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### TOPIC: Draft Rules for Online Gaming

**Issue in brief –** The Ministry of Electronics and IT proposed an amendment to bring online gaming under the ambit of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021.

[https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/draft-rules-for-online-gaming-released-8358527/#:~:text=A%20self%2Dregulatory%20body%2C%20mandatory,IT%20\(MeitY\)%20on%20Monday.](https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/draft-rules-for-online-gaming-released-8358527/#:~:text=A%20self%2Dregulatory%20body%2C%20mandatory,IT%20(MeitY)%20on%20Monday.)

#### **Where in Syllabus:**

**GS 2: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors**

#### ❖ Why in news?

The Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) proposed an amendment to bring online gaming under the ambit of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021.



#### ❖ Draft rules to Regulate Online Gaming

- **Online gaming intermediaries**
  - shall exercise **due diligence including KYC of users** to ensure that online games with gambling, betting are not permitted.
  - shall inform users of policy for **withdrawal or refund of deposit, fair distribution of winnings and applicable fees.**
  - shall not be allowed to engage in betting on the outcome of games.
- **Self-Regulatory Organisation**
  - Online games will have to register with a self-regulatory body, and only games that are cleared by the body will be allowed to legally operate in India.
  - The self-regulatory body will have a board of directors with five members from diverse fields including online gaming, public policy, IT, psychology and medicine.
  - There could be more than one self-regulatory body and all of them will have to inform the Centre about the online games they have registered, along with a report detailing the criteria for registering a certain game.
  - Self-regulatory bodies will be registered with the MeitY
- **Dispute resolution mechanism:**
  - Proposed three-tier dispute resolution mechanism consists of:
    - ✓ A grievance redressal system at the gaming platform level,
    - ✓ Self-regulatory body of the industry, and
    - ✓ An oversight committee led by the government.

#### ❖ What is online gaming?

- Online gaming refers to any type of game that are played through the Internet or over a computer network.
- **Types of Online gaming**



- Electronic sports eg. FIFA games
- Fantasy sports (choosing real-life sports players and winning points based on players performance) e.g., Kubera Fantasy
- Skill-based (mental skill) e.g., Horse racing
- Gamble (based on random activity) e.g., Playing Cards, Rummy
- **Reasons for recent boom in Online gaming industry in India:**
  - Digital India boom in the gaming industry post implementing of the flagship scheme Digital India mission of Government of India
  - Growing younger population [ 65% of India population is young as per Census 2011]. The country is the biggest market for fantasy sports globally, with over 13 crore users playing across over 200 platforms.
  - Decline in the cost of internet data post Jio led internet revolution in 2016.
  - Introduction of new gaming genres e.g., E-sports, gambling, fantasy sports, etc.
  - Increasing number of smartphone and tablet users
  - The pandemic caused huge spurt in the popularity of online games.

### ❖ Need for Regulation

- **Lack of comprehensive law:**
  - India currently has no comprehensive law with regards to the legality of online gaming.
  - Online gaming in India is allowed in most parts of the country. However, different states have their own legislation with regards to whether online gaming is permitted.
- **Safeguard users** against potential harm from skill-based games.
- **Economic advantage**
  - **Online games are generating huge amount of revenue and is one the sunrise sector so it needs to be regulated.**
  - The industry grew at a CAGR (compound annual growth rate) of 38 percent in India between 2017-2020, as opposed to 8 percent in **China** and 10 percent in the **US**.
  - It is expected to grow at a CAGR of 15 percent to reach Rs 153 billion in revenue by 2024.
  - Huge potential for job creation.
- **Ensure Transparency:** This framework will boost the legitimate domestic online gaming industry, ensuring greater transparency, consumer protection and investor confidence.
- **Safety of women:** Around 40 to 45 % of the gamers in India are women, and therefore it was all the more important to keep the gaming ecosystem safe.
- **Encourage innovation and Startups:**
  - Online gaming is a very important piece of the start-up ecosystem and a part of the goal of the 1-trillion dollar economy.

### ❖ Issues with Online Gaming

- **Addiction of games:** Numerous people are developing an addiction to online gaming like Rummy, Poker, etc. This is destroying lives and devastating families as some people are falling into debt trap while some have committed suicide.
- **Affecting Children:** Gaming is affecting children's performance in schools and impacting their relations with family members. E.g., Death of children due to Blue whale challenge game.
- **Betting and gambling :** Online games have run into controversy, and allegations of betting and gambling.



- **Loss of tax revenue:** Shifting of users to illegal offshore online gaming apps results in loss of tax revenue for the State and job opportunities for locals but results in users being unable to avail remedies for any unfair behaviour or refusal to pay out winnings.
- **Manipulative websites:**
  - Some experts also believe that online games are susceptible to manipulation by the websites operating such games.
  - There is a possibility that users are not playing such games against other players, but against automatic machines or 'bots', wherein there is no fair opportunity for an ordinary user to win the game.

### ❖ Way Forward

- Set up Centralised Authority to regulate online gaming.
- Comprehensive law by Union needs to be formulated.
- Educate the online gaming users about potential risks.
- Ensure accountability of the online gaming intermediaries.

### Practice Questions

#### Mains: (Level-Moderate)

Q. Why India's online gaming industry needs a regulatory mechanism? Analyse in the context of the recent draft rules framed by Government of India.

[10 marks, 150 words]

#### DIY:

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/questioning-the-ban-on-online-gaming-platforms/article65052847.ece>



## TOPIC: Anti-Defection Law

**Issue in brief** – Anti-Defection law has gained attention as it has become a tool in the hands of legislature to bring down the Governments in various states.

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/need-larger-bench-to-examine-impartiality-of-speakers-under-tenth-schedule-uddhav-thackeray-to-constitution-bench/article66509395.ece/amp/>

### Where in Syllabus:

GS 2: Indian Constitution—amendments, significant provisions

### ❖ Why in news?

- The Former Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Tuesday said in the Supreme Court that the “artful” dodges legislators employ **to subvert the Tenth Schedule (anti-defection law)** to bring down governments in crucial States and the “sweeping discretion” available to Speakers in deciding cases of disqualification of legislators need a relook by a larger Bench of seven judges.
- The Constitution Bench is hearing a series of petitions following the political crisis which rocked Maharashtra when current Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and his camp of followers rebelled against Mr. Thackeray and eventually brought down the Maha Vikas Aghadi government in early 2022.



### ❖ How has the Anti-Defection law (ADL) been circumvented in some recent cases?

- **Maharashtra:** The Nabam Rebia judgement is misused by legislature to stall their disqualification.
  - ✓ According to the judgement, when notice of removal is issued to the Speaker or Deputy Speaker, he cannot act as a Tribunal under the Tenth Schedule.
    - Using the same judgement, notice of removal is served to the presiding officer and in meantime politics takes over. The government falls.
    - A new Chief Minister is appointed with the support of the rebel legislators.
    - A new Speaker is installed and the disqualification proceedings are in limbo.
- **Goa:** Legislators have made use of the merger provision in the Anti-Defection Law to switch between political parties
  - ✓ Eight out of 11 MLAs of a particular party joined another Party in the newly elected Goa Assembly. This is more than the two-thirds of the members required for being exempted under the merger provision.
- **Manipur:** ADL is silent on the maximum time within which a decision must be taken on questions of disqualification.
  - ✓ The speaker of the legislative assembly took no decision on the multiple disqualification petitions filed against the minister for switching parties after being elected to the House. Later, The Supreme Court had to intervene.





### ❖ What is Anti-Defection Law?

- The Tenth Schedule of the Constitution, also known as the anti-defection law, was added to prevent political defections.
- The rationale to curb such defections was that they undermine the foundations and principles of Indian democracy.
- The law disqualifies legislators for violating the will of their political party
- **Features of the Anti-Defection Law**
  - ✓ **Disqualification on ground of defection:** A legislator belonging to a political party will be disqualified if he:
    1. Voluntarily gives up his party membership, or
    2. Votes/abstains to vote in the House contrary to the direction issued by his political party. A member is not disqualified if he has taken prior permission of his party, or if the voting or abstention is condoned by the party within 15 days.
    3. Independent members will be disqualified if they join a political party after getting elected to the House. Nominated members will be disqualified if they join any political party six months after getting nominated.
  - ✓ **Exemptions in cases of merger:** Members are exempted from such disqualification when at least two-thirds of the original political party merges with another political party. Further:
    1. The members must have become members of the party they have merged with/into, or
    2. They should have not accepted the merger and choose to function as a separate group.
  - ✓ **Decision making authority**
    - The decision to disqualify a member from the House rests with the Chairman/Speaker of the House.
    - If a case of defection happens, any member of the house can file a petition to the speaker to take action under Anti-Defection Law (ADL) and if the speaker himself undergoes defection, the petition is supposed to be filed with the secretary general of the house.
    - Decision regarding ADL petition against speaker would be taken by such a person of the house specifically elected for the purpose.
    - Apex court in **Kihoto Hollohan case in 1992**, said that there is no wrong in the case being decided by the speaker, but there will be a provision for judicial review since the speaker acts in a quasi-judicial capacity exercising judicial functions, and the highest judicial court is Supreme Court, hence judicial review can be done.

### ❖ Loopholes in the Law

- **Controversial role of Speaker:** The Speaker occupies a pivotal position, being the guardian of rights and privileges of the House and at the same time, he is also responsible for administering the Act. It is the Speaker who has to decide on defections, splits or mergers.
  - ✓ The partisan role played by some Speakers due to a conflict of interest is clearly visible. On several occasions, their bias in favour of a political party, has led to malpractices, violations of the Constitution and prolonged political instability in a state, impacting administration in general.
  - ✓ No time limit has been prescribed for the Speaker to take a decision.
  - ✓ No uniform application of Law: One Speaker to the other. In the Manipur case, the Speaker had kept sitting over the petition while in another case, the Speaker decided the matter in a great hurry without following the procedures, leading to an adverse comment of “hot haste” from the Supreme Court.
- **While individual defectors face penalties, wholesale defection is allowed.** States like Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka witnessed massive defections with Congress lawmakers quitting the party leading to the fall of the respective governments.
- **Undermining Representative & Parliamentary Democracy:** The MP or MLA has to follow the party's direction blindly and has no freedom to vote in their judgment. Due to Anti-Defection law, the chain of accountability has been broken by making legislators accountable primarily to the political party.





- **Defection proceedings happen only when a person gives up the membership of the party and not when he resigns from the seat** or the membership of the house itself. Such candidates later switch parties, contest by-elections, and do not invite anti-defection proceedings onto them.

### ❖ Way Forward

- Notice of removal against a Speaker or a Deputy Speaker should be moved while the House is in session and put to vote within seven days.
- Experts have suggested that pre poll coalitions should be covered by Anti-Defection Law and if there is any defection, the party defection in bulk shall be disqualified.
- As per the recommendation of National Commission for the Review of the Working of the Constitution, 2002, the defectors should be barred from holding public office or any remunerative political post for the duration of the remaining term.
- The Law Commission recommended that the power to decide on questions of disqualification on the ground of defection should be vested with the President or the Governor, who should act on the advice of the Election Commission of India (ECI).
- Neutrality of Speaker: One suggestion came in from the conference of presiding officers held as early as 1951. According to this, to enable the Speaker to stay neutral, a convention was to be established reserving the constituency of the Speaker so that in the subsequent elections, he could be returned unopposed, and further he should not take part in party politics. Even before Independence, Vithalbhai Patel had set an example by following this principle in letter and spirit.
- Strengthening of the party internal system/internal democracy.
- Set time limit to decide petition for disqualification: All petitions for disqualification of members under paragraph 2 of the Tenth Schedule should be decided, by adopting a summary procedure, within a period of three months.

### Practice Questions

#### Prelims:

Q. Consider the following statements about Anti Defection law:

1. Decision of Speaker is final and cannot be challenged in the court of law.
2. The Anti defection law is applicable only to the parliament and not to the state assemblies.

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

**Answer: d)**

#### Mains: (Level-Moderate)

Q. Anti Defection law has not been effective in providing political stability as envisaged. Is it time to scrap this law? Give your opinion.  
**[10 marks, 150 words]**



### TOPIC: Ladakh's demand for Sixth Schedule

**Issue in brief** – The demand for more autonomy under 6<sup>th</sup> schedule by Ladakh came into focus due to the agitation done by the residents recently.

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/ladakh-a-fragile-region-needs-autonomy/article66508199.ece>

#### **Where in Syllabus:**

**GS 2: Issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure,**

**Devolution of Powers and Finances up to Local Levels and Challenges therein**

#### ❖ Why in news?

- The normally peaceful residents of Ladakh are in agitation mode. They are demanding for special constitutional status, which would allow them to decide on a development path that safeguards the region's fragile ecological and cultural heritage.
- The *Leh Apex Body* and the *Kargil Democratic Alliance*, two of Ladakh's most powerful religious and political organisations, rejected a committee set up by the Central government to examine the status issue. They said the committee's mandate was vague and did not consider the specific demands made by them.
- Student groups and civil society groups too have ramped up their demand for constitutional safeguards.



#### ❖ What are the demands of Ladakh?

- Statehood for the Union Territory
- Safeguards for the people of the region under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution.
- Formation of a Public Service Commission and reservation of jobs for the youth of Ladakh
- The creation of two separate parliamentary constituencies for Leh and Kargil districts.

#### ❖ What is Sixth Schedule?

- The sixth schedule under Article 244 provides for the formation of autonomous administrative divisions- Autonomous district councils (ADCS)- that have some legislative, judicial and administrative autonomy within states.
- It governs the tribal areas of **Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram**.
- **Features of the schedule:**
  - ✓ The tribal areas in the four states of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram have been constituted as *autonomous districts*.
  - ✓ The *governor* is empowered to organise and re-organise the autonomous districts.
  - ✓ If there are different tribes in an autonomous district, the governor can divide the district into several autonomous regions.



- ✓ **Composition of ADC:** It consists of 30 members, out of which 26 would be elected and 4 would be nominated.
  - An exception to this is the Bodoland Territorial Council in Assam, which has 46 members, of which 40 are elected and 6 are nominated.
- **Powers of ADC:**
  - a) **Legislative and Administrative Powers:**
    - ✓ They will have law making powers over allotment of land, management of forests, use of water bodies, and regulation of shifting cultivation.
    - ✓ They can also make laws in matters relating to town/village administration including
  - police and public health, appointment of tribal chiefs and headmen. They can also by law codify personal law (inheritance, marriage, divorce and other social customs).
  - b) **Judicial Power:** ADCs can constitute village courts/councils for dealing with tribal vs. tribal conflicts.
  - c) **Financial Powers:**
    - ✓ Powers to levy and collect certain taxes.
    - ✓ ADCs can issue licenses for extraction of minerals and are entitled to share of royalties.
    - ✓ ADCs make regulations with respect to moneylending.
    - ✓ Constitution of district funds

### ❖ Why is Ladakh demanding for Sixth schedule?

- Neglect, earlier from the Jammu and Kashmir government and then from the Union government.
- Promise made by the Centre: In 2019, the Indian government had announced that Ladakh would get special constitutional status providing it autonomy. Before the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (AHDC) election, Sixth Schedule status was promised to the region, similar to what is seen in some parts of north-east India.
- The changed domicile policy in Jammu and Kashmir has raised fears in the region about its own land, employment, demography and cultural identity.
- Development Model: The region's cold desert ecosystems harbour rare mammals like the wild yak and the snow leopard, and diverse flora. Cultures and livelihoods have evolved to be sensitive to the fragility of ecosystems that cannot bear heavy human activity. High-altitude pastoralism, agriculture, and trade have been the mainstays of Ladakhi economy and society for centuries.
  - ✓ Administrators hardly comprehend what can and cannot work in such a fragile landscape.
  - ✓ Since 1995, Ladakh has had an AHDC with the aim of enabling locally determined development. However, a study by Kalpavriksh in 2019 showed that decision-making was mostly dominated by Srinagar and Delhi.
  - ✓ Ladakh is already groaning under infrastructure development, intense armed forces presence, and excessive tourism. Since Ladakh became a UT, there is even more focus on an exploitative 'development' path.
  - ✓ There is enormous commercial interest for mining, tourism, hydropower, and other natural resources.
  - ✓ A new airport is under construction, and road construction, including into the relatively unexploited Zaskar region, has been ramped up.
  - ✓ Ladakh already faces serious problems of landslides, erosion, solid waste and effluents, disturbance to wildlife, and cordoning off common lands for development projects.



