.

SHOULD INDIA CONSIDER PHASING OUT NUCLEAR POWER?

#ENERGY SECTOR #NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

With solar and wind power becoming more popular globally, there are questions on whether nuclear power, with its concerns about cost and safety, remains a relevant option for the future, particularly in India.

ADVANTAGES AND NEED FOR NUCLEAR POWER

- **Clean Energy:** Nuclear power does not produce greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide and methane, which contribute to climate change. Therefore, it is a cleaner source of energy compared to fossil fuels.
- **High Energy Density:** Nuclear power plants can produce a large amount of energy from a small amount of fuel.
 - For operating a plant like Kudankulam over a year — 1,000 megawatts at 90% PLF (plant load factor) — the requirement is only 25 tonnes of low-enriched uranium fuel. Low enrichment means below 5% (proportion of fissile uranium).
 - Compared to a coal plant (of similar capacity) — approximately five million tonnes of coal is required. Further, thermal power plants are polluting and coal produces ash. (Ash contains

many heavy metals, which are detrimental to the water source).

- **Firm/Reliable Power:** Nuclear power plants can run continuously for months or even years without needing to refuel, providing a reliable source of electricity.
- **Lack of other alternatives:**
 - Currently, major share of India's energy mix is thermal power. With nearly 210 gigawatts of coal capacity, the sector produces **73%** of India's electricity. However, coal is a non-renewable fossil fuel and leads to massive greenhouse gas emissions.
 - India has very limited growth potential for **hydropower** because of conserving biodiversity, costs of rehabilitating and compensating landowners and seismological factors in Himalayas.
 - Solar and Wind are good alternatives but the issue is that the energy generated is variable, and the high cost is associated with Solar photovoltaic cells and storage batteries.
- **Meet Sustainable Energy targets of India:** India has target to cut carbon emissions by 1 billion tonnes by 2030 and achieve net-zero emission status by 2070. For that purpose, India needs to diversify its energy mix and increase the share of renewable clean energy like Nuclear energy.

CONCERNS REGARDING NUCLEAR POWER

Resistance to nuclear energy is driven by fears about safety, nuclear proliferation, or some other concerns related to its use, including:

- **Nuclear accidents:** Disasters at **Chernobyl** & **Fukushima** have demonstrated the devastating effects that can occur when nuclear reactors malfunction. Even with strict safety protocols, accidents can still happen.
- **Nuclear waste:** Nuclear power produces radioactive waste that can remain dangerous for thousands of years. There is no universally agreed-upon solution for the long-term storage and disposal of nuclear waste.
- **Proliferation of nuclear weapons:** Spent Nuclear fuel can be enriched and nuclear technology can be used to create nuclear weapons. There is particularly a concern in countries with less-than-transparent governments that can use nuclear power programs as a cover for the development of nuclear weapons.

- **High cost:** Nuclear power plants are expensive to build and maintain and thus high cost of nuclear power can make it difficult for some countries to afford.
- **Public perception:** Due to concerns about safety and the risk of accidents, public opposition can make it difficult to build new nuclear power plants.

CHALLENGES TO SCALING NUCLEAR ENERGY IN INDIA

- **Availability of fuel:** India does not have large reserves of natural Uranium and must import much of its nuclear fuel from other countries. This can make it difficult to plan for and maintain a stable supply of fuel, which in turn can limit the growth of the nuclear energy industry.
- **Limited contribution to energy mix:** Presently, India has 22 nuclear reactors in operation at seven plants, with a total installed capacity of 6,780 MW, as well as eight reactors under construction. Still, **nuclear power is only 2.5%-3.2%** of India's installed and generated power.
- **Nuclear liability:** India's nuclear liability laws have also been a barrier to the growth of the nuclear energy industry. India's strict liability laws place the burden of compensation for nuclear accidents on the plant operator, which can deter private companies from investing in nuclear power.

Also, according to the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010, the liability can be shifted from the operator to the vendor or supplier in case the accident is due to equipment or material. This was the reason nuclear companies pulled out of India, made it difficult to attract foreign investment in the industry and limited the growth of the sector.

E.g., Nuclear liability continues to be the major issue behind why the deal to install French European Pressurised Reactors at Jaitapur, Maharashtra, has not made progress.

- **Regulatory environment:** India's regulatory environment for nuclear power is still evolving, and there is a need for clear and consistent regulations to govern the industry. This includes regulations related to safety, security, and waste management.
- **Government monopoly:** Currently there is a government monopoly in the nuclear power sector. Earlier only Nuclear Power Corporation of India (NPCIL) & BHAVINI were approved to operate nuclear

power plants in India. However, now Central PSUs can enter joint ventures to operate nuclear power plants. There is a need to allow private companies and foreign enterprises to operate in this sector with stringent regulatory control.

WAY FORWARD

- **Combination of small modular reactors and large reactors** to increase nuclear power production, reduce the cost of production and achieve sustainable energy targets.
- Government should allow the **phased induction of other public sector companies** like NTPC (National Thermal Power Corporation) to get into the nuclear power sector. Consider the possibility of gradual induction of the private sector.

INDIA, RUSSIA TO BUILD BRAHMOS HYPERSONIC VERSION

#DEFENCE TECHNOLOGY

PRIMARY SOURCE: THE ECONOMIC TIMES

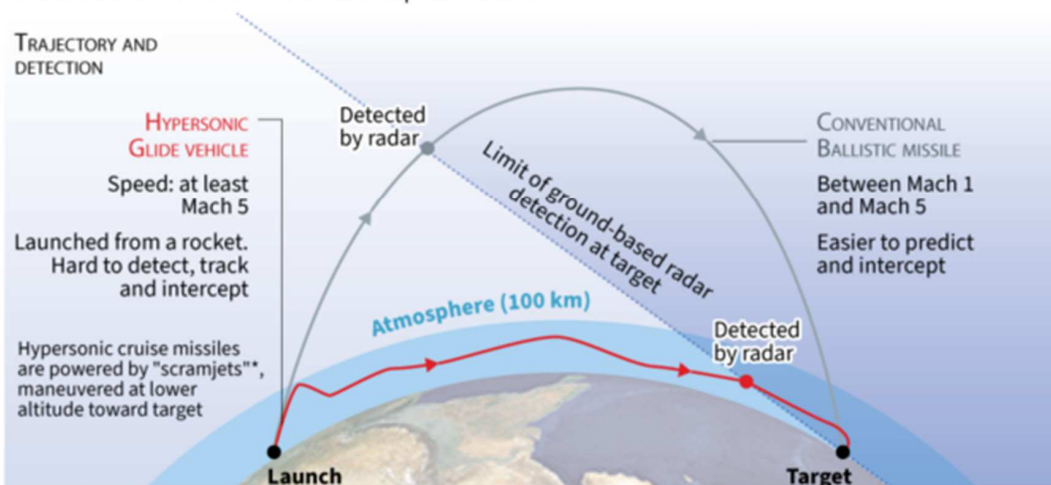
India & Russia are exploring the possibility of joint development of the **hypersonic version of BrahMos or BrahMos-II missile**.

HYPERSONIC WEAPON SYSTEMS (HWS)

- HWS are **advanced military technologies** that can travel at extremely high speeds, typically defined as **Mach 5 or higher** (five times the speed of sound).
- These weapons are designed to be **extremely manoeuvrable**, able to change course quickly during flight and evade enemy defence systems.
 - They are **different from ballistic missiles**, which can also travel at hypersonic speeds (of at least Mach 5) but have set trajectories and limited manoeuvrability.
- There are **two main categories of hypersonic weapons**: hypersonic glide vehicles and hypersonic cruise missiles.
 - Hypersonic glide vehicles are launched from a rocket. The glide vehicle then separates from the rocket and “glides” at speeds of at least Mach 5 toward a target.
 - Hypersonic cruise missiles are powered by high-speed, air-breathing engines.
- HWS can carry **out launches from a variety of platforms**, including ground-based systems, aircraft, and submarines.
- They are typically **designed to carry conventional or nuclear warheads** and are seen as a potential game-changer in military operations, particularly in terms of their speed, range, and ability to penetrate enemy defences.
 - The United States, Russia and China are developing hypersonic weapons.

Hypersonic weapons

Considered the next generation of arms with conventional or nuclear warheads that are hard to detect and can travel more than five times the speed of sound



BRAHMOS-II MISSILE

- BrahMos-II is a **hypersonic cruise missile** currently under joint development by India's DRDO and Russia's NPO Mashinostroyeniya, which have together formed BrahMos Aerospace Private Limited.
- BrahMos-II is expected to be capable of travelling at **speeds of over Mach 7** (possibly reaching Mach 8) and has a range of **around 620 miles (1000 kms)**.
- It is being designed to be **launched from multiple platforms**, including land, air, and sea, and is likely to

have the same characteristics as Russia's **Tsirkon missile**.

Key Fact:

- India is a party to **Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR)**, which allows the country to develop a missile with a **range of over 300 km** and **weighing more than 500 kg** but not to export it to other countries. The export version of BrahMos is **capped at 290 km** to comply with the MTCR restrictions of 300 km.

SNIPPETS FOR PRELIMS

MALARIA SET TO BE A NOTIFIABLE DISEASE ACROSS INDIA

#HEALTH

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

Malaria is all set to become a notifiable disease across India, with Bihar, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Meghalaya too in the process of putting this vector-borne disease in the category.

MALARIA

- Malaria is a **potentially life-threatening disease** caused by parasites (*plasmodium vivax*, *plasmodium falciparum*, *plasmodium malariae* and *plasmodium ovale*) that are transmitted through the bite of infected **female Anopheles mosquitoes**.
- India was the only high-burden, high-impact country in South-East Asia region to report a **decline in malaria cases** in 2020 as compared to 2019.
 - India witnessed 85.1% decline in malaria cases and 83.36% decline in deaths during 2015-2022.
- India has the vision to be **malaria-free by 2027** and to **eliminate** the disease by **2030**.
- India has the availability of near-real-time data monitoring through an integrated health information platform (**HIP-Malaria Portal**) and periodic regional review meetings to keep a check on malaria growth across India.

WHAT ARE NOTIFIABLE DISEASES?

- A **notifiable disease** is any disease that is required by law to be reported to government authorities. The collation of information allows the authorities to monitor the disease, provides early warning of possible outbreaks, and formulate a plan for their **elimination and control**.
- **Registered medical practitioners** need to notify such diseases in a proper form within three days or notify verbally via phone within 24 hours depending on the urgency of the situation. Every government hospital, private hospital, laboratory, and clinic will have to report cases of the disease to the local government authorities.
- The onus of notifying any disease and the implementation lies with the **state government**. Any failure to report a notifiable disease is a **criminal offence** and the state government can take **necessary actions** against defaulters.
- **Notifiable diseases in India:** Cholera, diphtheria, encephalitis, leprosy, meningitis, pertussis (whooping cough), plague, tuberculosis, AIDS, hepatitis, measles, yellow fever, malaria, dengue.

LUMPY SKIN DISEASE

#HEALTH

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

Central Government is foreseeing a "stagnation" in milk production and a possible scarcity of ghee and butter as an impact of the lumpy skin disease (LSD) that took the lives of about 1.89 lakh cattle recently.

ABOUT LUMPY SKIN DISEASE (LSD)

- LSD is caused by the **lumpy skin disease virus** which belongs to the **genus capripoxvirus** that usually affects host animals like cows and buffaloes.
- The **contagious disease** can either spread through:
 - **direct contact with the vectors** (like mosquitoes, some biting flies, and ticks)
 - **contaminated fodder and water** (infected animals shed the virus through oral and nasal secretions which may contaminate common feeding and water troughs)
 - **animal semen** during artificial insemination.
- It is **not a zoonotic virus** i.e., the disease cannot spread to humans.
- **Symptoms:** LSD affects the **lymph nodes** of the infected animal, causing the nodes to enlarge and appear like lumps on the skin. The nodules may later turn into ulcers and eventually develop scabs over the skin.
 - **Other symptoms** include high fever, sharp drop in milk yield, discharge from the eyes and nose, salivation, loss of appetite, depression, damaged hides, emaciation (thinness or weakness) of animals, infertility and abortions.
- The **morbidity of the disease** varies between 2-45% and **mortality** or rate of death is less than 10%. It is **safe to consume milk from cattle infected** by Lumpy Skin Disease, as it is a non-zoonotic disease.

Implications:

- The disease leads to **reduced milk production** as the animal becomes weak and also loses appetite due to mouth ulceration, abortion in pregnant animals and sterility in bulls.
- It **threatens the livelihoods** of smaller farmers significantly which incur losses due to cattle deaths.

MALWARE-AS-A-SERVICE

#INTERNET & COMMUNICATION
TECHNOLOGY #CYBERSECURITY

PRIMARY SOURCE The Indian EXPRESS

Raccoon Stealer, an information-stealing malware, was used to target eight Central government entities, including Central Paramilitary Forces and the Income Tax Department.

- The malware is usually delivered through email that retrieves sensitive data from infected machines and is available as Malware-as-a-service.

MALWARE-AS-A-SERVICE (MAAS)

- MaaS is a type of **cybercrime model** where malware is offered for sale or rent by cyber criminals as a service. These services typically are available on the **dark web**.
- In this model, individuals or groups with little or no technical expertise can gain access to sophisticated and powerful malware tools and services, enabling them to launch cyber-attacks without needing to develop or maintain their own malware. Thus, **making it easier for cybercriminals to launch attacks and evade detection**.
- MaaS operates similarly to legitimate Software as a Service (SaaS) models, where software is provided on a subscription or pay-per-use basis.

SOME OF THE MOST COMMON TYPES OF MALWARES

- **Viruses:** Programs that can replicate themselves and spread to other computers which can cause various problems, such as disrupting computer operations, stealing information, or damaging files.
- **Trojan horses:** These programs masquerade themselves as legitimate software but can carry out malicious activities, such as stealing data or giving attackers unauthorized access to a computer.
- **Worms:** A self-replicating program that can spread across networks, disrupting computer operations and consuming network resources.
- **Adware:** Software that displays unwanted advertisements on a computer. It can be intrusive and sometimes can track a user's online activities.
- **Ransomware:** Encryption of a victim's data with the demand for a ransom payment to unlock it. It can result in losing important data and files.
- **Spyware:** Software designed to collect information about a user's online activities without their knowledge or consent to steal sensitive information (like financial statements and passwords).

- **Bots:** A bot, short for "robot", is a type of software application or script that performs automated tasks on command like malicious activities.

LOCKBIT RANSOMWARE

#CYBERSECURITY

PRIMARY
SOURCE

THE HINDU

A new ransomware **LockBit** is **targeting macOS devices**, making this the first major ransomware operation to specifically target Apple computers.

ABOUT LOCKBIT RANSOMWARE

- The ransomware is designed to **infiltrate victims' systems** and **encrypt important files**. It is categorised as a "**crypto virus**" due to its requests for payment in cryptocurrency to decrypt the files on the victim's device.
- LockBit gang operates on the **ransomware-as-a-service (Raas) model** and comes from a line of extortion cyberattacks.
 - In this model, willing parties put down a deposit for use in a custom attack and make profits through the ransom payment.
 - The ransom is divided between the LockBit developer team and attacking affiliates.

