

# CURRENT AFFAIRS

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**NOV-DEC**

**2022**



**Prelims  
&  
Mains**

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Vikram S: India's first private satellite vehicle
- Science behind heavy rockets
- ISRO's heaviest rocket launches 36 satellites
- First private bio-energy plant in Punjab
- No Money for Terror (NMFT) Conference





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## NOV-DEC 2022

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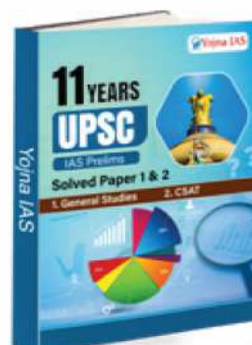
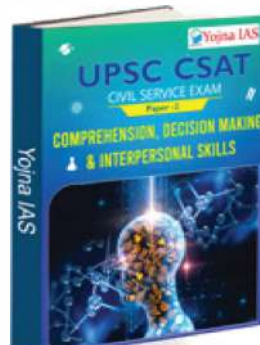
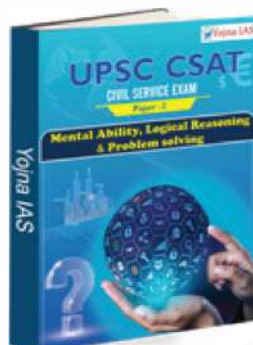
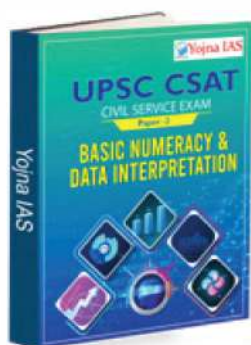
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### FOREWORD

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We Wish you Good Luck, Keep Believing in Yourself, and if you are well prepared, you will Succeed.

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# **General Studies -1**

(Indian Heritage and Culture, History and Geography of the World and Society)

# LINGAYATS

**Relevance in Prelims:** History of India

**Relevance in Mains:** Indian Culture will cover the salient aspects of art forms, literature and architecture from ancient to modern times

**Key facts for UPSC Exam**

**Who are Lingayats?**

- **Origin:** From 12th-century social reformer Basava 's sect. Word Lingayats is derived from linga and ayta which means 'the people who bear a small stone, the linga (phallic symbol), generally around their neck.' They are followers of the 12th-century philosopher Saint Basavanna, who rejected the supremacy of Brahman priests, ritualism, and caste system. At present Lingayats are a dominant community of Karnataka and smaller sections live in Goa, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal.
- **Worship:** Shiva as a formless entity. Lingayats are monotheists who worship only one God, namely, Linga (Shiva), as a formless entity. But as per modern practice, Lingayats have also started to worship a few other gods in addition to Shiva.
- **Belief:** Basava's Vachanas. Does not believe in the caste system. As Saint Basavanna was against the caste system, and Vedic rituals and led revolt against Brahmanical Hinduism. Hence, they do not believe in the caste system rather they follow equality, fraternity, and individuality. They held that all wearers of the linga should be considered equal.
- **Religious Institutions:** Bans Temple and Icon Worship.

**Key facts about Guru Basaveshwara/Basavanna**

**About:**

- Basaveshwara was 12th-century Philosopher, Statesman and a Shaivite social reformer and Lingayat saint of Bhakti era. He grew up in a Brahmin family with Shaivism tradition.
- He was contemporary to the reign of the Kalyani Chalukya/Kalachuri dynasty **King Bijjala I**.
- **Other Names:** Bhakti Bhandari (literally, the treasurer of devotion), or Basaveswara (Lord Basava).

**Important works/Contributions:**

- Basavanna spread awareness through his poetry, popularly known as Vachanas which means sayings or utterances such as the Shat-sthala-vachana, Kalla-jnana-vachana, Mantra-gopya, Ghatna Chakra-vachana and Raja-yoga-vachana.
- He established **Anubhava Mantapa** (the "hall of spiritual experience") to openly debate spiritual and ordinary life concerns which laid the foundation for social democracy. It allowed men and women from all socio-economic backgrounds to discuss spiritual and mundane questions about human life.



- **He initiated the Sharana movement**, which drew individuals from all classes and fought vehemently against the practice of the **caste system**.

**Current Contributions:**

- Several Lingayats are now farmers, and some of them are providing the services like carpentry, blacksmithing, leatherworking, and oil-pressing. Small educated section is also represented in government service and the professions. In urban areas in Karnataka, Lingayats dominate small trade, commerce, and the textile industry.
- Further, the lingayat or Veerashaiva sect has many Mutts which are presided over by Swamis. They have done some social services like the establishment of educational Institutions, hospitals, etc.

**Mains Questions:** Discuss the contribution of Basavanna during the Bhakti movement.

**Sources:** The Hindu; The Print; PIB



## EARLY HISTORY OF KASHMIR BEFORE MUGHALS

**Significance for Prelims:** Early rulers of Kashmir like the Karkota dynasty, Utpala dynasty, Lohara dynasty and Kashmir before the Mughals.

**Significance for Mains:** Not Much relevance

### Famous rulers in the early history of Kashmir:

#### Karkota dynasty;

##### Durlabhavardhana:

- According to Chinese annals, Durlabhavardhana was the first King of Kashmir to issue coins and his territories extended beyond Kashmir.
- During his tenure, Chinese pilgrim, Hsuan Tsang spent three years from A.D 631 to 633 in Kashmir.
- He provided a thorough description of Ashokan stupas housing Buddha relics, Buddhist monasteries, and the inhabitants of Kashmir.

#### Lalitaditya:

- Lalitaditya is well known for military exploits and active patronage of arts and letters. His capital was Parihasapura.
- He defeated Yasovarman of Kanauj and annexed his kingdom.
- He contributed to the foundations of many towns and settlements and the building of temples and mathas.
- **Architectural wonder built by Lalitaditya in Parihasapura:** 1) Four Vaishnava shrines with gold and silver images. 2) Buddhist temple enshrining a brass image 3) monastery.
- Lalitaditya's most important religious foundation was the Sun temple at Martanda.
- Karkota kings extended liberal patronage to Buddhism, even though they were followers of the Brahmanical religion.

#### Utpala dynasty;

##### Avantivarman:

- He and Surasena (his loyal minister) brought peace, prosperity and stability to Kashmir.
- Avantivarman founded Avantipura and built Avantisvami and Avantisvara temples there.
- **Poets and Authors adorning his courts:** Bhatta Kallata, Muktakana, Sivasvami, Ratnakara and Anandavardhana.
- Suyya (A great medieval hydraulic engineer of Kashmir) was also contemporary to Avantivarman.
- **Suyya's contribution:** He improved the irrigation facilities by devising a technique to control the waters of the Jhelum river and increasing the amount of cultivable land.

**Sankaravarma:**

- **Sankaravarma is well known for** his expeditions, but these expeditions drained Sankaravarma's treasury and hence he was forced to impose heavy taxes.
- He extorted heavily on temple endowments and priestly corporations. Cultivators were further oppressed by forced labour.
- Sankaraputrapattana adorned by three large shiva temples was founded by him.

**Didda:**

- She was the wife of the ruler Kshemagupta
- Politics of Kashmir revolved around her for nearly half a century as a queen-consort, regent and finally a sovereign.

**I Lohara dynasty;****Harsa:**

- Harasa is a talented scholar and musician but lacked the military and administrative skills.
- In order to replenish his exchequer he robbed temple treasures and melted down ancient images.

**II Lohara dynasty;****Jayasimha:**

- Jayasimha was a judicious combination of strength and cunningness. He combined these two qualities to rule Kashmir.
- He was Kalhana's patron ( Author of Rajatarangini).
- Jayasimha's death was followed by a succession of weak Hindu princes until A.D 1337.
- Hindu rule in Kashmir was terminated by Sultan Shamsuddin.

**Kashmir before the Mughals: Kings of the Kashmir Sultanate****Shah Mir was the first Muslim ruler of Kashmir;**

- There were varying accounts of his rise to power. Shah Mir led the revolt of Muslim employee against Anandadeva which led to Anandadeva's death in 1326. Shah Mir founded his own dynasty in 1339. He handed over his kingdom to his two sons, Jamshed and Sher Ali in 1349.

**Jamshed and Shahbuddin;**

- Jamshed emerged victorious in the power struggle between the two brothers.
- He adopted the title Alauddin.
- Sher Ali assumed the throne and ruled under the title Shahabuddin after his death in 1363.



- Shahbuddin led campaigns to the south and emerges victorious over the Samma dynasty king of Sindh after that brought Kangra ruler under his suzerainty.
- Upon his death in 1386, Sher Ali was succeeded by Qutubuddin, who in turn was succeeded in 1396 by his son, the Sikandar.

### **Sikandar;**

- He is known by the epithet 'Butshikan', meaning the destroyer of idols.
- During his reign, several Hindu temples were destroyed and forceful conversion of Hindus took place.
- Sikander accepted the overlordship of the Central Asian invader Taimur who invaded India in 1398.
- Sikandar was succeeded by his son Amir Khan in 1416. He was soon deposed by his brother Shadi Khan in 1422.

### **Zain-ul-Abidin;**

- Shadi Khan took the title Zain-ul-Abidin
- He reversed Sikandar's conservative policies and restored many temples.
- Hindus and Buddhists were allowed to practice their religion. He was also a patron of art, literature, and poetry.
- Many lakes and canals were constructed by Zain-ul-Abidin.

### **Muhammad and Fateh Khan;**

- Zain-ul-Abidin was succeeded by his successor Haji Khan alias Haidar who ruled for a year.
- His son Haji Khan ruled for a tumultuous 13 years and was succeeded by son Hasan who left his minor son Muhammad in charge. Then Muhammad was deposed by Fateh Khan. Fateh Khan formed an alliance with Delhi Sultanate ruler Sikandar Lodi to resist Muhammad. Muhammad regained the throne when Fateh Khan died South voyage, and ruled until 1535.
- The death of Muhammad led to uncertainty in Kashmir for the next fifty-year period and part of which was ruled by the Chak dynasty.
- Kashmir became a part of the Mughal Empire under Akbar after the end of this period.

### **Important sources to study the early history of Kashmir:**

- Rajatarangini written in A.D 1148-1150 by Kalhana in the Sanskrit language.
- Rajatarangini is considered the most reliable source to study Kashmir's history, especially from about A.D. 600 onwards
- Rajatarangini contains detailed, reliable and comprehensive information on political, administrative, religious and economic conditions during Kalhana's times.

- Rajataranginī started with the foundation of the Karkota dynasty by Durlabhavardhana early in the seventh century.

### Early Kashmir and religion:

- **Nilamata Purana (7th century A.D. work from Kashmir):** Shows the strong persistent Naga worship tradition in Kashmir. .
- Asoka's Buddhist missionary **Majjhantika** had to contend with the Naga cult in the third century B.C. According to the account of Hsuan Tsang Majjhantika achieved remarkable success in preaching Buddhism.
- **Fourth Buddhist Council** was convened by Kaniska in Kashmir. At the end of this council, Kaniska engraved Tripitaka on copper plates and deposited it in a stupa in the valley.
- During **Hsuan Tsang's** stay in Kashmir Buddhism was flourishing in the valley and there were about 5,000 Buddhist priests and viharas.
- Buddhism was also in a flourishing state during **Ou-kong's visit** to Kashmir during the eighth century A.D.
- **Sarvastivada sect of Buddhism** developed in Kashmir and Kashmir became the centre to spread Buddhism and Buddhist art beyond India to Afghanistan, Central Asia, Tibet and China.
- After the eighth century, Shaivism and Vaishnavism overshadowed Buddhism. Distinctive four-faced Vaikuntha form of Vishnu worshipped in Kashmir.
- **Utpala kings from Sankarvarma** onwards were more inclined towards Shaivism. Kashmir became the citadel of the **Pasupata sect**.

**Source:** The Indian Express

Prelims(2014):

With reference to the cultural history of India, the term 'Panchayatan' refers to

- (a) an assembly of village elders
- (b) a religious sect
- (c) a style of temple construction
- (d) an administrative functionary

Mains( 2016):

- Q. Early Buddhist Stupa-art, while depicting folk motifs and narratives successfully expounds Buddhist ideals. Elucidate.

# MARTAND TEMPLE

**Significance for Prelims:** Facts about Martand Temple

**Significance for Mains:** Architectural features of Martand temple

**News:** In May this year, the Archaeological Survey of India-protected (ASI) objected to 'NavgrahAshtamangalam Puja' on the premise of the Martand temple even though Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha participated in it.

## About Martand Temple:

- King Lalitaditya of the Karkota dynasty who ruled Kashmir from 725 AD to 753 AD built the Martand Temple.
- Capital of King Lalitaditya was Parihaspora.
- **Deities to whom Martand Temple is dedicated:** Vishnu-Surya.
- **Unique feature of Martand Temple:** It is the only three-chambered temple in Kashmir. The temple has three distinct chambers i.e. the mandapa, the garbhagriha, and the antrala.
- **Architectural style of the temple:** Unique Kashmiri style with definite Gandhar influences. But, the structure shows the typical Hindu work of the late Gupta period,
- Descriptions of Martand's grandeur are also mentioned in Rajatarangini.

## Architectural features of Martand temple:

- The original Complex consists of a principal shrine at the centre of a quadrangular courtyard circumscribed by two small structures towards the north and south.
- The Central Courtyard was filled with water supplied through a canal by the Lidar river that immersed almost one foot of the base of the columns.
- Further, this central courtyard was enclosed by a colonnade consisting of 84 pillars.
- Use of Lime mortar to build Temple walls of evenly dressed grey limestone.
- Architectural influence on Martand Temple: Classical Greco-Roman, Buddhist-Gandhara, and North Indian styles.
- Lalitaditya may have applied the services of architects from other empires such as Gandhar, and Greece. He may have also employed immigrant Byzantine architects, this can be established from the usage of lime mortar in architecture.
- Today, the temple's roof is missing. But, Alexander Cunningham assumes that a two-tiered pyramidal roof must have covered not only the central shrine but the other two smaller shrines in stone.



**Key facts:**

- Rajatarangini written by Kalhana in the 12th century is a major historical source of Kashmir's history.
- After the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate in the 13th century, architects start using lime mortar for buildings.

**Further Readings: Other important temples in Kashmir**

- Shankaracharya temple
- Pandrethan temple
- SankaraGuruvaram (Sugandesha) temple
- Naranag Temple
- Avantiswami (Avantipur) Temple
- Loduv Temple
- Mamaleshwar Temple
- Lidar river

**Source:** The Indian Express

**Article:** Martand Temple in Kashmir: Its grandeur survives, and so do its controversies

**Prelims(2014):**

With reference to Buddhist history, tradition and culture in India, consider the following pairs:

**Famous Shrine****Location**

- |                                       |               |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Tabo monastery and temple complex: | Spiti Valley  |
| 2. Lhotsava Lhakhang :                | Zaskar Valley |
| 3. Alchi Temple Complex :             | Ladakh        |

Which of the above pairs given is/are correctly matched?

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

**Mains(2015):**

- Q. The ancient civilization in the Indian sub-continent differed from those of Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Greece in that its culture and traditions have been preserved without a breakdown to the present day. Comment.

## **General Studies -2**

(Governance, Constitution, Polity, Social Justice  
& International Relations)



# PROTECTION OF CHILDREN FROM SEXUAL OFFENCES (POCSO) ACT, 2012

**Significance for Prelims:** Key provisions of the POCSO Act

**Significance for Mains:** Issues associated with POCSO law; Justice J.S. Verma Committee on Amendments to Criminal Law; Way forward

**News:** Karnataka High Court dismissed a case filed under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012. High Court noted various instances of sexual intercourse as a result of mutual love affairs amongst minor girls and boys aged above 16 but below 18.

## Terms of POCSO Act:

- **Aim of POCSO Act:** To protect children from sexual abuse also the Act raises the consent age for sexual intercourse from 16 to 18 years.
- Under the POCSO Act of 2012 and several IPC clauses, If anyone engages in a penetrative sexual assault on a minor under the age of 18, then he or she can be “imprisoned for a term which is not less than seven years but which may extend to imprisonment for life, and shall also be liable to [a] fine.”
- Under the POCSO Act, 16 years old girl is considered a “child” and hence her consent does not matter. So, any sexual intercourse is treated as rape and this may lead to stringent punishment.
- POCSO Act, 2012 and several provisions of the IPC treat any sexual intercourse as rape if children below 18 years of age are involved.

## Issues associated with POCSO law:

- **Severe distress to concerned families of boys and girls:** Various court judgments including the one by Karnataka High Court said that criminal prosecution of a minor girl or boy under POCSO is negatively affecting families.
- **Most often disgruntled parents file cases to foil the relationship between two adolescents.** Since in many cases couple elopes due to fear of opposition from parents. But families file a police case against the boy under the POCSO Act and abduction with the intent to marry under IPC or the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006.
- Parents often want to control the marriage choices of their sons and daughter. Hence, they misuse the law for the same.
- **Clause of mandatory reporting:** According to Section 19 of the POCSO Act, anybody, including children, if suspected that an offence is likely to be committed under the Act or about to be committed is required to report it.
- **Contrary to sciences leading to unhealthy development of young minds.** Under the Act, a case is only registered against a boy and the girl is

- an aggrieved party. This means that young women do not have a sexual identity.
- Even cases of elopements and love affairs or cases of 'non-serious' offences were transferred to the POCSO court.
- **Immense psycho-social trauma** due to draconian aspects of the POCSO Act negatively affects healthy or normal adolescent development and sexuality.
- **Another issue that may make women more vulnerable:** The government is seeking an amendment to the Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2021 that will increase the minimum age of marriage for women from 18 to 21 years.

### Various Judgements and Committees:

- **Vijaylakshmi vs State Rep case, 2016:** Madras High Court dismissed a POCSO case by saying that the definition of 'child' under Section 2(d) of the POCSO Act can be redefined as 16 instead of 18. It further added that rigorous provisions of the POCSO Act should exclude bodily contact or allied acts or consensual sex after the age of 16.
- **Justice J.S. Verma Committee on Amendments to Criminal Law** recommended a reduction in the age of consent to 16, and also calls for necessary amendments in the POCSO Act.
- **High Court of Karnataka directed State Education Department,** to set up a committee to evolve a mechanism for educating students about the acts, which are criminalised under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012 and the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

### Way forward:

- **Decriminalise sex among older adolescents** to protect them from the misuse of the law by lowering the age of consent to the age of marriage.
- **Implement the suggestion of Courts** that differences in consensual relationships should not be more than five years. It will also ensure that a much older person is not able to take advantage of girls of an impressionable age.
- **Long-term solution:** Amendment to the age of consent criteria in the POCSO Act.
- **Awareness building among adolescents** regarding stringent provisions of the POCSO Act and Indian Penal Code (IPC) through educational material for adolescents on the law on sexual offences and its consequences.
- **Investigation and prosecution must consider the realities of adolescent attraction** at the age of 16 and the ascertainment of consent while protecting vulnerable children from sexual assault or exploitation or grooming.

**Conclusion:** POCSO Act must stay in tune with the times and ground realities. The Law Commission must ensure actual implementation of the POCSO Act so that Act remains true to its broad intent i.e. the protection of children



**Further reading:**

1. Justice J.S. Verma Committee
2. Sexual Harassment of Women at Work Place (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (POSH Act)

**Prelims Question(2018):**

**Q1. International Labour Organization's Conventions 138 and 182 are related to**

- (a) Child labour
- (b) Adaptation of agricultural practices to global climate change
- (c) Regulation of food price
- (d) ) Gender parity at the workplace

**Mains Question(2021):**

1. "Though women in post-Independent India have excelled in various fields, the social attitude towards women and feminist movement has been patriarchal." Apart from women's education and women empowerment schemes, what interventions can help change this milieu?