### ❖ Can Ladakh be included in the Sixth Schedule?

- **National Commission for Scheduled Tribes** has recommended Schedule VI status for Ladakh in 2019, noting that it is primarily (97%) tribal region.
- But it is difficult to extend as:
  - ✓ As per the Constitution, Schedule VI was meant for North-east states.
  - ✓ For other states there is Schedule V.
- However, it remains the prerogative of the Government- it can if it so decides, bringing a bill to amend the Constitution for this purpose.

### ❖ Experience of 6<sup>th</sup> Schedule in other states?

- It has created multiple power centres instead of bringing in a genuine process of autonomy in the region.
- There is frequent conflict of interests between the District Councils and the State Legislatures.
- **Meghalaya**: ADCs cover practically the whole state causing frequent conflict with the state government
  - ✓ Para 12A of Schedule VI says that state laws take precedence over ADC laws
  - ✓ Poor devolution of funds
  - ✓ Benami system - land in the name of a tribal, but leased out to an outsider non-tribal
  - ✓ ADCs have displaced tribal institutions
  - ✓ Corruption in ADCs
- **Tripura**: ADC represents a heterogeneous composition of numerous tribes.
  - ✓ Hence, codification of personal laws naturally becomes a problem.
  - ✓ Such heterogeneous composition may also lead to underrepresentation of smaller tribes

### ❖ Way Forward

- Cooperation between local and central government: A Hill Council decision for Ladakh agriculture to become fully organic could be backed by the Central government (for instance, by requiring the armed forces to purchase locally grown and made items).
- Communities could be aided to claim and operationalise collective rights over grasslands using the Forest Rights Act.
- Tourism could be fully oriented towards community-run, ecologically sensitive visitation.
- Implementation of the Ladakh 2025 Vision Document - seamlessly integrating centuries' old indigenous traditions and culture with the changing lifestyle, to bring an immediate stop to the shocking deterioration of rich heritage by developing an appropriate set of preventive measures
- A constitutional status that enables locally determined pathways, driven by a sensitive local population, can help avoid the disastrous track that many other parts of India have tread.

#### **Basic terms/related concepts and facts:**

**Fifth Schedule:** As per Art 244(1), The provisions of the Fifth Schedule shall apply to the administration and control of the Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes in any State other than the States of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.

- ✓ The 10 States of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan and Telangana have Fifth Schedule Areas.
- ✓ The President (union government) has the authority to decide the scheduled area in a state, to alter its boundaries, to decide on whether it ceases to be a scheduled area, etc. It is usually done in consultation with the governor.
- ✓ These scheduled areas are to be treated somewhat differently as there are largely occupied by aboriginal tribes which need to preserve their culture and identity, and there are socio-economically backward as well.



### Practice Questions

#### Prelims:

**Q.** Consider the following statements about 6th Schedule of the constitution:

1. It governs the tribal areas of Assam, Manipur, Tripura and Mizoram.
2. The President is empowered to organise and re-organise the autonomous districts.

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

**Answer: d)**

#### Mains: (Level-Moderate)

**Q.** Critically evaluate the role of the Sixth Schedule in promoting inclusive development, addressing the demands for autonomy and self-rule among tribal communities in India.

**[15 marks, 250 words]**





## TOPIC: Mental Healthcare Act, 2017

**Issue in brief** – Recently, NHRC brought out its report on the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017 highlighting the challenges faced by the act in its implementation.

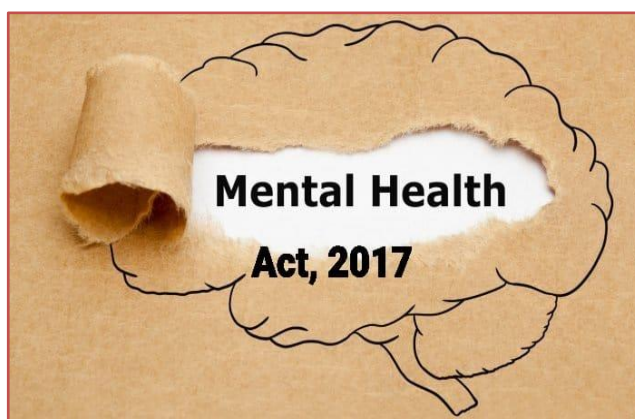
<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/health/explained-does-indias-mental-healthcare-act-2017-protect-patients-rights-and-dignity-in-institutions/article66503295.ece>

### Where in Syllabus:

GS 2: Government Policies & Interventions in Various Sectors

### ❖ Why in news?

- The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in a report flagged the “**inhuman and deplorable**” condition of all 46 government-run mental healthcare institutions across the country.
- The report notes that the facilities are “illegally” keeping patients long after their recovery, in what is an “infringement of the human rights of mentally ill patients”. These observations were made after visits to all operational government facilities, to assess the implementation of the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017 (MHA).



### ❖ What is mental health?

- Mental health is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a state of well-being in which an individual realizes their own potential, can cope with normal life stresses, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to contribute to their community. Mental health is not merely the absence of mental illness, but encompasses a wide range of emotional, psychological, and social well-being factors. It is an integral component of overall health and is essential for a person's overall quality of life.

#### Status of mental health in India.

As per the National Mental Health Survey conducted by the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS), Bangalore in 12 States of the country, the prevalence of mental disorders including common mental disorders, severe mental disorders, and alcohol and substance use disorders (excluding tobacco use disorder) in adults over the age of 18 years is about 10.6%. The major findings of the survey are as under:

- The prevalence of mental morbidity is high in urban metropolitan areas.
- Mental disorders are closely linked to both causation and consequences of several non-communicable disorders (NCD).
- Nearly 1 in 40 and 1 in 20 persons suffer from past and current depression, respectively.
- Neurosis and stress related disorders affect 3.5% of the population and was reported to be higher among females (nearly twice as much in males).
- Data indicate that 0.9 % of the survey population were at high risk of suicide.
- Nearly 50% of persons with major depressive disorders reported difficulties in carrying out their daily activities.





### ❖ What are the provisions of Mental Health Care Act, 2017?

- Mental Healthcare Act, 2017 (MHA) was enacted after India *ratified the United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006*. MHA, 2017 replaced the Mental Healthcare Act, 1987, which did not provide for *rights* of mentally ill persons and instead prioritised *institutionalisation* of mentally ill persons. The 1987 Act also necessitated stringent and arbitrary licensing requirements for psychiatrists.

#### **Provisions of the Act**

#### • **Rights of persons with mental illness**

- ✓ Every person will have the right to access mental healthcare services. Such services should be of good quality, convenient, affordable, and accessible.
- ✓ Rights of confidentiality as for mental health, treatment, mental health care, and physical health care to mentally ill people.
- ✓ To protect such persons from inhuman treatment
- ✓ To gain access to free legal services and their medical records.
- ✓ Right to complain in the event of deficiencies in provisions
- ✓ Right to community living: The government was made responsible for creating opportunities to access less restrictive options for community living — such as halfway homes, sheltered accommodations, rehab homes, and supported accommodation.

#### • **Advance directive**

A person with mental illness shall have the right to make an advance directive that states how he/she wants to be treated for the illness and who his/her nominated representative shall be.

The advance directive should be certified by a medical practitioner or registered with the Mental Health Board.

#### • **Mental Health Establishments**

- ✓ The government has to set up *the Central Mental Health Authority at national level and State Mental Health Authority in every state*.
- ✓ All mental health practitioners (clinical psychologists, mental health nurses, and psychiatric social workers) and every mental health institute will have to be registered with this authority.
- **Mental Health Review Commission and Board:** The Mental Health Review Commission will be a quasi-judicial body that will periodically review the use of and the procedure for making advance directives and advise the government on protection of the rights of mentally ill persons.

#### • **Decriminalizing suicide and prohibiting electroconvulsive therapy**

- ✓ It decriminalizes suicide attempt by a mentally ill person.
  - ✓ It also imposes on the government a duty to rehabilitate such person to ensure that there is no recurrence of attempt to suicide.
  - ✓ A person with mental illness shall not be subjected to electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) therapy without the use of muscle relaxants and anesthesia. Furthermore, ECT therapy will not be performed for minors.
- The Act acknowledged that external factors — such as income, social status, and education — impact mental well-being, and therefore, recovery needs a psychiatric as well as a social input.

### ❖ Mental Health legislations in other countries

- The *Italian Public Law* enacted in 1978, and the *Mental Health Act of 1983 in England and Wales*, are prominent examples of a shift **from custody and incarceration to the integration and rehabilitation of persons with mental disorders**.
- *In Japan*, the Mental Hygiene Law was enacted in 1950 and encouraged the development of psychiatric hospitals and ensured financial support for patients who were admitted involuntarily.



### ❖ What are the challenges in implementation of the Act?

- **Enforcement challenges:** Almost 36.25% of residential service users at state psychiatric facilities were found to be living for one year or more in these facilities, according to a 2018 report by the Hans Foundation.
- **Defunct Bodies:** Under the MHA, all States are required to establish a State Mental Health Authority and Mental Health Review Boards (MHRBs) — bodies that can further draft standards for mental healthcare institutes, oversee their functioning and ensure they comply with the Act. In a majority of States, “these bodies are yet to be established or remain defunct. Further, many States have not notified minimum standards which are meant to ensure the quality of Mental Health Establishments (MHE)
- **Poor budgetary allocation and utilisation of funds** creates a scenario where shelter homes remain under-equipped, establishments understaffed, and professionals and service providers not adequately trained to deliver proper healthcare
- **Lack of community based services:** While *Section 19 recognises the right of people to “live in, be part of and not be segregated from society,”* there have been no concrete efforts towards implementation. The dearth of alternative community-based services further complicates access to rehabilitation.
- **Integration with primary healthcare:** Mental healthcare services in India are largely disconnected from primary healthcare services, which makes it difficult to provide integrated and comprehensive care to individuals with mental illness.
- **Lack of awareness:** One of the biggest challenges in implementing the MHA is the lack of awareness among healthcare professionals, law enforcement officials, and the general public about the provisions of the Act.

### ❖ Way forward

- **Implementation of District Mental Health Programme(s) to create a community-based work force:** The District Mental Health Programme (DMHP) envisages community-based mental health intervention in the absence of psychiatrists or trained mental health professionals.
- **Digital mental health:** The use of digital technologies, such as *telemedicine and mobile apps (MANAS)*, can improve access to mental healthcare services, particularly in rural and remote areas where there is a shortage of mental healthcare professionals. The government can promote the use of digital mental health services and provide training to healthcare professionals to deliver these services.
- **Peer support networks** can provide emotional support, information, and practical assistance to individuals with mental illness and their families. The government can collaborate with NGOs to establish peer support networks and provide training to peer support workers.
- **Research and data collection:** There is a need for more research on mental health issues in India, including the prevalence of mental illness, the effectiveness of different treatment approaches, and the impact of stigma and discrimination.
- **School mental health programs:** Mental health problems often start in childhood or adolescence, and school-based mental health programs can help identify and address mental health issues at an early stage. The government can promote the development of school-based mental health programs and provide training to teachers and school counsellors.
- **More investment** in infrastructure, training, research and development,

#### Case study

- Kerala is pioneering mental health integration in schools. If mental illnesses in children are not accurately diagnosed and treated, there is an increase in the probability of health issues in adulthood.
- The state administered UNARV, a model for adolescent mental health in schools at a district level in 2007. Students with behavioural and academic problems from Class 8 to 12 were counselled by their teachers, who were trained in adolescent developmental psychology, and mental health disorders. If their problems persisted, they were given cognitive behavioural therapy, problem solving skill therapy, and anger management skills at a clinic.



## Basic terms/related concepts and facts:

### • National Human Rights Commission of India:

- ✓ The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of India was established on 12 October, 1993. The statute under which it is established is the Protection of Human Rights Act (PHRA), 1993 as amended by the Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Act, 2006.
- ✓ It is in conformity with the Paris Principles, adopted at the first international workshop on national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights held in Paris in October 1991, and endorsed by the General Assembly of the United Nations by its Regulations 48/134 of 20 December, 1993.
- ✓ The NHRC is an embodiment of India's concern for the promotion and protection of human rights.
- ✓ Section 2(1)(d) of the PHRA defines Human Rights as the rights relating to life, liberty, equality and dignity of the individual guaranteed by the Constitution or embodied in the International Covenants and enforceable by courts in India.

## Practice Questions

### Prelims:

Q. Which among the following statement(s) is/are *incorrect* about National Human Rights Commission (NHRC):

1. NHRC is a Constitutional body.
2. The chairperson should be a retired chief justice of India or a retired judge of the Supreme Court.
3. Sitting judge of the Supreme Court cannot be the member of NHRC.
4. The Commission shall not inquire into any matter after the expiry of one year from the date on which the act constituting violation of human rights is alleged to have been committed.

Choose the correct option from the codes given below:

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 4 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 3 and 4 only

Answer: c)

### Mains: (Level-Moderate)

Q. The National Human Rights Commission in a report flagged the “inhuman and deplorable” condition of government-run mental healthcare institutions across the country. In this context, discuss the various challenges for the implementation of the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017 and suggest measures to improve the status of mental health in India. **[15 marks, 250 words]**



## TOPIC: Delimitation Commission

**Issue in brief** – Commission set up by the Centre Government submitted its final report for the delimitation of Assembly and parliamentary constituencies in Jammu and Kashmir. Supreme Court further upheld the appointment of delimitation panel.

[https://epaper.thehindu.com/ccidist-ws/th/th\\_delhi/issues/25049/OPS/GEJASFTI8.1.png?cropFromPage=true](https://epaper.thehindu.com/ccidist-ws/th/th_delhi/issues/25049/OPS/GEJASFTI8.1.png?cropFromPage=true)

### **Where in Syllabus:**

**GS 2:** Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies

### ❖ Why in news?

- PIL filed in SC challenging constitution of J&K Delimitation Commission to readjust constituencies in the new Union Territory.
- Delimitation became necessary when the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act, 2019 increased the number of seats in the Assembly.
- This was after abrogation of J&K's special status in 2019 (Article 370)
- Now the delimitation of both Assembly and parliamentary seats is governed by the Constitution.



### ❖ Changes recommended by Delimitation Commission in J&K

- Legislative Assembly: The Commission has increased seven Assembly seats — six in Jammu (now 43 seats) and one in Kashmir (now 47).
- Scheduled Tribes: Total 9 seats reserved for Scheduled Tribes for the first time.
- Kashmiri Pandits: The Commission has recommended provision of at least two members from the community of Kashmiri Migrants (Kashmiri Hindus) in the Legislative Assembly

### ❖ What is delimitation?

- Delimitation is the process of redrawing the boundaries of electoral constituencies to represent change in population and to ensure that each constituency has roughly the same number of voters.
- The aim of delimitation - to ensure that each vote carries equal weight, and that each citizen has an equal say in the electoral process. It ensures fair representation and equal participation in the democratic process.
  - By ensuring that constituencies have roughly the same number of voters, delimitation helps to prevent the over-representation or under-representation of certain communities or regions.