INDIGENOUS SUICIDE DRONES NAGASTRA-1

#DEFENCE TECHNOLOGY

PRIMARY
SOURCE

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

Army has used its emergency powers to order more than 300 **indigenous suicide drones 'Nagatra 1'** from Nagpur-based Solar Industries. The procurement would enable shorter selection time and expedited deliveries of the drones within one year.

MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS

- **Nagatra 1** is the first indigenous Loiter Munition which can strike targets within **15-30 km** using GPS-enabled precision. It can loiter over a target for a maximum of 60 minutes and has an accuracy of less than 2 metres.

- The fixed-wing electric-powered unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) **uses GPS for precision strikes** and is capable of destroying various soft-skinned targets using its **pre-fragmented high explosive warhead**. The munition also carries a **day-and-night camera** for surveillance as well.

- Nagatra-1 in its '**Kamikaze**' mode can search and destroy any target by crashing into it. If the target is not found or the mission is aborted, the munition can be called back and recovered using a parachute.

- **Developed by:** Economic Explosives Limited

SIGNIFICANCE

- **Cost-effective weapon against low-value targets.** The drones can **undertake shallow strikes** with precision, without endangering the lives of soldiers.
- **Enhance options** for armed forces to strike terrorist camps and launch pads across the Line of Control in Pakistan.
- **Cut down dependence** on foreign sources with **over 75% indigenous content** and fully designed and developed in India.
- **Have a strong export potential**, given the growing demand for economical stand-off weapons that can deliver precision strikes.

PSLV ORBITAL EXPERIMENTAL MODULE

#ASTRONOMY & SPACE TECHNOLOGY

PRIMARY
SOURCE

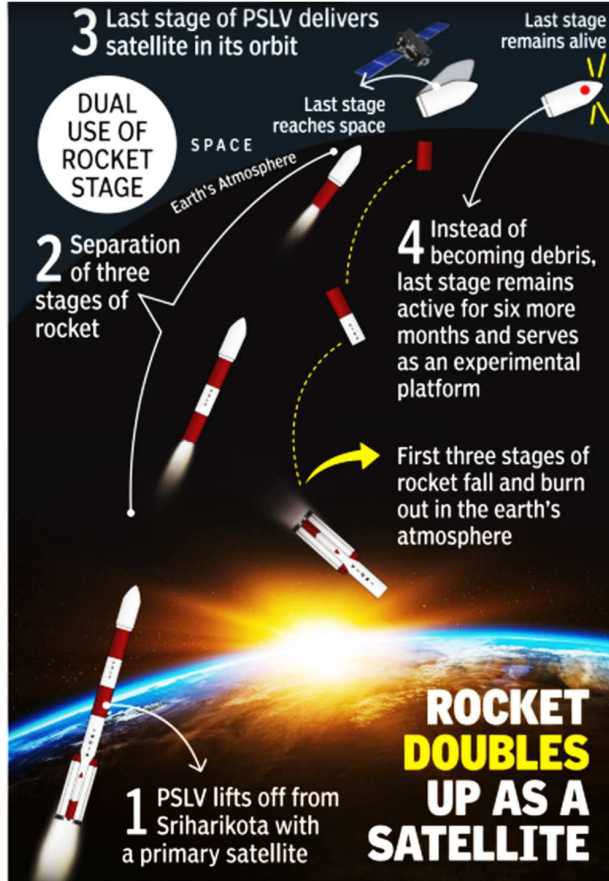
THE HINDU

ISRO launched the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle C55 (**PSLV-C55**) mission recently with Singapore's **TeLEOS-2** as the primary satellite and **Lumelite-4** as a co-passenger satellite. PSLV-C55 mission has **PSLV Orbital Experimental Module (POEM)**, where the spent PS4 (fourth and final stage of the PSLV launch vehicle) would be utilised as an orbital platform to carry out scientific experiments through non-separating payloads.

PSLV ORBITAL EXPERIMENTAL MODULE (POEM)

- POEM is a platform that will help **perform in-orbit experiments** using the final, and otherwise discarded, stage of ISRO's PSLV.
- PSLV is a **four-stage rocket** where the first three spent stages fall back into the ocean, and the final

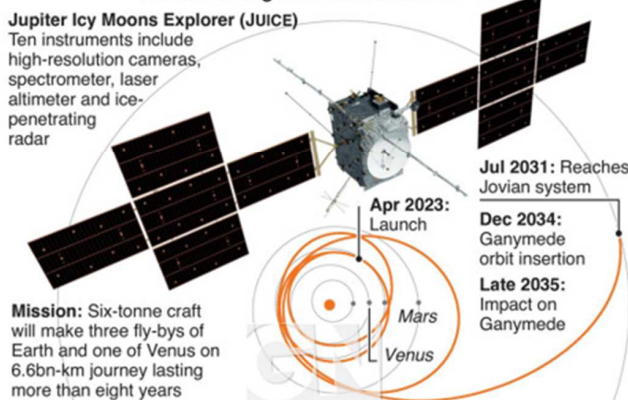
stage (PS4) — after launching the satellite into orbit — ends up as space junk. However, in the PSLV-C55 mission, the spent final stage will be utilised as a “stabilised platform” to perform experiments.



- POEM has a dedicated **Navigation Guidance and Control (NGC) system** for attitude stabilisation, which

Mission to find life on Jupiter's icy moons

Europe's €1.6 billion voyage into deep space will explore the frozen oceans of Ganymede, Europa and Callisto to hunt for signs of extraterrestrial life



stands for controlling the orientation of any aerospace vehicle within permitted limits. The NGC will act as the **platform's brain** to stabilise it with specified accuracy.

JUPITER ICY MOONS EXPLORER MISSION (JUICE)

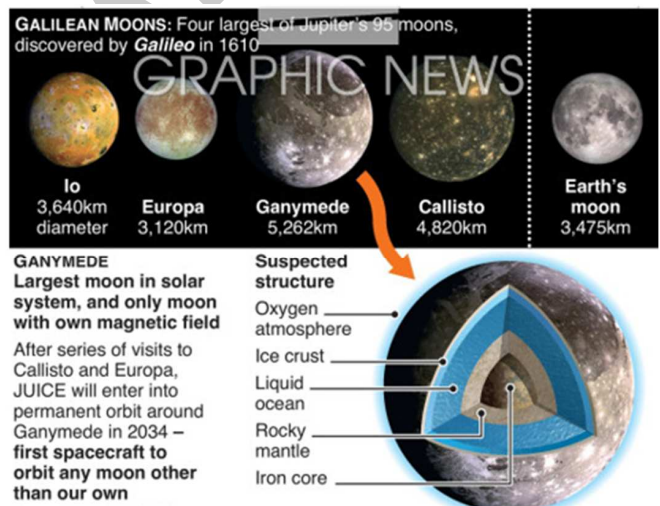
#ASTRONOMY & SPACE TECHNOLOGY

PRIMARY SOURCE **ESA**

Jupiter Icy Moons Explorer (JUICE) mission lifted off on Europe's most powerful rocket - the Ariane-5.

JUICE MISSION

- Juice is on an **eight-year-long voyage** to make detailed observations on **Jupiter** and **three of its ocean-bearing moons** — Ganymede, Callisto and Europa.
- **Objective:** To explore the moons in search of signs of life and possibility to live/habitability.
- During its voyage, spacecraft will complete fly-bys of Venus, Earth, and Earth-Moon system to **arrive at its destination in 2031**.
- **JUICE Mission** will orbit Ganymede and end its life there.
- Operations of JUICE Mission will overlap with **NASA's Europa Clipper Mission**.



ABOUT JUPITER

- Jupiter is the **fifth planet** from the Sun and the **largest** in the Solar System.
- It is a **gas giant** primarily composed of hydrogen, followed by helium.
- Jupiter is surrounded by a **faint planetary ring system** and has a powerful magnetosphere. The **Great Red Spot** is a gigantic storm (anticyclone) that is about twice as wide as Earth, circling the planet in its southern hemisphere.
- Jupiter has the highest number of moons in our Solar System (95 known moons till date) including **Ganymede** which is the largest (larger than the planet Mercury).

ABOUT GANYMEDE

- Largest moon in our solar system. It is even bigger than planet Mercury.
- There is strong evidence that Ganymede has underground saltwater ocean that may hold more water than all the water on Earth's surface.
- It is the only moon known have its own magnetic field – typically only found on planets like Earth.

- Ganymede has a faint oxygen atmosphere; however, it is far too thin to breathe.

ABOUT CALLISTO

- Jupiter's second largest moon and third largest moon in our solar system.
- Surface of Callisto is heavily cratered created of ice and rock.
- Scientists believe that Callisto may have an underground salty ocean making it a potential habitat for life.

ABOUT EUROPA

- Europa is slightly smaller than Earth's moon and barely one-quarter the diameter of Earth itself.
- Surface of Europa is composed of solid water ice and it has extremely thin oxygen atmosphere.
- Europa is believed to be most promising place in our solar system to have environment suitable for life.
- Beneath the icy surface of Europa is a salty-water ocean thought to contain twice as much water as Earth's oceans combined.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

MCQS

Q1. Consider the following statements with reference to Quantum Computers:

1. Quantum computing calculates with qubits which can represent either 0 or 1.
2. The power of quantum computing increases exponentially in proportion to the number of qubits.
3. It is relatively easier to maintain the stability of qubits by increasing the number of qubits.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 3 only (b) 2 only
(c) 2 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Q2. With reference to "Malware as a Service (MaaS)", consider the following statements:

1. MaaS aims at providing technical support for Malware removal.

2. It enhances cybersecurity measures and promotes ethical hacking.
3. Under the model software is provided on a subscription or pay-per-use basis.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Q3. Consider the following statements with reference to the Large Hadron Collider (LHC):

1. In LHC electrons are accelerated and collided to study fundamental particles and their interactions.
2. LHC is able to explain the nature of dark matter and dark energy.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only

(c) Both 1 and 2

(d) Neither 1 nor 2

(c) 1 and 2 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

Q4. Consider the following statements with reference to the Gravitational Waves:

1. Gravitational waves are ripples in space-time caused when massive objects move with extreme accelerations.
2. They are invisible but travel at a speed lower than the speed of light.
3. Gravitational waves by nature are much stronger than electromagnetic radiation.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only

(b) 2 and 3 only

Q5. With reference to "lumpy skin disease", consider the following statements:

1. It is a bacterial skin disease transmitted by vectors affecting cattle and buffaloes only.
2. It spreads by blood-feeding insects including mosquitoes, flies, and lice.
3. It infects humans through the consumption of milk or meat.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only

(b) 1 and 2 only

(c) 2 only

(d) 2 and 3 only

DESCRIPTIVE QUESTIONS

Q1. What is genome sequencing? Highlight the potential applications of genome sequencing.

Q2. Eradication of Tuberculosis is in the dire need of global synergy. What role can India play in the global effort to eradicate Tuberculosis? Also, highlight India's initiatives in this regard.

Answers: 1-b, 2-c, 3-d, 4-a, 5-c

HISTORY, HERITAGE & CULTURE

GS PAPER (PRELIMS) & GS PAPER I (MAIN)

Sanju Singh



IN CITY, AN EXHIBITION CELEBRATING INDIA'S MONUMENTS IN THANJAVUR STYLE

GENERAL STUDIES I #CULTURE

PRIMARY
SOURCE

The Indian
EXPRESS

Seema Sethi, an artist from Delhi, decorates her canvases using a variety of mixed media, including gold foil, watercolor, and semiprecious stones. Deities are portrayed in the Thanjavur style, which is distinguished by use of vibrant, rich colours and shiny golden foil.



THANJAVUR/TANJORE PAINTINGS

- Thanjavur painting is a traditional South Indian painting style that originated in the Tamil Nadu town of Thanjavur.
- The Nayakas of Thanjavur, who were under the control of the Vijayanagara Rayas, encouraged art—



Jatin Bharadwaj

primarily, classical dance and music—as well as literature, both in Telugu and Tamil, and painting of predominantly Hindu religious subjects in temples. The art form draws its immediate resources and inspiration from this time period, which dates back to around 1600 AD.

- However, Thanjavur art as we know it today originated in the Thanjavur Maratha court
- (1676–1855). Under the support of the famous art patron Sarfoji II Maharaj, these works achieved their pinnacle.
- The Saraswathi Mahal Library in Tanjore, which was established by Sarfoji II, contains some specimens of this artwork.
- According to Charles Gold, a British narrator, the Tanjore paintings were created by Moochys or Painters of India. The Nayudu community of Madurai and the Raju group of Thanjavur and Tiruchi, also known as Jinigara or Chitragara, were the communities that produced the paintings in the Thanjavur style.
- The Government of India recognised it as a Geographic Indication in 2007–2008.

STYLE AND TECHNIQUE

- The pieces were framed and intended to be hung on the walls of domestic puja rooms or bhajan halls. They were constructed on canvas glued on a wooden structure, marking a considerable departure from the pan-Indian tradition, which requires that paintings be modest.
- The vibrant reds, rich greens, chalk white, turquoise blues, and generous use of gold (foil) and inset glass beads made up the majority of their stunning colour palette. The paintings occasionally included precious stones.

- During Sarfoji-II reign, Thanjavur glass paintings that used Chinese reverse glass painting techniques became popular as a quicker and less expensive art.
- Dark brown or red was typically utilised for outlining. The background was primarily red, though it may also be blue or green.

INFLUENCES

- Paintings from Thanjavur exhibit influences from Deccani, Vijayanagara, Maratha, and possibly European or Company styles.
- The paintings from Tirupati and Kalamkari may have had the most influence.
- During the Anglo-Mysore Wars of 1767–1799, when a British garrison was stationed in Thanjavur, the direct European influence on Tanjore paintings began.
- The majority of artworks depict Hindu gods, goddesses, and saints, essentially acting as devotional icons. Jain, Sikh, Muslim, and other religious as well as secular subjects have also appeared in Tanjore paintings.

ABOUT MINIATURE PAINTINGS

- Miniature paintings are bright, individually created, small works of art. These paintings complex brushwork, which contributes to their distinct individuality, is one of their best qualities.
- The colours utilised in the paintings come from a variety of organic materials, including fruits, indigo, precious stones, gold, and silver.
- Miniature painting in India is credited to the Palas of Bengal as its forerunners, but it was under the Mughals that it attained its zenith.

HISTORY OF MINIATURE PAINTINGS

- When the Palas ruled over India's eastern region around 750 A.D., miniature paintings first appeared there.
- The religious teachings of the Buddha, which included his images, were inscribed on palm leaves, which is how these paintings came to be well-known.
- Similar paintings were imported to western India by the Chalukya Dynasty kings around 960 A.D. Religious topics were frequently depicted in miniature artworks at this time.
- The popularity of miniature paintings began to soar with the expansion of the Mughal Empire. Indian miniature paintings merged elements of the Persian style of painting during Akbar reign.