**Source:** The Hindu

**Article:** Explained | Should the age of consent be changed for adolescents?; HC says Law Commission needs to rethink age criteria for consensual sex; Considering consent: On POCSO Act and the age of consent; The persecution of consent( S. POORVAJA)

## COLLEGIUM SYSTEM FOR APPOINTMENT OF JUDGES

**Significance for Prelims:** Collegium System; Article 124; Article 217; Judges Cases

**Significance for Mains:** Evolution of the collegium system of appointments; Criticism of the Collegium system:

**News:** Union Minister for Law and Justice Kiren Rijiju's statement that the collegium system of appointments to the higher judiciary needs to be reconsidered reopens longstanding debate over the process of appointing judges to the Supreme Court and High Courts of India

### Constitution on the appointment of judges in the higher judiciary:

- Articles 124(2) of the constitution deal with the appointment of judges to the Supreme Court.
- Article 217 of the Constitution deals with the appointment of judges to the High Courts.
- President may hold consultations with "such of the judges of the Supreme Court and of the High Courts" to make appointments in the higher judiciary as per need.
- But the Constitution is silent on the process for making these appointments.
- **Article 124(2) says:** "Every Judge of the Supreme Court shall be appointed by the President by warrant under his hand and seal after consultation with such of the Judges of the Supreme Court and of the High Courts in the States as the President may deem necessary for the purpose and shall hold office until he attains the age of sixty-five years. Provided that in the case of appointment of a Judge other than the Chief Justice, the Chief Justice of India shall always be consulted."
- **Article 217 says:** "Every Judge of a High Court shall be appointed by the President by warrant under his hand and seal after consultation with the Chief Justice of India, the Governor of the State, and, in the case of appointment of a Judge other than the Chief Justice, the Chief Justice of the High Court."

### About the Collegium system:

- Method of appointment and transfer of judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts in India is known as the collegium system.
- The collegium system is not based on the constitution or law promulgated by the Parliament. But, it evolved through various judgements of the Supreme Court.
- Composition of the collegium is constantly changing, and its members only serve for as long as they hold their seniority positions on the Bench before retiring.
- **Member and Composition of Supreme Court collegium:** The Supreme Court collegium is headed by the incumbent Chief Justice of India (CJI). It consists of five members including the incumbent Chief Justice of India (CJI) and four other seniormost judges of the court at that time.
- **Member and Composition of High Court collegium:** It consists of three members led by the incumbent Chief Justice and two other seniormost judges of that

court.

### **Role of Government in the collegium system:**

- The government plays role in the appointment of judges in the higher judiciary only after names have been decided by the collegium.
- Recommended names for appointment by a High Court collegium reach the government only after approval by the CJI and the Supreme Court collegium.
- **Government plays a very minuscule role in the entire process of appointing judges to the higher judiciary:** Government directs Intelligence Bureau (IB) to conduct an inquiry in case a lawyer is to be elevated to High Court or the Supreme Court judge.
- **Under Constitution Bench judgments** the government can raise objections and seek clarifications regarding the collegium's choices, but if the collegium reiterates the same names, the government is bound to appoint them as judges.
- But, the Government can delay making the appointments, if it seems unhappy with one or more judges recommended for appointment by the collegium.

**Evolution of the collegium system of appointments:** Through a series of judgments of the Supreme Court known as “Judges Cases” and the interpretations of the relevant provisions of the Constitution

- **First Judges Case or ‘SP Gupta Vs Union of India’, 1981:** The judgement gave primacy to the executive in appointments of judges of High Courts. The Supreme Court through its majority judgment held that the Constitution did not give primacy to the CJI in the appointment of judges in higher judiciary. The judgement held that “consultation” used in Articles 124 and 217 did not mean “concurrence”. So, the President’s consultation with these functionaries does not mean his decision is bound to be in concurrence with all of them.
- **Second Judges Case or ‘The Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association Vs Union of India’, 1993:** A nine-judge Constitution Bench devised a specific procedure called the ‘Collegium System’ for the appointment and transfer of judges in the higher judiciary by overturning the decision in ‘SP Gupta’. Now, it is the responsibility of the top court to “protect the integrity and guard the independence of the judiciary”. Primacy was given to the CJI in matters of appointment and transfers of judges. In the collegium system, the recommendation should be made by the CJI in consultation with two seniormost judges of the Supreme Court and the executive’s role is to give effect to such recommendations. Second Judges Case added that the executive can raise objections to the name recommended for the appointment of judges and can ask for reconsideration, but if the collegium reiterated the recommendation, the executive was bound to make the appointment.
- **Third Judges case:** In this SC, put an end to the question of the meaning of the term “consultation”(whether “consultation” required consultation with a number of judges in forming the CJI’s opinion, or whether the sole opinion of CJI could by itself constitute a “consultation”).In response, Supreme Court laid down that the

recommendation should be made by the CJI and his four seniormost colleagues. In case of an adverse opinion between two judges, the CJI should not send the recommendation to the government.

### **Criticism of the Collegium system:**

- **Collegium system is non-transparent and closed-door affairs:** As it does not involve any official mechanism or secretariat.
- The system still does not prescribe norms regarding eligibility criteria for the appointment of judges.
- **No official minutes of collegium proceedings:** People are kept in dark about collegium meetings as they do not have knowledge regarding how and when a collegium meets, and how it takes its decisions. Even lawyers are not aware of when their names have been considered for elevation as a judge.
- It led to tussles between the judiciary and the executive.
- Lead to the slow pace of judicial appointments. Hence, the large number of judicial vacancies.

### **Further readings:**

1. National Judicial Appointments Commission Act of 2014
2. 99th Constitutional Amendment Act

**Source:** The Indian Express

**Article:** Debate over the collegium system: How are SC and HC judges appointed?

### **Prelims(2019):**

Consider the following statements:

1. The motion to impeach a Judge of the Supreme Court of India cannot be rejected by the Speaker of the Lok Sabha as per the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968.
2. The Constitution of India defines and gives details of what constitutes 'incapacity and proved misbehaviour' of the Judges of the Supreme Court of India.
3. The details of the process of impeachment of the Judges of the Supreme Court of India are given in the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968.
4. If the motion for the impeachment of a Judge is taken up for voting, the law requires the motion to be backed by each House of the Parliament and supported by a majority of total membership of that House and by not less than two-thirds of total members of that House present and voting.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

### **Mains( 2017):**

- Q. Critically examine the Supreme Court's judgement on 'National Judicial Appointments Commission Act, 2014' with reference to the appointment of judges of higher judiciary in India



# NATIONAL INSTITUTIONAL RANKING FRAMEWORK (NIRF) 2022.

**Significance for Prelims:** National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF)

**Significance for Mains:** Myopia of high placement packages from institutions of national importance.

**News:** The release of the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) 2022 raises serious questions regarding engineering education in the country.

## About National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF)

- NIRF ranking was launched in September 2015 for ranking colleges, universities and research institutions.
- It is released by the Ministry of Education.
- It also provides a combined overall ranking of colleges, universities and research institutions.
- **Subjects domain on which institutions are ranked:** Engineering, management, pharmacy, law, medical, architecture and dental.
- Initially, participation was voluntary in the NIRF, but in 2018 it was made compulsory for all government-run educational institutions.
- **National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) ,2022** evaluated 4,786 institutions on five parameters i.e. teaching, learning and resources (TLR), research and professional practice, graduation outcome, outreach and inclusivity and perception.



**Report card**  
A look at the top 10 educational institutions in India, according to Ministry of Education's National Institutional Ranking Framework 2022

Rank	Institution	Score
1	Indian Institute of Technology-Madras	87.59
2	Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru	83.57
3	Indian Institute of Technology-Bombay	82.35
4	Indian Institute of Technology-Delhi	82.22
5	Indian Institute of Technology-Kanpur	77.83
6	Indian Institute of Technology-Kharagpur	75.94
7	Indian Institute of Technology-Roorkee	71.48
8	Indian Institute of Technology-Guwahati	69.75
9	All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Delhi	69.57
10	Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi	67.25

### **Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's statement during the launch of NIRF, 2022:**

- He calls for mandatory accreditation and assessment of every higher education institution
- All higher institutions will have to be part of the NIRF ranking system.
- He calls for the merger of the two accreditation systems i.e. National Assessment and Accreditation Council for institutional accreditation (NAAC) and the National Board of Accreditation for programmes (NBA).
- NAAC accreditation or NIRF rank is necessary to receive government funds.
- The Ministry of Education is planning for an accreditation system for schools in the country.

### **Key findings of NIRF, 2022 with respect to institutes of technology and engineering colleges:**

- NIRF, 2022 presents disturbing scenarios regarding institutes of technology and engineering colleges.
- The best institutes in the technology and engineering colleges category scored 90.04% in the NIRF ranking. But the score of the 50th best is only 50.11% and the 100th best institute scored a mere 40.14%.
- More than 1,049 institutions applied for the ranking but got no rank and approximately 4,500 institutions did not even apply for the ranking.
- There are 5,926 institutions approved by AICTE to offer programmes in engineering and technology. But only 1,249 (21.07%) came forward to get ranked under the NIRF in 2022.

### **Issues associated with engineering education:**

- **Cut-throat competition for admissions in top-ranking institutions:** The top-ranking institutions can only accommodate 30,000 students against 11 lakh-12 lakh JEE Main exam registration. Only 2.73 % can make it into the top 100 institutions, while Only 0.9% can make it to one of the top 10 institutions.
- **Misleading placement packages in premium institutions:** Reported salary packages worth lakhs of rupees disregard the cost of living or purchasing power parity in the U.S.
- **Placement headlines related to high packages** are limited to only a minuscule number of graduates and are mostly confined to international placements in the Information Technology sector. Placement stats of premier technology institutions shows that out of 30,000 students, not more than 100 bag such offers.
- **Immense stress on children:** High placement package headlines trigger a mindless rat race to get students into institutions of national importance. Students chase quality institutions with assured placement and a dream package.
- **Coaching Culture:** The scarcity of seats in premium institutions and the dream

of high packages forced parents to enrol their children on coaching for entrance tests. These rob children with their ambitions and passions.

- **Loss of moral values among children:** Children of tender age want to become doctors and engineers to make big money not to serve society.
- **Dejection and persistent peer pressure** cause anxiety, and depression and gives birth to suicidal tendencies among IIT JEE aspirants.
- Institutes of technology and engineering colleges lack the ability to deliver value for money as there are very few institutions that offer quality engineering education at an affordable cost.

### **Way forward and Conclusion:**

- The need of the hour is improvement in the overall quality of technical higher education through mitigating the widening gap between the best and the rest.

### **Further reading:**

1. National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) system :  
(<https://yojanaias.com/national-assessment-and-accreditation-council-naac-system/>)

**Source:** The Hindu

**Articles:** IIT-M ranked India's top higher education institute; The lack of quality engineering education(Ayalur K. Bakthavatsalam, Furqan Qamar)

### **Prelims( 2017):**

Which of the following gives 'Global Gender Gap Index' ranking to the countries of the world?

- (a) World Economic Forum
- (b) UN Human Rights Council
- (c) UN Women
- (d) World Health Organization

### **Mains:**

Q. Discuss the issues associated with engineering education in India in light of the recent National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) 2022.

## PROFESSORS OF PRACTICE

**Significance for Prelims:** Professors of Practice

**Significance for Mains:** Role of Professors for Practice; Objectives behind Professors for Practice.

**News:** University Grants Commission (UGC) issued new guidelines where higher education institutes can hire experts from various sectors without having formal academic qualifications such as a PhD as a faculty in any college or university in India.

### **Eligibility to apply for the post of Professor of Practice:**

- An individual who is a “distinguished expert” and “made remarkable contributions in their professions” is eligible for appointment.
- Individuals must have at least 15 years of service or experience.
- Higher Educational Institutions are free to decide the sector from where they want to rope in professionals.
- **Diverse Background of professor of practice:** He can be anyone from technology, science, social sciences, media, literature, armed forces, law, fine arts, etc.
- **Professors of Practice** positions are not open for serving or retired teachers.
- Professors of Practice does not fall within the ambit of formal academic qualification or UGC’s minimum qualifications for the appointment of teachers and other academic staff.
- Engagement for Professor of practice can be full-time or part-time for at least four years. Initially, the hiring will be for one year and can be extended to four years based on performance.
- Institutes and experts being hired decides the remuneration. Universities can also approach the industries for financial support.

### **Mechanisms for appointments of Professors of Practice:**

- Basis of appointments: On a nomination basis, Universities and colleges will carry out appointments. Vice-chancellors or directors can invite nominations for filling up posts. But, nominations cannot exceed 10 per cent of the sanctioned faculty strength of an institute.
- After the invitation of nominations, Interested persons can send their applications with detailed biodata with a brief write-up regarding how they can potentially contribute.
- Selection committee for reviewing applications of professors of practice consists of two senior professors from the respective institute, and one “eminent external member”.
- Academic council and the executive council of the institutes took the final calls on appointments based on the recommendations of the committee.



### **Role of Professors of practice:**

- Development and designing of courses and curriculum for the institute along with delivering lectures.
- Enhancing industry-academia collaborations.
- Collaborate with regular faculty members for joint research projects or consultancy services.

### **Objectives behind the Professors of practice initiative:**

- **Augment faculty resources in universities and colleges:** India's higher education institutes (central and state universities) are understaffed. So, recruiting industry experts and professionals will help in filling vacancies.
- **Improving the quality of graduates being produced by Indian colleges and universities.** Current industries require graduates with specific skill sets, but the higher education system failed to impart those skill sets to graduates.
- **To facilitate and promote the integration of academic scholarship with practical expertise and experience** through the introduction of real-world practices and experiences into classrooms.
- Professors of practice aim to churn out **industry-ready graduates**.

#### **Key facts:**

- **UGC's minimum qualification to be recruited as a professor or associate professor:** Only individuals with PhD and who have cleared the National Eligibility Test (NET) are eligible to be appointed as a professor or associate professor.

**Source:** The Indian Express

**Article:** UGC clears 'professors of practice' in all colleges, and universities: who are they and what will they do?

### **Prelims:**

Q. Professor of Practice is associated with

- (a) Academic
- (b) Technology
- (c) Entrepreneurship
- (d) Internal Security

### **Mains(2015):**

Q. In the absence of a well-educated and organized local level government system, 'Panchayats' and 'Samitis' have remained mainly political institutions and not effective instruments of governance. Critically discuss.

# FROM LODHA TO RAMANA: THE CHIEF JUSTICES OF THE MODI ERA

## From Lodha to Ramana: the Chief Justices of the Modi era

- The Supreme Court (SC) of India known as the custodian of the Indian Constitution.
- **Primary responsibility of the SC:** To ensure protection of fundamental rights of citizens guaranteed under the Constitution from the state.

## Supreme Court emerges as the most powerful court among other courts of the world due to:

- Its power of judicial review through its decision in Keshavananda Bharati case.
- It assumed the power of judicial appointments to itself and High Courts through various judgements in first judge, second judge and third judge cases and CJI is appointed through seniority convention.
- SC of India ensures the citizens wide ranging protections by expanding scope of the fundamental right to life and liberty guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution.
- Provision of Public interest litigation(PIL) through which common citizens approach the courts even by sending a letter.
- **Powerful Chief Justice of India (CJI):** Besides performing normal judicial duties. CJI is responsible for selecting judges for appointment to the higher judiciary and deciding the number and composition of benches to adjudicate on different kinds of cases.

## Evolution of the office of CJI: It is a classic example of a constant shifting and rebalancing of power between the judiciary and the executive.

- **From 1950 to 1971:** During this period CJI had complete authority over judicial appointments, and CJI can even veto any judicial appointments.
- **Between 1971 and 1993:** Executive became strong due to strong single party central governments and executive started appointing 'committed judges' to the Supreme Court, in a clear attempt to change the size of Supreme Court in its favor. SC in 'first judges' case (1981) or SP Gupta case held that the opinion of the Chief Justice of India would not be binding on the government.
- **In the second judge's case (1993)** creation of Judicial primacy and the collegium took place. Through the second judge case of 1993 the judiciary seized the power of appointments back from the executive.
- **After 2014:** Due to the rise of the Narendra Modi-led BJP government single party majority the executive is once again back in control and as a consequence of it the power of the judiciary is weaker than before and weak judiciary is unable to con-

trol autocratic tendencies of the executive such as communal polarisation, misuse of investigating agencies and slow destruction of democratic institutions etc.

### **CJIs of the Modi era (2014 – 2022):**

- Just after ending the tenure as CJI, **Justice P. Sathasivam** was appointed as Governor of Kerala without an appropriate cooling period against the own policy of BJP govt. After the NJAC judgment, matters were still not settled, and the memorandum of procedure for appointments to the higher judiciary became the centrepiece of the dispute between the executive and the judiciary
- **Tenure of Justice R.M. Lodha:** He revived the dormant trend of direct appointments from Bar to the Bench in the Supreme Court. This practice was permitted under the Constitution, but rarely attempted. Justice Lodha was also famous for report on reforms in the Board of Control for Cricket in India. The Executive under the Modi government first confronted the judiciary when it refused the appointment of Gopal Subramaniam as judge of SC.
- **Tenure of Justice H.L. Dattu:** His tenure was known for the first major confrontation between the executive and the judiciary. Judiciary struck down the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) Act. But, Supreme Court failed to fix the flaws in the NJAC Act, by addressing its shortcomings. Memorandum of procedure for appointments to the higher judiciary remains the centerpiece of the dispute between the executive and the judiciary.
- **Justice T.S. Thakur:** He highlighted the plight of the overburdened Indian judiciary and worked actively for mechanisms of filling up vacancies. He was responsible for setting up the National Judicial Data Grid to connect all levels of the judicial system and to provide easy information to litigants. He fell in conflict with Modi government when he attempted about 20 transfers of judges across High Courts. Due to ambiguous nature of the decision and since it is threatening independence and overall integrity of the judiciary, he had to reverse his decision.
- **Justice J.S. Khehar:** Many landmark judgments such as Right to Privacy and Triple Talaq were passed during his short tenure. He also revived the debates on the lack of transparency and fairness in managing the roster in the Supreme Court. His response towards procedure followed by him when allegations were made against him in a suicide note of Kalikho Pul (former Arunachal Pradesh CM) was without precedent and also without propriety. In a complete disregard of basic principles of natural justice and clear case of conflict of interest, Justice Khehar chose to list the letter written by Pul's wife seeking permission to file an FIR against the judges mentioned in the as a writ petition (converting an administrative question into a judicial one). In his tenure High Court judge, Justice C.S. Karnan, was convicted and imprisoned for contempt of court but some experts felt that decision was unconstitutional as it overlooked Parliament's exclusive privilege to remove a member of the higher judiciary in an act.