### ❖ Constitutional Provisions

- Article 82 provides that Parliament will enact Delimitation Act **after every census**.
- Article 170 deals with the delimitation of constituencies in state legislative assemblies.
- Articles 2 and 3 of the Constitution enable the Parliament to create new States and Union territories. Accordingly, the two new Union territories have been created (J&K + Ladakh)

### ❖ What is Delimitation Commission and what are its functions?

- President appoints Delimitation Commission
- It is 3 member body consisting of
  - ✓ Chairperson - serving / retired SC judge
  - ✓ CEC (chief election commissioner) or EC nominated by CEC
  - ✓ SEC (state election commissioner) of that state

#### **Functions:**

- ✓ To redraw the boundaries of Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha constituencies (the lower house of the Indian Parliament and state legislative assemblies respectively) based on the latest census data to make the population of all seats, as far as practicable, be the same throughout the State.
- ✓ Identify seats to be reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes wherever their population is relatively large considering other factors such as topography and the distribution of reserved constituencies (for members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes).
- Order issued by Delimitation commission cannot be Questioned in court of law.

### ❖ Why has there been no delimitation exercises after each census?

- Delimitation Commissions have been set up four times — 1952, 1963, 1973 and 2002 under the Acts of 1952, 1962, 1972 and 2002.
- There was no delimitation done after the 1981, 1991 and 2001 Censuses.
- The last delimitation exercise that changed the state-wise composition of the Lok Sabha was completed in 1976 and done on the basis of the 1971 census
- Delimitation based on the 2001 census was done in 2008. However, the total number of seats in the Assemblies and Parliament decided as per the *1971 Census was not changed*.
- **84th Constitutional Amendment Act 2002** - not to have delimitation of constituencies till first census after 2026. This means that the boundaries of Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha constituencies will remain the same until the first census after 2026, and there will be no redrawing of constituency boundaries during this period.

#### **Reason-**

- Delimitation, if carried out as per constitutional mandate, would give greater number of seats to those states who took little interest in population control. For e.g. – Southern states have greater success in controlling population, would lose out political representation due to delimitation exercise.
- 84<sup>th</sup> CA froze delimitation till 2026 to give political stability to states and prevent any political controversies that could arise from delimitation.

### ❖ Issues with present Delimitation

- It does not reflect contemporary population at union level (as froze on 1971 census)
- States that take little interest in population control could end up with a greater number of seats in Parliament.





- The southern states that promoted family planning faced the possibility of having their seats reduced.
- Increasing populations are being represented by a single representative.

### ❖ Way Forward

- Need to appoint delimitation commission after every census (Article 82)
- Total number of seats in Parliament should be increased in such a way to ensure that no state loses the seats it already has.
- Population control measures should be rewarded by Delimitation Commission.

### Practice Questions

#### Prelims:

**Q.** Consider the following statements with respect to Delimitation Commission:

1. Election Commission of India appoints delimitation commission.
2. Election commissioner is member of the commission.
3. First delimitation commission was appointed in 1947.
4. Orders of the Delimitation Commission cannot be challenged in a Court of Law.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

**Ans:** (c)

#### Mains: (Level-Moderate)

**Q.** "The present delimitation does not reflect the population distribution of contemporary times and faces many challenges". Comment **[10 marks, 150 words]**





### TOPIC: Parliamentary Privileges

**Issue in brief** – The Parliamentary privileges has been used as a shield to avoid answering the questions raised by the Opposition which is undermining the role of the Parliament.

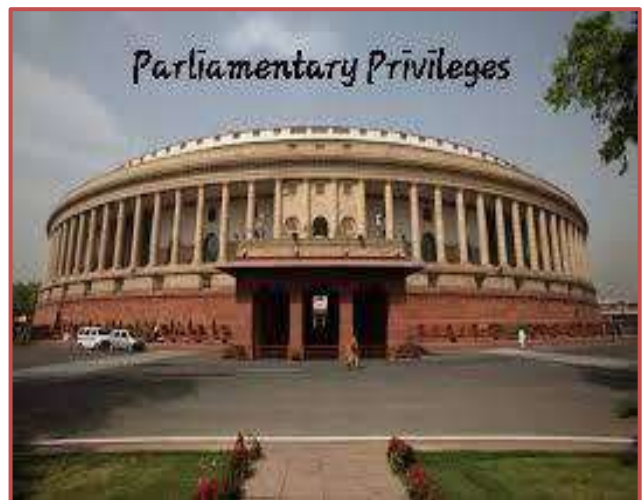
<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/discipline-and-discussion-on-jagdeep-dhankar-directive-to-privileges-committee/article66536816.ece>

#### Where in Syllabus:

**GS 2: Parliament - structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these**

#### ❖ Why in news?

- Recently, Rajya Sabha Chairman directed the Privileges Committee, headed by Deputy Chairman, to investigate the “disorderly conduct” by 12 Opposition Members of Parliament that had led to multiple adjournments during the first leg of the Budget session.
- The MPs in question are accused of repeatedly entering the well of the Council, shouting slogans, and persistently and wilfully obstructing the proceedings of the Council, compelling the Chair to repeatedly adjourn the sittings of the Council, in violation of rule 203 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Council of States.



#### ❖ What is Parliamentary Privilege?

- The Parliamentary privilege refers to rights and immunities enjoyed by Parliament as an institution and MPs in their individual capacity, without which they cannot discharge their functions as entrusted upon them by the Constitution.

#### Types of Privileges

##### **Collective Privileges**

- Right to publish its own proceedings and restrain others/outsiders from publishing their proceedings.
- Make rules for conduct of business.
- Punish members/outsiders for breach of privilege and contempt of the house
- The right to immediate information about the arrest, release, conviction, or imprisonment of a member

##### **Individual Privileges**

- **Articles 105 and 194** talk about privileges at the central level and at the state level respectively.
- Members have the right to free expression.
- Freedom from arrest in civil cases during the session, 40 days prior to the commencement of the session and 40 days after the prorogation/end of the session .
- While the House is in session , no MP can be compelled to become a witness for a case pending before any court of law, without the permission of the House.
- An MP cannot be asked to be a member of the Jury i.e. they are exempted from jury duty, while the House is in session .



- **Sources of Parliamentary Privileges:** The Constitution, Rules of house, Conventions and Judicial Intervention.
- **Importance of Parliamentary Privileges:**
  - ✓ Parliamentary privilege exists for the purpose of enabling the MPs/MLAs effectively to carry out its functions, that is, to inquire, to debate and to legislate.
  - ✓ Proper functioning of the Parliament: Without these privileges, the Houses can neither maintain their authority, dignity and honour nor can protect their members from any obstruction in the discharge of their parliamentary responsibilities.
  - ✓ Unimpeded attendance: MPs have the right to attend parliamentary sessions without any interference from external forces, such as the police or security forces.
  - ✓ Upholding the accountability of the government through fearless debates and discussion. It is a key pillar in supporting the constitutional principle of responsible government and the accountability of Ministers to Parliament.
  - ✓ Protection from legal action: Parliamentary privileges protect MPs from legal action for things said or done in the course of their parliamentary duties.
  - ✓ Access to information: The right of MPs to access government documents and information is essential for holding the government to account and ensuring transparency in the decision-making process.

### ❖ What is the breach of privilege?

- Action by any individual or body to disregard or attack any of the privileges, rights and immunities, either of the member individually or of the House in its collective capacity, is called the breach of the privilege and is punishable by the house.
- The house can refer the matter to the Privileges committee or collectively decide among members as well.
- **Who can punish for breach of privilege or contempt?**
  - ✓ In Harendra Nath Barua v. Dev Kanta Barua & Others (1958), the High Court of Assam held that only the concerned House can issue punishment regarding breach of privilege or contempt of that House or its members. This power was called the 'keystone of parliamentary privilege.'
  - ✓ In Sushanta Kumar Chand v. Speaker, Orissa Legislative Assembly (1973), the Orissa High Court held that the House can impose a punishment of imprisonment for contempt or breach of privilege. It further held that the duration of such imprisonment cannot extend the duration of the session of the House.
- **Instances of breach of privilege or contempt of the Parliament House:**
  - ✓ The 'cash for query' scam.
  - ✓ The Chairman of Rajya Sabha, issued a warning to all the members of Rajya Sabha stating that recording the proceedings of the House on mobile phones would be deemed as a breach of privilege and an action for the same may be initiated by him if anyone is found guilty.
  - ✓ Not attending Committee meetings amounts to a breach of privilege.

### ❖ Can Parliamentary Privilege be used to shut down the parliamentary accountability?

- Parliamentary privilege is not intended to be used to shut down parliamentary accountability. Rather, it is intended to protect the independence of the legislative branch and enable MPs to carry out their duties without fear of external interference.  
However, there is a risk that parliamentary privilege could be misused or abused in ways that undermine parliamentary accountability:



- ✓ MPs could potentially abuse their access to information by obtaining confidential information that is not relevant to their parliamentary duties, or using such information for personal gain or to damage political opponents. This could be seen as an attempt to circumvent accountability rather than to promote transparency and accountability in government.
- ✓ MP could potentially use their parliamentary privilege to make false or defamatory statements about an individual or organization without fear of legal repercussions. This could be seen as an attempt to shut down accountability or criticism of their actions, rather than an exercise of free speech within the context of parliamentary proceedings.
- ✓ Restriction of debates and discussion by penalizing the opposition members those who are raising the questions.
- ✓ Parliamentary privilege can also be used to shield MPs from investigation or prosecution for actions taken in the course of their parliamentary duties.

### ❖ Way forward

- **Clear guidelines and rules:** The parliament can establish clear guidelines and rules around the use of parliamentary privilege, including what constitutes a breach of privilege and the consequences of such a breach. This can help to ensure that MPs are aware of the limitations of their privilege and that they use it responsibly.
- **Due procedure had not been followed:** The MP should be served proper notice and given an opportunity to explain their position before any punitive action is taken against them.
- **The government should answer the queries raised instead of suspending the opposition members** in the name of discipline. Parliamentary discipline must ensure that discussions take place, and the government provides the answers.
- **Public scrutiny:** The media and civil society can play an important role in scrutinizing the actions of MPs and holding them accountable for their use of parliamentary privilege. This can help to ensure that MPs are aware that their actions are being closely watched and that they are more likely to use their privilege responsibly.
- **Education and training:** The parliament can provide education and training to MPs on the appropriate use of parliamentary privilege and the importance of parliamentary accountability.
- **Strengthening other accountability mechanisms:** The parliament can strengthen other accountability mechanisms, such as freedom of information laws, whistleblower protections, and independent oversight bodies, to provide additional checks and balances on government actions.

#### Basic terms/related concepts and facts:

##### • **Committee of Privileges:**

- ✓ The functions of this committee are semi-judicial in nature.
- ✓ It examines the cases of breach of privileges of the House and its members and recommends appropriate action.
- ✓ The Lok Sabha committee has 15 members, while the Rajya Sabha committee has 10 members.
- ✓ In the Lok Sabha, the Speaker nominates the head of the committee of privileges.
- ✓ In the Rajya Sabha, the deputy chairperson heads the committee of privileges.



## Practice Questions

### Prelims:

**Q.** Consider the following statements:

1. Parliamentary Privileges are comprehensively listed in the Constitution.
2. The parliamentary privileges also extend to the president who is also an integral part of the Parliament.

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

**Answer: d)**

### Mains: (Level-Moderate)

**Q.** Parliamentary privilege is an essential for proper functioning of the Parliament, but it can also be used to diminish parliamentary accountability. Elucidate. What measures can be taken to prevent the misuse of parliamentary privilege and enhance the accountability of the parliament?  
**[15 marks, 250 words]**



## TOPIC: Indus Water Treaty

**Issue in brief** – India issues a notice to renegotiate the 63-year-old Indus Water Treaty with Pakistan.

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-notifies-pakistan-on-modification-of-indus-waters-treaty/article66438780.ece>

### Where in Syllabus:

**GS 2:** Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

### ❖ Why in News?

- On January 25, India sent an official notice through the Indian Commission calling for the Modification of the Indus Water Treaty (IWT) of September 1960, as per Article XII (3) of the treaty citing Pakistan's "intransigence" in resolving disputes over the **Kishenganga** and **Ratle hydropower projects**.
- On January 27, The Permanent Court of Arbitration bench appointed by the World Bank at The Hague began to hear a petition by Pakistan that has objected to two Indian Hydropower projects
- World Bank, which is considering its response to India's notice, said it believes that
  - The IWT is one of the most successful transboundary water management treaties in the world and its preservation has been among the World Bank's highest priorities
  - That the ongoing disputes- on the Kashmir dams Kishenganga and Ratle are a risk to the treaty given they have not been resolved for 16 years.

### ❖ What is Indus Water Treaty (IWT)?

- The Indus Water Treaty was signed by **PM Nehru** and Pakistan **President Ayub Khan** in 1960 in Karachi after negotiations for almost 9 years, with World Bank being a signatory to the pact.
- Water sharing:** The Treaty allocates the Western Rivers (Indus, Jhelum, Chenab) to Pakistan and the Eastern Rivers (Ravi, Beas, Sutlej) to India.
  - Each country is under obligation to let flow in others' rivers beyond the permitted uses (Domestic use, agriculture use, non-consumptive use).
- Article IX** of the IWT lists out a procedure for dispute resolution- classifying these as Questions, Differences and Disputes, where both sides agree to try and resolve issues through bilateral meetings of the **Permanent Indus Commission**.
- Failing resolution through Permanent Indus Commission, the World Bank will appoint a **Neutral Expert** or constitute a **Bench at The Hague's Permanent Court of Arbitration**.
- The Commission is required to meet regularly at least once a year, alternately in India and Pakistan and also when requested by either Commissioner.
- Article XII** provides for the provisions of the Treaty to continue in force until terminated by a duly ratified treaty between the two Governments.

#### Division of rivers as per Indus Waters Treaty

**Eastern rivers to India:** Sutlej, Beas, Ravi  
**Western rivers to Pakistan:** Chenab, Jhelum and Indus



### ❖ Success of IWT

- Survival:** The IWT has managed to survive even after three wars (1965, 1971 and 1999), a number of military stand-offs (1987, 2001-02, 2008, 2016 and 2019) and several other episodes of political friction.





- **Graded Dispute resolution mechanism:** The treaty provides for a 3-step graded dispute resolution, starting from Indus Commissioners from respective countries then a neutral expert to be appointed by World Bank and finally a court of arbitration.
- **No water wars:** Unlike many countries like Egypt and Ethiopia which have gone for war over water sharing, the IWT has restricted its scope to zero in case of India and Pakistan.
- **Green Revolution:** Both the countries owe their success of green revolution of 60s and 70s to the proper implementation of this treaty.
- Former U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower described it as "**one bright spot** ... in a very depressing world picture that we see so often."

### ❖ Issues with Indus Water Treaty

- **Exit Clause:** The IWT does not have a unilateral exit clause. Still if India wants to go about abrogating it, the country should abide by the 1969 Vienna convention on the law of treaties.
- **Challenge of validity:** The validity of the treaty is being challenged in court as it was signed by the Prime minister of India who is not head of the Indian Republic.
- **Irrigation projects:** Pakistan has constantly objected to irrigation and hydel power projects which are legal under the provisions of the treaty.