- With the influence of European paintings at the Mughal court, these miniature paintings underwent further development.
- The Rajput kings of Rajasthan continued to support miniature paintings and artists even after the Mughal Empire had collapsed. The miniature paintings of Rajasthan had unique characteristics and frequently portrayed the royal lifestyle and mythological tales of Lord
- Krishna and Radha, despite being influenced by the Mughal style of painting.

ODISHA'S MODERN CAPITAL SWALLOWS ITS ANCIENT URBAN HUB

#ANCIENTINDIA #ARTANDCULTURE

PRIMARY SOURCE

THE HINDU

SECONDARY SOURCE

Odisha Tourism

The nationally protected 2,700-year-old Sisupalgarh, a fort city on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar, is being bulldozed by the land mafia, even as official notifications are ignored, and the State government and ASI point a lazy finger at each other. Odisha high court has already ordered to remove the encroachment in the vicinity of the fort.

ABOUT SISUPALGARH AND ITS FORT



- Location: Sisupalgarh or Sisupalagada is situated in Khurda District in Odisha on the banks of Mahanadi Delta.

- Duration: 7th Century BC.
- It was excavated in 1948 by Braj Basi Lal under Archaeological Survey of India orders.
- Currently only, Shola Khamba, a constellation of 16 monolithic (now 13) pillars, and the western gateway has survived which proves the presence of ancient city and fort.
- Stone used for the construction were laterite stones.
- Excavations in the 1950s revealed the settlement was well planned, with a drainage system and roads crossing each other at 90-degree angles.

ABOUT KALINGA AND VARIOUS EMPIRES

- Kalinga is known to be a powerful kingdom as early as the time of the Kurukshetra battle. Srutayudha, the king of the Kalinga joined the camp of the Kaurava in the battle and was killed in the battle by Bhimasena with his two heroic sons: Bhanumana and Ketumana.
- After the Mahabharata War a new Kshetriya dynasty ruled over Kalinga and it is known from the Buddhist work '*Mahagovinda Suttanta*' that the glory and power of Kalinga was restored within a short period.
- According to the Puranas **32 Kshetriya kings** ruled over Kalinga after the Mahabharata War up to the time of **Mahapadmananda** who ascended the throne of Magadha in 362 BC.
- **Nanda rule:** Mahapadmananda undertook irrigation projects to eradicate famine condition in Kalinga. The pre-Mauryan black polished potteries and punch-marked coins having four symbols found in plenty from Asurgarh in Kalahandi district and Sonapur in Bolangir district indicate the flourishing economic condition during the time of the Nanda rule. Last Nanda king was overthrown by Chandragupta Maurya.
- **Mauryan rule:** Asoka, the son of Bindusara who invaded Kalinga in 261 B.C. and succeeded in occupying Kalinga (Massive Kalinga War). Seeing the massive loss of life, Ashoka converted to Buddhism. Kalinga became one of the administrative provisions in the empire of Magadha with headquarters of a Kumara (Viceroy) located at Tosali. It was also the headquarter of highest judiciary of Mauryan rule. Edicts were engraved on the Dhauli and Jaugada rocks to inculcate his administration and religious principles to the people.
- **Kharvela rule:** In the early part of the 1st century BC Kalinga became independent under the Chedi Chief

Mahameghavana. The third ruler of this dynasty was Kharavela who flourished during the second half of the 1st century B.C. The Hatigumpha inscription in Udayagiri near Bhubaneswar furnishes detailed accounts about the life and activities of Kharavela from his boyhood to his 13th regnal year. He repaired the fort at Sisupalgarh (Kalinganagari). Kharavela excavated a number of cave-dwellings in the Kumari hills for the Jain monks and bestowed endowments for them. Jainism greatly flourished in Kalinga under the sincere patronage of Kharavela. Inscriptions of Guntupalli, Velpuru in Andhra Pradesh and Velpuru inscription also talks about this *Mahameghavahana* dynasty.

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SIKH ASSEMBLY

#BHAKTIMOVEMENT #MEDIEVALHISTORY

PRIMARY SOURCE The Indian EXPRESS

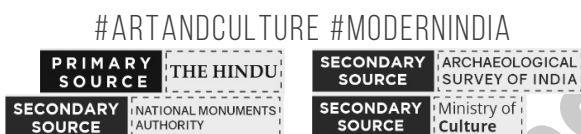
Sarbat Khalsa, the Sikh assembly has been demanded by some religious groups in Punjab.

ABOUT SARBAT KHALSA

- The word **sarbat means 'all'**, and literally, the Sarbat Khalsa is an assembly of all factions of Sikhs (Khalsa).
- The idea of a deliberative assembly of Sikhs dates back to the 18th century.
- Following the death of the tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh, the **Sikh misls** (military units) began to convene the Sarbat Khalsa to discuss political, social, and religious issues of great importance to the community, which was then in the midst of its struggle against the Mughals.
- These gatherings, called twice a year on the occasion of Baisakhi and Diwali, had the power to issue directions to all Sikhs.
- The Sarbat Khalsa was first institution of Sikhs that took shape after the tradition of Guru in human form came to end, and turned out to be very effective amid the internal conflicts among the misls.
- The establishment of the Sikh kingdom by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1799 ended the era of the Sikh misls, and also the primary need for the institution of the Sarbat Khalsa.

- In 1920, the Sarbat Khalsa was called to discuss control over gurdwaras and subsequently, the SGPC was born.
- In the 20th century, the formation of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) further reduced the need for an institution like the Sarbat Khalsa. Over the years, the SGPC has set up a well-oiled mechanism for taking decisions on behalf of the community.
- After the Army action at the Golden Temple in 1984, some organisers called the Sarbat Khalsa, but prominent Sikh bodies including the SGPC were not part of the call.
- One of the most important of these gatherings was called on January 26, 1986, when radical Sikhs sought to discuss kar sewa at the Akal Takht, which had been damaged in Operation Bluestar.
- A panthic committee that was formed to decide on the future of the Sikh struggle later that year, gave a call for Khalistan.
- More recently, Sikh bodies opposed to the Shiromani Akali Dal (Badal) called the Sarbat Khalsa on November 10, 2015. Resolutions were passed to remove Jathedars of the Akal Takht, Takht Damdama Sahib, and Takht Kesgarh Sahib, and to appoint other, parallel Jathedars. This Sarbat Khalsa impacted Punjab politics in a number of ways.

GATEWAY OF INDIA AND CENTRALLY PROTECTED MONUMENTS



According to a recent observation, there were some cracks which were found on the Gateway of India.

ABOUT GATEWAY OF INDIA

- Gateway of India is located in Mumbai's southern coast and does not fall under the purview of the Archaeological Survey of India.
- It is a **Triumphal Arch** structure that showcases the **Indo-Islamic architecture of Gujarat and Indo-Saracenic style**.

- Its architect is **George Wittet**.
- It was erected to commemorate the landing of **King-Emperor George V**, the first British monarch to visit India, in December 1911 at Strand Road near Wellington Fountain.
- The Gateway is also the monument from where the last **British troops left** India in 1948.
- It does not fall under the purview of the Archaeological **Survey of India**. It is **not a centrally protected monument**. Its preservation and restoration comes under the control of the Archaeological department of Maharashtra Government.

WHAT IS A CENTRALLY PROTECTED MONUMENT?

- The centrally protected monuments are sites which have been declared so under the provisions of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958 (AMASR Act).
- All archaeological sites and remains which have been declared by the **Ancient and Historical Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (Declaration of National Importance) Act, 1951**, or by section 126 of the States Reorganization Act, 1956 to be of national importance shall also be deemed to be protected areas for the purposes of this Act. AHMAR act is different from the **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958** as the latter one provides preservation while the previous one recognises a site.
- All functions related to conservation, preservation, and environmental development of centrally protected areas come under the Archaeological Survey of India.
- Any construction activity around such monuments is guided and regulated by the National Monument Authority.

THE ANCIENT MONUMENTS AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND REMAINS ACT, 1958

Why:

- Preservation of historical monuments and archaeological sites and remains of national importance (over 100 years old).
- Protection of sculptures, carvings, and other similar objects.
- Regulation of archaeological excavations.

Authorization:

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) functions under this act.

Amendments in 2010:

- It strengthens its penal provisions, to prevent encroachments and illegal construction close to the monuments – which was happening on a large scale.
- Defines Prohibited area: 100 metre around every national monument where no construction, public or private is permitted.
- Defines Regulated area: 200 metres beyond the prohibited area, where any construction requires permission of a newly constituted National Monuments Authority.

New proposed amendments:

- An Expert committee will decide on the extent of the prohibited and regulated areas around each monument and activities permitted herein.
- The ASI would be given enforcement powers such as in the Forest Act which would empower it to act against those encroaching at protested sites.

ABOUT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA

- The first systematic research into the subcontinent's history was conducted by the **Asiatic Society, which was founded by the British Indologist William Jones in January 1784.**
- The most important of the society's achievements was the **decipherment of the Brahmi script by James Prinsep in 1837.**
- The Archaeological Survey of India was eventually formed in **1861** by a **statute passed into law by Lord Canning with Alexander Cunningham** as the **first Archaeological Surveyor.**

Present Status:

- The Archaeological Survey of India is an **attached office of the Ministry of Culture.** Under the provisions of the AMASR Act of 1958, the ASI administers more than 3650 ancient monuments, archaeological sites and remains of national importance.
- These can include everything from temples, mosques, churches, tombs, and cemeteries to palaces, forts, step-wells, and rock-cut caves.

- The Survey also maintains ancient mounds and other similar sites which represent the remains of ancient habitation.
- The **ASI is headed by a Director General** who is assisted by an Additional Director General, two Joint Directors General, and 17 Directors.

ABOUT NATIONAL MONUMENT AUTHORITY

- National Monuments Authority (NMA) is a statutory body under the Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India has been set up as per provisions of The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains or AMASR Act, 1958 (amended in 2010).

Functions of NMA:

- Protection and preservation of monuments and sites through management of the prohibited and regulated area around the centrally protected monuments.
- To consider grant of permissions to applicants for construction related activity in the prohibited and regulated area.
- To categorize all the protected monuments and protected areas declared as of National importance as per AMASR act 1958.

FAQs;

1.What is an ancient monument?

In the AMASR Act, ancient monument means any structure, erection or monument, or any tumulus or place of interment, or any cave, rock sculpture, inscription or monolith, which is of historical, archaeological or artistic interest provided it has been in existence for not less than one hundred years. Other inclusions are remains or the site of an ancient monument, and means of access to the monument are also termed as ancient monuments.

2. How is a monument declared protected?

Where the Central Government is of opinion that any ancient monument is of national importance it issues a notification (preliminary) in the Official Gazette, of its intention to declare such ancient monument to be of national importance. A notification published under section 4 (3) makes the ancient monument to be of national importance for the purposes of this Act.

3. What is the difference between a protected area and a protected monument?

When any archaeological site and remains is declared to be of national importance it is called a protected

area whereas an ancient monument when declared to be of national importance is called a protected monument. Government may acquire the protected monument under the provisions of the Land Acquisition Act, 1894.

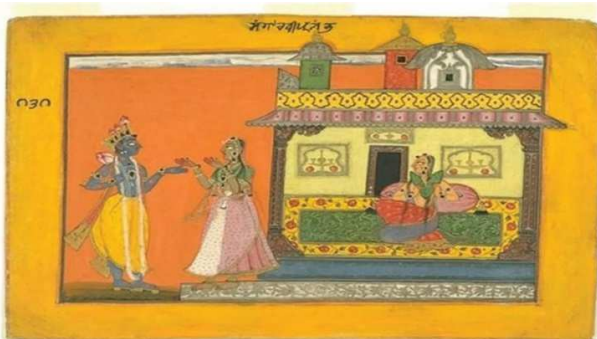
FAMOUS BASOHLI PAINTING FROM JAMMU AND KASHMIR'S KATHUA GETS GI TAGGING

#MEDIVALINDIA #ARTANDCULTURE

PRIMARY SOURCE Business Standard

After the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development's recommendations (NABARD), the renowned Basohli painting from the Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir has received the Geographical Indication (GI) Tag.

- An item's GI tag provides the original manufacturers with legal protection and prevents unauthorised use of the item by third parties.
- Basohli painting of Kathua is the first independent GI tagged product from Jammu region.



Basohli: Puranic Scene Devi Enthroned

ABOUT BASOHLI PAINTING

- Pahari paintings originated in Basohli, a small town in Jammu region.
- It gave rise to a distinctive genre of miniature paintings where mythology and conventional folk art were combined.
- Basohli paintings reached their height during the reigns of Sangram Pal (1635–1673) and later Kirpal Pal (1678–1693).

- The Ramayana, Gita Govinda and Rasamanjari illustrations by Bhanudatta were ordered by Raja Kirpal Singh.
- The most well-known painter of this school was Devi Das, who is most known for his paintings of Radha Krishna and rulers dressed in white clothing.

Features

- The use of vivid and strong colours in the borders, such as red, yellow, and blue, was one of the distinguishing characteristics.
- A prominent nose and lotus-shaped eyes were two further distinctive characteristics of the face.
- Both men and women are dressed in a style like that found in Rajput or Mughal courts.
- In Basohli art, flora was frequently shown. The vibrant red rhododendron blossoms were the artists' favourite.
- The portrayal of jewellery, which was done with embossed white paint to represent pearls and beetle wings to represent emerald green, was what made these paintings stand out.
- The vibrant contrast of colours that characterises this school is inspired by the Malwa paintings.

PAHARI PAINTING

- A form of miniature painting and book illustration that evolved in the autonomous Indian republics at the foothills of the Himalayas.
- The term 'Pahari Paintings' applied to a variety of schools that thrived in these smaller kingdoms.
- The Pahari paintings can be divided into two series—the Northern Series from the Jammu or Dogra School, and the Southern Series from the Basohli and Kangra Schools.
- The paintings' topics, which covered everything from mythology to literature, highlighted fresh methods.
- Each figure has a unique composition, colour scheme, and pigmentation.
- Nainsukh and Manaku were two of this school's best artists.

GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION (GI)

- The Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 intends to make provisions for the registration and improved protection of geographical indications relating to goods in India.

- The WTO Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) governs related aspects of Intellectual Property Rights governs and directs it.
- The protection of industrial property and geographic indications was determined and is also indicated in Articles 1(2) and 10 of the Paris Convention as components of intellectual property.
- It is primarily a manufactured, natural, or agricultural product (handicrafts and industrial goods).
- This tag is valid for ten years, after which it may be renewed.
- However, a protected geographical indication does not enable the holder to prevent someone from making a product using the same techniques as those set out in the standards for that indication.
- Darjeeling Tea from West Bengal received the first GI Tag in India.
- The Department of Industry Promotion and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, is responsible for issuing these tags.