- **Justice Dipak Misra:** During his tenure four fellow judges held an unprecedented press conference condemning the CJI's internal administrative decisions, specifically related to disregard for court conventions of bench strength and bench composition in the allocation of cases. Impeachment motion was also proceeded against him in parliament which was as eventually quashed by the Rajya Sabha. Issue of the master of roster and conflict of interest also emerged during his tenure. Justice Misra tried to achieve a balance between adjudication and disposal and known for setting up the maximum number of constitutional benches as CJI.
- **Justice Ranjan Gogoi:** He had been party to the unprecedented press conference held by judges. But during his tenure he disregarded the conflict of interest when he sat in the hearing of a sexual harassment complaint made by an employee of the Supreme Court against himself breaking all principles of natural justice. He was obsessed with secrecy, and preferred information to be submitted to the court in 'sealed covers' and this was employed in Assam's National Register of Citizens (NRC) matter, the Rafale dispute, the electoral bonds issue. His tenure gave rise of the 'executive court' when judiciary took over the executive's role in NRC. He refused to admit habeas corpus petitions filed from Jammu & Kashmir in the wake of the abrogation of Article 370. He gave rise to the practice of 'judicial evasion' as Supreme Court avoided hearing certain cases altogether such as the electoral bonds case, the Citizenship Amendment Act case, the abrogation of Article 370, etc. He also accepted an appointment as a Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) soon after retirement which he opposed during his judicial tenure. Also there is increased interference of executive and legislative in the matters of the judiciary. Also the tendency towards sycophancy started among Supreme Court judges, some judges like Justice Arun Mishra and Justice M.R. Shah publicly praised the PM. His Bench also concluded the long-standing Ayodhya dispute.
- **Justice Sharad A. Bobde:** He has the longest tenure in the Modi era. Judiciary experimented boldly with technology, but it also shows greater subservience towards the government. Judicial evasion continued in his tenure. In his period the Court gave preferential treatment to certain matters, for example, in the bail matters of journalists Siddique Kappan versus Arnab Goswami. He stayed the farm laws and set up a committee to examine the law that seems to be biased in favor of law. He discouraged the use of Article 32 petitions as a means of approaching the court. He tried to take away the right to adjudicate on COVID cases from High Courts. Supreme Court's attitude towards plight of migrant laborers in India during the pandemic was blight. In his tenure there was a case of stand off within the collegium when Justice Bobde was reluctant to recommend Justice Akil Kureshi to the Supreme Court which was recommended by Justice Nariman.
- **Justice N.V. Ramana:** He started the judiciary's engagement with the public through his speeches and brought back some of the old glory of the Supreme Court. He once again revived the 'sentinel on the qui vive' of the Judicial institution. He im-



proved the public confidence in the judiciary through certain bail orders and stays (e.g., sedition), and the Pegasus inquiry. But some judgments from his associate judges during his tenure seriously undermined civil liberties. Court's decision on the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (the Watali case), had the effect of virtually detaining people for an indefinite period. The Supreme Court was held responsible for criminalizing petitioners who dared to approach the Court on civil liberty matters for example, The Teesta Setalvad/ Zakia Jafri and Himanshu Kumar cases. To improve the diversity in the system he appointed many women judges and made a significantly large number of appointments in the higher judiciary to fill all the vacancies of the SC. But, despite efforts to improve the image of the judiciary, the practice of judicial evasion continued and no constitutional Benches were formed in Justice Ramana's term. **Current CJI of SC is U.U. Lalit:** He improved processes of filing and listing of cases. He initiated certain orders such as granting bail to individuals in the Kappan and Setalvad cases.

#### **Future Challenges and responsibilities of SC/Judiciary:**

- Protect the judiciary from powerful executives.
- Strengthening the Indian judiciary, especially the lower courts.
- Evolving the office of the CJI in the right direction.

**Source:** The Hindu: From Lodha to Ramana: the Chief Justices of the Modi era (A.P. Shah)

#### **Prelims(2019):**

With reference to the Constitution of India, consider the following statements:

1. No High Court shall have the jurisdiction to declare any central law to be constitutionally invalid.
2. An amendment to the Constitution of India cannot be called into question by the Supreme Court of 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

#### **Mains(2017):**

Q. Critically examine the Supreme Court's judgement on 'National Judicial Appointments Commission Act, 2014' with reference to the appointment of judges of higher judiciary in India.

## ANALYSIS OF ECONOMICALLY WEAKER SECTIONS (EWS) RULING

**Significance for Prelims:** 103rd Constitutional Amendment; Article 14, Article 15, Article 16, Article 17.

**Significance for Mains:** Constitutional analysis of 103rd Constitutional Amendment.

**News:** The majority judgment in the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) case, upheld the validity of the 103rd Constitutional Amendment which introduced 10% reservation for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) in education and public employment but the minority opinion of the Chief Justice of India (CJI) U.U. Lalit (now former CJI) and Justice Ravindra Bhat give us strength to fight for equality.

### Key features of the 103rd Amendment:

- **It introduced Article 15 (6) which** enables the state to make special provisions for “any economically weaker sections of citizens” other than “socially and educationally backward classes” and Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.
- 103rd amendment also inserted Article 16(6) to the Constitution to enable reservation for “economically weaker sections”, other than the SEBCs and SC/ST, in public employment and education.
- It permits 10% reservation in educational institutions and public employment for those from the economically weaker section(EWS).
- This reservation is exclusively for the general category and excludes persons from the Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST) and the Other Backward Classes (OBC) categories.
- **In 2019, the government notified the criteria to identify EWS:** Anyone with a family income of less than 8 lakh from all sources in the fiscal year is classified as EWS. Those who had five acres of agricultural land, a residential flat of 1,000 square feet, or a residential plot of 100 square yards and above in notified municipalities, or 200 square yards in other areas were excluded from the EWS category.

**Grounds of challenge EWS quota:** Since the law is a constitutional amendment, the Supreme Court has to evoke the ‘basic structure doctrine.

- Petitioners challenged the EWS quota on the basis that the amendment violated the basic structure of the Constitution as it violated equality before the law.
- **The violation of the equality code is due to** (a) the Introduction of economic criterion as the reservation was meant only for socially and educationally backward groups due to historical disadvantages (b) excluding OBC/SC/ST candidates from the EWS category (c) Introduction of EWS reservation breached the 50% ceiling on the total reservation.
- Reservation was introduced as a measure to overcome structural barriers to the advancement of historically disadvantaged social groups. But the EWS category

will convert it into an anti-poverty measure.

- EWS quota will make reservations a norm and the principle of non-discrimination and equal treatment will become the exception.

### **Majority's reasoning for upholding EWS quota:**

- Three judges Justices Dinesh Maheshwari, Bela Trivedi and J.B. Pardiwala rejected the basic structure challenge.
- **Instrument of affirmative action:** Economic weakness can be addressed through reservation. Besides social and backward classes, reservations can also cover any disadvantaged section.
- **EWS quota did not violate any essential feature of the Constitution:** As classifying a section based on economic criterion alone was permissible under the Constitution.
- The equality principle does not get offended due to exclusion of the classes already enjoying reservation from the EWS category.
- The majority view was that the 50% ceiling itself was not inflexible or inviolable and the 50% limit was applicable only to the existing reserved categories (OBC/SC/ST).
- **Amendment survived the two standards i.e. 'width test' and 'identity test' prescribed to check the violation of basic structure:** the 'width test' (it is not of such wide amplitude as to obliterate or destroy any basic feature) and the 'identity test' (as it does not alter or erase the identity of a basic feature such as the equality code).

### **Dissent of Chief Justice U.U. Lalit and Justice Ravindra Bhat:**

- Chief Justice U.U. Lalit and Justice Ravindra Bhat differed from the majority but agreed that introducing special provisions on the basis of economic criteria is legitimate and does not violate the basic structure of the Constitution. But EWS category violated the basic structure as it excluded backward classes from the EWS quota benefit.
- Justice Bhat noted that EWS reservation arbitrarily excluded the socially and historically disadvantaged classes. He said that excluding them "on the ground that they enjoyed pre-existing benefits is to heap fresh injustice based on past disability".
- **Amendment violated the equality code of the basic structure particularly the principles of non-discrimination and non-exclusion:** As it resulted in hostile discrimination against the socially and educationally backward poorest section of society that was subjected to caste-based discrimination.
- Justice Bhat had an additional ground to strike down Article 16(6). He said that the additional reservation for those already represented in public employment violated the equal opportunity norm of the basic structure. As the EWS category "snaps this link between equal opportunity and representation" by introducing a category

ry that is not premised on 'inadequate representation'.

**Key facts:**

Article 15: Protects against discrimination on any ground.

Article 16: It mandates equality of opportunity in public employment, with representation for the unrepresented classes through reservation being the only exception.

Article 17: Abolition of untouchability in any form. Article 17 imposes an obligation on the state to prohibit caste discrimination in any manner.

**Key features of Basic Structure Doctrine:** Secularism, Federalism, Independence of the judiciary, Rule of law and equality before the law etc.

**Further readings:**

- Indra Sawhney (1992) judgement.

**Prelims (2020):**

Which one of the following categories of Fundamental Rights incorporates protection against untouchability as a form of discrimination?

- (a) Right against Exploitation
- (b) Right to Freedom
- (c) Right to Constitutional Remedies
- (d) Right to Equality

**Mains Question:**

1. Does the right to clean environment entail legal regulations on burning crackers during Diwali? Discuss in the light of Article 21 of the Indian Constitution and Judgement(s) of the Apex Court in this regard.

**Source:** The Hindu

**Article:** Explained | How has the EWS ruling altered reservations?



## ELECTORAL BONDS AND ASSOCIATED ISSUES

**Significance for Prelims:** Not Much

**Significance for Mains:** Issues associated with the electoral bond.

**News:** Since the inception of electoral bonds, electoral bonds worth Rs 10, 246 crores have been sold by the State Bank of India. In 2016 and 2018, the government amended the FCRA through the annual Finance Bills when the Delhi High Court held that both the Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) were guilty of violating Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), 1976, as these parties accepted donations from two companies registered in India but whose controlling shareholder a foreign company (Vedanta).

**Government initiative in cleaning the politics:**

- Reduction in anonymous cash donations to political parties from ₹20,000 to ₹2,000 to ensure greater transparency in political funding.
- The introduction of electoral bonds brought reform.

**Issues with Electoral bonds: It allowed full anonymity to corporate and foreign political donors.**

- **Corrupting influence of anonymous corporate money:** After electoral bonds now even loss-making companies can contribute to political parties, before the amendment and changes in the Companies Act, 2013 only profit-making domestic companies could contribute to political parties.
- **New form of Colonialism:** Now onwards foreign companies or companies where the controlling stake was held by a foreign company could contribute in donations to political parties. Theoretically, India's political parties could be fully funded by a foreign company operating in India or by a foreign entity through a shell company.
- **Reduction of public and legislative oversight:** Now, only the ruling party has a complete record of all electoral bond donations through the State Bank of India (SBI). This information is not known to the public, the Election Commission, the Opposition parties, or the Parliament.
- **Unconstitutional nature of electoral bonds:** Various Public Interest Litigation (PIL) challenges by the institutions such as the Association of Democratic Reforms (ADR) termed these bonds as unconstitutional.
- **Complications in receiving information from Right to Information (RTI) regarding electoral bonds, since** ordinary people do not have the resources to navigate documents on obfuscating government websites for information to enable accountability of the government.

**Conclusion and Way Forward:** Electoral bonds dilute the universal franchise of one

voter-one vote and give political power to companies, wealthy individual donors, and foreign entities. It gives companies the power to influence policies through hidden donations. The real winner of the electoral bond arrangement is the ruling party and the loser is the average voter. Political parties and Companies should demonstrate moral leadership by disclosing the names of donors and recipients, as the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha did recently.

**Judgment of SC: In 2021, Supreme Court refused to stay the sale of electoral bonds before the West Bengal Assembly Elections,** Supreme Court judgment listed several documents to establish a paper trail of donations some 'match the following.

**Issues with this judgment:** Doing "match the following" is inefficient as it is still difficult to know the full scale of registered entities. Annual financial statements of registered entities do not disclose all political donations.

**Source:** The Hindu

**Article:** Needed: full disclosure on electoral bonds

### **Prelims( 2017):**

Consider the following statements:

1. The Election Commission of India is a five-member body.
2. Union Ministry of Home Affairs decides the election schedule for the conduct of both general elections and bye-elections.
3. Election Commission resolves the disputes relating to splits/mergers of recognized political parties.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

### **Mains(2017):**

- Q. To enhance the quality of democracy in India the Election Commission of India has proposed electoral reforms in 2016. What are the suggested reforms and how far are they significant to make democracy successful?

# UNDERMINING FEDERALISM, ERODING STATES' AUTONOMY

**Significance for Prelims:** NITI Aayog

**Significance for Mains:** Co-operative Federalism; Federalism; Way forward for Cooperative federalism.

**News:** National Democratic Alliance Government (NDA) replaced the Planning Commission of India with National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog) to promote cooperative federalism.

## **India's move towards co-operative federalism:**

- **Recommendations of Fifteenth Finance Commission:** Recommended special grant to three States so that tax devolution in absolute terms in 2020-21 should not be less than the devolution amount received by these States in 2019-20. It recommended ₹7,735 crore grants for nutrition. It recommended sector-specific grants and State-specific grants amounting to ₹1,29,987 crore and ₹49,599 crores, respectively.
- Union government often meet revenue expenditure through Extra Budgetary Resources (EBR), but such borrowings are not reflected in the Central Government Budget. So, it is totally unjustified to treat State corporations' off-Budget borrowings as States borrowings.
- Constitution of National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog) after replacing the Planning Commission.

## **Instances that show that policies of central government eroded the autonomy of the States and undermined federalism:**

- **Union Government has undermined the stature of the Finance Commission** by not accepting its recommendation of tax devolution to states.
- **'Award and package' tradition of grants:** Centre government treat all Finance Commissions recommendations with respect to transfers to States as an award and a package.
- **The inefficiency of NITI Aayog in promoting Co-operative federalism:** Major objective of NITI Aayog is to promote cooperative federalism. But, since its constitution, it has not taken major steps to promote cooperative federalism.
- **Treating off-Budget borrowings as government borrowings retrospectively from 2021-22:** The decision to adjust off-Budget borrowings against the borrowing limits under Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) in 2022-23 and subsequent years, starting with borrowings serviced from State budgets beginning in 2021-22, is against all standards.
- **Increase use of cesses and surcharges to garner revenues, but these are not**

**shareable with the States under the Constitution:** In the Budget estimates for 2022-23, cesses and surcharges share in the Union gross tax revenue increased to 20% from 13.5% in 2014-15. The fifteenth Finance Commission recommended States' share of 41% in the Central taxes. But, because of higher cesses and surcharges states are getting only a 29.6% share.

- **Union government is denying States their due share as per the constitutional provisions:** The C&AG 's Audit Report for 2018-19 observed that out of the ₹2,74,592 crore collected from 35 cesses only ₹1,64,322 crore credited to the dedicated funds and the rest was retained in the Consolidated Fund of India.
- **Increase in Central Sponsored Schemes led to the loss of autonomy of states:** The government of India grouped the Centrally Sponsored Scheme under certain broad umbrella heads. Also, with an increase in the State's share in the number of CSSs burden of the states got increased. Since most CSS operates in the State list subjects so, States lost their autonomy.
- **Recent incident:** The Centre has enacted three farm laws though agriculture is a state subject, the states were not even consulted while introducing these Bills. Now, these farm laws have been repealed.

#### Way forward:

- **Formation of a high-powered intergovernmental group consisting of representatives from the state as well as the Central government:** The functioning of this group is to guide states to observe strict fiscal discipline, resist stock of off-budget transactions, and proper timetable for achieving debt sustainability.
- **Centre and states should work together** to ensure that the legislations of the Union and the States are consistent with respect to FRBM Act.
- Various Committees recommended that the Government of India should restrict the Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) to a few areas of national importance.
- **Government should act on the recommendations of the Sub-Committee of Chief Ministers appointed by NITI Aayog** which is the reduction in the number of schemes and the introduction of optional schemes.

**Conclusion:** Centre should seriously move from the Indian federation's coercive to cooperative federalism.

#### Further reading:

1. Five Years Plan

#### Prelims Question(2019):

With reference to the Legislative Assembly of a State in India, consider the following statements:

1. The Governor makes a customary address to Members of the House at the com-



mencement of the first session of the year.

2. When a State Legislature does not have a rule on a particular matter, it follows the Lok Sabha rule on that matter.

**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

**Mains Question(2021)**

Q1.How have the recommendations of the 14th Finance Commission of India enabled the states to improve their fiscal position?

**Source:** The Hindu

**Article:** Undermining federalism, eroding States' autonomy(B. Vinod Kumar)



# OPAQUE POLITICAL FINANCING DUE TO ELECTORAL BONDS

**Significance for Prelims:** Not Much relevance

**Significance for Mains:** Electoral Bonds and associated issues.

**News:** Electoral bonds were presented as an instrument to clean the electoral politics but it became mechanisms to legitimize 'institutionalised corruption.

## **Political pathologies prevalent in our system:**

- Crumbling organisations
- Political centralisation
- Nexus of business and politics fuelled by rent-seeking and cronyism.

## **Influence of political finance on the political competition:**

- **Shows the efficacy of institutional safeguards:** The efficiency of an institution like the Election Commission of India depends on the degree of transparency of political funding. **For example:** Due to the opaque nature of electoral bonds the Election Commission of India (ECI) failed to ensure a level playing field.
- **Increasing unfairness of electoral processes due to opacity of political finance** due to greater information asymmetry between the ruling and the Opposition parties.
- **Centralisation of political funding within a party** determines the power structure in the party whether it is derived from organisational structures or exercised in a personalistic manner. **For example,** earlier Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam and the Bahujan Samaj Party were highly organised parties due to membership funding of these parties. In these parties, leaders wielded power in a responsive and programmatic manner.
- **Impact of political financing regime on grounding ideas in political competition:** Ideological base of political competition starts corroding when political finance is anchored only to a narrow concentration of economic capital.

## **About Electoral Bonds:**

- In Union Budget, 2017 government of India launched electoral bonds.
- These are interest-free bearer instruments used to donate money anonymously to political parties.
- A bearer instrument does not carry any information about the buyer or payee, and the holder of the instrument (which is the political party).
- **Denominations of the bonds:** State Bank of India is the only bank authorised to sell electoral bonds in multiples of Rs 1,000, Rs 10,000, Rs 1 lakh, Rs 10 lakh, and Rs 1 crore.
- SBI deposits these bonds into the Prime Minister's Relief Fund if the party does not

encash the bonds within 15 days.

- A political party can encash the bonds through their verified account within 15 days. There is no limit on the number of bonds an individual or company can purchase.

#### **Issues associated with electoral bonds:**

- **The colonisation of the declared sphere of political funding by the electoral bonds:** According to Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) within two years electoral bonds cover 52% of the total income of national parties and 53% of the total income of regional parties.
- **Design of electoral bonds gives an advantage to the ruling party:** According to ECI data, out of the total electoral bonds sold the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in 2019-20 got over 75% as opposed to the 9% share of the Congress.
- **Only the government or ruling party have access to the transaction trails:** as it inverted the concept of transparency and openness in political funding.
- **Information asymmetry and institutional scrutiny barriers** also divert the electoral bonds towards the ruling party.
- Electoral bonds centralise political funding: So national leadership got leverage over the State and local units. As a reply to a Right To Information (RTI) query in 2018-19, 80% of the bonds were redeemed in Delhi.
- **Change in the legal architecture of political finance (removal of erstwhile limits (7.5% of net profit) on corporate donations) along with the introduction of Electoral bonds** enables the nexus of the national political elite and big business conglomerates. Hence, it squeezes the space of local elites and regional capital.
- The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party now do not fear the outcomes of policies like demonetisation and Goods and Services Tax (GST) on its traditional backers (small businessmen and trading castes) as their contribution to the political treasury is decreasing.