### ❖ Decoding India's Move to modify Indus Water Treaty

- **Infrastructure development:** Modifying IWT can be seen as India's counter measure to Pakistan's repeated objections to every irrigation or power project on the Indian side of the Indus basin.
- **Pakistan's unfair demands:** Despite being awarded nearly 80 per cent of the water flow in these rivers, Pakistan has always maintained that it has been treated unfairly, arguing that it should have been allotted some share of the Ravi, Sutlej and Beas rivers as well.
- **Climate change:** Experts on both sides agree that there have been significant changes since the Treaty came into being in 1960, and it needs to be updated. The impacts of climate change have been prominent.
- **Adapting to new technology:** The Indus Waters Treaty is very prescriptive, but today's dams or reservoirs are very different from the ones in the 1960s. Whenever India has tried to use newer designs and technologies, Pakistan has objected, like with the Baglihar dam.
- **Strategic angle:** since long India has resisted its temptations to use IWT as strategic tool but post 2016 Uri attack PM Narendra Modi has categorically said, "Blood and Water cannot flow together".
- **Other reasons:** Include the need for joint management, greater flexibility in utilization of waters, and adoption of basin-wise approach in the management of the river waters

### ❖ Possible risks to India by amending IWT

- **Slim chance of success:** There is no indication that Pakistan will accept the proposal within 90 days (Acc to IWT), in which case India would have to escalate to the next step, and even call to scrap the treaty.
- **Pakistan's brazen demands:** Even if India succeeds to bring Pakistan on to table, the demands from Pakistan (greater water share) may be difficult and fulfill and threat to stability of the region.
- **India's image:** The Indus Water Treaty is an example of a successful treaty for the rest of the world, and India stands to lose face as a responsible international power if it calls for its abrogation.
- **China's angle:** Since Indus originates in China, Pakistan may provide for a way to China to enter the discussion table and that will complicate the chances of success.
- **Pakistan's economic instability:** Any update in the treaty will be difficult at a time of intense economic instability in Pakistan, it will harm India's stature by making India look like taking advantage of the opposite party.
- **Relations with neighbors:** The abrogation of the IWT will send alarm bells ringing in India's other lower riparian country, Bangladesh which receives about 91% of its waters from the rivers flowing from India.





### ❖ Way Forward

- Instead of contemplating abrogation or finding faults with the IWT, India and Pakistan can explore it for mutual benefits. For example, Article VII of the IWT talks about “future cooperation” and calls for taking up joint studies and engineering works on the rivers to benefit people living in the catchment area of IRS.
- A joint body may be formed either independently or within the ambit of Permanent Indus commission to work out modalities of joint cooperation.
- It is imperative for both states to combine their resources and expertise to benefit from the available opportunities to secure progress and prosperity of the nuclear neighbours.
- Any step taken should be based on the ultimate aim of peaceful coexistence and cooperation enhancing mutual benefit.

#### **Important Hydel projects over Indus River system**

- **Kishenganga project:** Hydel power project on river Jhelum
- **Dul Hasti Project:** Hydroelectric power project on river ChenaB
- **Burser Dam:** On Marusudar river (right bank tributary of Chenab) to store water and produce power
- **Wuller Barrage:** on river Jhelum to create an additional storage
- **Bagliar Project:** A run of the river hydroelectric power project on river Chenab
- **Salal project:** a run of the river hydroelectric plant on River Chenab
- **Ratle project:** A run of the river project on river Chenab

### Practice Questions

#### **Prelims:**

**Q.** Which of the following statement(s) is/are *incorrect* with respect to Indus Water Treaty:

1. World Bank is a signatory to the Pact.
2. The disputed projects, Kishanganga and Ratle Hydroelectric Project, are run-of-the-river projects on the Chenab River.
3. It allots western rivers to Pakistan and eastern rivers to India.
4. India does not any rights on the western rivers allotted to Pakistan.

Choose the correct option from the codes given below:

- a) 2 and 4
- b) 2 only
- c) 2 and 3
- d) 4 only

**Answer: a)**

#### **Mains: (Level- Moderate)**

**Q.** “Indus Water Treaty is considered as one of the most successful transboundary water management treaties”. In the light of this statement, discuss the reasoning and possible risks behind the India's demand for amendment of the treaty. **(15marks, 250 Words)**



## TOPIC: UNSC Reforms

**Issue in brief** –Recently, UN General Assembly (UNGA) President Csaba Korosi stated that the UNSC does not reflect today's realities.

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/general-assembly-divided-over-un-reforms-says-csaba-korosi/article66451621.ece#:~:text=The%20crucial%20hurdle%20in%20the,Delhi%20on%20January%2030%2C%202023.>

### Where in Syllabus:

**GS 2: Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate**

### ❖ Why in news?

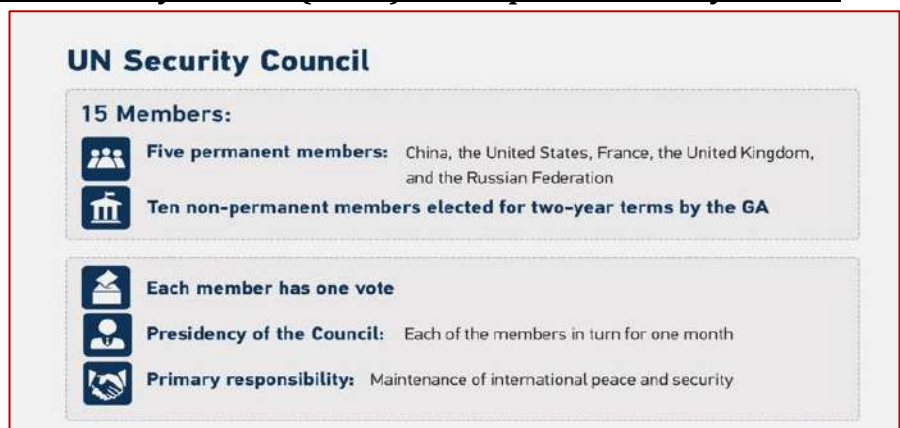
- Recently, UN General Assembly (UNGA) President Csaba Korosi stated that the UN Security Council **does not reflect today's realities**, is paralysed and is unable to discharge its basic function of maintaining international peace and security as it has not been able to take any effective decision regarding Russia-Ukraine war.
- Russia, a veto-wielding permanent member of the UN, attacked Ukraine in February 2022.
  - Russia has vetoed UNSC resolutions on Ukraine.
  - Russia also voted against a resolution in the UN General Assembly which called on countries not to recognise the four regions of Ukraine that Russia has claimed.



### ❖ Why UNSC reforms required?

**Reform of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) encompasses five key issues:**

- Categories of membership,
- The question of the veto held by the five permanent members,
- Regional representation in UNSC
- The size of UNSC and its working methods, and
- The General Assembly-UNSC relationship.





### Why reform required?

- **Changing world order:**
  - In the 77-year-old history of the UN, the composition of the Security Council has been altered only once -- in 1963 when the General Assembly decided to expand the Council from 11 to 15 members, with the addition of four non-permanent seats.
  - Since then, the world has changed. The geopolitical relations in the world have altered and the economic responsibilities in the world in some countries have also changed.
  - *There is a need for a more equitable world in order to uphold the principles of democracy at the global level.*
- **Inclusivity in UNSC:**
  - The regions like far East Asia, South America, Africa have no representation in the permanent membership of the council. Lack of representation of geopolitical and geo-economically important countries is **leaving out a large segment of global opinion to have a voice in the highest security summit.**
  - Developing countries like the African countries, need to be made stakeholders in the multilateral institutions and involved in the decision-making process.
- **Mitigation of New Threats:**
  - With rising protectionism, increased incidents of terrorism and the threat of climate change, the multilateral system must become more resilient and responsive.
- **Misuse of Veto Power:**
  - One country's objection, rather than the opinions of a majority of countries, may prevent any possible UN response to a crisis. It is not appropriate for the current **global security environment to be guided by elite decision-making** structures.
  - Recent cases of Masood Azhar which was vetoed by China and Russia vetoed resolution against itself post Russia-Ukraine war are an example of misuse of veto power.
- **Geopolitical Rivalry within P5:**
  - The geopolitical rivalry among the permanent members has prevented the UNSC **from coming up with effective mechanisms to deal** with global issues.
  - Taking the current world order as an example, the P5 members: **United States, Russia, and China are three poles** on the periphery of the globe having several geopolitical issues revolving around them (**Taiwan Issue and Russia-Ukraine War**).
- **Threat to State's Sovereignty:**
  - As the principal organ of international peacekeeping and conflict resolution, the **UNSC is responsible for keeping peace and managing conflict.** Its decisions (referred to as resolutions) are binding on all member countries, unlike the General Assembly's.
  - This means that any state's sovereignty can be encroached upon if necessary by taking action, **such as imposing sanctions.**
- **Failure of UNSC:**
  - It has failed to tackle the recent crisis of Syria, Gaza and Ukraine and also have not raised voice against terrorism.
  - It failed to establish itself as a credible and a legitimate body due to use of platform for personal gains by many nations.

### ❖ **Mechanism to reform UNSC?**

- Any reform of the Security Council would require the agreement of at least two-thirds of UN member states in a vote in the General Assembly and must be ratified by two-thirds of Member States.
- All of the permanent members of the UNSC (which have veto rights) must also agree.



### ❖ Hurdles to reform UNSC?

- **Lack of Political Will:**

- Although there is a general agreement towards change in the system, different countries have different perceptions of the requirement for change.

- **Coffee Club:**

- It is an informal group, comprising mostly middle-sized states who oppose bigger regional powers grabbing permanent seats, has been instrumental in holding back reforms to the United Nations Security Council over the past six years.

#### Key UN reforms



### ❖ India's Role in UNSC reforms

- India as the present non-permanent members of the UNSC can start by drafting a resolution containing a comprehensive set of proposals for reforming the UNSC.

- In September 2022, India made a **push for UNSC reform** hosting a meeting of two separate groupings – **G-4** and **L-69** – in New York on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly.

- As India leads **Global South**, it needs to revitalise its engagement

with its traditional partners in the "global south" by articulating their peace and security concerns in the UNSC.

- India's released **NORMS reform** (New orientation for a reformed multilateral system) to reform architecture of global governance, including the UNSC

#### Main UNSC reform plans



Source: UN official website

CGTN





### ❖ Way Forward

- **Balance of Power in UNSC:**
  - The power imbalance between the P5 and other countries in the **UNSC needs to be addressed urgently to make the council more democratic** and increase its legitimacy in governing international peace, security and order.
- **Expansion of UNSC:**
  - Expand **UNSC**, including expanding its permanent and non-permanent seats to better address the complex and evolving challenges **to international peace and security**.
- **Equitable Representation:**
  - Equitable representation of all the regions in the UNSC is critical to **decentralizing its governing power and authority over nations**.
  - The decentralization of the UNSC's decision-making processes will enable its transformation to a more representative, participatory body.

### Basic terms/related concepts and facts:

- **Veto Power:** The United Nations Security Council veto power is the **power of the five permanent members** of the **UN Security Council** (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) to veto any “substantive” resolution. The UN defines 'veto' as a “special voting power”, which provides that **"if any one of the five permanent members cast a negative vote in (UNSC), the resolution or decision would not be approved"**.
- **India** has served seven times in the UNSC as a non-permanent member and in January 2021, India entered the UNSC for the eighth time.
- **G4 nations:** The G4 nations, comprising **Brazil, Germany, India, and Japan**, are four countries that **support each other's bids for permanent seats** on the **United Nations Security Council**.
- **L 69 group-** A group of like-minded countries from Asia, Africa and Latin America.

### Practice Questions

#### Prelims (UPSC CSE PRELIMS 2009):

**Q.** The Security Council of UN consists of 5 permanent members, and the remaining 10 members are elected by the General Assembly for a term of

- a) 1 year
- b) 2 years
- c) 3 years
- d) 5 years

**Answer: b)**

#### Mains (UPSC CSE MAINS 2015):

**Q.** Discuss the impediments India is facing in its pursuit of a permanent seat in UN Security Council.  
**[15 marks, 250 words]**



## TOPIC: Non Aligned Movement

**Issue in brief** – India and Egypt reiterated their support for the NAM which led us to the analysis of relevance of NAM in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-and-egypt-reiterate-support-for-non-aligned-movement/article66437222.ece>

### Where in Syllabus:

GS 2: Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings

### ❖ Why in news?

- Recently, in a joint statement issued after the end of bilateral engagements for President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, who was the chief guest at the Republic Day parade here, both countries reiterated support for the Non-Aligned Movement and expressed desire for exchange of technology between their defence industries.
- “The two countries reaffirmed their commitment to multilateralism, the principles of the United Nations Charter, international law, the founding values of the Non-Aligned Movement, and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states,” they said in the joint statement.



### ❖ History of NAM

- The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) is an international organization of states that are not formally aligned with or against any major power bloc. The movement, founded in 1961, emerged as a response to the bipolar world order of the Cold War, where states were forced to choose between aligning with the Western-led North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) or the Eastern-led Warsaw Pact.
- Steps towards formation**

#### March 1947

- **Asian Relation Conference**
- Attended by leaders of Asian countries which had just become independent or leaders of national movements of those Asian countries which are still under colonialism

#### 1955

- **Bandung Conference**
- **Principles of co-existence (Panchsheel), Founding Values:**
  - Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity.
  - Non aggression
  - Non-interference in internal affairs
  - Equality and mutual benefit
  - Peaceful coexistence

#### 1961

- **First summit of NAM in Belgrade** (Capital of Yugoslavia, Serbia)
- 25 members participated to begin with. Today it has 120 members.





### • **Objectives**

- ✓ Rejection of bloc politics.
- ✓ To promote solidarity and cooperation among developing countries.
- ✓ To provide a platform for these countries to express their views and concerns on international issues.
- ✓ To oppose colonialism, apartheid, and foreign occupation.
- ✓ To promote cooperation in various fields, including economic and technical cooperation.
- ✓ Declaring the UN as the peacekeeping body.
- ✓ Protecting human rights and the environment.

### ❖ **Achievements of NAM**

- NAM played a major role in maintaining peace in areas like Germany, Korea, China, Indo-China, Congo, etc. NAM got international recognition as it tried to dilute the tense situations in the above countries.
- Being a founder member of NAM, India placed the matter of nuclear test ban before international platform in 1954. As a result, in 1963, partial ban was placed on Nuclear tests.
- The NAM organization has supported the discussion of the case of Puerto Rico's and western Sahara's self-determination before the United Nations.
- It has advocated the creation of a New International Economic Order (NIEO) based on greater economic cooperation and justice. In fact, the first UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) held in 1964 was largely a result of the efforts of the Non-Aligned countries.

### ❖ **India's Approach towards NAM**

#### • **Past Approach**

- ✓ Establishing powerful relationship with both the blocks. *Eg:* Steel plants Bhilai and Bokaro set up with Russian assistance; wheat from the USA under PL-480 scheme.
- ✓ Secured independence of our foreign policy.
- ✓ It gave India a stature led by Nehru which was out of proportion with the actual economic and military strength of India.
- ✓ Helped in reshaping of foreign policy with both the countries – Russia and USA after the collapse of Soviet Union.

#### • **Present Approach**

- ✓ India to device its foreign policy weighed heavily with decisional autonomy that makes its relations with other countries more inclusive and non-partisan instead of alignment.
- ✓ India's focus is that it wants to align with everyone without becoming a camp follower of anyone. *Eg:* Quad format India is engaging with USA but parallel India is maintaining its traditional relationship with Russia by purchasing S400 missile, partnering with them in BRICS and SCO.
- ✓ India is widely perceived as a leader of the developing world. The NAM provides an important platform for India to engage with other developing countries and to work towards creating a more just and equitable world order.
- ✓ NAM's total strength comprises 120 developing countries and most of them are members of the UN General Assembly; which can act as a strong support for India's candidature as permanent member of UNSC.
- ✓ The Indian Foreign Policy during the COVID-19 crisis is much along the same lines with attempts to emerge as a global responsible power.
- ✓ India faced a diplomatic confrontation during the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict when pressure was built upon by the United States and other Western nations to publicly condemn Russia for the Russia-Ukraine conflict and for disturbing the international order. However, India did not bow to Western pressure and continued with its independent, neutral stance.