Approaches to safeguard Geographical Indications

- Specific regimes of protection (sui generis systems)
- Collective/certification marks
- Methods for concentrating on business operations, such as the administrative product and approval schemes.

Significance

- After a product receives this designation, no one or business may sell a similar product under that name.
- A product's GI registration gives it legal protection and safeguards against unauthorized use by others.
- The GI tag aids in marketing the product's exports and gives customers confidence in the product's legitimacy.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION-2015

Q. Which of the following has/have been accorded 'Geographical Indication' status?

1. Banaras Brocades and Sarees
2. Rajasthani Dal-Bati-Churma
3. Tirupathi Laddu

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 and 3 only

(c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (c)

HISTORY AROUND THE CORNER- AN ILLUMINATED VIEW OF KHAN-E-KHANA (RAHIM KHAN'S TOMB) AND THE HUMAYUN'S TOMB

#MEDIEVALINDIA #ARCHITECTURE

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

ABOUT RAHIM KHAN

Early Life: He was born in 1556 to Bairam Khan, the uncle and tutor of Akbar and upon Bairam Khan's assassination, Akbar ordered that the child to be brought to him and arranged for his upbringing.

Career:

- He was one of the Navratans in Akbar's court and served also the court of Jahangir. His political and military career began with Akbar's Gujarat campaign. In 1575, he was appointed by the emperor as the Governor of Gujarat.
- He was a composer who wrote couplets based on Lord Krishna as Akbar's wife, Jodha, worshipped Lord Krishna. He was given the title of Mirza Khan by Akbar.
- In his poetry, he experimented with Persian, Hindi and Sanskrit. His 700-odd couplets over the years have become an important part of Hindi school textbooks.
- He was also one of the foremost translators of his times and translated Babur's autobiography from Turkish to Persian language.

KHANE-E-KHANA

- Rahim Khan is credited with patronising the construction of beautiful buildings, canals, tanks, gardens. The grandest among all his constructions, is the tomb he built for his wife, Mah Banu in 1598. It

was the first Mughal tomb of its kind built for a woman.

Features:

- **Material used:** The tomb is made of red sandstone, buff sandstone and marble.
- **Different architectural styles:** It is an arch-shaped structure and is decorated using the structure of an inverted lotus. Other styles include- niches, bulbous domes, canopies and Charbagh pattern.
- **Ornamentation:** The tomb has been ornamented with diverse motifs including those seen in other mausoleums as well as those found in Hindu architecture like the peacock and Swastika.

HUMAYUN'S TOMB

• Significance of Tomb:

- Built in 1570, it is of particular cultural significance as it was the first garden-tomb on the Indian subcontinent.
- The tomb has also been documented as the first ever tomb built for a Mughal emperor.
- The structure is considered to be an inspiration for the most well-known example of Mughal architecture, the Taj Mahal.

• Commissioning:

- Many scholars have argued that it was Haji Begam, Humayun's widow who had commissioned this mausoleum.
- However, according to Akbar Nama, written by Emperor Akbar's official biographer Abu'l Fazl, Haji Begam was on a pilgrimage to Mecca during much of the construction period of the tomb. This has been confirmed by both Abu'l Fazl and Father Monserrate, a Jesuit priest who resided in Emperor Akbar's court during the early 1580s. The monument was built by Emperor Akbar.
- Abd al-Qadir Badauni mentioned it was designed by Mirak Mirza Ghiyas, an architect of Iranian descent.
- It was designated as a World Heritage Site by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1993.

Features:

- **Persian Influence:** It was the first structure in which the slightly bulbous and double dome, a feature borrowed from Persia and Samarkand, was

introduced in India. Persian style is once again evident in this complex in the Char-Bagh (Four Gardens), a quadrilateral garden layout based on the four gardens of Paradise mentioned in The Holy Quran.

- Hybrid of Persian and Indian Architectural styles:
- Topping off the mausoleum is the Persian double dome, flanked by pillared kiosks, or chattris, which are a distinct Indian architectural feature. This combination of Persian and Indian architectural styles works beautifully together and this makes Humayun's Tomb a great example of a hybrid of styles of two separate cultures.
- Four distinct octagonal units separated by four recesses make up the mausoleum, with the entrance located in the recess which is located in the centre of the southern facade.
- Contrast is one of the key elements: While the rest of the building is made up of red sandstone, with white and black marble and yellow stone detailing, the exterior dome is of purely white marble.
- Dormitory of Mughals: A central domed chamber with the emperor's tomb in the middle and four corner rooms comprise the first floor. The large corner rooms as well as the numerous cells at the plinth level are a clear indication that the structure was originally designed to accommodate several graves. Over 150 Mughal family members are buried there.
- Significance: For the patron of this tomb, Akbar, there were two purposes behind building this great structure, to commemorate his father's legacy and to make a political statement.

MUGHAL ARCHITECTURE

• 'Indo-Islamic Architecture':

- This style was developed by the Mughals in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. It developed from the architectural styles of earlier Muslim dynasties in India and from Iranian and Central Asian architectural traditions, particularly Timurid architectures.
- It also further incorporated and syncretized influences from wider Indian architecture, especially during the reign of Akbar (1556–1605).
- Uniform pattern of structure and character: large bulbous domes, slender minarets at the corners, massive halls, large vaulted gateways, and delicate ornamentation.

- The Mughal dynasty was established after the victory of Babur at Panipat in 1526. During his five-year reign, Babur took considerable interest in erecting buildings, though few have survived.
- Akbar built widely, and the style developed vigorously during his reign. Among his accomplishments were Agra Fort, the fort-city of Fatehpur Sikri, and the Buland Darwaza. The principal feature of the constructions during Akbar's reign was the use of red sandstone. He also introduced the use of 'Tudor arch' (four centred arch).
- Akbar's son Jahangir commissioned the Shalimar Gardens in Kashmir. During the reign of Jahangir white marble became the chief building material, replacing red sandstone which had been used till now. Mughal architecture reached its zenith during the reign of Shah Jahan, who constructed Taj Mahal, the Jama Masjid, the Shalimar Gardens of Lahore.
- Aurangzeb built the Badshahi Mosque, Bibi Ka Maqbara, Moti Masjid etc.

Features:**Decorative elements:**

- Use of white marble and red sandstone was common. The monuments show delicate ornamentation work, including 'pachin kari' decorative work, 'jali-latticed screens', decorative chhatris and jalis and jharokhas.
- Persian and Arabic calligraphic inscriptions, including verses from the Quran were also used to enhance the decorative features.
- The large bulbous onion domes were sometimes surrounded by four smaller domes. The Mughal buildings were surrounded by gardens on all four sides. The large gateways were built that led up to the main building.
- Mughal architecture has also influenced later Indian architectural styles, including the Indo-Saracenic style of the British Raj, the Rajput style and the Sikh style.

Examples of Monuments**1. Agra Fort**

- Agra fort is a UNESCO world heritage site in Agra, Uttar Pradesh.
- The major part of Agra fort was built by Akbar from 1565 to 1574. The architecture of the fort clearly

indicates the free adoption of the Rajput planning and construction.

- Some of the important buildings in the fort are Jahangiri Mahal built for Jahangir, the Moti Masjid, and Mena Bazaars.

2. Fatehpur Sikri

- Akbar's greatest architectural achievement was the construction of Fatehpur Sikri, his capital city near Agra.
- It contained some of the most beautiful buildings – both religious and secular which testify to the emperor's aim of achieving social, political and religious integration.
- Religious buildings: Jama Masjid and tomb of Salim Chisti.
- Secular buildings:
 - Buland Darwaza, also known as the Gate of Magnificence, was built by Akbar in 1576 to commemorate his victory over Gujarat and the Deccan.
 - Jodha bai Palace is the largest palace in the Fatehpur Sikri, connected to the minor haramsara quarters. The columns of rooms are ornamented with a variety of Hindu sculptural motifs.

3. Tomb of Itimad-ud-Daulah

- The tomb of Itimad-ud-Daulah, is a mausoleum in the city of Agra in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh.
- It is described as a "jewel box", sometimes called the "Bachcha Taj", as the tomb of Itimad-ud-Daulah is often regarded as a draft of the Taj Mahal.
- It is known for the first use of the pietra dura (floral design made up of semiprecious stone).

4. Taj Mahal

- The Taj Mahal, a World Heritage Site was built between 1632 and 1653 by the emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his wife Mumtaz Mahal.
- It is a large, white marble structure standing on a square plinth and consists of a symmetrical building with an iwan (an arch-shaped doorway) topped by a large dome.
- Parchin kari, a method of decoration on a large scale-inlaid work of jewels and Jali work has been used to decorate the structure.

5. Shalimar Gardens

- It is a Mughal garden complex located in Lahore, capital of the Pakistani province of Punjab. The gardens date from the period when the Mughal Empire was at its artistic and aesthetic zenith.
- Construction of the gardens began in 1641 during the reign of Emperor Shah Jahan, and was completed in 1642.
- In 1981 the Shalimar Gardens were inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site as they embody Mughal garden design at the apogee of its development.

6. Bibi ka Maqbara

- Bibi Ka Maqbara was a mausoleum built by Emperor Aurangzeb, in the late 17th century as a tribute to his first wife, Dilras Bano Begum in Aurangabad, Maharashtra.
- Some accounts suggest that later it was taken care by Azam Shah, son of Aurangzeb.
- It is a replica of the Taj Mahal, and was designed by Ata-Ullah, the son of Ahmed Lahori, who was the principal designer of the Taj Mahal.

WOMEN WHO CONTRIBUTED IN MAKING THE INDIAN CONSTITUTION

#MODERNINDIA #PERSONALITIES

PRIMARY SOURCE The Indian EXPRESS

1. **Ammu Swaminathan** was an upper-caste Hindu family in Anakkara of Palghat district, Kerala. She formed the Women's India Association in 1917 in Madras, along with Annie Besant, Margaret Cousins, Malathi Patwardhan, Dadabhoy and Ambujammal. She became a part of the Constituent Assembly from the Madras Constituency in 1946.
2. **Dakshayani Velayudhan** was born on July 4, 1912, on the island of Bolgatty in Cochin. She leads the (then titled) Depressed Classes. In 1945, Dakshayani was nominated to the Cochin Legislative Council by the State Government. She was the first and only Dalit woman to be elected to the Constituent Assembly in 1946.
3. **Begum Aizaz Rasul** was born in Malerkotla, into a princely family and was married to the young

landowner Nawaab Aizaz Rasul. She was the only Muslim woman member of the Constituent Assembly. With the enactment of the Government of India Act 1935, Begum and her husband joined the Muslim League and entered electoral politics. In the 1937 elections, she was elected to the UP Legislative Assembly. She was elected to the Rajya Sabha in 1952 and was a member of the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly from 1969 to 1990.

4. **Durgabai Deshmukh** was born in Rajahmundry on July 15, 1909. When she was 12 years old, she participated in the **Non-Co-operation Movement** and along with **Andhra Kesari T Prakasam**, she participated in the **Salt Satyagraha movement in Madras city in May 1930**.

In 1936, she established the Andhra Mahila Sabha, which within a decade became a great institution of education and social welfare in the city of Madras.

5. **Hansa Mehta** : Born on July 3, 1897, to the Dewan of Baroda Manubhai Nandshankar Mehta, Hansa Mehta studied journalism and sociology in England. Along with being a reformer and social activist, she was also an educator and writer. She wrote many books for children in Gujarati and also translated many English stories including the Gulliver's Travels. She was elected to the Bombay Schools Committee in 1926 and became **President of the All India Women's Conference** in 1945-46.
6. **Kamla Chaudhary** was born in an affluent family of Lucknow, however, it was still a struggle for her to continue her education. Moving away from her family's loyalty to the imperial government, she joined the nationalists and was an active participant in the **Civil Disobedience Movement launched by Gandhi in 1930**. She was vice-president of the All India Congress Committee in its 54th session and was elected as a member of the Lok Sabha in the late seventies. Chaudhary was also a celebrated fiction writer and her stories usually dealt with women's inner worlds or the emergence of India as a modern nation.
7. **Leela Roy** was born in Goalpara, Assam in October 1900. Her father was a deputy magistrate and sympathised with the Nationalist Movement. She graduated from Bethune College in 1921 and became an assistant secretary to the All Bengal Women's Suffrage Committee and arranged meetings to demand women's rights. In 1923, with

her friends, she founded the **Dipali Sangha** and established schools which became centres of political discussion in which noted leaders participated. Later, in 1926, the Chhatri Sangha, an association of women students in Dacca and Kolkata, was founded. She became the editor of a journal, Jayashree.

8. **Malati Choudhury** was born in 1904 to a distinguished family in the then East Bengal, now Bangladesh. In the year 1921, at the age of 16, Malati Choudhury was sent to Santiniketan where she got admitted to Viswa-Bharati. During the Salt Satyagraha, Malati Choudhury, accompanied by her husband joined the Indian National Congress and participated in the movement. They educated and communicated with the people to create a favorable environment for Satyagraha.
9. **Purnima Banerjee** was the secretary of the **Indian National Congress committee in Allahabad**, Uttar Pradesh. She was one of a radical network of women from Uttar Pradesh who stood at the forefront of the freedom movement in the late 1930s and '40s. She was arrested for her participation in the **Satyagraha and Quit India Movement**. One of the more striking aspects of **Purnima Banerjee's** speeches in the **Constituent Assembly** was her steadfast commitment to a socialist ideology. As secretary for the city committee, she was responsible for engaging and organising trade unions, Kisan meetings and work towards greater rural engagement.
10. **Renuka Ray** lived in London to complete her BA from the London School of Economics. She submitted a document titled **Legal Disabilities of Women in India; A Plea for a Commission of Enquiry** in the year **1934**, as legal secretary of the **AIWC**. From 1943 to 1946 she was a member of the Central Legislative Assembly, then of the Constituent Assembly and the Provisional Parliament. In 1952-57, she served on the West Bengal Legislative Assembly as Minister for Relief and Rehabilitation. In 1957 and again in 1962, she was a member of Malda of the Lok Sabha.
11. **Sarojini Naidu**, also known as **the Nightingale of India**, was born on February 13, 1879, in Hyderabad, India. She was the first Indian woman to become the president of the Indian National Congress and the first woman to be appointed as an Indian state governor.

12. **Sucheta Kriplani** was born in 1908 in present-day Haryana's Ambala town. She is especially remembered for her role in the **Quit India Movement of 1942**. Kriplani also established the women's wing of the Congress party in 1940. Post-independence, Kriplani's political stint included serving as an MP from New Delhi and then also as the **Minister of Labour, Community Development and Industry** in **Uttar Pradesh's state government**.

13. **Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit** was born in Allahabad on August 18, 1900, and she was the sister of India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. She was imprisoned by the British on three different occasions, in 1932-1933, 1940, and 1942-1943. Pandit's political career began with her election to the **Allahabad Municipal Board**. In 1936, she was elected to the **Assembly of the United Provinces**, and in 1937 became minister of local self-government and public health the first Indian woman ever to become a cabinet minister.