**Conclusion:** Black hole of electoral bonds negatively affects the institutional safeguards provided by Independent institutions provided by ECI and the Supreme Court of India. This so-called political finance “reform” is the marker of democratic decline.

#### **Prelims Question(2019):**

##### **Consider the following statements:**

1. The Parliament (Prevention of Disqualification) Act, 1959 exempts several posts from disqualification on the grounds of ‘Office of Profit’.
2. The above-mentioned Act was amended five times.
3. The term ‘Office of Profit’ is well-defined in the Constitution of India.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- (a) 1 and 2 only

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

**Mains Question(2019):**

1. In the light of recent controversy regarding the use of Electronic Voting Machines (EVM), what are the challenges before the Election Commission of India to ensure the trustworthiness of elections in India?

**Source:** The Hindu; The Indian Express

**Article:** Opaque political financing could cost democracy dear( Asim Ali); Explained: Why is the electoral bond scheme being opposed by transparency activists?





# ARMED FORCES (SPECIAL) POWERS ACT (AFSPA)

**Significance for Prelims:** Armed Forces (Special) Powers Act (AFSPA)

**Significance for Mains:** Imposition of AFSPA and controversies surrounding AFSPA; Impact of AFSPA on the federal structure.

**News:** Government retained the Armed Forces (Special) Powers Act (AFSPA) in some parts of Assam, Manipur, Nagaland, and Arunachal Pradesh for another six months citing uncertainty over the culmination of the Naga peace process.

## Foundation of Armed Forces (Special) Powers Act (AFSPA)

- Armed Forces Special Powers Ordinance was promulgated by the colonial government of Britain on 15 August 1942, to suppress the Quit India movement.
- “Assam disturbed areas” ordinance in 1947 to deal with partition-induced internal security challenges, the Assam Disturbed Areas Act of 1955 to deal with the uprising in the Naga Hills and adjoining areas and The Armed Forces (Assam and Manipur) Special Powers Act, 1958 formed the basis for Armed Forces (Special) Powers Act (AFSPA).

## Government of India invoked various acts to deal with security challenges:

- For wider applications and when the Northeastern state governments failed to control violence, the parliament passed the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, in 1958.
- In 1990, an identical Act specific to Jammu and Kashmir was enacted.

## Meaning of AFSPA:

- AFSPA gave special power to armed forces for maintaining public order in “disturbed areas”.
- **Powers of Armed Forces:** Armed forces can prohibit a gathering of five or more persons in an area and if they feel a person is in contravention of the law they can open fire after giving due warning; Without a warrant, the army can arrest a person on suspicion, enter or search premises; and ban the of firearms possession.
- After taking any person into custody army may hand over that person to the officer in charge of the nearest police along with a report detailing the circumstances that led to the arrest.

## Imposition of AFSPA:

- **Section 3 of the AFSPA:** Under this Governor of a state and administrator of a Union Territory (UT) can declare an area “disturbed”.
- Thereafter, the governor issued an official notification in The Gazette of India giv-

- ing the Centre the authority to deploy the “armed forces in aid of the civil power”.
- Armed forces and Central Armed Police Forces deployed in “disturbed areas” receive unbridled power to kill anyone acting in contravention of the law, they can arrest and search any premises without a warrant and armed personnel can not be prosecuted without the sanction from the Central government.
- AFSPA gives powers to any commissioned officer, warrant officer, non-commissioned officer or any other person of equivalent rank in the armed forces for the maintenance of public order “fire upon or otherwise use force” after giving a necessary warning depending upon his discretion.
- **Periodic review for extension of AFSPA:** Assam and Manipur governments issue a notification for periodic review of AFSPA while the Ministry of Home Affairs does it for Tirap, Changlang, Longding and areas falling under Namsai and Mahadevpur police stations bordering Assam falling in Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh.
- **According to The Disturbed Areas (Special Courts) Act, 1976** once a region is declared “disturbed”, it has to maintain the status quo for a minimum of three months.

#### **Safety nets available under Armed Forces (Special) Powers Act (AFSPA):**

- Security forces can not open fire without giving prior warning to the suspect.
- In case any suspect is apprehended by the security forces he or she should be handed over to the local police station within 24 hours.
- Armed forces should not act as an independent body, they must act in cooperation with the district administration.

#### **Controversies surrounding the Act:**

- Allegations that AFSPA gave the armed forces personnel the “license to kill”.
- Rights groups maintained that it is a tool of State abuse, oppression and discrimination.
- According to the United Nations, AFSPA has no place in Indian democracy.
- ASPA receives staunch opposition from human rights groups for being aggressive.

#### **Incidents that support the repeal of AFSPA:**

- In the 1950s, the Indian military air bombed Nagaland and Mizoram under AFSPA.
- Mass killings and rape Allegations against security forces.
- **Fallout of AFSPA in Manipur:** Malom massacre in 2000, and the killing and alleged rape of Thangjam Manorama.
- **Manipur’s Irom Sharmila** went on a hunger strike in November 2000 and continued till August 2016 after ten people were killed waiting at a bus stop in Malom in Manipur.
- **Mon firing incident in Nagaland** where security forces incessantly opened fire on a vehicle carrying coal miners without giving prior warning.

### **Concept of “ disturbed area” under Section 3 of the AFSPA:**

- The whole or part of the state or Union Territory can be declared as disturbed by the Central Government, States Governor or Union Territory administrator.
- For declaring an area as disturbed a suitable notification have to be made in the Official Gazette.
- As per Section 3 of the AFSPA “disturbed areas” can be invoked in places where “the use of armed forces in aid of the civil power is necessary”.
- In the majority of cases, the Ministry of Home Affairs enforce AFSPA according to necessity but in case of exceptions, State governments can also enforce AFSPA.
- An area can be disturbed due to differences or disputes between members of different religious, racial, language or regional groups or castes or communities.

### **States under AFSPA:**

- Entire Nagaland, Assam, Manipur (excluding seven assembly constituencies of Imphal) and parts of Arunachal Pradesh are under this act.
- In Arunachal Pradesh, AFSPA was reduced in eight police stations in Tirap, Longding and Changlang districts bordering Assam.
- Jammu and Kashmir too have a similar Act.

### **Due to changing political scenarios and public demand various state governments repealed the AFSPA:**

- Punjab withdrew from AFSPA in 1997 followed by Tripura in 2015.
- Before 1st April 2018, AFSPA was effective in a 20 km area along the Assam-Meghalaya border after that AFSPA was revoked by the centre from Meghalaya.
- In 2004, Manipur had withdrawn AFSPA from seven Assembly constituencies surrounding the State capital Imphal.

**Source:** The Hindu; The Indian Express

### **Articles:**

1. AFSPA extended in four States as uncertainty remains over Naga peace talks
2. The partial rollback of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act

3. What is AFSPA, and where is it in force?
4. Explained: What is AFSPA, and why are states in the Northeast against it?

**CAPF(2018):**

Q. Recently, the Armed Forces(Special Powers) Act was completely removed from which of the following states?

- (a) Arunachal Pradesh
- (b) Meghalaya
- (c) Assam
- (d) Nagaland

**Mains( 2015):**

Q. Human rights activists constantly highlight the fact that the Armed forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 (AFSPA) is a draconian act leading to cases of human rights abuses by security forces. What sections of AFSPA are opposed by the activists? Critically evaluate the requirement with reference to the view held by the Apex Court.





## A PLACE FOR ALL REFUGEES UNDER INDIA'S WELFARE UMBRELLA

**Significance for Prelims:** 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence; Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW; 'Nari Shakti for New India' campaign

**Significance for Mains:** India's contribution in ensuring gender-sensitive norms.

**News:** Myanmar coup, Taliban takeover in Afghanistan, and Ukrainian invasion of Russia forced people to flee their homes and seek refuge in other countries. Women bear a disproportionate burden of these conflicts.

### **India's response to ensuring gender-sensitive norms:**

- India is among the largest economy in the world and since independence, it regularly championed rights and the development of women and girls.
- After India's independence in 1947 Indian women received universal adult suffrage.
- India was instrumental in ensuring that gender-sensitive norms were included in the draft of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The language of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights changed from 'all men are created equal' to 'all human beings are....' in India's instance.
- India has also ratified key international conventions like the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) to end discrimination against women.
- Indian women are making progress in all spheres of human endeavours, including politics, science, business, medicine, sports and agriculture.
- Women have overcome "the glass ceiling" in the armed forces and since 2020 they are also serving as commanders in defence forces.
- Indian women are playing an equal role in conflict-emerging countries and territories: India has the largest number of women in the United Nations peace-keeping forces.
- Central and State governments are promoting gender equality through schemes, policies and programmes.
- Regardless of the legal status of women government is providing them access to welfare services ranging from the welfare of the girl child to supporting aspiring female entrepreneurs, to empower both urban and rural women and promote gender equality.
- **Now, women are leading from the front:** The 'Nari Shakti for New India' campaign was launched so that women should not only participate but lead development initiatives.

**Indian initiatives for women refugees:**

- India ensures that 2,12,000 refugees in which more than half of whom are women and girls can access protection services on par with their fellow Indian hosts.
- Refugees from some countries like Sri Lanka are contributing effectively to the Indian economy as they are entitled to Aadhaar cards and PAN cards so they have access to national welfare schemes.
- Refugees from Afghanistan, Myanmar and other countries do not possess government-issued documentation. So they have access to protection and limited assistance services.

**Conclusion and Way Forward:** For effective inclusion in the social protection system the government should include all refugees in existing national welfare and economic schemes. The government of India is prioritising gender-equal programs to unleash the economic and social potential of women. So, that they have societal resilience to handle future shocks. Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently said: “The progress of humanity is incomplete without the empowerment of women”.

**16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence:**

- It is an annual international campaign against Gender-Based Violence.
- It kicks off on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women i.e. 25th November and runs until 10 December, Human Rights Day.
- It was started at the inaugural Women’s Global Leadership Institute in 1991 and coordinated by the Center for Women’s Global Leadership.
- It calls for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls.
- In support of this civil society initiative, the United Nations Secretary-General’s UNiTE by 2030 to End Violence against Women campaign (UNiTE campaign) calls for global actions to increase awareness, galvanize advocacy efforts, and share knowledge and innovations.
- The global theme for this year’s 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, which will run from 25 November to 10 December 2022, is “UNITE! Activism to end violence against women and girls”.

**Source:** The Hindu; UN -WOMEN

**Article:** A place for all refugees under India’s welfare umbrella; UN Women

**Prelims( 2017):**

Q. A place for all refugees under India's welfare umbrella 'European Stability Mechanism', sometimes seen in the news, is an

- (a) agency created by EU to deal with the impact of millions of refugees arriving from Middle East
- (b) agency of EU that provides financial assistance to eurozone countries
- (c) agency of EU to deal with all the bilateral and multilateral agreements on trade
- (d) agency of EU to deal with the conflicts arising among the member countries

**Mains( 2016):**

Q. What are the aims and objectives of the McBride Commission of UNESCO? What is India's position on these?



## NO MONEY FOR TERROR (NMFT) CONFERENCE

**Significance for Prelims:** No Money for Terror (NMFT) Conference

**Significance for Mains:** Money Laundering and associated issues

**News:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the Third No Money for Terror (NMFT) Conference on November 18-19 in India. The conference will take up ways to combat global terrorist financing.

### **About the No Money for Terror conference(NMFT):**

- It started in 2018 as an initiative of the French government.
- **The necessity for the NMFT conference:** (a) To curb increasing terrorist financing after the 9/11 attacks. (b) Territorial defeats of Islamic State and Al Qaeda in Syria-Iraq and Afghanistan did not deter them to stop their terrorist activities.
- The seriousness of the NMFT Conference can be seen from the 2018 event that was titled “International conference on combating the financing of Daesh and Al-Qaeda (Paris, 25-26 April 2018)”.

**Outcome of NMFT conference, 2018:** Delegations of around 70 countries and 20 agency leaders participated in France.

- Fully criminalising terrorism financing even without a link to a specific terrorist act.
- Increasing traceability and transparency of financial flows.
- Development of proper frameworks to tackle risks associated with cash use, informal remittance systems such as hawala, prepaid cards, and anonymous means of payments,
- Promotion of digital transactions in international transactions.
- Commitment to implementing the FATF standards also in the case of **crypto-assets**.
- The conference urged the FATF to **advance global implementation of** its standards to stop the misuse of new financial instruments.
- Implementation of FATF standards relating to non-profit organisations for traceability and transparency of non-profit organisations (NPOs) and charitable funds without disrupting the activities of civil society.
- Effective implementation of UN sanctions, and cooperation on intelligence sharing.
- Capacity building of countries to fully adhere to FATF standards.

**NMFT conference, 2019:** In this conference, 65 delegations, including 23 Ministers and representatives from 15 international bodies participated in Australia

- Identification of new channels for terrorist financing such as “kidnapping for ransom” and “emerging technologies” such as digital and cryptocurrencies, stored



value cards, online payment systems and crowdfunding platforms.

- It recognised that the private sector has a critical role in detecting and preventing the misuse of financial systems by terrorists.
- The conference flagged the need for monitoring of NPOs.

**Agenda for NMFT 2022 conference:** It is largely a build-up on recent concerns raised during the Interpol Conference and UN General Assembly's Counter-Terrorism Committee Conference held in Delhi.

- Use of virtual assets and crowdfunding platforms by terrorist entities,
- Use of the dark web for terrorist financing.
- The links between terror financing and legitimate economic activities, and payment intermediaries.
- Misuse of non-profit organisations and non-financial businesses and professions in terror financing.
- Financing through the Money Transfer Service Scheme and hawala networks.

**Indian experiences with respect to the No Money for Terror (NMFT) conferences:**

- India articulated its "zero tolerance approach" towards terrorism.
- It tries to attract the attention of the global community towards the cross-border terrorism from Pakistan.
- In the 2019 conference, India called for a "united global effort against all those who support terror or help generate finances for terror".
- India pointed out the usage of social media sites by terror groups. Hence, undermining any ban placed by the United Nations (UN).
- Nations were told to expedite the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism under the UN.
- India asked for effective enforcement of FATF Standards in these conferences.
- India called for non-politicisation of UN listings and FATF: As China regularly blocks India's push for sanctions against Pakistan-based terror groups and terrorists.
- International Community should initiate discussion on 'Countering Financing of Radicalisation (CFR)', to prevent radicalisation.
- NMFT conferences focused on building consensus on terror financing and firming up nations' intent to combat it.

**Source:** The Indian Express

**Article:** India to host terror funding meet: Significance, objectives

**Prelim(2018)**

Consider the following pairs:

Towns sometimes mentioned in news - Country

1. Aleppo - Syria
2. Kirkuk - Yemen
3. Mosul - Palestine
4. Mazar-i-sharif - Afghanistan

Which of the pairs given above are correctly matched?

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

**Mains( 2019):**

Q. Indian Government has recently strengthened the anti-terrorism laws by amending the unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), 1967 and the NIA act. Analyze the changes in the context of the prevailing security environment while discussing the scope and reasons for opposing the UAPA by human rights organizations.



## HYDROPOWER AND INDIA-NEPAL TIES

**Significance for Prelims:** Seti River; MoU between India-Nepal on West Seti and Seti River (SR6) projects.

**Significance for Mains:** Joint Hydro-Power Projects between India and Nepal and their significance.

**News:** India's involvement in the West Seti and Seti River (SR6) storage project shall enhance cross-border power exchanges.

### **Timeline of the development of West Seti and Seti River (SR6) projects:**

- In the early 1980s, the 750MW West Seti Hydroelectric Project started as a 37 MW run-of-the-river scheme. France's Sogreah received the license to develop the project. It proposed the scheme without building a dam in its pre-feasibility study in 1987.
- In the 1990s, Australia's Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation (SMEC) acquired a majority stake in the project.
- Between 1997-2011, Investment and environmental concerns affected the progress of projects.
- In 2009, China National Machinery and Equipment Import and Export Corporation stepped in the project, but withdrew citing a poor investment environment.
- In 2011, Nepal handed the project to China.
- China's Three Gorges International Corporation was assigned to develop the project in 2012.
- Due to issues of resettlement and rehabilitation, China's Three Gorges International Corporation withdrew from the project in 2018.
- Nepal's effort to develop the project by mobilising internal resources led to further delays and increased costs.
- Recently, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Investment Board Nepal and India's National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) Limited to develop the West Seti and Seti River (SR6) joint storage project (1,200 MW).

### **Potential of the project in enhancing India-Nepal ties:**

- Completion of the project on time will give **India much-needed leverage in future hydropower cooperation**. A decision to involve India is a sign that Nepal is reposing its faith in India to complete the project.
- MoU will **minimise the geopolitical influence of China in Nepal** as the West Seti Hydroelectric Project was a major Chinese venture under the Belt and Road Initiative.
- **India can firm its presence in Nepal** with this project India will get involved in

the fourth hydropower project along with Mahakali Treaty (6,480 MW), the Upper Karnali Project (900 MW) and the Arun Three projects (900 MW) in western and eastern Nepal.

- The project can enhance cross-border power exchanges between the two countries. Since the project has an estimated potential of 83,000 MW, Nepal can export electricity and earn foreign exchange.
- **India will get a new alternative to address the power deficit:** In recent years, India faced a severe deficit in coal-based thermal power plants. So, the West Seti Hydroelectric Project can provide an added alternative and viable way to address power deficits to meet the growing energy demand.

### Way Forward:

- **Careful study of investment scenarios:** For successful completion of the projects few options and alternatives need to be explored particularly a conducive investment environment, distribution and transmission network and cost of resettlement and rehabilitation, at the preliminary stage.
- **Extension of the project to other bilateral and regional levels:** Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) framework for cross-border energy cooperation can be used to harness the potential of this project.
- **Creation of cross-border energy market:** Hydropower potential in Nepal and Bhutan and Northeast India can be optimally operationalised.

### Key features of MoU between India-Nepal on West Seti and Seti River (SR6) projects:

- Now Nepal will receive 21.9% share of energy; earlier it was 10% to address the rising electricity demands of Nepal.
- To address Nepal's concern regarding electricity rates and supply from India, the new MoU allows Nepal to request the NHPC to sell the power generated from the projects to the domestic market before selling whole or part to the export market.

### Further readings:

1. Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) framework
2. Mahakali Treaty
3. Upper Karnali Project
4. Arun Three projects

**Source:** The Hindu

**Article:** Energising India-Nepal ties, the hydropower way (Mukesh Kumar Srivastava)



**Prelims( 2020)**

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. The value of Indo-Sri Lanka trade has consistently increased in the last decade.
2. "Textile and textile articles" constitute an important item of trade between India and Bangladesh.
3. In the last five years, Nepal has been the largest trading partner of India in South Asia.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

**Mains( 2013):**

- Q. In respect of India — Nepal relations, discuss how domestic factors influence foreign policy.



# INDIA'S QUEST FOR PERMANENT MEMBERSHIP AT UNSC

**Significance for Prelims:** UNSC; P-5; G-4

**Significance for Mains:** Veto powers available to P-5 members; India's quest for permanent membership of the UNSC.

**News:** India is actively seeking reforms in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). The expansion of permanent membership in the UNSC is one way of reform. India is seeking the support of various countries to fulfil its desire of becoming a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council.