### ❖ **Emerging Global Order**

- The world is today adrift. We are neither in a bipolar Cold War nor in a multipolar world, though perhaps tending towards a world of several power centres. We are in a world between orders.



- The lack of a coherent international response to the COVID-19 pandemic is proof of an absence of international order and of the ineffectiveness of multilateral institutions. So is the ineffective international response to climate change and other transnational threats.
- *Secular stagnation in the global and Indian economies* and a *retreat from globalisation*, the regionalisation of trade, a shifting balance of power, *the rise of China* and others, and structural China-United States strategic rivalry have shifted the geopolitical and economic centres of gravity from the Atlantic to Asia.
- Inequality between and within states has bred a narrow nationalism and parochialism. We are entering a new polarised information age, and face ecological crises of the Anthropocene, making climate change an existential threat.
- Increasing security congruence with the U.S. could enable growing cooperation in fields significant for India's transformation: energy, trade, investment, education and health.
- Several middle powers are now India's natural partners. There is also an increasing possibility of working with partners in the developing world building broader coalitions on issues of common interest.
- This time of transition between orders is also when new standards and norms are being developed, particularly in the digital space. India can and must be present at the creation.

### ❖ Is NAM relevant today?

- At the end of the Cold War, de-colonisation was largely complete by then, the apartheid regime in South Africa was being dismantled and the campaign for universal nuclear disarmament was going nowhere. Freed from the shackles of the Cold War, the NAM countries were able to diversify their network of relationships across the erstwhile east-west divide. Non-alignment lost its relevance.
- **Present Relevance**
  - ✓ Independent foreign policy free from the bullying of the superpowers.
  - ✓ Strategic autonomy was one, which soon acquired a connotation similar to non-alignment.
  - ✓ Earlier the NAM was a political movement, but now the movement is shifting its political concept to the economic. It's also true that the bipolarity of the world is ended after the cold war but still the world has an economic gap between the first world and third world nations. So, as long as the economic gap among the nations exists the NAM continues as relevant in this present world order too.
  - ✓ Promoting peace, security, and development, particularly in regions of the world that are facing conflict and instability.
  - ✓ South- South Cooperation on issues like global trade and climate change.
  - ✓ EU as the new NAM due to the emergence of USA- China rivalry. Due to grand Chinese design of Belt and Road initiative, many of the European countries are still keen on exploiting economic opportunities which comes from cooperation with China. Many EU and NATO members have joined BRI and in parallel they don't want to give up relationship with USA.

### ❖ Criticism

- Lack of unity and cohesion among its members. The absence of a unified approach and a common agenda has resulted in the movement being unable to effectively address global issues such as poverty, inequality, climate change, and human rights.
- The NAM has become irrelevant in the post-Cold War era, as the bipolar world order has given way to a multipolar one. The movement's focus on non-alignment and its rejection of military alliances is seen as outdated in today's world.
- There is no leadership on global issues, and there are also disagreements among the members. As a result, the organization has no direction as to the path it should take
- Limited impact on international relations: Despite its large membership, the NAM has had limited impact on international relations and global politics. The movement is seen as lacking the power and influence to effect real change in the world.



### ❖ Way forward

- **Focus on shared interests and priorities** among its members, and work towards finding common ground on important global issues.
- **Strengthening unity and cohesion** among its members by fostering greater cooperation and collaboration.
- **Reorient itself to address current challenges** such as poverty, inequality, climate change, and human rights. The movement should work towards finding practical solutions to these issues that are relevant to its members.
- **The NAM should re-evaluate its non-alignment principle** in light of the changing world order, and consider how it can adapt to new realities.
- **The NAM should engage with other international organizations**, such as the United Nations, G20 etc. to amplify its voice and increase its impact on global politics.
- **The NAM should encourage dialogue and diplomacy** as a means of resolving conflicts and promoting peace and stability in the world

#### Basic terms/related concepts and facts:

- The term “**non-alignment**” was coined by **V K Menon** in his speech at the United Nations (UN) in 1953, which was later used by Indian Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru during his speech in 1954 in Colombo, Sri Lanka; in which he described the Panchsheel (five restraints) which would later become the basis of the Non-Aligned Movement’
- The **founders of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)** were Jawaharlal Nehru of India, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Nasser of Egypt, Sukarno of Indonesia and Tito of Yugoslavia.

### Practice Questions

#### Prelims:

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. NAM emerged during the second world war.
2. It was created by the heads of Yugoslavia, India, Egypt, Ghana and Indonesia.

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

Answer: b)

#### Mains: (Level-Moderate)

Q. NAM started as an inclusive, democratic and mutual cooperation based platform, however, with the changing Geopolitics and emerging new global order, It has lost its relevance. Analyse.

[15 marks, 250 words]



### TOPIC: India-France Relationship

**Issue in brief** – The celebration by India and France of 25 years of their strategic partnership (January 26) presents an important opportunity for both to introspect on their relations.

[https://epaper.thehindu.com/ccidist-ws/th/th\\_delhi/issues/24539/OPS/GOQAS0SFV.1+G0SAS129U.1.html](https://epaper.thehindu.com/ccidist-ws/th/th_delhi/issues/24539/OPS/GOQAS0SFV.1+G0SAS129U.1.html)

#### **Where in Syllabus:**

**GS 2: Bilateral, Regional & Global Groupings & Agreements Involving India and/or Affecting India's Interests**

#### ❖ **Why in news?**

- **Recently**, India and France have completed 25 years of their strategic partnership. Signed in 1998, the time-tested strategic partnership has continued to gain momentum over shared values and aspirations of peace, stability and, most importantly, their desire for strategic autonomy.
- The modern relationship between India and France has its roots in the historical connections between the two countries, including the French colonial presence in India and the cultural influence of India on France. Today, India and France share a common vision of a multipolar world and collaborate on global issues such as climate change, terrorism, and multilateralism



#### ❖ **Cooperation between India and France**

##### • **Economy**

- ✓ France has emerged as a key trading partner of India with annual trade of \$12.42 billion in 2021-22.
- ✓ It is the 11th largest foreign investor in India with a cumulative investment of \$10.31 billion from April 2000 to June 2022, which represents 1.70% of the total foreign direct investment inflows into India.
- ✓ AFD, the French Agency for Development has extended a loan of Euro 100 million to the Government of India for its Smart Cities Mission. French side has been actively cooperating with various programmes in especially three Smart Cities, viz. Chandigarh, Nagpur and Puducherry.
- ✓ SNCF, the French railways and the Indian Railways have established a Permanent Indo-French Railway Forum. They have been cooperating in the studies for the feasibility of semi-high speed upgrade of Delhi-Chandigarh section and station development study of Ambala and Ludhiana.

##### • **Defense and Security**

- ✓ It has emerged as a key defence partner for India, becoming the second largest defence supplier in 2017-2021.
- ✓ A key example of this is the inducting of the French Scorpene conventional submarines, being built in India under technology transfer agreement of 2005, and the Indian Air Force having received 36 Rafale fighter jets. The Tata group has also tied up with Airbus to manufacture C-295 tactical transport



aircraft in Vadodara, Gujarat. This line is expected to be expanded into other civilian and military aircraft manufacturing in a joint venture with France.

- ✓ Robust network of military dialogues and regularly held joint exercises — Varuna (navy), Garuda (air force), and Shakti (army).
- ✓ As the complexities in the international geopolitical order have emerged, both countries have worked towards a deepening and broadening of their cooperation.

### • **Civil Nuclear Cooperation**

- ✓ France was among the first countries with which India signed a civil nuclear deal. Paris also played a critical role in limiting India's isolation in the non-proliferation order after the 1998 nuclear tests.
- ✓ In a sign of expanding cooperation, France supports India's bid for permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council as well as its entry into the Nuclear Suppliers Group.
- ✓ An agreement on civil nuclear cooperation was signed between India and France on 30 September 2008 during the visit of then PM to France.
- ✓ France has been a key partner for India in the development of nuclear energy, with French companies like Areva and EDF playing a significant role in the construction of India's Jaitapur nuclear power plant project in the state of Maharashtra.

### • **Clean Energy and Climate Change**

- ✓ France and India are strengthening their cooperation for the environment and the fight against climate change. The Agence Française de Développement (AFD) started working in India in 2008, and has a mandate focused on the preservation of global public goods.
- ✓ India has supported France in the Paris Agreement expressing its strong commitment towards mitigating climate change impact.
- ✓ New Delhi and Paris, as part of their joint efforts on climate change, launched the International Solar Alliance in 2015.

### • **Space Cooperation**

- ✓ India and France have a rich history of cooperation in the field of space for over 50 years with ISRO and the French Space Agency (CNES) carrying on various joint research programmes and launch of satellites.
- ✓ The Indian launchpad at Sriharikota was built with the assistance of France, and they remain the major supplier of components and equipment for the Indian space program. In the early 1970s, the Indo-French scientific collaboration helped ISRO's Vikas rocket engine, which is based on the Viking 4A engine built by the French space agency CNES.
- ✓ That cooperation continues for India's Gaganyaan human spaceflight program, with France space agency, CNES, will support scientific experiment plans and will provide French equipment, consumables, and medical instruments for Indian astronauts use.
- ✓ During the visit of President Emmanuel Macron in 2018, the "India-France Joint Vision for Space Cooperation" was announced. In the same year, ISRO along with Arianespace launched the GSAT-11 satellite from Kourou in French Guiana.
- ✓ Inter-planetary exploration and space transportation systems are cutting edge science and technology areas that have also been identified.
- ✓ Collaboration on Space Debris: India and France have also been working together on addressing the issue of space debris.

### • **Maritime ties**

- ✓ India and France are resident powers of the Indian Ocean and in the Indo-Pacific.
- ✓ In 2018, when the leadership of both countries welcomed the "Joint Strategic Vision of India-France Cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region" which presented a blueprint for a strengthening of ties.
- ✓ In operational terms, Franco-Indian joint patrolling in the Indian Ocean signals New Delhi's intent to engage with like-minded partners in expanding its footprint in the Indian Ocean.





- ✓ Both countries have articulated their common vision for a free, fair and open Indo-Pacific.
- ✓ India and France in September 2022 agreed to set up an Indo-Pacific Trilateral Development Cooperation Fund that will support sustainable innovative solutions for countries in the Indo-Pacific region.
- ✓ India, France and UAE trilateral groupings to ensure maritime domain awareness and security from the east coast of Africa to the far Pacific.
- ✓ Both countries share concerns over the rise of China and its aggressive behaviour, regionally and globally, and have committed to working together to ensure that there is no imbalance in the Indo-Pacific.
- **Cultural Cooperation**
  - ✓ Indian culture enjoys wide following amongst the people of France. An Indian Cultural Centre, named Vivekananda Cultural Centre, is being opened in Paris. The International Day of Yoga has been organized by the Embassy of India in Paris and other cities of France.
  - ✓ Yearlong celebrations have also been organized to commemorate 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, 550th Birth Anniversary of Shri Gurunanak Devji and the 70th Year of the Constitution of India.
  - ✓ GoI has offered five scholarships for study of Sanskrit in India to French nationals. Various other bilateral programmes of cultural cooperation are under implementation.
  - ✓ India was a guest of honour at the Paris Book Fair in 2021, while France will be a guest of honour at the New Delhi World Book Fair in 2022.

### ❖ Challenges between India and France relationship

- **Strategic priorities in the global arena**. France is a member of the European Union (EU) and has a strong focus on promoting European Unity and protecting European interests. In contrast, India has historically pursued a more non-aligned foreign policy, prioritizing its own strategic interests and maintaining a degree of independence in its foreign relations.
- **Divergences over the Ukraine crisis**, there is a broad understanding of each other's position and both countries are working together to coordinate on playing a constructive role in the crisis.
- **France's commitment to Belt & Road Initiative** is in stark contrast to India's stand as well; hence the strategic differences between the two nations.
- **Absence of Free Trade Agreement (FTA)**: Despite having good relations, France and India don't have a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between them.

### ❖ Way forward

- **Strengthen strategic partnership**: France and India can further strengthen their strategic partnership by deepening cooperation on global issues such as climate change, sustainable development, and multilateralism. There is a high-level India-France political dialogue that is ongoing in defence, maritime, counterterrorism and the Indo-Pacific. They are now forging ahead with cooperation in issues such as digitisation, cyber, green energy, a blue economy, ocean sciences, and space.
- **Enhance economic partnership**: France and India can expand their economic partnership by increasing trade and investment ties, promoting entrepreneurship and innovation, and collaborating on technology transfer. This can be achieved by simplifying trade procedures, harmonizing standards, and promoting business-to-business linkages.
- **Increase collaboration on clean energy and climate change**: France and India can further collaborate on clean energy and climate change by promoting joint research, development, and innovation in areas such as renewable energy, energy storage, and energy efficiency. This can be achieved by increasing joint



investments in clean energy projects, promoting technology transfer, and sharing best practices in energy policies.

### Basic terms/related concepts and facts:

- **International Solar Alliance:** A treaty-based international intergovernmental organization, International Solar Alliance (ISA), aims at mobilizing more than USD 1000 billion of investment needed by 2030 for the massive deployment of solar energy.
- ✓ Established by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President of France Francois Hollande on November 30, 2015,
- ✓ ISA's objective is to scale up solar energy, reduce the cost of solar power generation through aggregation of demand for solar finance, technologies, innovation, research and development, and capacity building.

### Practice Questions

#### Prelims:

**Q.** With which of the following country, India conducts military exercise namely, Exercise GARUDA, Exercise VARUNA and Exercise SHAKTI?

- a) France
- b) Russia
- c) Japan
- d) Malaysia

**Answer: a)**

#### Mains: (Level-Advance)

**Q.** India and France relationship is based on the fundamental conviction of both countries in a multipolar world and in the concept of strategic autonomy. In the light of this statement, discuss with suitable examples, the areas where the interest of both the countries are not aligned.

**[10 marks, 150 words]**



## TOPIC: Prison Reform

**Issue in brief** – PM Modi's call for prison reform is an acknowledgement that the more than a century-old system of prisons in India needs repair. This article presents an analysis on the various challenges in the prison institutions in India and their reform.

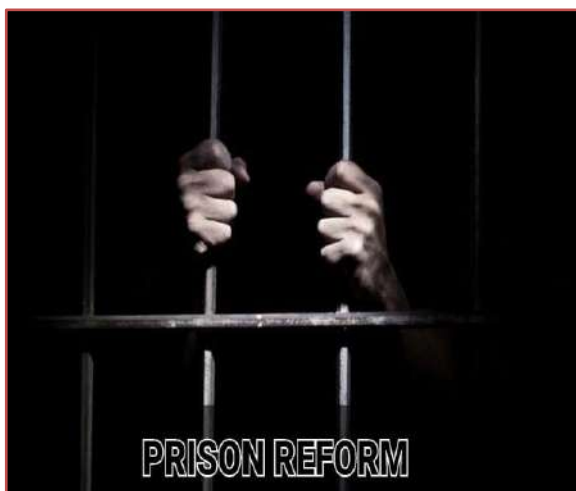
<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/adopt-emerging-technologies-while-strengthening-traditional-policing-like-foot-patrols-pm-modi-at-dgps-meet/article66421314.ece>

### Where in Syllabus:

GS 2: Issues Relating to Development and Management of human resources

### ❖ Why in News?

- Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi suggested prison reforms to improve jail management and recommended repealing obsolete criminal laws, at the annual police meet.
- A government statement said that the Prime Minister suggested making the police forces more sensitive and training them in emerging technologies. He emphasised on the importance of National Data Governance Framework for the smoothening of data exchange, across agencies.
- Prison reforms in India are a much debated subject matter and have been the point of discourse for many Committees appointed by the Government of India. However, despite many suggestions made on multiple occasions, the ground-level situation with respect to Prison reforms remains gloomy and stagnant.