14. **Annie Mascarene** was born into a Latin Catholic family of Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. She was the **first woman to be part of the Travancore State Congress Working Committee**. She was one of the leaders of the movements for independence and integration with the Indian nation in the Travancore State.

POLITICAL DEBATE HAS STARTED ON WHO KILLED TIPU SULTAN AMID THE ELECTIONS IN KARNATAKA

#MODERNINDIA #PERSONALITIES

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

As elections in Karnataka approach, the 18th-century king Tipu Sultan is once more at the centre of a debate. By supporting claims that Tipu Sultan was assassinated by two Vokkaliga leaders rather than the British and Maratha army, an effort is being made to appeal to the politically influential Vokkaliga population.

ABOUT MYSORE KINGDOM

- An Independent state that was created as a result of the Mughal Empire's fall. The **destabilisation of the**

Mughal power over the provinces was a major factor in the emergence of these states.

- A significant state that emerged in the eighteenth century was **Mysore**. The **Wodeyars** were in charge of this region, which was situated near the meeting point of the Eastern and Western Ghats.
- The region became a never-ending battleground as a result of several powers' interest in this land. In the end, **Haider Ali gained control over the state**.

HAIDER ALI

- Nanjaraj (the sarvadhikari) and Devaraj (the Dulwai), had reduced Chikka Krishnaraja Wodeyar to the status of a puppet in the early eighteenth century. Under the leadership of the **ministers Nanjaraj and Devaraj, Haider Ali began his career in the Mysore army**.
- In addition to introducing Western training techniques for his army, Haider Ali enlisted the assistance of the **French to establish a weapons factory in Dindigul (now in Tamil Nadu)**.
- Due to his involvement in the **First and Second Carnatic Wars in South India**, Haider Ali witnessed the military superiority of European troops. **Mysore sided with the French** in the Carnatic Wars.
- The Nizam of Hyderabad, the Marathas, and the English formed an alliance against Haider Ali, the king of Mysore, in **the first Anglo-Mysore war (1767-69)**. In the end the English had to sign the humiliating **Treaty of Madras in 1769**.
- The **Treaty of Mangalore, which was signed in 1784**, brought an end to the **Second Anglo-Mysore War (1780-1784)**. Tipu Sultan succeeded his father Haider Ali after his death.



TIPU SULTAN

- Tipu Sultan was the last Muslim ruler of the Kingdom of Mysore, before the taking over by Wodeyar Dynasty.
- **Navy:** Defeat in Third Anglo-Mysore War convinced Tipu to take



measures to build a navy. He issued a **Hukmnanah (ordinance) in 1796** for a strong naval force with 40 ships to be built at speed. The navy was put under command of **11 Mir Yam (Lords of Admiralty)**, with headquarters at **Seringapatam**. The naval divisions or Kachehris at Jamalabad (Mangalore), Wajidabad and Majidabad. Timber for ships was to be procured from state forests.

- **Ammunitions:** Established munitions industry in Nagar, which were regarded as equal in quality to those produced in Europe.
- **Rocket technology:** Pioneer of rocket technology and expanded **iron cased Mysorean rockets** and commissioned a **military manual Fathul Mujahidin**
- **Economy:** Attempted to revive commerce and forged commercial linkages with other parts of India and West Asia and build a public sector company with state finance. **Introduced sericulture and an was a member of the Jacobin club.** He also planted a **liberty tree at Seringapatam**.
- **Agriculture and Revenue Settlement:**
 - Tipu modified land revenue management.
 - Rules were laid down for distribution of arable land among old and new ryots, preference was given to hereditary ownership of land and rent was fixed.
 - Tipu's measures were the basis for **Ryotwari Settlement introduced by East India Company in South India**.
 - **Captain Alexander Read** first introduced Ryotwari Settlement in Baramahal district surrendered by Tipu after his defeat in 1792.
 - **Calendar:** Introduced a **new calendar in 1784. This calendar was known as Mauludi Era and had 354 days**. It counted its first year from the year of birth of Prophet Muhammad. The calendar's name was derived from Arabic phrase 'Maulud-i-Muhammad', Birth of Muhammad.
 - Introduced several administrative innovations such as a **new coinage system**.
- Deployed rockets against advances of British forces and their allies during Anglo-Mysore Wars, including the Battle of Pollilur and Siege of Srirangapatnam.
- **Third Anglo Mysore war (1790-92):** Tipu Sultan was defeated by EIC and the **Treaty of Seringapatam was concluded**. Under this treaty, Tipu lost half of Mysore's territory.

- **Fourth Anglo-Mysore war (1799):** This conclusive war led to **falling of Seringapatam**. English chose a Hindu boy from the earlier ruling royal family i.e., **Wodeyars**, as the **Maharaja** and imposed **subsidiary alliance** on him.

PM RECALLS THE NOBLE TEACHINGS OF BHAGWAN MAHAVIR ON MAHAVIR JAYANTI

#ANCIENTINDIA #RELIGION

PRIMARY SOURCE pib

The Jain community celebrates Mahavir Jayanti, one of their most important festivals, throughout India. The celebration honours the birth of Lord Mahavira, the 24th Tirthankara of Jainism.

HISTORY OF MAHAVIR JAYANTI

- Lord Mahavira was born in Kundalgrama, Bihar, in the Chaitra month, according to Jain traditions and religious writings.
- The cleansing of the Mahavir effigy with fragrant oil by the people symbolises the purity of the Lord.
- People go to pilgrimage locations that are associated with the Jain community.

Gomateshwara is a well-known place to visit during the festival.

EMERGENCE OF HETERODOX THINKERS

- In the sixth and fifth centuries BCE, North India had a remarkable awakening as a result of a number of heterodox philosophies challenging the pre-existing philosophy.
- In order to reflect on the social and cultural climate of their times, philosophers like Gosala, Gautama Buddha, Mahavira, Ajita Kesakambalin, and others renounced the world and wandered across the Gangetic plains.

CAUSES OF INTELLECTUAL AWAKENING

- The rigidity of the Vedic religion and state creation limited people's freedom of thinking and behaviour.
- In heterodox sects, a revolt against the practise of accepting dogmas as truth was articulated.

- The process of socio-political and economic change was expedited by the creation of territorial identities.
- Disenchanted with the existing order, the wealthy classes (thriving in Magadha or the mid-gangetic plains) started to act in opposition to the Orthodox faiths.
- Since the Vedic religion was not yet fully organised, its influence on society was limited, making it easy for individuals to adhere to the newly forming religious sects.
- New classes of merchants and bankers like Sethis sought higher social status in line with their economic standing as a result of urbanisation and the rise of trade.
- Kshatriyas were upset because the Vedic writings only allowed Brahmins to live a staged life in ashramas.

JAINISM

- Vardhamana Mahavira's sect, which Buddhist writings refer to as Nigantha Nataputta
- grew into the religion known as Jainism.
- Before, it was known as Nirgranthas (free from bonds).
- Risabha is credited as the sect's founder in Jain mythology.
- He is regarded as the original Tirthankara.
- Three of the Tirthankaras: Risabha, Ajitanatha, and Aristanemi, are mentioned in the Yajur veda.
- Mahavira, also known as Jina, the conqueror of the soul, organised his followers into secular and monastic groups.

LIFE OF MAHAVIRA

- About 540 BCE, Mahavir was born in Vajji, a democratic kingdom (Ganarajya)
- where the ruler was chosen through popular vote.
- He was son of the King Siddhartha of Kundagrama and Queen Trishala belonging to the Ikshvaku dynasty.
- Mahavir was given the name Vardhaman, which means "One who grows."
- His mother was a princess of the Lichchavi and Chetaka's (chief of Lichchavi) sister.
- Mahavira was closely related to the rulers of Magadha, Anga, and Videha through his mother.
- At the age of 30, he left his home and spent 12 years wandering as a mendicant in search of the truth.
- He abandoned his clothes and engaged in strict penance.

- He met Gosala while wandering, but they later parted ways because of their differences.
- Vardhamana gained Nirvana, or enlightenment, in the thirteenth year of his wandering, when he was 42 years old. He attained Tirthankara status and came to be known as Jina or Mahavira (the Great Conqueror).
- He passed away at the age of 72 in Pavapuri, close to Rajgriha, around 468 BCE. He fasted unto death (Sallekhana) according to Jain ideals.

SECTS OF JAINISM

- A split in Jainism happened roughly 500 years after Mahavira's departure, in or around 79 or 82 CE.

JAINA COUNCILS

Jaina Council	Year	Venue	Chairman	Patron	Result
First	300 BC	Patliputra	Sthulabhadra	Chandragupta Maurya	Compilation of 12 Angas
Second	512 AD	Vallabhi	Devardhi-Kshmasramana	—	Final Compilation of 12 Angas and 12 Upangas

TENETS OF JAINISM

- Jainism places a strong emphasis on nonviolence.
- Jainism rejects the idea of a creator. Jainism did not initially worship any deities.
- Mahavira disapproved of Vedic rule.
- It holds that there is no beginning or end to the world.
- **Jainism promoted dualism:**
 - According to which the universe is composed of everlasting souls (jivas) and substance (ajivas).
 - When jiva and ajiva combine, karma (action) is produced, which causes a never-ending cycle of birth and reincarnation.
 - Severe penance and austerity must be practised in order to release oneself from karma.
 - As a result, only monks in Jainism were able to break free from the cycle of rebirth and birth.
- It does not support any form of inequality based on birth.
 - Birth does not determine one's social standing; rather, one's actions do.
 - Birth-based status is regarded as a sin.
 - The monastic order accepted women.

- Because of the severe famine in Magadha.
- some of Jain monks under Bhadrabahu left for south to maintain their rigorous discipline.
- They remained without garments and were known as 'Digambaras' (space-clad or naked).
- Others who remained behind under Sthulabhadra's leadership, chose a white clothing, and came to be known as 'Svetambaras' (white-clad).
- Jainism was weakened in Magadha as a result of the schism, but it flourished in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, and Karnataka.

- Nevertheless, a woman to find salvation need to be reborn as a man and then pursue redemption by accruing merit through good deeds.

THREE GEMS

Jains are required to follow three principles called Triratnas

- (1) Right faith (samyag-darshana/samyak-shadha);
- (2) Right knowledge (samyag-jnana);
- (3) Right conduct (samyag-mahavratas/ samyak-karma/samyak-acharana)

FIVE GREAT VOWS/PANCHA MAHAVRATAS

The monks have to undertake the five great vows

- (1) Not to kill or injure (ahimsa);
- (2) Not to steal (asteya);
- (3) Not to lie (satya);
- (4) Celibacy (brahmacharya);
- (5) Not to possess property (aparigraha)

The first four vows were laid down by Parshwanath and the fifth one was added by Mahavira.

TYPES OF KNOWLEDGE

There are five types of Knowledge:

- (1) Mati jnana: Perception through activity of sense organs, including mind

- (2) Shruta jnana: Knowledge revealed by scriptures
- (3) Avadhi jnana: Clairvoyant perception
- (4) Manahpariyaya jnana: Telepathic knowledge
- (5) Keval jnana: Temporal knowledge

SYADVADA THEORY IN JAINISM

- The “theory of perhaps” holds that all of our judgements must necessarily be conditional and relative.
- Seven different types of prediction are conceivable, according to Syadvada (Saptabhangi Nayavad).
- Both absolute affirmation and negation are incorrect.
- Anekantvada, or the philosophy of plurality, is another name for Syadvada.

JAINA LITERATURE

- The sacred literature of the Svetambaras is written in a type of Prakrit called Ardhamagadhi Prakrit (language of the common people) and can be classified as follows: 12 Angas, 12 upangas, 10 parikarnas, Chhedasutras, Mulasutras and Sutra-Granthas.
- 14 purvas/parvas- It is the part of 12 Angas and the oldest text of Mahavira's preachings.
- Besides this, the important Jain texts are:
 - Kalpasutra (Sanskrit)- Bhadrabahu
 - Parishishta Parvan (an appendix of Trishashthishalaka Purusha)- Hemachandra.

HOW THE JAIN COMMUNITY HAS SURVIVED TEST OF THE TIME?

When Buddhism, was on the decrease, Jains were successful in maintaining their own identity.

Challenges faced by Jainism and Buddhism:

- Rebirth of reformed Hinduism, which started in the fourth and fifth centuries AD, posed one of the biggest threats to Buddhism and Jainism while enjoying a time of ascendancy and royal favour for a few centuries.
- Popularity of Bhakti cults: Padmanabh S. Jaini, a renowned expert on Buddhism and Jainism, claims that the popularity of various Hindu devotional cults, linked with Rama and Krishna, regarded Buddha and Rishabh as the incarnations of Vishnu.
- Islamic invasion: The Islamic invasion of the Indian subcontinent between the 12th and the 16th centuries caused a setback to Indian religions, their places of worship, and their idols.

HOW JAINS REACTED TO THESE CHALLENGES?

- The Jains attempted to counter the bhakti movement by appropriating its key cult figures by creating

alternate versions of the Ramayana and Mahabharata, in which Rama and Krishna were portrayed as worldly Jaina heroes subject to Jaina ethical rules.

- Example: The ahimsa practising Rama in the Jaina Ramayana does not to kill Ravana and as a result, Rama is reborn in heaven.
- Relationship with the Mughal rulers: Spiritual leaders and wealthy traders of the Jain community of medieval India had relatively peaceful relationships with the Mughal ruling class.

Example: It is well known that emperors like Akbar and Jahangir bestowed royal favours and issued farmans, or imperial orders, prohibiting the killing of animals on specific days, like the Jain festival of Paryushan, in areas near Jain sacred sites.

NON-VIOLENCE AS THE CENTRAL DOCTRINE

- Jains attempted to avoid those ways of life that obviously and consistently injure the living, since they believed that even unintended actions produce karma.
- As a result, many popular jobs including farming and transporting animals were disapproved of almost from the beginning for the Jain practitioners. In the end, Jains came to be specialised in mercantile occupations, with jewelry making and money lending being the most popular ones and amassed wealth.
- This wealth historically assisted its member in maintaining influence and relevance in the multi-cultural society of medieval India.

ORGANISATION OF THE COMMUNITY

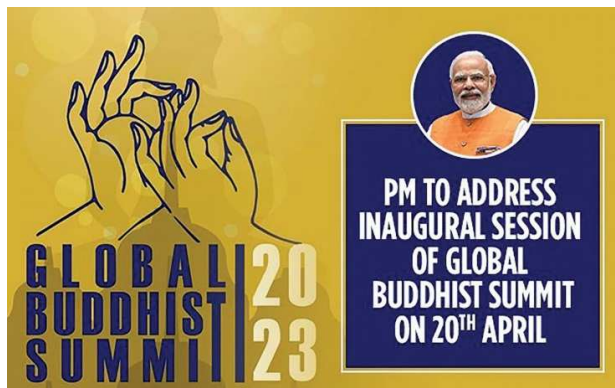
- The fourfold division of society known as the **Chaturvidhasangha**, which is how the community is organised in Jainism, **creates a very strong emotional connection between the Jain ascetic community and Jain layman.**
- Because of their constant movement and lack of a fixed residence, ascetics are totally dependent on laypeople for food and shelter. In return, the community has great regard for the customs of its monks and nuns.
- Ascetics and laity Buddhist followers did not have a comparable affinity.