## **Obstacles in India's quest for permanent membership:**

- No Permanent Members (P-5) members i.e China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States want the UNSC's ranks to be increased. Also, the majority members do not want any more veto-wielding members in the Council.
- **No basis for declarations of support for India's candidature for UNSC's permanent membership:** Each P-5 member is aware that someone among them will veto India's candidature for UNSC.
- **Claim of other countries as roadblocks to India's membership:** G-4 countries (India, Japan, Brazil and Germany) are also aspiring for permanent membership. Due to the present underrepresentation of Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean in the permanent category. These regions have a wide understanding and support.
- **Other Obstacles to the expansion of permanent membership:** China will never support India and Japan. Opposition to Brazil from other regional players. Italy is opposing the joining of Germany and Japan as permanent members. As these countries were Axis powers or 'enemy' states during the Second World War and if these countries join as permanent members only Italy will be left out (third founding member of the Axis group).
- **Hurdles in amendment of UN Charter:** Amendment of the UN Charter involves the consent of two-thirds of the total membership of the U N, including the concurring votes of P-5. Amendment to the UN Charter happened once in the 1960s for the addition of non-permanent seats to the Council.

## **Issues associated with veto powers available to P-5 members:**

- **United Nations based on the edifice of veto powers available to P-5 members.** The right to veto was the subject of maximum debate and controversy while drafting the Charter of the future United Nations at Dumbarton Oaks near Washington DC in 1944-45. Many countries oppose the right to veto but the British delegation made it clear that either you have a United Nations with a veto or no United Na-

tions.

- **Misuse of veto powers:** Russia in its Soviet avatar cast more vetoes than the three western members combined. Western members also used this privilege many times to protect Israel and the apartheid regime of South Africa.
- **Veto power and India:** Indian delegates during the formation of the United Nations called for an imperfect United Nations with a veto than not having one. Russia supported India by vetoing unfavourable resolutions during the Bangladesh liberation war( 1971). India often needs the support of council members regarding Kashmir issues. But except Russia, no other country has a fixed positive attitude towards India. China often blocks India's efforts to include confirmed Pakistani terrorists in the sanctions list.

### Way forward:

- A new proposal that a UNSC resolution can be defeated only by a negative vote of at least two permanent members.
- **Creation of a group of semi-permanent members:** In this grouping, Countries would be elected for a period of eight to 10 years and would be eligible for re-election.
- If offered, India should grab the permanent membership even without veto to protect its vital national interest.

**Source:** The Hindu

**Article:** Permanent membership of the UNSC is another story(Chinmaya R. Gharekhan)

### Prelims( 2017):

- Q. With reference to the role of UN-Habitat in the United Nations Programme working towards a better urban future, which of the statements is/are correct?
1. UN-Habitat has been mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities to provide adequate shelter for all.
  2. Its partners are either governments or local urban authorities only.
  3. UN-Habitat contributed to the overall objective of the United Nations system to reduce poverty and to promote access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

### Mains(2019):

- Q. 'Too little cash, too much politics, leave UNESCO fighting for life.' Discuss the statement in the light of the US' withdrawal and its accusation of the cultural body as being 'anti-Israel bias'.

## THE EUROBOMB

**Significance for Prelims:** US Nuclear Umbrella

**Significance for Mains:** Putin's nuclear threat and its impact

**News:** Putin's miscalculations regarding the Ukraine war are becoming costly for Russia. To reverse the losses Putin recently threatened Europe with Nuclear war.

### **Components of Moscow's nuclear doctrine:**

- Moscow's nuclear doctrine states that Russia will use nuclear weapons if the existence of the state is threatened due conventional war or attack on Russia.
- Putin turned "occupied Ukrainian territories" into Russian territory. Hence, any attempts by Ukraine and its Western supporters to liberate occupied territory would be met with a nuclear response.
- **Grave nature of Nuclear situation :** Dmitry Medvedev( former Russian President and a close associate of Putin) has made the Nuclear threat explicit. He has declared that for the defence of "new Russian territories" Russia is not just going to use just tactical nuclear weapons but also strategic ones.

### **Reasons for Russia's Nuclear threat:**

- **Dictatorial attitude of Russian President Vladimir Putin:** Even before the Ukraine invasion Putin put Russian nuclear weapons under command of the army on alert.
- **Russia's weakening position in Ukraine** due to setbacks on the battlefield.
- **For domestic political gains:** As the Ukraine "war of choice" has gone terribly wrong.
- **Moscow's nuclear doctrine is linked with Russia's "territorial integrity" :** Putin claiming that occupied Ukrainian territories are part of Russia. Hence, seeking political legitimacy for nuclear use.
- Putin's nuclear war calculations may encourage those in the West who seek a compromise with Russia at the expense of Ukraine.
- Putin is also hoping for a quick closure of the Ukrainian war through nuclear threat.

### **Effect of Putin's threat on global nuclear security debate:**

- **Change in post-War global nuclear order:** Many major powers in Europe and Asia start taking a fresh look at their nuclear policies.
- **Nuclear threat may act as catalyst for nuclear arms race:** After threat of use of atomic weapons by Russia on a non-nuclear weapon state like Ukraine. Ukraine, voluntarily gave up nuclear weapons in 1994 in return for guarantees of its security. But security guarantees turned out to be worthless during the annexation of Crimea from Ukraine(2014).



- **World may witness a rise in armed aggression** to annex the territory of a neighbour if World fails to check Russia.
- **Use of nuclear weapons for offensive or coercive purposes will become normal:** Till now, the prospect of national suicide acted as a self-deterrent to prevent nuclear weapon use. But with Putin's remark many fidayeen states may receive populist support to use nuclear weapons.
- **Europe may develop its own nuclear weapons:** EU members except France voluntarily gave up their nuclear weapon options by signing the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and since then relied on the US nuclear umbrella for security.
- **Rethink in security policies of European states:** Now, more emphasis on building defence capabilities, and more "strategic autonomy" vis-a-vis the US.
- **Nuclear threat from Russia may rearrange European geopolitics** in favour of Russia but his miscalculations in Ukraine may change European security order detriment of Russia.
- **Boost in strength of NATO's nuclear forces and US nuclear umbrella** over Europe through new deployments of US nuclear weapons in Europe, wider nuclear sharing arrangements, and stronger conventional deterrent capabilities.

**Conclusion:** During his address Putin added that nuclear threat "is not a bluff." This nuclear threat emerging from Russia's side will change the nature of global nuclear security debate. European Union is already stressed due to unreliable nuclear security umbrella of United States and flip-flop of U.S.'s NATO policy because of domestic politics of United States. Russia may be able to rearrange the geopolitics of Europe, although it might not be in its favour. Europe may proceed towards developing Eurobomb having "European dimension" and France may take the lead in turning the French nuclear arsenal into a European deterrent.

#### **Key facts:**

**US Nuclear Umbrella:** US had nuclear weapon-sharing arrangements with five NATO countries i.e. Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Turkey.

#### **Further readings:**

1. Region surrounding Crimea
2. Concept of Strategic autonomy. Nuclear deterrence
3. Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
4. India's Nuclear Doctrine.

**Source:** The Indian Express

**Article:** The Eurobomb (C.Raja Mohan)

**Prelims(2018):**

- Q. What is "Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD)", sometimes seen in the news?
- (a) An Israeli radar system
  - (b) India's indigenous anti-missile programme
  - (c) An American anti-missile system
  - (d) A defence collaboration between Japan and South Korea

**Mains( 2021):**

- Q. The newly tri-nation partnership AUKUS is aimed at countering China's ambitions in the Indo-Pacific region. Is it going to supersede the existing partnerships in the region? Discuss the strength and impact of AUKUS in the present scenario.



# OBSTACLES IN UNITED NATION MULTILATERALISM

**Significance for Prelims:** L69 Group; United Nations

**Significance for Mains:** Limitations faced by United Nations; Reformed Multilateralism; India's contribution in reforming United Nations; Steps to make United Nations more inclusive.

**News:** United States visit of Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar in September led to bilateral and multilateral diplomacy by India.

## **Reasons for reforming United Nation:**

- **Institutional limitations of UN during COVID-19 pandemic:** UN's multilateralism faced weak moments during COVID-19 pandemic when vaccine deployment were interrupted due to supply chain disruptions and countries closed their borders.
- **U.N.-led multilateralism unable to prevent wars:** Ongoing Russia-Ukraine led to several deadlocks in UN Security Council (UNSC) resolutions, West continues to boycott Russia, pushing the veto provision of the U.N.S.C. at a more redundant level than in the past.
- **Another limitation of the U.N.-style multilateralism** can be seen through China's rise, belligerence, and aggression in the South China Sea, the Indo-Pacific region and now globally.
- **United Nations failed to evolve with rapidly changing global scenarios** as China is carving its own multilateral matrix by economic and strategic circumvention of the West, and also due to international isolation of Russia and Iran as well as increasing United States' Taiwan bonhomie.
- **Increase Chinese control on multilateral organisations, including the U.N.:** China shamelessly used veto power against India in the U.N., recently it blocked a joint India-U.S. proposal at the U.N. to enlist Sajid Mir, a top Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) operative, as a 'global terrorist'. China exerted unofficial pressure on Michelle Bachelet (former U.N.'s human rights chief) to stop the release of U.N. Human Rights Council report on the condition of Uyghurs in China.

**India's push for United Nations reform:** From the past few years India is consistently pushing for United Nations Security Council Reforms

- Foreign Minister Mr. Jaishankar's hosted ministerial meetings of the G4 (Brazil, India, Germany, and Japan).
- High-level meeting of the Indian delegation with the L.69 Group, on "Reinvigorating Multilateralism and Achieving Comprehensive Reform of the U.N. Security Council".
- **India is searching for new frameworks of global governance through other**

**forums:** Foreign Minister recently participated in Quad (Australia, India, Japan, the U.S.), IBSA (India, Brazil, and South Africa), BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), Presidency Pro Tempore CELAC (Community of Latin American and the Caribbean States), India-CARICOM (Caribbean Community) and other trilateral formats, such as India-France-Australia, India-France-the United Arab Emirates and India-Indonesia-Australia

### Way forward for U.N's reformed multilateralism:

- **Integration of best practices within the institutional ambit of the United Nations:** U.N. should be based on burden-sharing mechanisms like multilateral regional organisations.
- **U. N. must have clear space for leadership and representation** from all over the globe to make it institutionally capable of dealing with global events such as Russia-Ukraine war and Covid-19 pandemic.
- More inclusive UN through reform in the UN Security Council having more representation from the global south.
- Reformed multilateralism with greater regional representation could generate deeper stakes to prevent wars.
- U.N. should have more space for countries like India that stepped up relief efforts, drug distribution and vaccine manufacturing during Covid-19 pandemic.

**Conclusion:** Indian delegation's enthusiastic participation in the High-Level Week at the 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly showcased India's renewed multilateral diplomacy after Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) meets in Samarkand.

### Key facts for Prelims:

- **L.69 group** composed of members from Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Small Island Developing States. Total number of members in the L.69 group is 42.
- The group is playing an important role in bringing global consensus on the issue of the U.N.S.C. reforms.

### Further readings:

1. United Nations: Envisaged role and actual record; Specialized UN agencies—aims and functioning; the need for UN reforms.
2. Know about Unilateralism, Bilateralism and Multilateralism.
3. Reformed Multilateralism
4. Quad, IBSA and BRICS.



**Source:** The Hindu

**Article:** A ground plan for India's reformed multilateralism(Harsh V. Pant; Vivek Mishra)

**Prelims( 2019):**

Consider the following statements:

1. The United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) has a 'Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air'.
2. The UNCAC is the first ever legally binding global anti -corruption instrument.
3. A highlight of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) is the inclusion of a specific chapter aimed at returning assets to their rightful owners from whom they had been taken illicitly.
4. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is mandated by its members States to assist in the implementation of both UNCAC and UNTOC.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

**Main( 2016):**

Q. "The broader aims and objectives of WTO are to manage and promote international trade in the era of globalization. But the Doha round of negotiations seems doomed due to differences between the developed and the developing countries." Discuss in the Indian perspective.

# INTERNATIONAL SPORTING EVENTS AS AN INSTRUMENT OF SOFT POWER

**Significance for Prelims:** Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) and Tokyo olympics.

**Significance for Mains:** Obstacles in India's sports architecture; Government Initiatives in sports; Way forward to improve sports governance; Concept of Soft power; Chinese strategy to attain soft power through international sporting events.

**News:** Good performance of Indian athletes in Tokyo Olympics and then the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games (CWG) ushered in the golden era of Indian sports.

**Outcomes of medals won by India in International sports events:** At the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games, Indian athletes won 61 medals, including 22 golds. India won seven medals at Tokyo olympics including one gold of Neeraj Chopra.

- It provided pride to every Indian citizen.
- It demonstrates the country's soft power on the global stage
- It paves the way towards India's status as a great "geopolitical actor".

**Obstacles in India's sport architecture:**

- **Poorest population-to-medal ratios in olympics:** According to "Indian Olympic medal winners: A comprehensive list" article India just won 35 medals at the Olympics since the 1900 edition. Country with 1.3 billion-plus people, this performance is disappointing.
- **Lack of a favourable sports atmosphere** to polish the skills of early-stage athletes due to low and scant exposure of Indians to sports at the elementary school level hampering India's professional engagement in sports.
- **Low spending on sports:** India spends only three paise per day per capita on sports on the other hand China spends ₹6.1 per day per capita.
- **Politicization of Sports governance:** Most sports organisations are governed by the politicians.
- **Other major issues** are absence of competent coaches, inadequate funding and lack of sports academics.

**Indian initiatives:**

- **Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) launched by the Ministry of Sports** to improve India's performance at the Olympics and Paralympics: It provides extra monetary assistance to athletes and training from the best national and international coaches.
- **NITI Aayog report in 2016:** A 20-point plan to improve India's Olympics perfor-

mance.

- **High viewership of Tokyo Olympic Games attributed to the increase in viewership in India:** Tokyo Olympic Games were watched by over 3.05 billion people, ‘a 74% increase in digital viewers from Rio 2016’.

#### Way forward:

- **Implement recommendations of NITI Aayog to improve things in sports:** NITI Aayog recommended government efforts at the family, community to school, regional academies, State and national levels.
- **Separation of sports from politics:** Former players should lead sports organisations.
- **Memorandum of understanding(MoUs) with nations that excel in specific sports to train Indian players overseas.** For example: Help from Australia and the United Kingdom can be taken for developing the talent pool in swimming. Collaborating with African countries such as Kenya for running.
- **India can also assist other countries in developing certain sports like Cricket and Kabaddi.** For Example: India can positively reply to China’s request for Indian assistance in cricket development in China (Chongqing city).
- **Increase the number of athletes training under TOPS for a competitive sports climate.**
- **Harnessing private investment to develop sports infrastructure:** Country’s performance in sporting events are interlinked with private investments in sports atmosphere.
- **Development of corporate sports programmes** for active corporate participation and investments in sports.
- **Focus on Public-private partnership (PPP) model** for development of basic sporting infrastructure at the district level.

#### About Soft power:

- In the late 1980s, American political scientist **Joseph Nye Jr.** defined “**Soft power**” as a “power of attraction through culture, political ideas, and policies rather than coercion” exhibited by that military hard power.
- Now, nations are investing in attaining soft power through international sporting events, which they are trying to achieve by investing more and doing well in elite sports. Even smaller nations increased their interest in international sporting events.
- Soft power in itself is not an end but a means to achieve an end.

### **Utilization of International sporting events as an instrument for attaining Soft power by China:**

- Research conducted by Dongfeng Liu (International Professor of Sport Management for the Shanghai campus of the Sport Business School) showed that China's Olympic achievement has a positive effect on its national soft power.
- Undemocratic countries like China, Russia and North Korea having shoddy human rights records used the Olympics or other world championships for brand building and changing preception.
- China builds "people-to-people" relations with other countries through its superiority in elite sports. For example: China trains athletes from African countries such as Madagascar in swimming, badminton, table tennis, etc.
- China's memorandum of understanding with countries helps Beijing in building better formal relations through creating a positive impact on a wider population.

### **Further readings:**

1. Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS)
2. Concept of Hard Power

**Source:** The Hindu

**Article:** Soft power, the new race every country wants to win (Abhishek Srivastav; Kartike Garg)

### **Prelims( 2017):**

Consider the following statements:

1. The Nuclear Security Summits are periodically held under the aegis of the United Nations.
2. The International Panel on Fissile Materials is an organ of International Atomic Energy Agency.

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

### **Mains( 2017):**

- Q. 'China is using its economic relations and positive trade surplus as tools to develop potential military power status in Asia', In the light of this statement, discuss its impact on India as her neighbor

## CURRENT GEO-POLITICS IN CENTRAL ASIA

**Significance for Prelims:** Hambantota port; East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM); Gilgit-Baltistan region

**Significance for Mains:** Power Politics in Central Asia; Pakistan as stabilising factor in Central Asia and Afghanistan; Limitation of China and Pakistan in Geo-Politics; Internal Security issues in Pakistan

**News:** Now, US-China rivalry enters Central Asia. China is overcoming nuclear disparity with the US with the help of Pakistan.

### Major Geo-political powers and Central Asia:

- **United States of America(U.S.A):** US's counterterrorism efforts involve "secure and stable" Central Asia and Afghanistan.
- **China:** SCO is led by China but does not have an ostensible anti-US tilt. The arc of Central Asia, Afghanistan and Pakistan is crucial to Chinese security interests. But, currently China is reluctant to provide a security umbrella to Central Asia or Afghanistan. Central Asia is part of Chinese ambition of becoming a pre-eminent Asiatic power. China also aims to spread their footprints in the Indian Ocean region; the recent docking of Chinese-built Pakistani frigate PNS Taimur at the Colombo port and China's spy ship Yuan Wang 5 at Hambantota port can be seen in this direction.
- **Russia:** Continuous Ukraine war exhausted Russian resources to spare for security situations across Central Asia. Russia may also face the spillover of the deteriorating security situation of Afghanistan or due to the presence of 8,000 to 10,000 foreign fighters in Afghanistan hailing from the north Caucasus region of Russia, Pakistan and China's Xinjiang province,

### Role of Pakistan in ensuring power parity between China and U.S.A in Central Asia:

- China is coordinating with Pakistan across the arc of Central Asia, Afghanistan and Pakistan and beyond to weaken competition from the US across the Indian Ocean region.
- Pakistan also ensures safety of Chinese staff in its country by cracking down on insurgents in the tribal belt in Pakistan. When seven Chinese staff were abducted from a Chinese massage parlour by a "vice and virtue" group of Jamia Hafsa seminary in July 2007, Pakistan's army initiated operations from Lal Masjid in Islamabad.
- Pakistan helped the Taliban to reach out to the larger world including Central Asia and China resulting in tactical silence in Afghanistan from East Turkistan Islamic



Movement (ETIM) and Central Asian terror groups.

- Proxy games played by Pakistan across the arc and beyond using diplomacy as smokescreen put other states in the region at the cusp of violence regarding border engagement.
- Pakistan played a defining role in the US-Taliban agreement in February 2020.
- Deep state of Pakistan i.e. ISI promoted terror groups like al Qaeda and Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP) for lone-wolf acts of terrorism and extremism.
- China -Pakistan coordination can be seen from the fact of consistent hardening of stance on Line of Actual Control( LAC) with India and holding UN designations of Pakistan-backed terror operatives like Sajid Mir.
- Pakistan as an “all-weather” nuclear friend of China will help China to achieve nuclear parity with the United States.