### ❖ What does prison reform mean?

- Prison reforms can be understood as attempts to improve conditions inside the prisons, and also finding alternatives to incarceration. It also focuses on rehabilitation of those who have been directly or indirectly affected by the crime.
- In India, 'Prisons' fall under the State Subject, and are included in List II of the Seventh Schedule to the Indian Constitution. The management and administration of Prisons falls exclusively in the domain of the State Governments, and is governed by the Prisons Act, 1894 and the Prison Manuals of the respective State Governments.

#### **Prison Statistics India–2021 (NCRB):**

- ✓ The total number of prisons at national level has increased by 1.0%.
- ✓ The actual capacity of prisons has increased by 2.8%.
- ✓ Of the 554,034 prisoners, 427,165, or 77 percent, were undertrials in 2021. This was a 14.9 percent increase from 371,848 undertrials in prison in 2020. More than three-fourths of India's jail inmates are undertrial prisoners.
- ✓ The occupancy rate has increased from 118.0% in 2020 to 130.2% in 2021.
- ✓ According to the NCRB 1.7 % of the prisoners have mental illness. 22% rise in number of mentally ill jail inmates.



## ❖ Issues related to prison in India

- Issues such as overcrowding of prisons, unhealthy living conditions, shortage of staff, inadequate training programs for prison officials, poor budgetary allocations.
- Prisons in India are still governed by the Prisons Act, 1894, a colonial legislation and provides for the legal basis for punishment to be retributive rather than rehabilitative.
- Pendency of cases: According to records from 2022, there are currently over 4.7 billion cases pending in Indian courts at all levels of the legal system.
- Insufficient and fractured legal aid.
- Physical, mental and sexual abuse of prisoners.
- Custodial violence, especially the vulnerability of inmates to authoritarian behavior. E.g.: The death of a father and son due to alleged custodial torture in Tamil Nadu.
- Corruption and extortion.
- Lack of a statutory right to compensation and fractured post-release care and rehabilitation mechanisms.

## ❖ Why there is a need for Prison reform?

- India's requests for extradition have on multiple occasions been declined due to the apprehension that once extradited, the offenders might be subjected to torture and inhumane treatment in Indian jails. This stalled the extradition of Neils Holck alias Kim Davey accused in the Purulia Arms Drop Case by the Netherlands Government.
- Under trials lose four of their fundamental rights: the right to liberty, freedom of movement, freedom of occupation, and freedom of dignity. And the legal right to vote as well.
- The focus of correctional measures needs to shift from punishment to reintegration. It is the responsibility of the jail administration to ensure that jails become a medium for such people who are not 'born criminals' or 'criminals by nature' to get back to society.
- Most recent statistics reveal that over 77 percent of the prisoners are under-trials and may continue to be held in overcrowded prisons for years. This makes them one of the weakest sections of society.

## ❖ Committees appointed to improve the conditions of prisons in India

- **Pakwasa Committee in 1949** suggested the system of utilizing prisoners as labour for road work without any intensive supervision over them. Subsequently, certain liberal provisions were also introduced in jails manuals by which well-behaved inmates were rewarded with remission in their sentence.
- The Government of India invited technical assistance in this field from the United Nations. **Dr. W. C. Reckless, a U.N. Expert on Correctional Work**, visited India during the years 1951-52 to study prison administration in the country and to suggest ways and means of improving it. His report 'Jail Administration in India' is another landmark document in the history of prison reforms. He made a plea for transforming prisons into reformation centers and advocated establishment of new prisons.
- **All India Jail Manual Committee in 1957**: The Government of India appointed it to prepare a Model Prison Manual. This forms the bedrock of Prison management in India until today.
- **Working Group on Prisons**: Appointed by the Ministry of Home Affairs, GoI, it presented its report in 1973. This Working Group brought out in its report the need for a National Policy on Prisons.
- **Justice Mulla Committee (1983)**:
  - ✓ Need to have a national policy on prisons and proposed a draft National Policy on Prisons.
  - ✓ An All India Service namely the Indian Prisons and Correctional Service shall be constituted.
  - ✓ Government to use alternatives to imprisonment such as community service, etc.
  - ✓ Evolve proper mechanism to ensure that no undertrial prisoner is unnecessarily detained.



- ✓ Vocational training and work programmes in prisons for all inmates eligible to work.
- **Justice Krishna Iyer on women prisoners (1987):**
  - ✓ Induct more women in the Police Services.
  - ✓ Management to inculcate a gender- sensitive approach in prison management.
- **Committee under the chairmanship of Director General, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D) 2005:** Drafted a *National Policy on Prison Reforms and Correctional Administration, 2007*.
  - ✓ Amending the constitution to include principles of prison management and treatment of undertrials under DPSP, and including prisons in the concurrent list.
  - ✓ Enactment of *uniform and comprehensive law* on matters related to prisons.
  - ✓ A *department of Prisons and Correctional Services* to be opened in each state and UT.
- **Justice Amaitava Roy panel on prison reforms:** In 2018, the Supreme Court appointed this panel. The committee submitted its report on February 2020 with major recommendations includes.
  - ✓ For overcrowding
    - *Special fast-track courts* should be set up to deal with petty offences which have been pending for more than five years.
    - *Lawyer to prisoner ratio:* there should be at least one lawyer for every 30 prisoners.
  - ✓ For Understaffing
    - The Supreme Court should pass directions asking authorities to start the recruitment process against permanent vacancies within three months and the process should be completed in a year.
    - There should be use of video-conferencing for trial.
  - ✓ For Prisoners
    - Every new prisoner should be allowed a free phone call a day to his family members to see him through his first week in jail.
    - Alternative punishments should be explored.

### ❖ Challenges in prison reform

- **Upgradation of infrastructure:** The total number of prisons at national level has increased from 1,306 in 2020 to 1,319 in 2021, while total number of prisoners are 5,54,034 with occupancy rate of 130%.
- **Prisons are a state subject.** This creates difficulty in having uniform prison management. The Union can only frame models for the states to incorporate and help in coordinating between states, encouraging them to adopt best practices.
- **Lack of Political will:** Prisons do not have voting rights as per the present Election law in India. Therefore, prisoners are not a political constituency for the ruling class and hence, remain irrelevant politically. Unless this changes.
- **Bureaucratic Inefficiencies:** India's bureaucratic system is often slow and inefficient, which makes it difficult to implement reforms in a timely manner.

### ❖ Way forward

- Repealing obsolete criminal laws like IPC, CrPc, prison act 1894.
- Liberalizing the bail system after looking into all the modalities, as this will not only make the process of rehabilitation easier, it will also lead to less expenditure on prisoners, in matters the bail can be granted.
- Cooperation between the State Police and Central Agencies to leverage capabilities and share best practices.
- Replicating the model of the DGsP/IGsP Conference at the State/district levels, for discussing emerging challenges and evolving best practices among their teams.
- Our approach to crime should be preventive rather than reactive.





- Handling white collar crimes differently: Devising swift processes of attachment of properties and freezing of bank accounts are alternatives to a jail term
- Ratifying the UN Convention against torture and sensitizing the staffs about the need to treat prisoners as humanely as possible.
- Open prison or semi open prison has to be encouraged
- Pass the DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill, 2018 to reduce the overcrowding by the faster conviction of offenders.
- Strict Implementation of DK Basu case guidelines as well as NHRC guidelines by States

### Basic terms/related concepts and facts:

- **National Data Governance Framework**: Draft National Data Governance Framework Policy last year to ensure that non-personal data and anonymized data from both government and private entities are safely accessible to the research and innovation ecosystem.
- **Open or Semi open prison**: Semi-open prisons or open prisons allow convicts to work outside the jail premises and earn a livelihood and return in the evening.
- **Bail**: Bail, in law, means procurement of release from prison of a person awaiting trial or an appeal, by the deposit of security to ensure his submission at the required time to legal authority.
  - ✓ The Criminal Procedure Code, 1973, does not define bail.
  - ✓ The amount of security that is to be paid by the accused to secure his release has not been mentioned in the Cr.P.C. Thus, it is the discretion of the court to put a monetary cap on the bond.
  - ✓ In bailable offences bail is a right and not a favour.

### Practice Questions

#### Prelims:

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. In India, 'Prisons' fall under the Concurrent list and are included in List III of the Seventh Schedule to the Indian Constitution
2. According to CrPC, the accused is entitled for Bail as a matter of right.

Which of the following statements is /are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) 1 and 2 both
- d) None of the above

Answer: b)

#### Mains: (Level-Moderate)

Q. India doesn't need new prisons; it needs prison reform. Examine the statement.

(10 marks, 150 words)



## TOPIC: Union Budget 2023-24

**Issue in brief** – Union Budget 2023-24 highlights.

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1895320>

**Where in Syllabus:**

**GS 3: Government Budgeting**

### ❖ Vision of the Budget 2023-24?

- This is the first Budget in Amrit Kaal with a **vision of empowered and inclusive economy**.

- ✓ Opportunities for citizens with focus on youth
- ✓ Growth in job creation
- ✓ Strong and stable macro-economic environment

- **Four Transformative opportunities during Amrit Kaal:**

- ✓ Economic Empowerment of Women
- ✓ PM Vishwakarma KAushal Samman (PM VIKAS): Package of assistance for traditional artisans and craftspeople
- ✓ Tourism
- ✓ Green Growth



### ❖ What is the Budget 2023-24 highlights?

- **Expenditure:** The government proposes to spend Rs 45,03,097 crore in 2023-24, which is an increase of 7.5% over the revised estimate of 2022-23.
- **Receipts:** The receipts (other than borrowings) in 2023-24 are expected to be to Rs 27,16,281 crore, an increase of 11.7% over revised estimate of 2022-23.
- **GDP:** The government has estimated a *nominal* GDP growth rate of 10.5% in 2023-24 (i.e., real growth plus inflation).
- **Deficits:** Interest expenditure is estimated to be 41% of revenue receipts.
- **Ministry allocations:** Among the top 13 ministries with the highest allocations, in 2023-24, the highest percentage increase in allocation is observed in the Ministry of Railways (49%), followed by the Ministry of Jal Shakti (31%), and the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (25%).
- **The estimated targets for 2023-24**
  - ✓ Fiscal deficit — 5.9% of GDP
  - ✓ Revenue deficit — 2.9% of GDP
  - ✓ Primary deficit — 2.3% of GDP
  - ✓ GDP growth estimate: The nominal GDP is estimated to grow at a rate of 10.5% in 2023-24.
  - ✓ **Outstanding Liabilities:** The central government's outstanding liabilities declined from 51% in 2012-13 to 48% in 2018-19. From 2019-20 onwards, outstanding liabilities have been increasing, and reached a high of 61% in 2020-21. They declined to 57% in 2021-22, and are expected to remain at that level in 2023-24.
  - ✓ **Fiscal consolidation:** Targeted fiscal deficit to be below 4.5% by 2025-26.
  - ✓ Fiscal deficit of 3.5% of GSDP is allowed for states.



- Budget has focused on raising capital expenditure, reduction in tax for the middle class and sticking to fiscal prudence. The combined effect of both (capex and new tax regime) the measures could kickstart the virtuous cycle of growth.

### ❖ What are the priorities of the Budget?

- Budget adopts the following **seven priorities** acting as the ‘Saptarishi’ guiding us through the Amrit Kaal:

#### 1. **Inclusive Development**

##### ➤ **Agriculture**

- ✓ Digital Public Infrastructure: building an accessible, inclusive and informative solutions for farmers and support for growth of agri-tech industry and start-ups.
- ✓ Agriculture Accelerator Fund: For encouraging innovative startups in rural areas.
- ✓ Atmanirbhar Horticulture Clean Plant Programme: To boost production of high value crops.
- ✓ Global Hub for Millets: ‘Shree Anna’: The Indian Institute of Millet Research, Hyderabad will be supported as the Centre of Excellence for sharing best practices, research and technologies at the international level.
- ✓ The agriculture credit target has been increased to Rs 20 lakh crore with focus on animal husbandry, dairy and fisheries.
- ✓ Setting up of widely available storage capacity will enhance farmers’ remuneration by enabling sale at appropriate times.

##### ➤ **Health**: Enhanced health expenditure- 2.1% of GDP.

- ✓ 157 new nursing colleges will be established.
- ✓ Mission to eliminate Sickle Cell Anaemia by 2047.
- ✓ Joint public and private medical research to be encouraged via select ICMR labs.
- ✓ New programme to promote research and innovation in pharmaceuticals.

##### ➤ **Education**: Enhanced education expenditure- 2.5%

- ✓ Revamped teacher’s training via District Institutes of Education and Training.
- ✓ National Digital Library for Children and Adolescents.
- ✓ States will be encouraged to set up physical libraries at panchayat and ward level.

#### 2. **Reaching the Last Mile**

- **Aspirational Blocks Programme** covering 500 blocks for saturation of essential government services across multiple domains such as health, nutrition, education, agriculture, water resources, financial inclusion, skill development, and basic infrastructure.
- **Tribal Welfare**: Pradhan Mantri Primitive Vulnerable Tribal Group (PMPVTGS) mission is been launched to improve socio-economic condition on PMPVTGS.
  - ✓ In the next three years, centre will recruit teachers and support staff for the 740 Eklavya Model Residential Schools.
- **Bharat SHRI** ‘Bharat Shared Repository of Inscriptions’ will be set up in a digital epigraphy museum, with digitization of one lakh ancient inscriptions in the first stage.

#### 3. **Infrastructure and Investment**: Increase in capital investment outlay by 33.4% (3.3 per cent of GDP).

- Effective Capital Expenditure’ of the Centre will be 4.5 per cent of GDP.
- Continuation the 50-year interest free loan to state governments for one more year.
- An Urban Infrastructure Development Fund (UIDF) will be established through use of priority sector lending shortfall, which will be managed by the National Housing Bank, and will be used by public agencies to create urban infrastructure in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities.



- All cities and towns will be enabled for 100 per cent mechanical desludging of septic tanks and sewers to transition from manhole to machine-hole mode.
- **Railways:** A capital outlay of Rs 2.40 lakh crore has been provided for the Railways, which is the highest ever outlay.
- Fifty additional airports, heliports, water aerodromes and advance landing grounds will be revived for improving regional air connectivity.
- 100 critical transport infrastructure projects for last and first mile connectivity for various sectors such as ports, coal, steel will be taken up.

#### 4. Unleashing the Potential

- Realizing the vision of “Make A-I in India and Make A-I work for India”, 3 centers of excellence for Artificial Intelligence will be set-up.
- National Data Governance Policy will be released to enable access to anonymised data.
- An Entity DigiLocker will be set up for use by MSMEs, large business and charitable trusts for storing and sharing documents online securely.
- 100 labs for developing applications using 5G services will be set up in engineering institutions to realize a new range of opportunities, business models, and employment potential.
- For enhancing ease of doing business, more than 39,000 compliances have been reduced and more than 3,400 legal provisions have been decriminalized. Government has introduced the Jan Vishwas Bill to amend 42 Central Acts.
- The KYC process will be simplified adopting a ‘risk-based’ instead of ‘one size fits all’ approach.
- Vivad se Vishwas I – Relief for MSMEs: In cases of failure by MSMEs to execute contracts during the Covid period, 95 per cent of the forfeited amount relating to bid or performance security, will be returned to them by government and government undertakings.
- A Unified Filing Process will be set up for submitting information to different government agencies.
- A Voluntary Settlement Scheme will be launched to settle contractual disputes of government and its undertakings. The financing system of certain schemes will be changed from input-based to result based on a pilot basis.