INDIA TO HOST MAIDEN GLOBAL BUDDHIST SUMMIT

#ANCIENTINDIA #RELIGIONS

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

Leaders and scholars from the global Buddhist community will convene in New Delhi to discuss contemporary global concerns from a Buddhist approach. The maiden conference is being organised by the Union Cultural Ministry and the International Buddhist Confederation, an umbrella organisation that acts as a forum for Buddhists worldwide. The conference is considered as a big step forward in India's aspirations to interact with Buddhism, which has millions of adherents worldwide. Recently, India, as chair of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), hosted a meeting on Buddhist heritage that included all countries.



Theme of the Summit: 'Responses to Contemporary Challenges from Philosophy to Praxis'.

OBJECTIVES OF THE SUMMIT

- The gathering's major objective is to explore methods of disseminating and internalising universal principles while encouraging collaboration among Dharma practitioners across philosophical, cultural, and national boundaries.
- The ultimate objective is to solve acute global concerns while also developing a long-term plan for a peaceful and harmonious future.
- The summit intends to explore Buddhist teachings and practices in order to identify answers to challenges like- climate change, poverty and war, among others.

ABOUT BUDDHISM

Buddhism belongs to the **Shramana school** of religious movements. The word Shramana means one who performs acts of austerity and ascetic.

BASIC DETAILS OF BUDDHA

- Buddha was born at Lumbini village of Kapilavastu Nepal in 563 BC in the Shakya Kshatriya clan.
- His clan considered themselves to be descendants of Ikshvaku dynasty.
- He died in 483 BC near Kushinara (Kushinagar, UP) and the event is known as **Mahaparinirvana**.
- **Mahabhiraskramana or the Great Going Forth** is the event when Gautam Buddha left his home and discarded worldly life.

PLACES VISITED BY BUDDHA

- After leaving his home in search of enlightenment Buddha visited Vaishali and learnt **Sankhya darshan**. He then went to Rajgriha and learnt yoga.
- He later went to Uruvela where he attained enlightenment. This event is known as **Sambodhi**.
- He then went on to Sarnath where he delivered his first sermon also called **Dharmachakrapravartana**. Buddha delivered his maximum sermons from Shravasti and made Magadha his promotional centre.
- **Ashta-mahasthana** refers to the eight significant places associated with the life of Buddha. These include: Lumbini, Bodh Gaya, Sarnath, Kushinagar, Shravasti, Sankissa, Rajgriha and Vaishali.

RELIGIOUS TEACHINGS

- Buddhism is based upon **triratnas i.e., Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha**.
- Buddha propagated **Ashtangik marga also called Madhya marga**. He was always silent on the discussion of the existence of God but believed in rebirth.
- Buddha was against caste system and opened the gates of Buddhism for all castes. He allowed women to be admitted in sangha.
- Buddha suggested that when desires are conquered, nirvana will be attained which means that a man will become free from the cycle of birth and rebirth.
- Buddha's chief disciple was Upali, and his most favourite disciple was Ananda. Buddha regarded the

social world as creation of humans rather than of divine origin. Therefore, he advised kings and gahapatis to be humane and ethical.

BUDDHIST COUNCILS

- **1st Buddhist Council**

- Place: Rajgriha, Bihar
- Ruler: Ajatshatru
- Accomplishment: Buddha's teachings were compiled into Sutta Pitaka (Ananda) and Vinaya Pitaka (Upali)

- **2nd Buddhist Council**

- Place: Vaishali
- Ruler: Kalashoka (Shishunaga dynasty)
- Accomplishment: Buddhist sangha was divided into schools i.e., Theravada or Sthavira and Mahasanghik or Sarvastivadin.
- Theravadi is the oldest Buddhist school with its main center in Kashmir. Mahasanghik's main center was in Magadha.

- **3rd Buddhist Council**

- Place: Pataliputra
- Ruler: Ashoka
- Accomplishment: Compilation of the third pitaka i.e., Abhidhamma Pitaka which explains the tenets of Dhamma.

- **4th Buddhist Council**

- Place: Kashmir
- Ruler: Kanishka
- Accomplishment: Compilation of Vibhashashastra by Vasumitra, a commentary in Sanskrit on the difficult aspects of Buddhist texts.

Buddhists again broke into 2 schools i.e., Theravadi or Sthavira became Hinayana and Sarvastivadin or Mahasanghik became Mahayana schools.

SECTS IN BUDDHISM

- Buddhist texts mention about 64 sects or schools of Buddhism. Teachers travelled from place to place, trying to convince one another and laypersons about the validity of their philosophy.
- **Debates took place in the Kutagarashala** – literally, a hut with a pointed roof or in groves where travelling mendicants halted.

- If a philosopher succeeded in convincing one of his rivals, the followers of the latter also became his disciples. So, support for any sect could grow and shrink over time.

PROMINENT SECTS OF BUDDHISM

1. Hinayana School

- Hinayana is also known as Shravakayana. They saw Buddha as a great soul but not God. They were orthodox in nature.
- Hinayana followers believed in helping themselves over others to attain salvation. They did not believe in Bhakti and idol worship. Their scriptures are written in Pali.
- Later divided into 2 sects i.e., Vaibhashika and Sautrantika.

- **Sub-schools of Hinayana:**

- **Staviravadin or Thervadins:** Earliest school from which all other schools of Buddhism originated. They follow the original doctrines of Buddha closely. They believe only in the three Pitakas.
- **Sarvastivada:** This is one of the early Buddhist schools which originated during the time of Ashoka (Separated from Sthaviravadins). This school is popular in Kashmir and Central Asia. This school has been broadly divided into- Vaibhasika and Sautantrika.
- **Mahasanghika:** It is a school which came into existence after the 2nd Buddhist Council. It separated from the Staviravadis over the differences in following monastic practices. Sub-sects of Mahasanghika school are- Lokottarvada, Kukkutika and Caitika.
- **Sammitiya:** A subsect of Hinayana tradition which believes that though an individual does not exist independently from the five skandhas, or components that make up his personality, he is at the same time something greater than the mere sum of his parts. It popular in Gujarat and Sindh during 7th Century. Their important centre of learning was at Valabhi, Gujarat.

2. Mahayana School

- Its prime centre was in Andhra Pradesh. Its scriptures are written in Sanskrit.

- They see Buddha as incarnation of God and started his idol worship.
- Mahayana attaches importance to role of Bodhisattvas who delay their own salvation to help others to its path.
- They believed in the concept of transmigration of soul and rebirth. Later divided into 2 sects i.e., Shunyavaad (Founder: Nagarjuna) and Vigyanvaad.
- In 8th century AD, Vajrayana School developed as an offshoot of Mahayana school in which Tara is considered as wife of Buddha.
- In early medieval period a new form of Mahayana called Mantrayana came up in which Bodhisattva Avalokiteshwar began to be worshipped.
- **Sub-Schools of Mahayana**
 - **Yogachara School:** Important scholars of this school were: Asanga and Vasubandhu. It attaches foremost importance to meditation as a means of attaining the highest goal. Hence, the name Yogachara.
 - **Madhyamaka School:** Founder of this school was Nagarjuna. Idea of Shunyata is important feature of this school. It means that appearances are misleading, and that permanent selves and substances do not exist. Important scholars of this school were Buddhapalita, Bhavaviveka and Chandrakirti.

BODDHISATVAS IN MAHAYANA BUDDHISM

BODDHISATTVAS	RELEVANCE
Avalokitesvara	Bodhisattva of compassion. Most universally acknowledged Bodhisattva in Mahayana Buddhism. Has many avatars, most famous being Padmapani (Holding Lotus).
Maitreya	Bodhisattva to be reborn. Future Bodhisattva.
Manjushri	Bodhisattva of awareness and wisdom.
Padmasambhava	Most famous in Tibetan and Bhutanese Buddhism. Regarded as a second buddha there.
Vajrapani	An early bodhisattva in Mahayana.

	Vajra means weapon.
Tara	Female bodhisattva in Tibetan Buddhism. A manifestation of Avalokitesvara. She represents the virtues of success in work and achievements. A manifestation of Avalokitesvara.

BUDDHIST LITERATURE

- Tripitakas are the oldest source of studying Buddhism.
- **Sutta Pitaka:** Encyclopedia of Buddhist thought and Buddhas religious ideas. It is divided into five groups or Nikayas. They contain popular works such as Theragatha and Therigatha and Jataka tales.
- **Vinaya Pitaka:** Rules of Buddhist Sangha. It contains two main sections (i) Sutta Vibhanga (ii) Khandaka and an appendix known as Parivara. Sutta Vibhanga contains Patimokka, a set of monastic rules, 227 for monks and 311 for nuns. Patimokka was recited by congregations of monks in the fortnightly uposatha ceremony held on the full moon and new moon days.
- **Abhidhamma Pitaka:** Buddhist principles and concept of dhamma
- Vishuddhimarga written by Ashvaghosha serves as a key composition to tripitakas.
- Mahavastu (by Hinayana sect) and Lalitvistara (by Mahayana sect) are biographies of Buddha.
- Pragyaparimita Sutra serves as the most important text for Mahayana sect. It was written by Nagarjuna who is known as the Einstein of India.

BUDDHIST SANGHA

- Eight personal possessions allowed to a monk comprised three robes, an alms bowl, razor, needle, belt and water strainer.
- Senior monks held authority within a monastic community.
- Four most serious offences (known as parajika) involving expulsion from sangha were: (i) Sexual intercourse, (ii) killing someone (iii) Stealing (iv) Making false claims of spiritual attainment.

BUDDHIST LAITY

- According to tradition, first lay followers of Buddha were two merchants, Tapassu and Bhallika.

- The laity was a person who had taken refuge in Buddha, dhamma and sangha but had not taken monastic vows. The laity included male followers (upasakas) and female followers (upasikas).
- There was a growing differentiation (social-stratification) amongst people engaged in agriculture – Buddhist literature refers to landless agricultural labourers, small peasants and large landholders.
- The term Gahapati was used in Pali texts to refer to small peasants and large landholders.

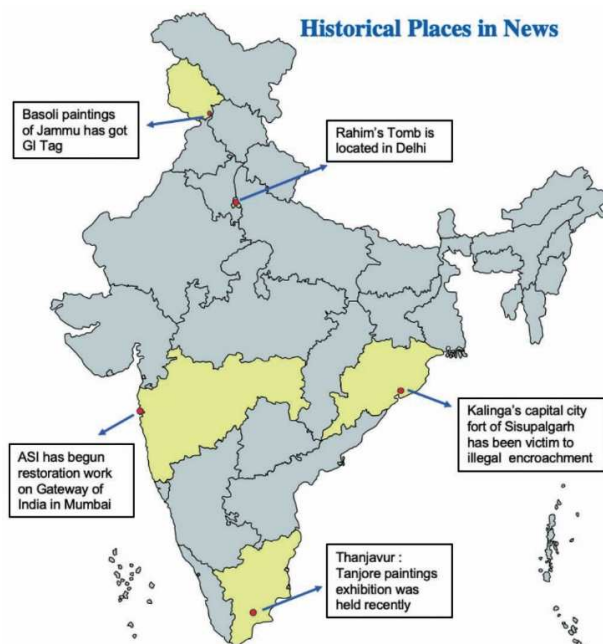
BUDDHISM AND WOMEN

- Initially, only men were allowed into the sangha, but later women also came to be admitted. (In Buddha's lifetime only).
- This was made possible through the mediation of Ananda (Buddha's dearest disciple).
- Buddha's foster mother, **Mahapajapati Gotami was the first woman to be ordained as a bhikkhuni.**
- **Therigatha** is a collection of verses composed by bhikkhunis (part of Sutta Pitaka). It provides an insight into women's social and spiritual experiences.

REASONS FOR DECLINE OF BUDDHISM

- Decline of Buddhist Sanghas: Sanghas became centres of corruption. Discipline of Vinay Pitaka was violated.
- Revival of Brahmanical Hinduism: Rites and rituals of Hinduism were simplified. It also incorporated Buddhist principle of non-violence and accepted Buddha as a Hindu incarnation.
- Buddhism lost royal patronage, which it received during the period of Asoka, Kaniska, and Harshavardhana. The Gupta rulers were great patrons of the Brahmanical religion.

- Buddhism was divided into several groups like "Hinayana," "Mahayana" "Vajrayana" "Tantrayana" and "Sahajayana," and ultimately, it lost its originality.
- Buddhist monks gave up Pali and took up Sanskrit, the language of intellectuals which was rarely understood by the common people. So, people rejected it.
- Mahayana Buddhists started worshipping Buddha as a God. Image worship was a clear violation of the Buddhist doctrines, which opposed the critical rites and rituals of Brahmanical Hinduism.
- Northern India was mostly ruled by the Rajputs from the eighth to twelfth century who found great pleasure in fighting. They discarded the Buddhist principle of non-violence.



PRACTICE QUESTIONS

MCQS

Q1. With reference to the Mughal architecture, consider the following statements:

1. The architecture of Agra fort indicates the free adoption of the Rajput planning and construction.

2. Humayun's tomb was built completely in the Persian style and shows no trace of Indian architectural features.

3. During the reign of Akbar, 'Tudor arch' was introduced in the construction of Mosques.

4. The use of white marble as a chief building material began during the reign of Shahjahan.

- (a) 1 only (b) 3 only
(c) 1 and 2 only (d) 1 and 3 only

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only (d) 2 and 4 only

Q2. With reference to the Cultural history of India, consider the following statements:

1. Thanjavur paintings depicted only religious themes related to Hinduism.
2. Under the Rayas of Vijayanagar, Thanjavur paintings first appeared and reached climax.
3. The community called 'Jinigara' was related to the production of Thanjavur paintings.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 3 only (d) 1 and 3 only

Q3. Which of the inscriptions given below belongs to the King Kharvela?

- (a) Girnar (b) Bagh
(c) Hatigumpha (d) Sannati

Q4. With reference to the ancient fort of Sisupalgarh, consider the following statement :

1. This fort flourished during the post-Harsha period.
2. Fort of Sisupalgarh was constructed during the reign of King Kharvela.
3. Monolithic pillars of laterite stones are unique features of the fort.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

Q5. With reference to Tipu Sultan, 18th century ruler of Mysore, consider the following statements:

1. He commissioned the military manual Fathul Mujahidin.
2. 'Hukmnanah' for a strong naval force was issued by Tipu Sultan.
3. A weapons factory with the help of French was established in Dindigul during his reign.
4. The Treaty of Madras to end the Second Anglo Mysore War was signed during the reign of Tipu Sultan.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1 and 3 only (b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 2 only (d) 2 and 4 only

Q6. Consider the following:

1. Theory of Syadvada emphasises on 'pluralism'.
2. Mahavira composed all the 'Panch-Mahavratas'
3. Jainism accepted the idea of a 'creator'.