#### **Limitation of Pakistan’s help to China:**

- **Deteriorating security situation in Pakistan** due to direct attacks by Tehreek e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in tribal areas, including those in Peshawar and the Swat Valley.
- **Disturbance in Gilgit-Baltistan region** due to frequent hostage situations created by local TTP fighters of Gilgit-Baltistan to fulfill their demands.
- **Rise in Baloch separatism:** Recently, Baloch Liberation Army took army personnel hostage for negotiating the release of Baloch cadres.
- **Failure of the Taliban-mediated talks** between the TTP and the Pakistan army.
- **Increased incidents of targeted attacks on Chinese interests** in Pakistan by the “bad” Taliban as well as Baloch groups after Taliban takeover of Afghanistan.
- **Even after engaging deeply with the Taliban** ( Mullah Baradar as a Chinese state guest in July 2021) China’s direct influence in Afghanistan remains limited.

**Conclusion:** Pakistan is a stabilizing factor in the arc of Central Asia, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Even the US has “calibrated” its US response towards “dangerous” Pakistan to challenge Chinese moves involving Pakistan. But, unlike the on-and-off US-Pakistan engagements, China-Pakistan cooperation is deep spanning the entire gamut of security and geopolitical areas.

#### **Further readings:**

1. Countries in Central Asian Region;
2. Xinjiang province
3. Line of Actual Control(LAC)
4. Balochistan region

**Source:** The Indian Express

**Article:** The view from Samarkand(Anju Gupta)

**Prelims( 2017):**

What is the importance of developing Chabahar Port by India?

- (a) India's trade with African countries will enormously increase.
- (b) India's relations with oilproducing Arab countries will be strengthened.
- (c) India will not depend on Pakistan for access to Afghanistan and Central Asia.
- (d) Pakistan will facilitate and protect the installation of a gas pipeline between Iraq and India

**Mains( 2018):**

- Q. A number of outside powers have entrenched themselves in Central Asia, which is a zone of interest to India. Discuss the implications, in this context, of India's joining the Ashgabat Agreement, 2018



## SAMARKAND DECLARATION

**Source:** PM's speech at SCO Summit 2022

**News:** While speaking at the recently concluded Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit 2022 at Samarkand, Uzbekistan Prime Minister Modi said that expected growth of the Indian economy this year is 7.5 percent and will be the highest among the largest economies in the world.

**Nine Member states of SCO:** China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Iran

### Key highlights of SCO Summit 2022:

- Signing of Samarkand declaration
- "Core" of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is Central Asia
- Stabilising Afghanistan
- Focus on South Asia to solve challenges and fulfill common aspirations of the region
- SCO intends to develop a single list of terrorist, separatist, and extremist organisations that are prohibited from operating within the borders of member nations.
- Both India and China expressed concern over Ukraine war
- Prime Minister Modi tells SCO members to give each other full transit rights.
- Xi Jinping 's cautioned SCO states against 'colour revolutions'.
- India takes over the SCO rotating presidency.
- PM Modi reviewed the progress of Chabahar Port with Iran PM.

### PM Modi's remarks at SCO Summit in Samarkand, Uzbekistan:

- Reiterates India's support for greater cooperation and mutual trust among SCO members.
- He also mentions the impact of Ukraine war on global supply chains
- In presence of Pak PM (Shehbaz Sharif) Modi tells SCO members to give each other full transit rights.
- India is becoming competitive manufacturing hub through young and talented workforce
- Economy of India is expected to grow by 7.5 percent this year.
- India 's focus on people-centric development model; Government is supporting innovation in every sector.
- India is becoming a start hub with more than 70,000 Start-ups in India, out of which more than 100 are unicorns.
- Called for establishing a new Special Working Group on Start-ups and Innovation for sharing Indian innovation experience with SCO member countries.

- During the UN International Year of Millets, 2023 called for organizing a 'Millet Food Festival' under the aegis of SCO.
- Aim to increase cooperation on traditional medicine among SCO countries through a new initiative like SCO Working Group on Traditional Medicine.

**Prelims(2022):**

Q. Consider the following countries :

1. Azerbaijan
2. Kyrgyzstan
3. Tajikistan
4. Turkmenistan
5. Uzbekistan

Which of the above have borders with Afghanistan ?

- (a) 1, 2 and 5 only
- (b) 1, 2, 3 and 4 only
- (c) 3, 4 and 5 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

**Mains( 2018):**

Q. "India's relations with Israel have, of late, acquired a depth and diversity, which cannot be rolled back." Discuss.



## **General Studies -3**

(Technology, Economic Development, Biodiversity,  
Security & Disaster Management)





# DOMESTIC INFLATION & DEPRECIATION OF THE RUPEE

**Significance for Prelims:** Concept Purchasing Power Parity

**Significance for Mains:** Factors responsible for the depreciation of the rupee; Impact of depreciation and appreciation of the rupee; Method to stabilise the rupee's exchange rate

**News:** In this article veteran policy maker C Rangarajan gives reasons why containment of domestic inflation is necessary to stop the slide of rupees.

**Determination of value of any currency:** Value of the rupee or any currency is determined through purchasing power parity.

- **Importance of purchasing power parity:** If as long as inflation in India is higher than the inflation in other countries, the value of the rupee will (continue to) depreciate.
- **Internal value determines the external value of a currency:** Difference in the inflation in the two countries governs the rate differential between one currency and another.
- **Increased value of the capital account in the balance of payments:** Traditionally balance of payments(BoP) was dominated by the current account i.e. export and import of goods and services, but now BoP is dominated by the capital account i.e. inflow and outflow of funds. So, the value of a currency can be strong even during a high current account deficit because there is enough external capital flowing into the country.

**Factors responsible for rupee depreciation:** Because of the outflow of funds and the lack of funds coming from outside.

- **Decrease in the supply of foreign currency** because investors are keeping deposits in their own country and this main reason for the depreciation of the rupee and currencies of other countries against the dollar.
- **Funds inflow into India diminished** because to control inflation in the United States, the Fed has raised the interest rate.
- **Higher rate of interest in the United States:** United States is more attractive for investors due to higher interest rates. So, instead of sending funds outside, they are keeping the funds inside and sometimes, withdrawing funds from India and putting them in the United States.
- **Impact of undervalued currency:** Exports became more attractive.

### **When devaluation or the depreciation of the currency is beneficial?**

- In case of a tough balance of payments situation.
- Country needs to export more to reduce the current account deficit.
- But, the steady deterioration of the rupee is not appreciable.

### **Method to stabilise the rupee's exchange rate:**

- **Reduce inflation rate:** India talks of 4% as the appropriate inflation. If we keep moving towards this goal every year the value of the rupee will depreciate. India needs to see that its inflation is at least close to U.S.A inflation and that the margin is not that high.
- **Control inflation by raising the rate of interest:** This step is beneficial as it moderates inflation and at the same time, it does not affect the value of the rupee.

### **Prelims(2021):**

#### **Consider the following statements:**

The effect of devaluation of a currency is that it necessarily

1. improves the competitiveness of the domestic exports in the foreign markets.
2. increases the foreign value of domestic currency
3. improves the trade balance

#### **Which of the above statements is/are correct?**

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

### **Mains Question:**

1. What is the meaning of the term 'tax expenditure'? Taking the housing sector as an example, discuss how it influences the budgetary policies of the government.

**Source:** The Indian Express

**Article:** C Rangarajan explains why it is essential to contain domestic inflation?

## VIKRAM S: INDIA'S FIRST PRIVATE SATELLITE VEHICLE

**Significance for Prelims:** Mission 'Prarambh'; Vikram-S; Polar Satellites Launch Vehicles (PSLV); Small satellite launch vehicles

**Significance for Mains:** Importance of private players in Indian space sectors.

**News:** Mission 'Prarambh' of Hyderabad-based Skyroot Aerospace will carry Indian as well as foreign payloads on India's first privately developed launch vehicle 'Vikram'. It will make its maiden flight on November 15 from the Sriharikota launchpad of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

### Mission Prarambh:

- Under Mission Prarambh Vikram-S will carry three client satellites in a sub-orbital flight.
- **Satellites carried by Vikram-S:** Two Indian and one foreign payload.
- Spacekidz (an aerospace startup based in Chennai) will also fly 'Fun-Sat', a 2.5 kg payload on Vikram-S. 'Fun-Sat' is developed by students from India, the US, Singapore and Indonesia.

### Features of Vikram launch vehicles:

- Skyroot (startup) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with ISRO for launching its rockets.
- Skyroot's launch vehicle is named 'Vikram' in tribute to the founder of the Indian space programme, Vikram Sarabhai.
- Vikram I, II, and III are three types of Vikram launch vehicles.
- Its launch vehicles are specially crafted for the small satellite market.
- Vikram vehicles offer capabilities like multi-orbit insertion and interplanetary missions with its technology architecture.
- Vikram vehicles tend to cover small satellite customers through customised, dedicated and ride-share options.
- Vikram rocket can be launched from any site as it can be assembled and launched within 24 hours.

### Importance of satellite launch vehicles like Vikram:

- **Big leap in India's space exploration sector:** Skyroot claims that with Vikram's successful launch "Launching satellites to space will soon become as easy as booking a cab — Quick, precise and affordable!"
- **This will help to meet the increasing demand for the launch of small satellites:** In the last, eight to ten years demand launch of small satellites increased at a rapid pace with the growth of requirements for space-based data, communication,

surveillance, and commerce.

- Now, the need for satellite data imageries and space technology cuts across sectors, from weather to agriculture to transport to urban development.
- Vikram-S rocket has the lowest cost in the payload segment.
- **Unprecedented mass producibility and affordability of the Vikram series** will help to meet future needs as more than 20000 satellites are estimated to be launched in the coming decade.
- Meet the demands of small satellites when more and more businesses, government agencies, and even universities and laboratories begin to send satellites.
- **Opening the space sector for private players will reduce the burden of ISRO:** ISRO is outrunning its capacity of launching satellites into space due to increasing demand and larger goals of ISRO.
- **Usage of ISRO facilities will provide much-needed revenue to the ISRO:** ISRO is helping private players with facilities and knowledge at a nominal charge.

#### Key facts:

- **Sub-orbital flights** travel slower than orbital velocity meaning these flights are fast enough to reach outer space but not fast enough to stay in orbit around the Earth. It was once undertaken by Jeff Bezos and Richard Branson.

#### Comparison between Vikram rockets, Polar Satellites Launch Vehicles(PSLV) and Small Satellite launch vehicles:

- **Vikram rockets** use solid and cryogenic fuels to carry between 290 kg and 560 kg payloads into sun-synchronous polar orbits. In comparison, India's **Polar Satellites Launch Vehicles( PSLV)** can carry up to 1,750kg to sun-synchronous polar orbit while **Small satellite launch vehicles** can carry up to 300 kg to sun-synchronous orbit.

#### Other Launches:

- Agnikul Cosmos's semi-cryogenic Agnilet engine was test-fired for 15 seconds on the Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO's) facility at Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launching Station (TERLS), Thiruvananthapuram.
- Small Satellite launch vehicles of ISRO are soon to be manufactured and operated by private players.
- ISRO's heaviest launch vehicle Mark III launched 36 OneWeb satellites (India's Bharti is a stakeholder) for private satellite missions

#### Further reading:

1. Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle

2. Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV)
3. Cryogenic Engine.

**UPSC Prelims Question(2018):**

With reference to India's satellite launch vehicles, consider the following statements:

1. PSLVs launch the satellite useful for Earth resources monitoring whereas GSLVs are designed mainly to launch communication satellites.
2. Satellites launched by PSLV appear to remain permanently fixed in the same position in the sky, as viewed from a particular location in Earth.
3. GSLV Mk III is a four-stage launch vehicle with the first and third stages using solid rocket motors, and the second and fourth stages using liquid rocket engines.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

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

**UPSC Mains Question(2016):**

1. Discuss India's achievements in the field of Space Science and Technology. How the application of this technology has helped India in its socioeconomic development?

**Sources:** The Hindu; The Indian Express

**Articles:** India's first private satellite vehicle to launch on Nov 15: All you need to know about Vikram S, and why it is a big deal; India's first private launch vehicle all set for maiden flight; India's first private rocket to be launched between November 12-16



# GREENWASHING

**Significance for Prelims:** Concept of Greenwashing

**Significance for Mains:** Concepts and reasons for Greenwashing; Possible solutions to regulate Greenwashing

**News:** UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned private corporations to desist from 'greenwashing'. He said that there will be zero tolerance for greenwashing at the ongoing climate meeting i.e. COP27 in Egypt.

## Concept of Greenwashing:

- Corporations or even Countries often use unfair practices in climate action by exaggerating the actions they took to fight against climate change. They do this by giving false information, and making unverifiable claims about their products or procedures.
- Greenwashing is a tendency among firms and governments to mark every activity as climate-friendly. Firms and governments make unverifiable, misleading, or dubious claims that their activities led to emissions reduction or avoidance of emissions. These claims boost the image and benefit the entity, but they do nothing to mitigate climate change.

## Examples of Greenwashing: It is prevalent across a whole range of environmental activities

- Developed countries often greenwash their normal business investments in developing countries or their bilateral aid. Most of the time they greenwash by highlighting climate co-benefits of the financial flows with very little justification.
- **Volkswagen scandal:** There is evidence that this German car company is cheating in emissions testing of its supposedly green diesel vehicles.
- Accusations of greenwashing against some multinational corporations shell and BP(oil giants), and Coca-Cola.
- **Impact of Greenwashing:** It pushes the world towards climate disaster. As Greenwashing presents false progress on the climate change front, at the same time rewards entities for irresponsible behaviour.

## Reasons for Greenwashing:

- Practically impossible to monitor and verify all the processes and products that cut emissions due to the innumerable number of products.
- **Lack of regulation and standardisation in environmental spaces:** Due to the absence of processes, methodologies and institutions. The institutions to measure, report, create standards, verify claims and grant certifications are still at the initial stage.

- **Dearth of integrity and robustness of organisations** claiming expertise in climate mitigation areas. But the services of these organisations are still availed by many corporations because it makes them look good.
- **Double counting and greenwashing in Carbon Markets:** Since the conceptualisation of carbon markets has increased manifold. This led to the growth of Informal carbon markets. But carbon credits transactions in informal, bilateral or voluntary carbon markets are often flagged for lack of integrity and double counting.

**Way forward:** Implementations of remedial actions report submitted by an expert group formed by the UN Secretary-General

- **Mandatory no fresh investments in fossil fuels by corporations** pursuing net-zero targets. These corporations must bring an end to all activities leading to deforestation.
- **Corporations must present short-term emission reduction goals** to achieve net zero.
- **No use of offset mechanisms** when corporates start their journey towards net-zero status.
- **Creation of regulatory structures and standards** to check greenwashing.

#### **Further reading:**

1. Carbon Market
2. Kyoto Protocol
3. Paris Agreement
4. Carbon offsets

#### **Prelims Question(2022):**

**Q. Which one of the following best describes the term “greenwashing”?**

- (a) Conveying a false impression that a company’s products are eco-friendly and environmentally sound
- (b) Non-inclusion of ecological/environmental costs in the Annual Financial Statements of a country.
- (c) Ignoring the disastrous ecological consequences while undertaking infrastructure development.
- (d) Making mandatory provision for environmental costs

#### **Mains Question(2021):**

**Q. Describe the major outcomes of the 26th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). What are the commitments made by India at this conference?**

**Source:** The Indian Express

**Article:** Red flags over ‘greenwashing’ at COP27 — what is it?

## SHIFTING MONSOON PATTERNS

**Significance for Prelims:** Onset and Withdrawal of Monsoon; 'triple dip' La Nina

**Significance for Mains:** Monsoon and its Characteristics; Shifting monsoon patterns and its impact.

**News:** India has witnessed a 7% monsoon rainfall surplus this year. Rainfall increased substantially in central and southern India. Rainfall in southern and central India was 25% and 20% over average, respectively.

### About Monsoon:

- The word "monsoon" originated from the Arabic word "mausim," meaning "season,".
- The seasonal reversal in the wind direction during a year is known as a monsoon.

### Causes of Monsoon:

- Difference between annual temperature trends over land and sea.
- Shift in Intertropical Convergence Zone or ITCZ towards East Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, Australia and the southern parts of North America. ITCZ are low-pressure zone where the northeast and southeast trade winds converge.

### Causes of the Indian monsoon:

- Summer in the Indian subcontinent led to the heating of the Thar desert and adjoining areas of the northern and central parts of the Indian subcontinent and this rapid solar heating between April and May develops a low-pressure zone over the subcontinent.
- Moisture-laden winds from India rush in to fill up the void developed due to the creation of a low-pressure zone.
- Further, ITCZ shifts northwards towards the subcontinent causing monsoon rains in the mainland during the last week of May or the first week of June.

### Characteristics of Monsoonal Rainfall

- **Seasonal Nature:** Southwest monsoon rainfall mostly occurs between June and September.
- **Relief or topography plays an important role in monsoon rainfall:** Western Ghat's windward side receives rainfall over 250 cm and due to hill ranges and the Eastern Himalayas, North-Eastern states receive heavy rainfall.
- **Monsoon rainfall depends on the distance from the sea:** With the increase in distance from the seas monsoon rainfall declines. During the southwest monsoon period, Kolkata receives 119 cm Patna 105 cm, Allahabad 76 cm and Delhi 56 cm.
- **One of the unique characteristics of monsoon is "breaks":** The wet spells of

monsoon rains having a duration of a few days are interspersed with rainless intervals known as 'breaks'. These breaks in rainfall mainly formed due to the cyclonic depressions at the head of the Bay of Bengal.

- **Heavy runoff and soil erosion** during the summer rainfall period of monsoon.
- **Agrarian economy of India depends on monsoons** as three-fourths of the total rain in the country is received during the southwest monsoon season.
- **Uneven spatial distribution:** Spatial distribution of monsoon ranges from 12 cm to more than 250 cm.
- Sometimes there are considerable delays with respect to the onset of the monsoon and sometimes the rains end considerably earlier than usual. This flip-flop led to great damage to standing crops and difficulty in sowing winter crops.
- During the June-September period cyclonic systems from the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal fuel the monsoon.

### **Onset of the Monsoon:**

- Monsoon winds drift towards the subcontinent during differential heating of land and sea during the summer months.
- During April and May, large north Indian landmass gets intensely heated due to the vertical shining of the sun over the Tropic of Cancer.
- **Outcome of intense heating over Tropic of Cancer:** Formation of intense low pressure in the northwestern part of the subcontinent.
- Due to the slow heating of water pressure in the Indian Ocean in the south of the landmass is high. Hence, the low-pressure cell attracts the southeast trade winds across the Equator.
- The above conditions led to a northward shift in the position of the Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ). Hence, the southwest monsoon is the continuation of the southeast trades deflected towards the Indian subcontinent after crossing the Equator.

### **Monsoon withdrawal: Cessation of rainfall activity over northwest India for five straight days**

- Monsoon withdrawal is the establishment of anti-cyclone in the lower troposphere and reduction in moisture content.
- June 1 is the official IMD monsoon onset date in Kerala. But, mostly Monsoon enters mainland India between the last week of May and the first week of June. IMD counts the rainfall between June 1 and September 30 as monsoon rainfall.
- But, the Monsoon system continues to pour rain over India even after September 30. Monsoon-related rain continues till the first fortnight of October and it only retreats from India by late October.
- In November, this southwest monsoon is replaced by the retreating, or northeast monsoon.



- Northeast monsoon or retreating monsoon is a key source of rainfall in several parts of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and north interior Karnataka.
- **Timeline of monsoon withdrawal:** Rajasthan is the last state where the monsoon reaches, from there it starts its withdrawal. Around September 15, cyclonic systems are replaced by an 'anti-cyclone' circulation. Due to 'anti-cyclone' circulation dry, windless conditions start to prevail over western and northern India.