#### 5. Green Growth

- PM Programme for Restoration, Awareness, Nourishment and Amelioration of Mother Earth (PM-PRANAM) will be launched to incentivise states/UTs to promote balanced use of chemical fertilisers and alternative fertilisers.
- **Energy and Environment**
- ✓ A Green Credit Programme will be notified under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 to incentivise environmentally sustainable actions.
- ✓ Battery Energy Storage Systems with 4,000 MWh capacity will be supported with viability gap funding.
- ✓ 500 new waste to wealth plants to be established under GOBARdhan scheme.
- ✓ Inter-state transmission system for evacuation and grid integration of 13 GW renewable energy from Ladakh will be constructed
- ✓ MISHTI: Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats and Tangible income.
- ✓ Amritdharohar to be implemented for the optimal usage of wetlands.
- ✓ Over the next 3 years, we will facilitate 1 crore farmers to adopt natural farming. For this, 10,000 Bio-Input Resource Centres will be set-up, creating a national-level distributed micro-fertilizer and pesticide manufacturing network.



## 6. Youth Power

- Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 4.0 will be launched to skill lakhs of youth within the next three years.
- To provide stipend support to 47 lakh youth in three years, Direct Benefit Transfer under a pan-India National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme will be rolled out.
- **Tourism:** States will be encouraged to set a 'Unity Mall' in State capital or the most popular tourist destination in the state for the promotion and sale of 'One District, One product' and GI products and other handicraft.
  - ✓ 50 Tourist destinations will be selected through challenge mode with an integrated and innovative approach.

## 7. Financial Sector

- Revamped Credit Guarantee Scheme for MSMEs with a corpus of Rs. 9000 crores
- A National Finance Information registry will be set up for accessing all financial and ancillary information.
- Central Processing Centre will be setup for faster response to companies through centralized handling of various forms filed with field offices under the Companies Act.
- Several measures will be taken to improve business activities in the Gujarat International Finance Tech-City International Financial Services Centre (GIFT IFSC). For instance, the IFSC Authority Act, 2019 will be amended to provide for arbitration and ancillary services in GIFT IFSC, and avoiding dual regulation under the Special Economic Zones Act, 2005.

## ❖ What are the main tax proposals?

### • Direct tax

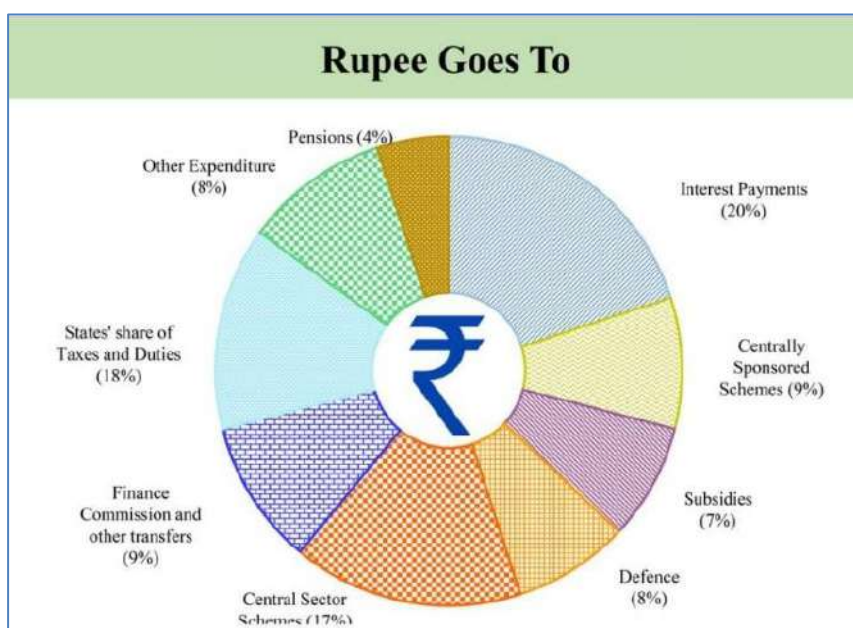
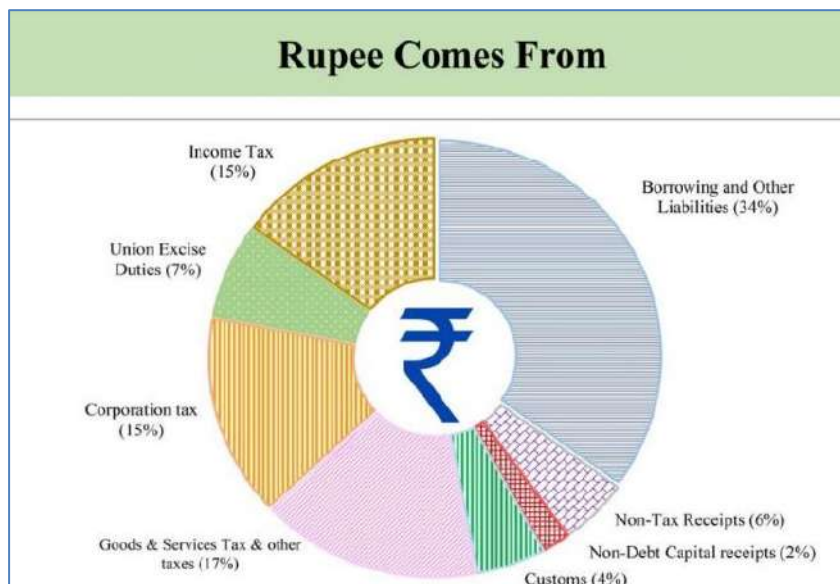
- ✓ No changes in the old tax regime
  - ✓ New tax regime to become the default tax regime. However, citizens can opt for the old tax regime.
- | Old Tax Regime                  | Tax rate   | New Tax Regime                  |
|---------------------------------|------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>Rs. 0 to 2.5 lakhs</b>       | <b>Nil</b> | <b>Rs. 0 to 3 lakhs</b>         |
| <b>Rs. 2.5 lakhs to 5 lakhs</b> | <b>5%</b>  | <b>Rs. 3 lakhs to 6 lakhs</b>   |
|                                 | <b>10%</b> | <b>Rs. 6 lakhs to 9 lakhs</b>   |
|                                 | <b>15%</b> | <b>Rs. 9 lakhs to 12 lakhs</b>  |
| <b>Rs. 5 lakhs to 10 lakhs</b>  | <b>20%</b> | <b>Rs. 12 lakhs to 15 lakhs</b> |
| <b>Above Rs. 10 lakhs</b>       | <b>30%</b> | <b>Above Rs. 15 lakhs</b>       |
- ✓ No tax on income up to Rs 7 lakh a year in new tax regime. If the income is more than Rs. 7 lakhs then the following slab will be applicable in the new tax regime.
  - ✓ Govt proposes surcharge on the income when it exceeds Rs 5 crore will be reduced from 37% to 25%.
  - ✓ Changes in tax exemptions: The tax exemption for news agencies set up solely for the collection and distribution of news will be removed.
  - ✓ Charitable trusts are required to apply 85% of their income within the year to avail income tax exemption. From April 2023, if a charitable trust donates to another charitable trust, only 85% of such a donation would be considered as application of income.
  - ✓ Co-operative societies: The income tax rate for new co-operative societies engaged in manufacturing activities has been lowered from 22% to 15% (plus 10% surcharge).
  - ✓ Presumptive taxation: The upper limit on turnover for MSMEs to be eligible for presumptive taxation has been raised from Rs 2 crore to Rs 3 crore. The upper limit on gross receipts for professionals eligible for presumptive taxation has been raised from Rs 50 lakh to Rs 75 lakh.
  - ✓ Online Games: Winnings from online games will be subject to 30% tax deductible at source.
  - ✓ Startups: Startups incorporated within a time-period and meeting other conditions can deduct up to 100% of their profits; the end of this period has been extended from March 31, 2023 to March 31,





2024. In addition, the period within which losses of startups may be carried forward has been extended from seven to ten years.

- **Indirect Taxes:** Govt. has proposed to reduce the number of basic customs duty (BCD) rates on goods from 21 to 13.
  - ✓ A reduction in mobile phone prices is likely on account of BCD on camera lens and its inputs/parts, used in manufacture of camera module of mobile phone, made nil from existing 2.5%. It has been decided to continue concessional duty on lithium-ion cells for batteries for another year. "The proposals are aimed at deepening domestic value addition in manufacture of mobile phones.
  - ✓ To promote value addition in manufacture of televisions, I propose to reduce BCD on parts of open cells of TV panels to 2.5% [from the existing 5%]
  - ✓ Exemption from the levy on vehicles, specified automobile parts, sub-systems and tyres imported by notified testing agencies for the purpose of testing/certification.
  - ✓ Denatured ethyl alcohol, used in the chemical industry, is being exempted from BCD. The Budget has reduced duty on key inputs for domestic manufacture of shrimp feed.
  - ✓ The CGST Act will be amended such that input tax credit will not be available for goods and services purchased for use in activities related to corporate social responsibility.





## Basic terms/related concepts and facts:

- **Presumptive Tax:** The presumptive taxation scheme was introduced by the Income Tax Act, 1961 to give relief to small taxpayers from the tedious job of maintaining books of account and from getting the accounts audited.
  - ✓ It allows you to pay your tax based on presumptive income. Meaning, you don't really need to estimate your income by deducting your expenses from revenue.

## Practice Questions

### Prelims:

Q. Which among the following is not mentioned as the seven priorities acting as the 'Saptarishi' in the budget 2023-24?

- a) Inclusive Development
- b) Youth Power
- c) Empowering Women
- d) Unleashing the Potential

Answer: c)

### Mains: (Level-Moderate)

Q. 'Budget has pulled off an artful balancing act between fostering medium term growth and preserving near term macro stability.' Comment **(15 marks, 250 words)**

## TOPIC: Fiscal Consolidation

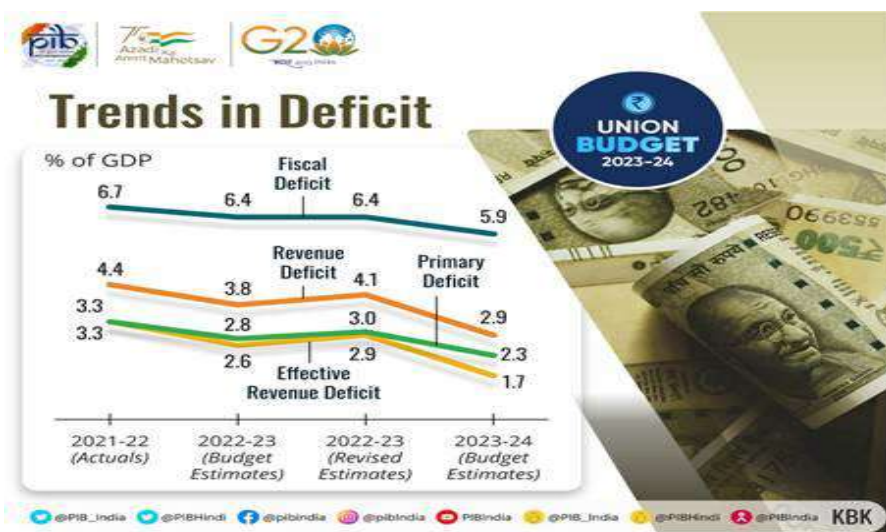
**Issue in brief** – Brief analysis of fiscal consolidation strategy of the government in the recent budget.  
[https://epaper.thehindu.com/ccidist-ws/th/th\\_delhi/issues/24302/OPS/G7TARNF52.1.png?cropFromPage=true](https://epaper.thehindu.com/ccidist-ws/th/th_delhi/issues/24302/OPS/G7TARNF52.1.png?cropFromPage=true)

**Where in Syllabus:**

**GS 3: Government Budgeting.**

### ❖ Why in news?

**The Budget for 2023-24** has attempted to address the aspirations of different segments of society. It is a good effort in a difficult situation. But how far do the Budget provisions go to meet the two fundamental goals of growth and stability? The two must go together for sustained growth over the medium term, which will be the answer to many of India's socioeconomic problems.



### ❖ What is fiscal consolidation?

- **Fiscal consolidation** is the process by which a government tries to reduce its debt by cutting spending and increasing revenue. It's a way for a government to get its finances in order and become more financially stable.
- **Importance**
  - ✓ **To attract foreign investment:** By reducing the budget deficit and stabilizing the debt-to-GDP ratio, fiscal consolidation can help to increase investor confidence and attract more foreign investment.
  - ✓ **To reduce inflation:** Emerging economies are often susceptible to high inflation, which can undermine the purchasing power of citizens and reduce economic growth. By reducing the budget deficit, fiscal consolidation can help to reduce the risk of inflation and promote macroeconomic stability.
  - ✓ **Long-term sustainability:** Fiscal reducing public debt, fiscal consolidation can help ensure that a government's finances are sustainable over the long-term. This is particularly important for countries with high levels of public debt, as it can help prevent future financial crises and ensure that there is sufficient funding available for future generations.
  - ✓ **Improved public services:** By reducing the burden of public debt, fiscal consolidation can free up resources that can be used to improve public services, such as education, health care, and infrastructure.

Overall, fiscal consolidation is important for ensuring the long-term stability and sustainability of a government's finances, as well as supporting economic growth and improving public services.



### • Fiscal deficit and how does the govt. finance fiscal deficit?

The difference between total revenue and total expenditure of the government is fiscal deficit.

#### ➤ **Government was financing its deficit:**

- ✓ **By borrowing:** Borrowings: internally from a commercial bank, or from external sources like the IMF, other governments, etc.
- ✓ **Deficit financing (that is, printing new currency):** borrowing funds from RBI against its securities (so, RBI prints new currency).

### ❖ **How the Govt. achieves fiscal consolidation?**

- The government can achieve fiscal consolidation through a combination of measures, including:
  - ✓ **Cutting government spending:** This can involve reducing government subsidies, cutting back on discretionary spending, and reducing the size of the public sector workforce.
  - ✓ **Increasing tax revenue:** This can be achieved through measures such as raising taxes, closing tax loopholes, and improving tax collection efficiency.
  - ✓ **Privatization:** The government can sell off state-owned assets and enterprises to private companies, reducing the size of the public sector and generating revenue.
  - ✓ **Social security reform:** The government can reform its social security system to reduce the long-term fiscal burden and make it more sustainable.
  - ✓ **Reforms to reduce entitlement spending:** The government can implement reforms to programs and subsidies to control the growth of spending and reduce the long-term fiscal burden.
  - ✓ **Debt restructuring:** The government can restructure its debt by renegotiating the terms of its loans, extending the maturity of its debt, or exchanging its existing debt for debt with longer maturities.

### ❖ **Fiscal consolidation in the context of the Budget**

Growth depends on the size of government expenditure and its revenue and capital components.

#### • **Expenditure side:**

**Govt. expenditure** is budgeted to grow at 7.5% while nominal GDP growth is estimated to fall from 15.4% in 2022-23 to 10.5% in 2023-24.

- ✓ The **total expenditure relative to GDP** is shown to fall. **The composition of government expenditure, however, would be growth positive.**
- ✓ Capital expenditure: 37%; Revenue expenditure: 1.2%.
- ✓ According to estimates by the RBI (2019, 2020), the **multiplier associated with central government capital expenditure is 2.45, while that for revenue expenditure is 0.45**
- ✓ **Investment expenditure by central public sector undertakings** (PSUs) is budgeted to **fall** by 0.2% points.
- ✓ **Off budget** expenditure were brought back onto the budget two years ago is step to improve transparency.
- ✓ **State capital expenditures may increase as a result of central grants** to the States meant for capital asset creation amounting to 1.2% of GDP.
- ✓ Also, **augmentation of States' fiscal deficit to GDP ratio to 3.5%**, and the **facility of 50 years of interest-free loans for creating capital assets** in 2023-24 could further boost infrastructure creation.