Which of the above is/are correct with reference to 'Jainism'?

- (a) 1 only (b) 1 and 2 only
(c) 2 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

DESCRIPTIVE QUESTIONS

- Q1.** With examples from major Mughal monuments, discuss the unique characteristics of Mughal architecture and its contribution to India's cultural and aesthetic heritage. (150 words, 10 marks)
- Q2.** Discuss the role of women in the development of the Indian constitution. (250 words)

Answers: 1-c, 2-c, 3-c, 4-b, 5-c, 6-a

PART TWO

**ETHICS, INTEGRITY
& APTITUDE**

Coverage from varied sources

WWW.UPSCMATERIAL.ONLINE

ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

#ETHICS #INTEGRITY #APTITUDE



Raj Kumar

Recently Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) released a report showing a fall in the number of polluted river stretches, but the worst ones remain untouched. The report says that the number of polluted river stretches in India has fallen from 351 in 2018 to 311 in 2022. Though the number of most polluted stretches is practically unchanged.

Biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) exceeding 3 milligrams per litre is identified as a polluted location. Two or more polluted locations identified on a river in a continuous sequence are considered as polluted river stretches meaning they are not fit even to bathe. Further, stretches with BOD exceeding 30 milligrams per litre are considered as most polluted (P1 Category) river stretches needing urgent intervention. In 2016 there were 45 river stretches in India under the P1 category, which shows the highest level of environmental concern.

Deciphering the Concept of Environmental Ethics

The evolving idea of environmental ethics emphasizes the right to life that all life forms on Earth have. We are depriving living things of this right by destroying nature. This behaviour is unethical and unjust.

Principle of Sustainability and Inter-generation Equity

We must leave the planet Earth in the same condition that we acquired it from our ancestors to uphold our moral commitment to future generations and the idea of intergenerational equality. This will make it possible for future generations to prosper and lead fulfilling lives. If we don't, we'll push future generations into crises that they didn't cause.

Principle of Polluter Pays

- According to the widely accepted "polluter pays" principle, individuals who cause pollution should be responsible for paying for its control to protect human health and the environment.

- The poor and vulnerable who have not contributed to environmental degradation and climate change are disproportionately affected by these issues. This goes against the polluter-pays premise.

WHAT NECESSITATES ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS?

Nature behaving so dynamically:

We must consider the ethical ramifications of these new behaviours because our modern technological civilization hurts nature.

Attainment of new knowledge about nature:

- Modern science shows how humans have altered and are altering our environment in previously unknown ways, posing new ethical questions. For instance, before the last ten years, few people thought that human activities might be affecting the planet's overall environment.
- However, today's experts contend that deforestation and the use of fossil fuels have altered the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, which has transformed our climates and necessitated a global response. This new viewpoint brings up fresh moral concerns.

Moral Concerns:

Some claim that the environment should be included in ethics as a natural extension of civilization because animals, trees, and even rocks have moral and legal rights. These new issues necessitate new ethical standards.

WHAT ARE THE VARIOUS APPROACHES TO ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS?

There are multiple approaches to environmental ethics and the prominent ones among them are the Conservation approach, the Libertarian approach, Utilitarian approach.

Conservation approach

- The extension of instrumental value to the natural world is conservation ethics. It only concentrates on the work of the environment in terms of its usefulness and uses to humans.
- The oldest type of ethic is conservation, which inspired the establishment of national parks, wildlife refuges, ethical use of non-renewable energy sources, and water conservation initiatives.
- Therefore, conservation is a means to an end and is solely focused on mankind and future generations. Most of the international agreements are outlined because of this moral code.

Libertarian Approach

- The idea of civil liberty is related to this viewpoint. The establishment of ethics to deal with the relationship between humans, land animals and plants is crucial since civil liberty follows the commitment to equal rights for every community member.
- Naturally, humans will have a social consciousness toward the environment. It is wrong to judge the natural world solely by its monetary value to people.
- The fundamental tenet of the libertarian viewpoint is that all elements of the environment, including humans and non-human animals including all living and non-living entities, should have equal rights or freedoms.
- Giving the status of the person to rivers like Ganga and Yamuna by Uttarakhand high court is an example of this approach.

Ecological Approach

- The ecological perspective shows how the environment works. According to ethical principles, the earth is thought to have its system for sustaining life, expanding, and developing.

- Even under the most challenging circumstances, nature has its purification mechanisms and life support systems.
- Furthermore, it's thought that whenever a climate change occurred, it did so in a very small geographic area to give life a chance to recover before it was destroyed.
- Later, though, it was realized that, as the planet's temperature continues to rise and more climatic disasters occur, the planet might not be able to recover as quickly as once believed.
- All biological and abiological entities must be understood to be fundamentally interdependent.

**THE DEBATE BETWEEN ENVIRONMENTAL
DEGRADATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

- This debate is rooted in the concept of Utilitarianism. they say that economic development is more important than environmental protection to ensure the greatest good to the greatest number.
- But this principle is against the greatest good in the long run because unrestricted exploitation of natural resources is harmful to humanity as a whole in the long run it can be seen in the man-made calamities' draughts, urban floods, Joshi math, and loss of biodiversity.
- From the perspective of virtue ethics, unrestricted exploitation of natural resources shows a lack of virtues like wisdom.
- It is unjust to exploit natural resources because the poor are paying more than the rich in terms of displacement, draughts, and other man-made disasters. The poor will bear a disproportionate share of the costs of climate change in both today's, and tomorrow's generations, who will bear less of the burden as greenhouse gas emissions increase.

WAY FORWARD

- Adopt a triple-bottom approach



- Implement the environmental laws in their letter and spirit like the environment protection act 1986.

- Civil society should perform its duty to raise its voice to protect the environment.
- Environmental issues should be incorporated into the curriculum at every stage from primary to university.
- People should be aware and empowered to perform their fundamental duty of protecting the environment.
- There should be dedicated budgetary allocation to deal with environmental challenges.

CONCLUSION

Environmental ethics serve to humble people and remind them of their primary duties to nature. The ability of humans allows us to take little or significant steps to correct environmental imbalances. With the moral foundation and principles that environmental ethics provide, people are using nature responsibly and not in a way that degrades and destroys natural resources.

CASE STUDIES FOR PRACTICE

MAINS GS PAPER IV

Case Study 1: Sharif had a long stint both in politics and with the criminal world. He won the election as an independent candidate and became a state lawmaker. He went on to win the seat for two consecutive terms and his fourth win came as a lawmaker from the regional party A. He won a seat in the federal election and became a Member of Parliament (MP). Meanwhile, cases continued to be filed against him in Gonda and other parts of the state. Supreme court of India ordered that he should be moved to a jail in Goa state after it emerged that he planned attacks on a businessman from a prison in Uttar Pradesh where he was being held awaiting trial in another case. In March, he was brought back to Gonda from Goa to appear in a local court as it announced his sentencing in a kidnapping case. Sharif was also brought to the city to be questioned in other cases. His brother Arif, who was in jail in Bareilly district, was also brought to the city to be questioned. They were both being questioned in the February murder of Suresh, a key witness in the murder of Monu, a lawmaker belonging to the regional party B. Dozens of cases, including kidnapping, murder and extortion, were registered against Sharif over the past two decades. A local court sentenced him and two others to life in jail in March this year in a kidnapping case. Sharif had previously claimed there was a threat to his own life from the police. Sharif and his brother, Arif, both were in handcuffs, speaking to journalists on the way to a medical check-up at a hospital. Sharif, who was under police escort, was talking to reporters when a gun was pulled close to his head in Gonda. After the shots were fired three men who had been posing as journalists quickly surrendered and were taken into custody. A policeman and a journalist were also injured at the scene. Following this incident, Chief Minister ordered a probe into the killings. You are the head of this investigating team. You are very enthusiastic to deliver the promises of the Preamble on the real ground. You are the only child of your parents. You are married and have a baby. Your promotion file is pending before the home ministry. The home minister asked you to acquit one of the gunmen involved in the murder of Sharif. In return, he assured your promotion. There is also a public

perception that the murder of criminals is not wrong. A gangster also threatens you to kill if you do not acquit the same person to whom the minister has talked about.

- What are the ethical issues involved in this case?
- List the options available to you
- Critically analyse each option listed by you
- What will be your course of action and why?

(250 words, 20 marks)

ANS. The given case deals with the issue of lack of good governance on the part of the criminal justice system.

Ethical issues involved in the case:

Denial to natural justice and Violation of the rule of law: Here people killed in police custody were denied their right to be listened to.

Violation of human rights: Encounter is a direct violation of human rights.

Against the principle of the social contract: under the social contract theory state is legally and morally obliged to ensure the welfare of its subjects but in this case, people died in police custody.

Means compromised for ends: Killing people in the name of justice is evidence of a compromise of means.

Erosion of trust in the judiciary: When police became judges, it may lead to erosion of the trust of common people in the judiciary.

Options available to me:

- Investigate the case in full honesty
- Accepting the demand of the minister
- Asking for recusal from the investigating team

Critical evaluation of options

Option	Merit	Demerit
1st	It will uphold the foundational values of civil services	It may be a riskier task for my life and career
2nd	Securing personal interest in the promotion	Against the constitutional

		morality
3rd	It will prevent probable tussles	It may lead to a crisis of conscience

Course of action

I will choose 1st option because

- It will ensure justice for the victim
- It will also uphold the rule of law
- It will increase the trust of people in the administration

Thus, it can be concluded that to ensure the rule of law investigating officers should show the values of courage and justness.

Case Study 2: A veteran politician and administrator, Shrikant Verma has been MP six times. Hailing from Balia, Shrikant Verma, 66, was associated with the religious movement led by the national political party. A self-proclaimed wrestling aficionado, he has been involved with the sport in several administrative roles — as president of the WFI, vice-president of the Asian Wrestling Federation, and a member of the government's Mission Olympic Cell, which identifies athletes for the Target Olympic Podium Scheme and takes action on their training proposals, etc. Known as a political strongman, Shrikant Verma wields a high degree of influence on the sport domestically and has had the last word on all things wrestling in India. Under his leadership, India has performed very well in international games including the Olympics. He has many plans for Indian sports especially wrestling to execute shortly. But the wrestlers have alleged financial mismanagement and arbitrariness in the functioning of the WFI and the gravest allegation has been that of sexual harassment. The complainants have cited incidents that took place as early as 2012 to as recently as 2022 and claimed some of them occurred at Shrikant Verma's official MP's bungalow in New Delhi, and during tournaments in India and abroad. One of the complainants, it was mentioned in the Supreme Court, is a minor. According to a letter sent by the Sports Ministry to the Indian Olympic Association, the wrestlers have levelled allegations against not just Shrikant Verma, but also other federation officials and coaches. When the internal means of grievance redressal get exhausted wrestlers went on protest. The government persuaded

the wrestlers to call off their protest by forming an Oversight Committee, which was tasked with looking into the allegations against Shrikant Verma as well as managing the day-to-day affairs of the WFI. The six-member committee submitted its report. After that, the committee has since been disbanded. The wrestlers have cited the delay from the government in releasing the report of the committee that looked into the allegations of sexual harassment against Shrikant Verma, loss of faith in the committee, and the absence of action against the MP, of which they had been assured months ago. They have also expressed unhappiness that WFI resumed its activities despite the ongoing probe, and have alleged that Shrikant Verma was still calling the shots, evidenced by the fact that the first national tournament since the controversy broke took place in his backyard, Balia. Wrestlers have tried many times to file an FIR against Shrikant Verma but police refused to do so, due to the influence of Shrikant. Finally, The Delhi Police had to register two FIRs on the orders of the Supreme Court, one under the stringent POCSO Act and another related to outraging the modesty of a woman, naming Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) president and Kaiser Ganj CJP MP Shrikant Verma following allegations of sexual harassment against him by women wrestlers. According to his 2019 election affidavit, he was named in the demolition case of a religious place. Additionally, in their police complaint, the wrestlers have also accused Shrikant Verma of criminal intimidation. You joined the post of IPS recently and you are full of enthusiasm to serve the nation. You are feminist in your orientation and you believe that there should be strict action should be taken against people who have committed crimes against women. But you are the sole breadwinner of your family. Your father is admitted to a costly private hospital due to a critical illness. Your younger brother is studying private medical college and you are also supposed to fix your sister's marriage. You have been appointed as head of the team investigating this matter. Within a few minutes of your appointment as investigating you received a call from the secretary of the home minister asking to give a clean chit to Shrikant Verma otherwise, you will lose career prospects. You also received a call from the Shrikant to give clean chit otherwise you may be killed.

a) What are the ethical issues involved in this case?

- b) What are the options available to you in the given situation?
- c) Critically evaluate each of the options listed by you
- d) Which option you will opt for and why?

(250 words, 20 marks)

ANS. The given case highlights the issues of misuse of power, denial of duty, sexual exploitation of women etc.

The stakeholders involved in the case are

- I. Chief of WFI
- II. Wrestlers
- III. Government
- IV. Police administration

A) Ethical issues involved in the case are:

Misuse of authority: In this case, Shrikant Verma and other officials have misused their authority to obtain sexual pleasure from women players.

Denial of duty: As police refused to register FIR against Shrikant.

Erosion of trust in Institutions: wrestlers have to go on the protest because no institution had paid heed to their concerns.

B) Options available:

- I. Investigate the matter without any fear on your own
- II. Seeking guidance from the senior

- III. Leave the case

C) Critical evaluation of options

Options	Merit	Demerit
1st	By doing so I will fulfil my duty (categorical imperative)	It may harm my life and career
2nd	I may get guidance and motivation	They may misguide me
3rd	It will help in securing my interests	It is akin to denial of duty it shows a lack of integrity.

D) I will opt for 1st option because

- It will help me ensure justice for victims and women empowerment, which is the realisation of my ideals on the real ground.
- I can create a role model for other civil servants so that they can take due action against any dreaded criminal.
- It will realise the principle of constitutional morality.
- It will increase the trust of the public in the administration.

Hence, it can be concluded that the administration should be prompt and pro-people in its functioning so that people can feel safe and secure.

PART THREE

ESSAYS

of

THE MONTH

Selected essays from Rau's GSI students

THE REAL PROBLEM IS NOT POPULATION GROWTH BUT WHAT THE POPULATION IS DOING

#SOCIAL JUSTICE

SUBMITTED BY: MUSKAN ARYA

Disclaimer: The viewpoints in the topic are strictly personal of the writer above. The role of Rau's IAS Study Circle is to present the write-up in its original form, hence the study circle neither endorses nor rejects any viewpoint in the submission. The purpose is only to showcase the manner of writing.

Therefore, it is the sole responsibility of the reader to use his/her intellect to check the veracity of viewpoints.