### **Monsoon this year:**

- By around surplus of 7% Monsoon rainfall in India with extreme inequity.
- Sharp surge in rainfall in Central and southern India: Rains were surplus in Central India and southern India by 20% and 25% respectively.
- Several instances of flooding in Kerala, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh were seen this year. On the other hand, large rainfall deficits were seen in parts of U. P., Bihar, and Odisha.
- Shortfall in the east and northeast India is 17% while northwest India reported a shortfall of 2%.

### **Change in monsoon patterns:**

- Barring a slight dip in a monsoon last year monsoon in India has returned to surpluses after 2019. In 2021, rainfall over the country as a whole, was 1% less than normal even though September rainfall was 35% above usual. India posts another year of surplus rain mostly due to vigorous September.
- Data suggest that three years of above-normal rain in a block of four years is unprecedented in IMD's record-keeping history.

### **Reasons for excessive rains in southern and central India: 'triple dip' La Nina**

- La Nina is the opposite of El Nino. Surplus rainfall in India is associated with La Ninas while reduced rains over India are linked with El Ninos.
- One of the characteristics of La Nina is cooler-than-normal sea surface temperatures in the central Pacific.
- 'triple dip' La Nina is an extended spell of the La Nina. The phenomenon of 'triple dip' La Nina lasts across three winter seasons in the northern hemisphere.
- Due to the 'triple dip' La Nina India is seeing surplus rain in September this year instead of the retreat of the monsoon.



**Impact:**

- **Negative impact on sowing of the kharif, or summer crop:** Paddy planting has sown area 5.51% lower than last year.
- **Elevated inflation:** The centre is expecting a minimum of a six-million-tonne shortfall in rice production.

**Further readings:**

1. El Nino and La Nina
2. Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ)
3. Jet Streams
4. El-Nino and the Indian Monsoon

**2011 Prelims Question:**

**Q. La Nina is suspected to have caused recent floods in Australia. How is La Nina different from El Nino?**

1. La Nina is characterized by unusually cold ocean temperature in equatorial Indian Ocean whereas El Nino is characterized by unusually warm ocean temperatures in the equatorial Pacific Ocean.
2. El Nino has adverse effect on south-west monsoon of India, but La Nina has no effect on monsoon climate.

**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

**UPSC Mains Questions.**

**Q.** What characteristics can be assigned to monsoon climate that succeeds in feeding more than 50 percent of the won population residing in Monsoon Asia? (2017)

**Source:** The Hindu; The Times Of India; INDIA : PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

**Article:** Explained | Shifting monsoon patterns; Learning with the Times: What causes the monsoon?

## BATTERY WASTE MANAGEMENT RULES, 2022

**Significance for Prelims:** Battery Waste Management Rules, 2022, Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS)

**Significance for Mains:** Impact of Battery Waste Management Rules , 2022; Issues associated with the new rules; and way forward

**News:** Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change replaced the Batteries (Management and Handling) Rules, 2001 with Battery Waste Management Rules, 2022.

### Key features of the Rules are:

- Batteries covered under the rules are Electric Vehicle batteries, portable batteries, automotive batteries and industrial batteries.
- These rules defined the types of waste batteries. **Waste Battery includes** (a) used/ end-of-life battery and their hazardous/non-hazardous components (b) battery diverted during the manufacturing process and (c) expired or discarded battery.
- **Provision of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR):** Producers (including importers) of batteries are made responsible for the collection, recycling/refurbishment of waste batteries and the use of recovered materials from wastes into new batteries.
- **Mandates of EPR:** All waste batteries be collected and sent for recycling/refurbishment. EPR requires that new battery manufacturers should employ at least some minimum amount of domestically recycled resources (eg. lithium, nickel, and cobalt).
- Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) prohibits battery disposal in landfills and incineration.
- **Centralization of Extended Producer Responsibility for fulfilling the obligations of producers:** Centralized online portal and mechanism should be set up for the exchange of EPR certificates between producers and recyclers/refurbishers.
- **Specific EPR targets for each type of battery:** portable, automotive, electric, and industrial and kind of battery (e.g. Lithium-ion, Lead-acid).
- **Provision of Environmental compensation fund based on the Polluter Pays Principle.** If entities failed to meet extended Producer Responsibility targets they have to pay environmental compensation.
- **Flexibility in managing EPR certificates:** EPR targets are exchangeable and tradable.
- **Different targets for different types of batteries:** Targets under Biological Waste Management Rules are granular in nature and are different for different types of collected batteries (lead-acid, lithium-ion, nickel-cadmium or zinc-based batteries).
- **Deterrence in case of non-compliance:** Through environment compensation charges and making names of defaulting entities public on the CPCB website.
- **Limits and labelling requirements** for batteries indicating quantity and nature of the usage of heavy metals (cadmium, mercury and lead)

- Batteries should have a picture of a crossed-out bin to indicate that it must be handed out to a registered battery collector and that batteries cannot be binned.
- **Measurable and outcome-based nature of new battery waste rules:** As it defines mandatory targets for collection and recycling within a compliance time-frame. An electric two-wheeler manufacturer has to meet a mandatory collection target of 70 percent of batteries placed in the market in 2022-23 and has a seven-year compliance time frame starting 2026-27.

### Impact of the rules:

- New rules encourage the setting up of **new industries and entrepreneurship** for recycling/refurbishment and collection of waste batteries. **For Example** Lohum Cleantech
- **Fresh investment in new technologies** for the recycling and refurbishment industry as rules
- **New business opportunities** arise due to the mandate of recovering a minimum percentage of materials from waste batteries.
- **Conservation of natural resources:** As the use of certain amount of recycled materials in manufacturing new batteries will reduce the dependency on new raw materials.
- **Effective implementation and compliance of rules** through online registration & reporting, auditing, and committee for monitoring the implementation of rules for removal of several difficulties.
- **Limits and labelling requirements of traditional batteries** (based on lead-acid and nickel-cadmium chemistries) can help the recycling community in planning battery waste management and put limitations on producers with respect to heavy metal usage.

### Issues with the rule:

- Lack of transparency in the auditing process undertaken for producers, recyclers and refurbishers.
- **Absence of sustainability standards**(i.e. economic, environmental, and social) in these rules.
- **Lithium-ion batteries are not within the ambit of limits and labelling requirements** so the recycler needs to deploy additional resources to investigate the materials present in the spent battery feedstock.
- **Absence of information regarding carbon footprint** (covering the entire life of the battery as well as the percentage of recycled battery materials such as cobalt, lithium and nickel) on battery labels.
- **High Carbon footprint of Lithium-ion batteries:** As materials for sourced from various parts of the world (South America and Australia for lithium, Congo for cobalt and Indonesia for a nickel).
- **High Cost of lithium-ion batteries:** But demand for electric vehicles is increasing

day by day amid rising cost of raw materials leading to supply issues.

#### Way forward:

- **Carbon footprint should be the parameter for producer responsibility as it would** trigger research and development activities upstream with lower-footprint materials.
- **Tracking regulation to ensure compliance:** Sourcing information about Lithium-ion batteries can ensure identification and avoidance of a supply chain with human rights abuse history and also ensure proper compliance from the battery manufacturer's side.
- **Development of new lithium-ion mines** to meet new demands arising from the rise of electric vehicles plying on the roads.
- **Manufacturers should improve Battery design** keeping in mind an efficient and effective recycling process.
- **Proper implementation of the rules** to promote a circular economy and meet the country's climate mitigation target.

#### About Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS):

- Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS) are rules that producers, traders, manufacturers, retailers or service providers may be asked to follow so that the things they make, grow or don't hurt people and the environment.
- Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS) are special rules that guarantee that the products you buy don't hurt the environment and the people that make them.

#### Voluntary Sustainability Standards:

1. focus on economic sectors like forestry, farming, mining or fishing
2. concentrate on environmental factors like protecting water sources and biodiversity, or reducing greenhouse gas emissions
3. support social protections and workers' rights
4. home in on specific parts of the production process
5. support groups like small-scale farmers or producers in developing countries
6. cover a full range of environmental impacts throughout a product's lifecycle
7. identify and promote best practice
8. support continuous improvement

**Further readings:**

1. Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016
2. Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016
3. E-Waste (Management) Rules, 2016
4. Working Mechanism of Li-ion battery

**Sources:** PIB; Down to Earth; PRS

**Article:** Government notifies Battery Waste Management Rules, 2022; New Battery Waste Management Rules make producers accountable for recycling; Monthly Policy Review(PRS) August 2022.

**Prelims( 2019):**

- Q. In India, 'extended producer responsibility' was introduced as an important feature in which of the following?
- (a) The Bio -medical Waste (Management and Handling) Rules, 1998
  - (b) The Recycled Plastic (Manufacturing and Usage) Rules, 1999
  - (c) The e -Waste (Management and Handling) Rules, 2011
  - (d) The Food Safety and Standard Regulations, 2011

**Mains(2012):**

In the context of the growing demands for the ban of Endosulfan in the country, critically examine the issues involved. What, in your view, should be done in the matter?



## SCIENCE BEHIND HEAVY ROCKETS

**Source:** The Indian Express

**News:** LVM3 M2/OneWeb India-1 mission of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) carried almost 6 tonnes payload into lower-earth orbit, highest of any ISRO mission.

### Features of some rockets:

- **LMV3 rocket:** It has a lift-off mass of 640 tonnes. In lower earth orbits or LEO (200 km from the Earth's surface ) it can carry merely 8 tonnes. Further in geostationary transfer orbits or GTO ( about 35,000 km from Earth) it can carry only about 4 tonnes. Additional thrust during liftoff (a liquid stage, and a cryogenic stage) is provided by solid fuels in the boosters in LVM3 rockets.
- **Ariane 5 rockets:** These rockets are frequently used by ISRO for its heavy payloads. Ariane 5 rockets can carry 20-tonne payloads to lower earth orbits and 10 tonnes to GTO. These rockets have a lift-off mass of 780 tonnes.
- **Falcon Heavy rockets from SpaceX:** It is the most powerful modern launch vehicle, weighing over 1,400 tonnes at launch time and can carry payloads of about 60 tonnes.

### Operational launch vehicles of India:

**Multiple versions of Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle or PSLV:** It is the most commonly used launch vehicle. Since 1993, it has carried 53 successful missions and failed twice.

**Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle or GSLV Mk-II:** ISRO carried 14 missions through GSLV-MkII rocket of which four have ended in failures.

**Launch Vehicle Mark-3 or LVM3:** Success rate of LVM3 in its five missions(including the Chandrayaan 2 mission) is 100 percent .

ISRO is developing a reusable launch vehicle (RLV) that can be brought back and refurbished for multiple use. It can prevent space pollution as RLV would not end up in space as waste.

### Need for Heavier rockets:

- Indigenously developed heavier rockets can carry heavier payloads, or venture much deeper into space.
- Heavier rockets like the LVM3 rocket can accommodate the change in engines and fuel required for deeper space missions.
- Reduce the inefficiency of space missions: Space journey consists of tremendous gravitational resistance.
- To overcome "tyranny of the rocket equation".

**Relevance of LVM3 M2/OneWeb mission:**

- Success of the flight validated the LVM3 rocket, ISRO's most important missions like the Gaganyaan.
- Launch of LVM3 M2/OneWeb mission affirmed ISRO's claim as a serious player in the heavy satellite launch market.
- LVM3 rocket (earlier GSLV Mk-III ) will end the dependence of ISRO on Ariane rockets of Europe for launching heavy satellites.
- India can confidently stride into its ambitious space programmes manned missions, Moon landings and deep space explorations

**Way forward for future missions:**

Manufacturing rockets that can make multiple trips and its components of larger structures can be assembled in space like the International Space Station.

**Article:** The heaviness of rockets, why it matters in space flight

**Prelims( 2016):**

**Q.** With reference to 'Astrosat', the astronomical observatory launched by India, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. Other than USA and Russia, India is the only country to have launched a similar observatory into space.
2. Astrosat is a 2000 kg satellite placed in an orbit at 1650 km above the surface of the Earth.

**Select the correct answer using the code given below.**

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

**Mains(2017):**

**Q.** India has achieved remarkable successes in unmanned space missions including the Chandrayaan and Mars Orbiter Mission, but has not ventured into manned space missions, both in terms of technology and logistics? Explain critically

## ISRO'S HEAVIEST ROCKET LAUNCHES 36 SATELLITES.

**Source:** The Hindu

**News:** Recently, ISRO's heaviest rocket Launch Vehicle Mark 3 (LVM3 or GSLV Mark 3) placed 36 satellites in low earth orbit.

### About OneWeb:

- U.K. government and India's Bharti Enterprises launched OneWeb as a joint venture.
- OneWeb partnered with NSIL and ISRO to fulfill its commitment to provide connectivity across the length and breadth of India by 2023 from Ladakh to Kanyakumari and Gujarat to Arunachal Pradesh.
- Launch Vehicle Mark 3 (LVM3 or GSLV Mark 3) successfully orbited 36 satellites of the U.K.-based OneWeb in its 14th launch, bringing the constellation to 462 satellites.
- Currently, OneWeb's connectivity solutions live in regions north of 50-degrees latitude. After this launch, OneWeb is just four satellites away to provide global satellite coverage in 2023.
- **Benefits associated with OneWeb:** Secured satellite solutions to enterprises, towns, villages, municipalities and schools, including the hardest-to-reach areas across the country.

### Features of LVM3-M2 mission:

- LVM3-M2 is the dedicated commercial satellite mission.
- It is part of NewSpace India Limited (NSIL), a Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE) under the Department of Space, Government of India.
- LVM3-M2 mission is part of the commercial arrangement between NSIL and m/s Network Access Associates Limited (m/s OneWeb Ltd).
- ISRO's statement said that in a historic mission all the satellites got separated successfully in a slow process and the mission happened exactly as planned in the shortest possible time. ISRO is planning to place another 36 satellites in the next M3 mission.
- Purpose of LVM3 was to launch geo-stationary satellites with payload capacity of 4T and launching 6T payloads for LEO.
- In the LVM3 mission C25 stage was handled through in-house built inertial navigation systems.

### Impact of the mission: New chapter for India in the space sector.

- LVM3 mission is a great opportunity for ISRO to meet the requirements of launch vehicles.

- **High foreign direct investment in the country:** As LVM3 mission launch opens up the space sector in India for billion dollars foreign investment.
- Less execution time of mission illustrated the opportunities for satellite connectivity in India.
- Mission utilizes LEO connectivity potential to deliver broadband services across India.
- LVM3 mission exemplifies **Atmanirbharta** and enhances India's **competitive edge** in the global commercial launch service market.

### Article:

ISRO's heaviest rocket successfully places 36 satellites in orbit

### Prelims( 2018):

Q. With reference to the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS), consider the following statements:

1. IRNSS has three satellites in geostationary and four satellites in geosynchronous orbits.
2. IRNSS covers entire India and about 5500 sq. km beyond its borders.
3. India will have its own satellite navigation system with full global coverage by the middle of 2019.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) None

### Mains( 2016):

Q. Discuss India's achievements in the field of Space Science and Technology. How the application of this technology has helped India in its socio-economic development?

## FIRST PRIVATE BIO-ENERGY PLANT IN PUNJAB

**Source:** The Hindu

**News:** Punjab is witnessing the beginnings of a renewable energy revolution rooted in agriculture as the first private bio-energy plant commenced its commercial operation. Plant aims to convert agricultural waste into wealth through production of Compressed BioGas (CBG) from paddy straw.

### **Common practice among Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh farmers:**

- Farmers prepare fields for the next crop by burning paddy stubble and biomass in the field.
- The resultant clouds of smoke after paddy burning engulf the entire National Capital Territory of Delhi and neighboring States between October to December.
- **Outcome:** Negative environmental effects on human and livestock health.
- Current situation is that crop residue burning is spreading to the rest of the country and even among rabi crops.

### **Measures taken to tackle stubble burning:**

- **Commission for Air Quality Management in the National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas (CAQM) framework:** CAQM had developed an action plan for the effective prevention and control of stubble burning.
- **In-situ management:** In this heavily subsidized machinery is used to incorporate paddy straw and stubble in the soil.
- The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare started the Crop residue management (CRM) Scheme.
- **Ex-situ CRM efforts:** (a) Utilization of paddy straw for biomass power projects and co-firing in thermal power plants (b) feedstock for 2G ethanol plants (c) feed stock in CBG plants (d) fuel in industrial boilers (e) waste-to-energy (WTE) plants (f) in packaging materials, etc.
- **Additional measures:** Monitor and enforce stubble burning ban and awareness generation campaigns.

### **New Study and its finding:**

- NITI Aayog and FAO India explored methods to convert paddy straw and stubble into energy.
- Study aims to complement the in-situ programme through possible ex-situ uses of rice straw.
- FAO's report calls for development of crop residue supply chain in Punjab for collection, storage and final use of rice straw for production of renewable energy and other services.
- **Result of the study:** Investment of ₹2,201 crore (\$309 million) needed to collect,



transport and store it within a 20-day period to mobilise 30% of the rice straw produced in Punjab. This would not only reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by about 9.7 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent and around 66,000 tonnes of PM<sub>2.5</sub>, but also improve the earning potential of farmers.

### **Outcome of techno-economic assessment of energy technologies:**

- Cost-effective nature of rice straw for producing CBG and pellets. Pellets can be used as a substitute of coal in thermal power plants. CBG can be used as a transport fuel.
- Rice straw production in Punjab i.e. 30% of total straw production will help in achieving the 5% CBG production target set by the Government of India scheme, "Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation (SATAT)".
- New energy technologies can also increase local entrepreneurship, increase farmers' income and reduce open burning of rice straw.

### **Other benefits associated with new energy technologies:**

- **Replenish soil with organic matter:** As slurry or fermented organic manure from the plant (CBG) will be used as compost.
- Reduce dependence on chemical fertilizers.
- Creation of a large value chain from paddy harvest, collection, baling, transport and handling of biomass due to installation of CBG plant will provide additional employment opportunities to rural youth.
- Initiative can change the face of the rural economy across the country due to value addition to the economy, farmers' income and sustainability through environmental benefits, renewable energy.

**Way forward:** Focus on 'wealth from waste' approach and circular economy.

**Article:** A renewable energy revolution, rooted in agriculture (Ramesh Chand, Konda Reddy Chavva)

### **Prelims(2019):**

In the context of which one of the following are the terms 'pyrolysis and plasma gasification' mentioned?

- (a) Extraction of rare earth elements
- (b) Natural gas extraction technologies
- (c) Hydrogen fuel-based automobiles
- (d) Waste-to-energy technologies

### **Mains( 2016):**

- Q. Give an account of the current status and the targets to be achieved pertaining to renewable energy sources in the country. Discuss in brief the importance of National Programme on Light Emitting Diodes (LEDs).

# GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX

**Significance for Prelims:** Global Hunger Index 2022

**Significance for Mains:** Global Hunger Index and associated issues and how to improve the index.

**News:** India's ranking in the recently released Global Hunger Index 2022 was 107 out of 121 countries.

## About Global Hunger Index(GHI):

- **GHI report is** jointly published by Concern Worldwide and Welt Hunger Hilfe.
- Since 2000, the Global Hunger Index or GHI, has been released almost every year.
- It measures and tracks hunger at global, regional, and national levels. Global Hunger Index compares hunger levels between countries and regions.
- **Intention of GHI:** Increase awareness and understanding of the struggle against hunger.
- **Reason for mapping hunger:** So, that world achieves the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal of “Zero Hunger by 2030”.
- Global Hunger Index 2022 drew attention towards those areas of the world where hunger levels are highest and where additional efforts are required to eliminate hunger.

**Calculation of Global Hunger Index(GHI):** GHI score is based on four indicators.

- **Undernourishment:** It is estimated by the share of the population with insufficient caloric intake.
- **Child stunting reflecting chronic undernutrition:** Its calculation is done by the share of children under age five who have low height for their age.
- **Child mortality:** It is calculated by the share of children who die before the age of five, partly due to inadequate nutrition and unhealthy environments.
- **Child wasting reflecting acute undernutrition:** Calculated by the share of children under age five who have low weight for their height.
- **Scale of GHI score:** It is based on a 100-point scale (a) zero is the best score (no hunger) (b) 100 is the worst.

**Index about India:** GHI ranking of India has consistently worsened in the last 10 years.

- India is in the ‘serious’ category with a GHI score of 29.1.
- GHI rankings of neighbouring Countries: GHI rankings of Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan are 64, 81, 84 and 99 respectively.
- Only Country in South Asia that performs worse than India on the index is Afghanistan (109).

### Issues associated with Global Hunger Indices:

- **Index treated hunger, food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture as synonymous:** Since the UN's Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 has clubbed these terms together. Hence, it is futile to measure the sustainability of agriculture through nutrition data.
- **Data did not appreciate the obvious gain made by India:** Hunger is not an Indian problem due to subsidised food security schemes. National Sample Survey's consumption surveys reported that almost every household, rural and urban, are getting two square meals a day.
- **Fault in methodology:** GHI (Global Hunger Index) is a self-proclaimed peer-reviewed methodology.
- Global Hunger Index is for the entire population but what's true of children, or women need not be true of the general population.
- **Misnomers in terminology:** Since in GHI, One-sixth of the weightage is attached to child stunting, 1/6th to child wasting, 1/3rd to child mortality and 1/3rd to under-nourishment so it is not appropriate to call it a hunger index.
- **Small Size of the survey:** FAO conducted its own Food Insecurity Experience Scale Survey Module to get data on undernourishment or hunger. This poll was administered to a sample size of 3,000, but for a country like India, this sample size was insufficient.
- **Serious error in translation of the questionnaires:** Answering Hindi questions are not the same as answering English question. For Example The Hindi translation of one Question "Your household ran out of food because of a lack of money or other resources?" is "apkegharmeinbhojana ki kami hogayikyonkigharmeipaise yaanyasamashadano ki kami thi". Here "Running out" means there is no food while "Kami" means less food.
- Index does not make a proper distinction between under-nourishment and malnutrition. But, Food and Agriculture Organization( FAO ) equates food insecurity with malnutrition and with hunger.

### Way forward:

- **Global discourse on food security should shift from hunger to malnutrition.**
- **Distinct policy for different segments:** Global Hunger Index should separate indicators for the general population from those for children.
- **Any global indicators connected with children, should take numbers from NFHS-5 (National Family Health Survey). For Example, a Multi-dimensional poverty report by UNDP has used NFHS-5 data to document declines in poverty.**
- **Inter-generational nature of malnutrition** can be tackled by designing comprehensive programmes for adolescent girls.
- Greater involvement of local government and community groups in the design and delivery of tailored nutrition interventions and implementation of public programmes like Integrated Child Development Services( ICDS) and Midday Meal

Scheme (MDM) schemes.

- **Incentivising behavioural change through cash transfers(JAM trinity i.e. Jan Dhan bank accounts, Aadhaar, Mobile):** Cash transfers can encourage people living in acute distress regions with very depressed household purchasing power to seek greater institutional support.

#### **Key facts about India's national indicator framework for SDGs:**

- It is developed by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.
- Following are the SDG indicators: (a) under-weight (b) stunted and wasted under-five children (c) anaemic pregnant women and children (d) women with low Body Mass Index(BMI ) and marginalised populations without access to subsidised food grains.

**National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) Report about children below the age of five years:** 35.5% were stunted, 19.3% showed wasting, and 32.1% were under-weight.

#### **Government Initiatives for Holistic Nutrition:**

- Prime Minister's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nutrition (POSHAN) 2.0 scheme also includes the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme.
- Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman(PM POSHAN) previously known as the Mid-Day Meal scheme (National Programme of Mid-Day Meal in Schools)
- Public Distribution System(PDS).

#### **Further readings:**

1. Sustainable Development Goals reports

**Source:** The Hindu; The Indian Express

**Article:** Trivialising Hunger(Bibek Debroy); What is the Global Hunger Index and how is it calculated?

#### **Prelims(2018):**

"Rule of Law Index" is released by which of the following?

- (a) Amnesty International
- (b) International Court of Justice
- (c) The Office of UN Commissioner for Human Rights
- (d) World Justice Report

#### **Mains (2017):**

Q. Hunger and Poverty are the biggest challenges for good governance in India still today. Evaluate how far successive governments have progressed in dealing with these humongous problems. Suggest measures for improvement.



## CHARTING THE ECONOMIC JOURNEY AHEAD

**Significance for Prelims:** Not Much

**Significance for Mains:** Future economic growth strategy.

**News:** India will complete 100 years of its independence by 2047. But, the real question remains will India achieve the status of a developed economy keeping in mind the global situation as India cannot be decoupled from the rest of the world.

### **Pre-Independence economic growth of India**

- Under British rule, India's economy was in a dismal state. India's economic progress was stalled in the first half of the 20th century. During the last five decades of the British Raj India's annual growth rate was just 0.89%. The per capita income increased by 0.06% while the population grew by 0.83%.

### **Nature of the economic journey of India after Independence:**

- After Independence, growth was the most urgent concern for policymakers.
- During the early Independence period, there was a focus on four elements of development i.e. raising savings and investment rate; dominant state intervention; import substitution, and domestic capital goods manufacturing.
- **Decade of the 1950s and 1960s:** At that time, Indian policymakers were handicapped due to the unavailability of a clear model for accelerating growth in developing countries. Extensive State intervention in the economy seems appropriate at that time.
- **End of the 1970s:** Indian model of state intervention did not deliver desired results and modification was needed in economic strategy. But India's policymakers refused to recognise the failure of the Indian economic strategy and at the same time, China made a big change in the economic sphere.
- **Crisis of 1990-91:** It compelled the policymakers to break with the past. Policymakers turn towards an 'idea whose time had come. The government took three steps to break with the past. First, it focuses on dismantling the complex regime of licences and permits; second, it redefines the role of the state; and third, it gave up the inward-looking trade policy.

### **Impact of Indian economic strategy since Independence to 1991-92:**

- **Till the end of the 1970s,** India's average growth remained modest, with the average growth rate being just 3.6%. The population growth rate was 2.2%, while the per capita income growth rate was 1.4%.
- **Improvements in various health and social parameters,** such as the literacy rate and life expectancy.
- **Green Revolution:** Initially, India had to rely heavily on imports of foodgrains on a



concessional basis, but it got a breakthrough in agriculture after the green revolution.

- **Broadening industrial base:** India started production of a wide variety of goods including steel and machinery. Compared to the pre-Independence period, India's post-Independence economic performance was reassuring but it is not as impressive as several developing countries even in Asia.
- **Growth was also less than India's expectations.** Actual growth was less than what was projected even the following plan after plan. In the 1980s, the Indian economy did grow at 5.6% but it was accompanied by a sharp deterioration in fiscal and current account deficits.

### **Indian economy after 1992-93:**

- **Indian economy faced its worst crisis in 1991-92:** But, between 1992-93 and 2000-01, the annual growth of GDP at factor cost was 6.20%.
- GDP at factor cost grew annually by 7.4% between 2001-02 and 2012-13.
- **The potential growth rate of India was shown between 2005-06 and 2010-11:** In this period GDP grew by 8.8%, and India experienced the highest growth rate over a sustained period of five to six years despite the global crisis in the 2008-09 year.
- Between 2013-14 and 2019-20, the growth rate was 6.7%.

### **Way forward: Raise the growth rate and Strengthen social safety nets**

- **Raise the growth rate:** If India achieves a continuous growth rate of 7% for the next two decades or more the level of the economy will substantially change and hence India may touch the status of a developed economy. For this India needs to raise the Gross Fixed Capital Formation(GFCF) rate from the current level of 28% of GDP to 33% of GDP and simultaneously India should have an incremental capital-output ratio of 4 to achieve capital efficiency. With this India can comfortably achieve a 7% growth rate.
- **Creation and sustenance of proper investment climate:** For this, along with the rise in public investment, both corporate and non-corporate private investment should rise.
- Stable financial and fiscal system with a focus on price stability.
- **Strengthen social safety nets** through a multidimensional development strategy through a strong export sector and organised manufacturing sector.
- As the output and income of India increase India must also focus on growth with equity for sustainable economic growth.
- **India should also focus on an open economy with some limitations:** Champions of globalisation are making a retreat due to obvious reasons like the Russia-Ukraine war.

**Key happenings between 2005-06 and 2010-11:** India's best performance at the economic front

- **Highest Growth rate:** Annual GDP growth rate was 8.8% sustained for five to six years.
- Peak investment rate i.e. 39.1% 2007-08 and a corresponding increase in the savings rate.
- Low current account deficit at an average of 1.9%.
- Growth suffered a setback after 2011-12. The growth rate fell to 4.5% in 2012-13. The growth rate witnessed various ups and downs. Finally, in 2019-20, the growth rate touched a 3.7% level.

**Further readings:**

1. Five Year Plans
2. Gross Fixed Capital Formation(GFCF)
3. GDP at factor cost
4. Current Account Deficit(CAD)

**Prelims(2019):**

Q. With reference to India's Five -Year Plans, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. From the Second Five -Year Plan, there was a determined thrust towards substitution of basic and capital good industries.
2. The Fourth Five -Year Plan adopted the objective of correcting the earlier trend of increased concentration of wealth and economic power.
3. In the Fifth Five -Year Plan, for the first time, the financial sector was included as an integral part of the Plan.

**Select the correct answer using the code given below.**

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

**Mains (2020):**

1. Explain the meaning of investment in an economy in terms of capital formation. Discuss the factors to be considered while designing a concession agreement between a public entity and a private entity.

**Source:** The Hindu

**Article:** Charting the economic journey ahead( C. Rangarajan)

## BAN ON PFI & WORKING OF UAPA TRIBUNAL

**Significance for Prelims:** Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) tribunal

**Significance for Mains:** Factors that led to the emergence of Popular Front of India (PFI); Procedure for declaring “unlawful association”; Impact on association after it declared as unlawful

**News:** Recently the central government declared the Popular Front of India (PFI) as an “unlawful association” under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA).

### About Popular Front of India (PFI):

- PFI was formed after the Centre banned SIMI through the merger of the National Democratic Front in Kerala, Karnataka Forum for Dignity, and ManithaNeethiPasarai in Tamil Nadu in 2007.
- Unlike marginal or secretive political groups, PFI works overground.
- Its political wing i.e. Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI) is active in electoral politics.
- PFI claims to represent the disenchanted and marginalised Muslims.

### Factors that led to the emergence of the Popular Front of India (PFI):

- Rise of Hindutva agendas in Indian politics before or after the demolition of Babri Masjid in 1992.
- Influence of political Islam after the Iranian revolution in the late 1970s.
- Ban on Students’ Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) proponent of political Islam gave birth to PFI.

**Ban on PFI:** Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) notification imposed a ban on the PFI and its associate organisations (like Rehab India Foundation (RIF) and Campus Front of India) under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), 1967 for Five years.

### Reasons were given by notification for the ban:

- Radicalizing particular sections of society undermines the concept of democracy.
- PFI and its associates operate as a socio-economic, educational and political organization in public but they show sheer disrespect towards the constitutional authority of the country
- For indulging in unlawful activities, that are detrimental to the integrity, sovereignty and security of the nation.
- PFI supports militancy in the country that disturbs public peace and the communal harmony of the nation.

## **About Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), 1967: Law against terrorism and terrorist activities**

- The UAPA allows the government to declare an organisation an “unlawful association” or a “terrorist organisation”, or a “ban” on the organisation.
- Under Section 3 of the UAPA Act, the government through gazette notification can declare an association as “unlawful”.
- **Definition of “unlawful association”:** Section 2(1)(p) of the UAPA defines an “unlawful association” as an association which has for its object any unlawful activity or offence defined under Sections 153A or 153B of the Indian Penal Code.
- **Unlawful activity or offence described under Sections 153A or 153B of the Indian Penal Code** is encouraging hostility between various groups and making imputations that are harmful to national integration
- An unlawful association is also one that “encourages or aids persons to undertake any unlawful activity, or of which the members undertake such activity”.

### **The process to declare an association unlawful:**

- Under Section 4 of the UAPA, it is mandatory for the government to send the notification to the Unlawful Activities Prevention Tribunal within 30 days of issuing the ratified ban gazette notification.
- Ministry has to give details to the Tribunal about the cases registered by National Investigation Agency, Enforcement Directorate, and state police forces against PFI and its cadres across the country.
- The Tribunal headed by a retired or sitting judge of a High Court then issued a show-cause notice to the PFI or unlawful association to reply in writing about why it should not be banned.
- After both sides’ arguments, the Tribunal conducts an inquiry for declaring an “unlawful association” that needs to be submitted within six months.
- If the tribunal approves the ban it becomes applicable for five years.

### **Impact on association after it is declared as unlawful**

- The criminalisation of its membership and the forfeiture of the properties of the organisation.
- Under Section 7 of the UAPA, the government can prohibit the use of funds for an unlawful association.
- Under Section 8, the government can notify and seize all the places used by unlawful association.
- Under the law, aggrieved persons can make an application to the Court of the District Judge within the local limits within 15 days of the date of such order.
- The person who continues to be a member of unlawful associations or takes part in meetings or contributes in any way to assist the operations of such association

is liable for a fine and punishment with imprisonment for two terms which may extend to two years.

### **About UAPA tribunal:**

- Under UAPA, the government can constitute a tribunal under a High Court judge for its bans to have long-term legal sanctity.
- Section 3 and Section 4 of the UAPA government order of declaring an organisation as an “unlawful association” would come into effect after the confirmation by the tribunal.
- Ban notification can also come into effect immediately in exceptional circumstances if the government gave the reasons for it in recording and writing and the tribunal has the power to endorse or reject it.

### **Constitution of the tribunal**

- A High Court judge is a single member of the tribunal.
- In case of a vacancy (other than a temporary absence) in the Tribunal, the Centre appoints another judge.
- It's the responsibility of the centre to provide the necessary tribunal staff to discharge its functions.
- The Consolidated Fund of India bears all expenses incurred by a tribunal.

### **Powers of UAPA tribunal:**

- Tribunal can regulate its own proceedings, it has powers to decide the place where it can hold its sittings. So, tribunals can hold hearings in different states.
- The tribunal is vested with the same powers as a civil court under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908.
- Every proceeding before the Tribunal is regarded as a judicial proceeding.

### **Further reading:**

1. National Green Tribunal (NGT)

### **UPSC Prelims Questions:**

**Q. With reference to the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) tribunal, consider the following statements:**

1. UAPA tribunal consists of only one person, who has to be a High Court judge.
2. It has the same powers as vested in a civil court under the Code of Civil Procedure,



1908.

3. All expenses incurred for a tribunal are borne out of the Consolidated Fund of India.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

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

**UPSC Main Questions(2021):**

1. The banning of 'Jamaat-e-Islami' in Jammu and Kashmir brought into focus the role of over-ground workers (OGWs) in assisting terrorist organizations. Examine the role played by OGWs in assisting terrorist organizations in insurgency-affected areas. Discuss measures to neutralize the influence of OGWs.

**Source:** The Indian Express Articles: Appealing the PFI ban: How UAPA tribunal works; What 'ban' on Popular Front of India means



## INDIA'S ISLAMIST CHALLENGE

**Significance for Prelims:** Hybrid Militant; Over Ground Workers (OGWs)

**Significance for Mains:** Rise in terror incidents and methods to tackle terrorism.

**News:** Explosions in Coimbatore and Mangaluru is a sign of radicalisation among some section of Muslims and point to India's Islamist challenge.

**Case of Mengaluru Blasts:** Karnataka Director General of Police (DGP) Praveen Sood called Mengaluru blasts an "act of terror".

- On 19th November, a blast occurred in an autorickshaw in front of Kankanadi police station in Mangaluru injuring the auto driver, and the passenger. Passenger Shariq is suspected to be the main accused.
- According to the investigator, Mohammed Shariq was allegedly carrying the improvised explosive device (IED) in a pressure cooker in an autorickshaw.
- Investigators were probing his ideological link with the Islamic State.
- Police conducted searches at more than seven places in Karnataka and they are also probing Mohammed Shariq's links with JameeshaMubin who was responsible for the Coimbatore blast in Tamil Nadu on October 23.
- According to the police, Shariq had earlier experimented with bombs in the Shivamogga district and before that he had travelled to Tamil Nadu and Kerala.
- Investigators are linking Mengaluru blasts with Coimbatore blasts: The police believe that the accused will reveal more information. Investigators too are linking the Mangaluru blasts with the Coimbatore blast as police had recovered 75 kg of explosives from the house of Mubin.

**Cause for worry due to Mengaluru blasts:**

- **The incident is a clear case of the rise of competitive communalism:** In recent years Hindu and Muslim outfits have upped the ante in CoastalKarnatkas.
- **Possibility of reversing the gains on the security front:** In recent years, the Center noted a countrywide decline in terrorism incidents particularly of 'jihadi terrorism. Data from the government shows that terror incidents have been contained in Jammu and Kashmir, the North East and Left Wing Extremism (LWE)-affected States.
- These incidents of terrorism happen despite there is the countrywide decline of terror incidents in any part of the country outside conflict zones of Jammu and Kashmir, the North East and Left Wing Extremism (LWE)-affected States

**Way forward:** Keep the political rhetoric low and maintain peace and harmony through a conducive political environment.

- Vigilance and the efficiency of investigative agencies can prevent terrorist inci-

dents, and a conducive political environment is required to tackle underlying security challenges before the country.

#### **'Hybrid' and 'OGW' in Kashmir:**

- **Hybrid Militant:** Jammu & Kashmir Police coined a new term 'Hybrid' to tackle the security situation of Kashmir. According to the police, hybrid militants, are the ones who pose as civilians to dissemble their violent activities. Now, the police starts using this term in press releases as well.
- **Over Ground Workers (OGWs):** A few years ago, J&K police came up with the Over Ground Workers (OGWs) term. These are the people who provide logistic support to the militants and assist militants in their surreptitious movement. During the troubled nineties, two Kashmiri words—Soyath (wick) or Pout Palaw (rear part of a shirt) were largely used for the present-day OGWs.

#### **Further readings:**

1. Money Laundering
2. Various Security Agencies such as NIA, CAPF etc.

#### **UPSC Mains Question(2019):**

1. The banning of 'Jamaat-e-Islami' in Jammu and Kashmir brought into focus the role of over-ground workers (OGWs) in assisting terrorist organizations. Examine the role played by OGWs in assisting terrorist organizations in insurgency-affected areas. Discuss measures to neutralize the influence of OGWs.

**Source:** The Hindu; Observer Research Foundation(ORF)

**Articles:** Signs of trouble: On explosions in Coimbatore and Mangaluru; 'Hybrid' and 'OGW': A thin line between militants and civilians in Kashmir

#### **Mains( 2019):**

Q. The banning of 'Jamaat-e-Islami' in Jammu and Kashmir brought into focus the role of over-ground workers (OGWs) in assisting terrorist organizations. Examine the role played by OGWs in assisting terrorist organizations in insurgency affected areas. Discuss measures to neutralize the influence of OGWs.



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