According to UN population program repeat, India is said to surpass population of China in 2023 to become the world's most population country. India is a young country with 45% of population below 25 years of age and 66% of population in the working age category. Prime Minister has time and again said emphasis on the need to utilize 'Amrit Kaal' where the population (young) is at its peak. India is said to enjoy demographic dividend till 2045 and this is where PM Modi has asked India to collectively work as team India to achieve a sustained and inclusive growth.

Population growth is a natural phenomenon in the country as the nation tries to develop over time parameters like increase in birth rate and decrease in death rate due to medical advancements contribute to rise of a nation's population. Other factors contributing to population growth being immigration and increase in the total fertility rate in females. These factors lead to increase in the building blocks of the nation human resource (population).

Population of a nation can be broadly divided into 3 groups children, working age and elderly. While children and elderly are called to be dependent population; it is the working age population that drives the growth. It is therefore essential to lay emphasis on this category along with children who are future determinants of a

country to effectively utilize the country's human resource towards development (all round, inclusive).

It has been pointed out time and again that it is not the size of population but its composition and quality that really create an impact. Population growth can be managed effectively and aligned as well if the people are informed, skillful, healthy and growth oriented. Population growth becomes a burden when the human resource a burden when the human resource is unable to contribute effectively to the collective progress of the nation as it lacks the ability and gainful sources of employment.

Thereby it can be rightly said that an unmanaged population can lead to demographic disaster instead of dividend straining the country's resources. This leads to discontent among masses whereby intolerance and hate crimes increase. The internal security also comes in peril due to possibility of left wing extremism and insurgency gaining momentum in the less informed minds as the only means to bring change. Lack of gainful engagements can lead to competition for the existing resources without the ability to innovate and generate more resources or effectively distribute the existing ones. Population can also be seen as both a cause and effect of poverty further perpetuating the problem.

In order to effectively oversee 'what the population' is doing it is necessary to first build the human capability in term of health and education and thereafter supplement it with quality employment, security of income and means, opportunity to grow etc. Investing in population is not a one-time need but requires a conscious and effort from government, NGOs, pressure groups, stakeholders (male, female) to gain a sustained momentum.

While focusing on the above factors, health forms the most basic and vital aspect of quality population. Health in terms of both mental and physical is necessary for the

person to contribute effectively. Health forms the core and impacts the ability for a person to perform effectively. Unfortunately in India, despite a young population about 37% of children are stunted and 56% of women (NFHS - 5 data) are anemic. Further, India suffers from triple burden of malnutrition, undernourishment and obesity. Also, the healthcare facilities are doctors have a divide – rural vs urban, developed regions vs underdeveloped. Covid-19 exposed the bitter truth wherein only the haves could afford treatment and medication in time.

However, the government is working relentlessly to turn things around and make health more accessible and affordable. Pradhan Mantri Jan Aushadhi Kendra's, Ayushman Bharat, National Digital Health ID, e-Sanjeevani (tele-medicine) are few among many initiatives being undertaken to improve the scenario. Mental Health is also being highlighted in the mainstream through debates and Mano Darpan initiative of the government.

Another, essential aspect of enhancing ability of the population is education. Education and skill training are a necessity and not luxury that should be made accessible to each citizen of the country. In National Education Policy, 2020. Education has been cited as a public good. Further emphasis has been laid on vocational training, continuous assessment and evaluation Gender equality, special areas by proposing to set up Special Education zones etc. Education is a powerful tool to bring social change and contribute towards mobility of various people. It will help in naturally diverting people's attention towards activities that are nation-building.

Further to supplement human capability after education and health is to channelize the ability effectively in India, 65% of population still resides in rural areas and taking up of agriculture as major source of employment. However, agriculture is a seasonal activity and disguised unemployment chances are really high thereby diminishing the human contribution and output. It is here that India loses its edge over other countries. India's structural deficiencies of premature Industrialization and lack of foundational (reading, writing and doing basic mathematical calculations) literacy further exacerbate the issue.

This calls upon to make agricultural sector more diversified allied activities like sericulture, pisciculture,

apiculture, animal rearing; food processing and sorting; supply chain management activities can be utilized effectively to offer an opportunity for the people to engage in gainful employment.

Not only this, government through its varied initiatives like production linked incentive scheme, Make in India, Assemble in India, Network product firm (Economic Survey 2019) is trying to enhance employment in manufacturing and industrial sector simplification and streamlining of labour laws will further supplement the effort. Provision of recycling fund and also emphasis on the social security for informal sector are welcome steps but would require concrete policy formation and implementation.

Therefore, it can be said that a rightfully trained population having ability to contribute gainfully will be able to overcome other shortcomings like unplanned childbirth (family planning), child marriages, social vices – begging, trafficking, drug peddling etc. to enhance the development prospects of a nation. Managing population would be easier as it will be a strain on social infrastructure thereby leading to better access to resources. Population growth in this way will also be in harmony with the nature as it will not exceed the ecological holding capacity.

Apart from all those factors, the most important change will come when the individuals themselves realise their potential and duty to contribute towards a progressive nation and world. The constitution gives various rights in form of fundamental rights to aid in the growth of individuals and impact liberty. However, it is also the duty of individuals (Fundamental Duty) to develop rational thinking and contribute to the best of their ability.

The state can supplement their capabilities by implementing the directive principles which emphasis on living wages of employees, share in the running of factories, equal pay for equal work, keeping youth away from intoxication and developing means of gainful engagement.

This quality of human resources will help India to achieve atmanirbharta while also contributing to the world growth and reaching the goal of \$5 trillion economy by 2025.

THE RIGHTS OF EVERY MAN ARE DIMINISHED WHEN THE RIGHTS OF ONE MAN ARE THREATENED

#PHILOSOPHICAL

SUBMITTED BY: AMIT PANDEY

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"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere". During the Fascist regime in Europe in 1930's & 40's rights of minorities were crushed in name of Majoritarian Nationalism. In Germany, the minorities (Jews) were officially targeted by state and mass public alike. Their properties were confiscated. Their businesses were boycotted & in the end special camps were built to kill and torture them. This increased Majoritarianism i.e. rule of majority (German people) who referred to thousands as descendent of Aryan Race, but after the World War II was over, the pride of German Majoritarian were shattered as they had lost the war and their leader had shot himself (Hitler).

The moral of the story is whenever rights of individuals or minority or even majority are diminished, rights of all individuals are threatened. According to Duorke, Rights are trumps i.e. individualistic freedom should have safeguards w.r.t. state or society's action. Rights of people are inherently linked with dignity & violation of people's rights also leads to violation of their dignity & as rights of all people are inherently linked (if diminishing one's right leads to threatening of rights of all men, thus violation of dignity of one man, in long term leads to violation of dignity of a society as a whole.

In contemporary times, inequality in economy, has led to violation of rights of men. According to world inequality report, top 1% of Indians have 22.5% of national income,

top 10% earn 57.5% of national income & bottom 50% earn only 13% of national income. This disparity in income adversely affects an individual's right to health, education, clean environment etc. Historically, high inequality leading to diminishing of rights of marginalised section ultimately leads threatening of rights of all men. For e.g. during French revolution, nobility & Church enjoyed many benefits & enjoyed lavish lifestyle and the poor peasants were burdened with taxes. This ultimately led to French revolution, in which there were huge periods of instability and anarchy in which rights of all man were threatened. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that inequality in economic sphere needs to be curtailed so that rights of masses & vulnerable are restored leading to promotion of Justice in the society.

Even in societal aspect, people should have right & freedom w.r.t. to follow their decisions. According to Aristotle dignity comes from the ability to make choices & denying these rights, ultimately leads to denying of dignity. As J.S. Mill had famously said No state becomes great by dwarfing its own people, thus, when rights of member of societies are taken away it eventually leads to downfall of society as a whole & impacts rights of all people.

For e.g. in ancient India, Jajmani system leads to downfall of India's strong & vibrant economy. Under Jajmani system, self-sufficient villages were preferred & for that all occupations in villages were made hereditary. So people's (especially vulnerable class) right to explore opportunities were taken away. This led to hereditary occupations i.e. son of cobbler will become cobbler, son of share cropper will be share cropper. This phenomena, which took away rights of most vulnerable group, eventually led to ruralisation of India & it became a prominent reasons for declines of cities.

At some time, in some instance threatening of rights of few lead to potential of instability in the country because of feelings of injustice. For e.g. Naxal Movement in India, is very violent & its grass root soldiers are poor tribal people. This is so because after liberalisation, privatisation & globalisation reforms of India in 1990's it led to increase in environmental degradation & exploitation of forest resources. This affected rights of minority tribals who were already burdened with poverty & malnourishment. Thus, Jal, Jungle & Jameen and their associated rights of tribals are at heart of tribal movement of Naxal Nature and government must aim at restoring these rights to bring peace and development in Naxal affected area. Govt's Samadhan doctrines is also a step in that direction by taking into account deprivation of rights of vulnerable community and pursuing developmental agenda.

Similarly, rising wave of terrorism can also be understood from deprivation of rights of certain communities. For e.g. Western Societies denies cultural and religious rights to ethnic minorities and immigrants (Hijab ban in France). For these communities culture is an important part of their identity and denial of such rights lead to hostile intentions by certain elements of

such communities. For e.g. after 9/11 religious terrorism is on the rise in Western countries and many such act of aggression is done by minority communities of their own nationality. According to scholars like Bhiku Parekh, for rise of cosmopolitan society and culture it is important that certain cultural & religious rights are intended to minorities which leads to boosting their self-esteem & strengthening social capital and cooperation in society as a whole.

According to ancient Indian philosophy – the world is one large family (Vasudev Kutumbakam) & therefore violation of rights of one section of society will ultimately lead to disharmony in society. Similarly, In Holy Quran, it has been written that saving of one innocent soul leads to safeguarding of whole mankind. Thus, ultimately rights and existence of all individuals are committed. As Laski-famously said all states are known by the rights they maintain therefore, protection & safeguarding of rights of each & individual person is essential for safeguarding prosperity and peace of entire human civilisation. Therefore to move towards utopia of perpetual peace and prosperity, rights of all individuals living in it must be equal & they must all share respect towards liberty & equality in the society.

YOU CAN NEVER CROSS THE OCEAN UNTIL YOU HAVE THE COURAGE TO LOSE SIGHT OF THE SHORE

#PHILOSOPHICAL

SUBMITTED BY: SOUMYA RANJAN DASH

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During its formative years post-independence, India was gradually

consolidating itself both in terms of its economic strength as well as foreign cooperation. Meanwhile the ethnically related East Pakistan was facing atrocities from West Pakistan. Further, India had a two front threat from Pakistan's East and West territory. With its economic development at stake and essential foreign cooperation at risk, India. Decided to help in Bangladesh liberation. This needed immense courage from leaders like Mrs. Indira Gandhi and Major. Sam Manekshaw but to cross the ocean of security threat from Pakistan and liberation of Bangladeshis, it was essential. Eventually India was

able to cross the ocean by losing sight of the comfort of its slow economic & geopolitical growth. For this risk taking attitude and courage was necessary.

But what is courage? It is a cardinal virtue as propounded by Plato. It is the attribute of an individual to face adversities and work through them.

It is very important to be courageous and increase one's risk appetite. Having courage to take risks enables individual to explore new things and possibilities. It helps us to leave our comfort zones and work hard to face the adversities. It is said that human minds work more efficiently on the face of adversities, as it creates a compulsion for us to discard laziness and enhance our abilities. But more than anything else having courage and taking risks, gives oneself a moral boost and confidence.

Historically, we have seen during the invasion of Alexander. While the ruler of Taxilla, surrendered to Alexander to save himself, King Porus had the courage to confront despite being aware of the might of Alexander's army. Eventually, King Porus was remembered for his bravery and honourably got his kingdom back.

Fast forward to the freedom struggle against British power, the courage of Indian leaders to move out of their comfort zones for national independence gained results. Had they not tried, perhaps India's independence would have been delayed further.

Even in the International arena, India took the risk of not siding any party during the cold war period. This could have resulted in India being sidelined by both blocks in future. But India was able to cross the ocean and today it is not only a partner of both rival blocs, but is also able to respectfully pursue its national interests.

Coming to the economic progress, a fast growth often requires, some risks to be taken be it individuals at stock market or the nation's growth as whole. India was able to capitalise on the reforms of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation by risking domestic growth. Today India is the 6th largest economy of the world.

The biggest relevance of risks and its necessity for growth is in businesses and entrepreneurship in particular. Developing a startup involves numerous risks like capital, human resource, consumer trust,

competitive market etc. But to be successful, one needs to take risk. The audio device manufacturer company "Boat" is a case in point. It gained market prominence alongside Sony, Bose etc.

Even in technological progress, India's Pokhran experiments risked global backlash. But a courageous risk taken then has made India a nuclear power today and external security.

Public Administration too calls for courage, to take risk and lose sight of the shore, with the likes of Satyendra Dubey, who risked life to expose financial irregularity, Ashok Khemka, who sacrificed his comfort owing to transfers due to whistle-blowing.

It is essential to have the courage, to take risk to succeed. But sometimes it is essential too to not lose sight of the shore under the hood of courage. It is said that courage is a mean value of fearfulness and foolishness. It is equally essential for us to not be foolish in our pursuit.

In the contemporary times, we can see that Taiwan's provocation to China by highlighting the visit of USA's speaker Nancy Pelosi did not augur well with China. It is essential for Taiwan to first exhaust all diplomatic solutions.

Similarly in facilitating technological advancements, we often risk the likes of privacy, security etc. while it is important to promote blockchain technology, governments must not promote unregulated use of cryptocurrency, as it can lead to failure of fiat currency, crime financing etc.

Even in disaster management, we calibrate our approach towards disaster risk reduction we should focus on essential development like dams, coastal infrastructure etc. but at the same time, we must reduce our risks.

Society in general calls for women empowerment and boosting individual liberty, but at the same time, we must strengthen the institutions like police, judiciary etc. to protect the liberty.

By now, we are convinced that we must raise our risk appetite and also our ability to withstand the consequences. And this is what needs courage and efficient risk management. But there also lies challenges in doing so.

It is very difficult to find such courageous people. PayPal co-founder said, "Courage is in further short supply than geniuses". This shortage can be attributed to the social upbringing in our society that naturally makes a person risk averse. Like every parent aspires their child be a doctor, engineer for secure & paying jobs. Further limitations like financial weakness, stops a person from taking risks. Further there is an inertia at individual level to move out of comfort zone and take the chances of failure.

In this regard, we must first try to become psychologically stronger. We should remember that, even if we are not able to cross the ocean, we would be proud of ourselves to have at least tried. This gives us

moral boost-further there is a need for positive attitude to handle failure like Edison said, "He did not fail, rather he discovered 10000 ways that do not work". Beyond being able to handle failure, we must keep hope as "Luck favours the brave". At the society level, risk taking attitude must be encouraged and role models be presented. Government initiatives to promote Indian unicorns in social media is a step in right direction.

To conclude, we must not fear taking risks to achieve something but at the same time, we must also focus on scoping and preparing ourselves for the consequences. This can help us sail through the oceans easily.

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