#### • **Revenue side**

- ✓ **Tax collection as a percentage of GDP** is marginally higher than they were in 2018-19.
- ✓ Increase in exemption limits means taxation is resting on the narrow base of taxpayers.
- ✓ **GST collection ratio** has remained essentially the same as it was five years ago, largely because the efficiency gains have been offset by repeated reduction in rates.
- ✓ **Capital tax** has been declined significantly because tax rates have been reduced.



### • External conditions

- ✓ **The global uncertainties** like three continuous COVID-19 waves, ongoing Russia Ukraine conflict, energy price volatility necessitated additional flexibilities in terms of expenditure management and fiscal consolidation.
- ✓ **Medium-term fiscal policy**: The Centre has attributed the deviation of the budgeted 5.9% fiscal deficit-GDP ratio to external economic conditions.
- ✓ **No fixed deadline for fiscal deficit target**: No indication of the year by which it envisages reaching a fiscal deficit level of 3% of GDP.
  - The Budget has indicated that a level of 4.5% of GDP would be reached by 2025-26, calling for a steeper adjustment of 0.7% points each in the next two years.
  - It might require another two to three years for reaching a level of 3%. However, even by this time, the mandated debt-GDP ratio of 40% would not be reached.
- ✓ **Centre's debt-GDP level net of liabilities** on account of investment in special securities of states under the National Social Security Fund (NSSF), is budgeted to increase. This increase is expected as the primary deficit to GDP ratio is indicated at 2.3% in 2023-24.
- ✓ **High level of Centre's debt-GDP ratio** is for interest payments relative to revenue receipts, which is budgeted at 41% in 2023-24. This reduces, significantly, the space for primary expenditure in the Centre's budget.
- **Private investment** requires that enough investible resources are left for the private sector after the public sector's pre-emptive claim on these resources.
  - ✓ At present, total investible resources, consisting of financial savings of the household sector and net foreign capital inflows, may be estimated at 10.5% of GDP. The central and State fiscal deficits considered together may amount to 9.4% of GDP in 2023-24. This implies that only 1.1% is available for the private sector and the non-government public sector.
  - ✓ The investment of the Centre's PSUs themselves amount to 1.1% of GDP in 2023-24, leaving little scope for State PSUs and the private sector.
  - ✓ This creates a non-compliant environment for interest rate reduction as borrowing beyond the available investible resources by the government could lead to inflation.

### ❖ Issues

- **Notable increase in the expenditure** over the past 5 years which remains substantial, exceeding 1.5% points of GDP. As a result, the structural fiscal deficit will amount to an uncomfortably large 6% of GDP next year.
- **Centralisation**: On the revenue side, state will receive less gross tax revenue in comparison with 2018-19.
  - ✓ This reflects centre's increasing use of cess, which will not be shared with the states, as well as the use of considerable portion of tax collection (from GST compensation cess) to repay the GST council for the loans given to the states during pandemic.
  - ✓ On expenditure side, non-interest, non-subsidy current expenditure is compressed by a sizeable percentage.
    - **Limits and limitations of centralization**:
  - ✓ **Limit**: Centralisation will lead to a long need improvement in state government efficiency, there is only so much consolidation achieved in this fashion. Then, centre will need to find other ways to reduce its fiscal deficit to its target of 4.5% of GDP.
  - ✓ **Limitation**: If centralization does not succeed in improving efficiency, it would result in a redistribution of efficiency from the state to the centre. Hence, states will need to reduce the services that they provide to the people or increase their borrowing, in which case the overall fiscal deficit might not improve at all.





## ❖ Conclusion

- The Government has kept the *fiscal policy “accommodative”*, and has undertaken capital spending to support economic growth recovery.
- The *ratio of capital expenditure to Fiscal Deficit (Capex-FD)* is estimated at 56.0% in BE 2023-24 as compared to 41.5% in RE 2022-23 and 37.4% in FY 2021-22. Increased capex spending by the government might result in the desired “*crowding-in*” of private sector investment.
- The centre requires stronger fiscal consolidation road map over the medium term.

### Basic terms/related concepts and facts:

- **Accommodative fiscal policy** refers to the use of government spending and taxation measures to stimulate economic activity and boost demand. This type of fiscal policy is typically pursued during periods of economic slowdown, high unemployment, and low inflation, with the aim of promoting growth and reducing economic hardship.
- **Crowding-in** is a phenomenon that occurs when higher government spending leads to an increase in economic growth and therefore encourages firms to invest due to the presence of more profitable investment opportunities. The crowding-in effect is observed when there is an increase in private investment due to increased public investment.

### Practice Questions

#### Prelims:

Q. High Fiscal Deficit does not lead to:

1. Rise in the general price level
2. Crowding in effect
3. Increase in uncertainty of the domestic economy to the external shocks
4. Increase in the developmental expenditure

Choose the correct option from the codes given below:

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

Answer: a)

#### Mains: (Level-Basic)

Q. What is fiscal consolidation? Explain the implications of high fiscal deficit? [10 marks, 150 words]



### TOPIC: Ken-Betwa Project

**Issue in brief** – Recently the Steering Committee of the Ken-Betwa Link Project (KBLP) held its third meeting

<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/energy-and-environment/explained-what-ails-the-ken-betwa-river-link-project/article66419523.ece#:~:text=In%20December%202021%2C%20the%20Union,Bundelkhand%20region%20in%20Uttar%20Pradesh.>

#### **Where in Syllabus:**

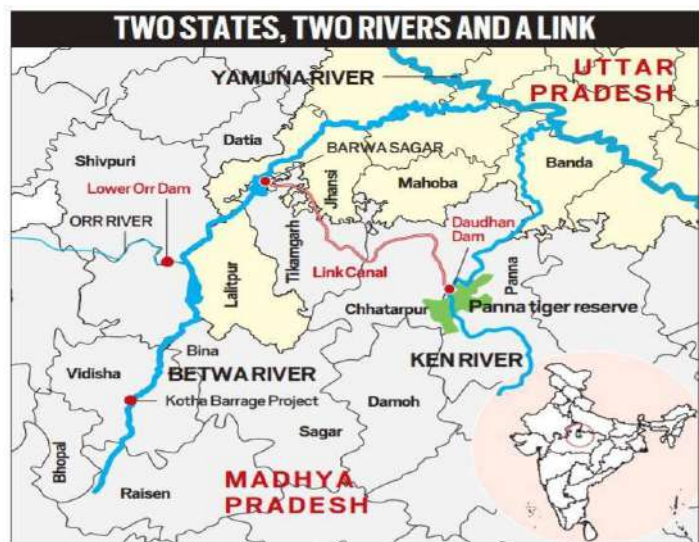
**GS 3: Environment Conservation**

#### ❖ Why in news?

Recently the Steering Committee of the Ken-Betwa Link Project (KBLP) held its third meeting. The meeting stated that KBLP is the “**flagship**” project of the national government and it “is **crucial for the water security and socio-economic development of Bundelkhand region**”.

#### ❖ What is Ken-Betwa Link Project (KBLP)?

- The Ken-Betwa Link Project is the **first project under the National Perspective Plan** for interlinking of rivers.
- It aims to **transfer surplus water from the Ken river in Madhya Pradesh to Betwa in Uttar Pradesh** to irrigate the drought-prone Bundelkhand region.
  - Both the rivers are **tributaries of river Yamuna**.
  - The link will be in the form of a canal that will be fed by the new **Daudhan Dam on the Ken**, to be built within **Panna Tiger Reserve**.
- A Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) called **Ken-Betwa Link Project Authority (KBLPA)** will be set up to implement the project.



#### ❖ Significance of the Project

- **Irrigation, drinking water & hydropower:**
  - According to the **Union Jal Shakti Ministry**, the project is expected to provide **annual irrigation of 10.62 lakh hectares**,
  - It will provide **drinking water supply to about 62 lakh people** and generate **103 MW of hydropower**.
- **Benefits to Bundelkhand:**
  - The Ken-Betwa Link Project lies in **Bundelkhand, a drought-prone region**, which spreads across **13 districts of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh**.



- It is expected to boost **socio-economic prosperity** in the backward Bundelkhand region on account of increased agricultural activities and employment generation.
- It would also help in **arresting distress migration** from this region
- **Way for other river linking projects:**
  - It will pave the way for more interlinking of river projects to ensure that scarcity of water does not become an inhibitor for development in the country.

### ❖ Concerns regarding the Interlinking of the river

- **Threat to Biodiversity:**
  - Changes in Rivers course will **impact the flora and fauna**, the **wetlands** and the **floodplains** that are **intricately linked to the river system**. For instance, spread of invasive species can take place which would affect the ecosystem of both the rivers.
- **Threat to deltas:**
  - The Interlinking of the river will **reduce the amount of flow of water and sediments in the downstream rivers** thereby affecting the formation of deltas.
- **Huge Economic cost:**
  - River inter-linking is costly as it involved huge cost from building the **link canals to the monitoring and maintenance of infrastructure**.
- **Disagreement between the states:**
  - The states are not able to agree on how to share water particularly during the non-monsoonal months.
- **Social impact:**
  - Reconstruction and rehabilitation caused due to **displacement resulting from the interlinking of the river project** will involve social cost as well.
- **Regarding Ken-Betwa river link project:**
  - **Issues of water security:**
    - The government's plan is based on a '**surplus and deficit**' model for the project and as per experts, this model has little scientific basis.
    - Critics are concerned that the project will endanger the **water security of Panna**.
    - According to them, there **may not even be enough water in the Ken**, a non-perennial river, to **meet the projected needs of the Betwa**.
  - **Inter-state conflicts:**
    - This linking may also intensify water conflicts between Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh;
  - **Endangering Panna Tiger Reserve & Ken Gharial Sanctuary:**
    - Further, out of the total of forest area coming under submergence of Daudhan dam of Ken Betwa Link Project, maximum area of the forest lies within the **core tiger habitat of Panna Tiger Reserve**.
    - Panna is exceptional tiger habitat because of its **deep gorges, which will be drowned if the new dam is built**.
    - Downstream of the national park lies the **Ken Gharial Sanctuary**, created to protect the **critically endangered Gangetic gharial**.
    - According to the experts, the destructive impact of the proposed dam on the flow of water into and outside of this sanctuary should be immediately clear.
  - **Legal hurdles:**
    - The **project is still to receive** full forest clearance, environment approval from the National Green Tribunal. Still, it got Cabinet approval and was announced for implementation in the 2022-23 Union budget.

- **Sections 29 and 35(6) of the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972** restrict human activities within ‘sanctuaries’ and ‘national parks’ without prior approval and the project aims at going against the provisions.
- Approval by the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife to the Ken-Betwa link Project has **not been proved to be necessary for the improvement and better management** of the wildlife therein as provided in Section 35(6) of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

### ❖ Steps taken by government for Inter-linking of the rivers

#### National Perspective Plan (NPP):

- It was prepared by the then Ministry of Irrigation (now Ministry of Jal Shakti) in 1980 for **water resources development** through the **inter-basin transfer of water**.
- It aimed for transferring water from **water-surplus basins** where there is **flooding** to **water-deficit basins** where there is **drought/scarcity**.
- The NPP comprises of the two components:

#### ▪ Himalayan Rivers Development:

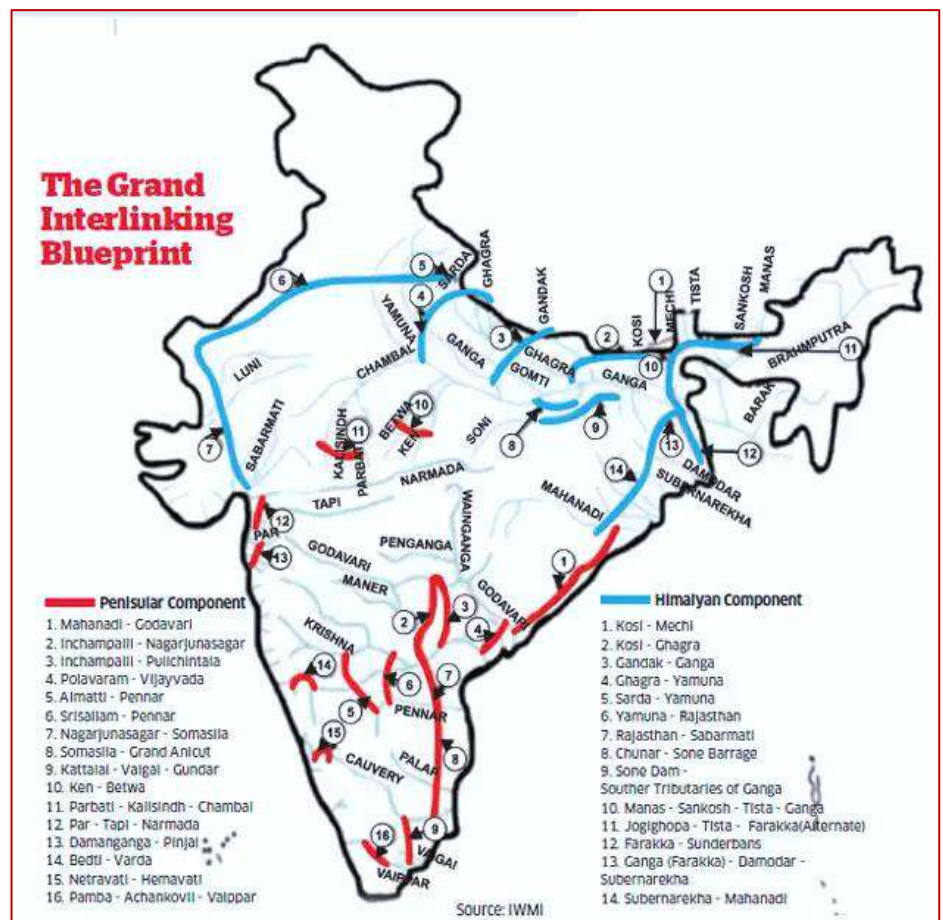
- It envisages the

construction of storage reservoirs on the main **Ganga and Brahmaputra Rivers** and their **principal tributaries** in India and Nepal so as to conserve monsoon flows for irrigation and hydro-power generation, besides flood control.

- Links will **transfer surplus flows of the Kosi, Gandak and Ghagra to the west**.
- Surplus flows that will become available on account of the interlinking of the Ganga and the Yamuna are proposed to be transferred to the **drought-prone areas of Haryana, Rajasthan and Gujarat**.

#### ▪ Peninsular Rivers Development:

- The main component of Peninsular Rivers Development is the “**Southern Water Grid**” which is envisaged to **link Mahanadi, Godavari, Krishna, Pennar, and Cauvery rivers**.







## ❖ Way Forward

- As per the experts, an independent hydrological study of river Ken is necessary and no developmental project should destroy the ecology of the fragile ecosystems and an important tiger habitat in the country.
- Appropriate rehabilitation measures should be taken by the Government as the interlinking project would lead to large-scale displacement of people and animals.
- As per experts, it will be more economical and faster if the **governments restored Bundelkhand's lakes and ponds** rather than building dam. The region is already blessed with adequate annual rainfall.
- Hence, KBLP has both technical and legal issues and it can also intensify water conflicts between Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.

### Basic terms/related concepts and facts:

- The important tributaries of the Yamuna River are **Tons, Chambal, Hindon, Betwa and Ken**. Other small tributaries of the Yamuna River include the **Giri, Sind, Uttangan, Sengar and the Rind**.
- Ken meets with Yamuna in **Banda district of UP** and with Betwa in **Hamirpur district of UP**.
- **Rajghat, Paricha and Matatila dams** are over Betwa river.
- Ken River **passes through Panna tiger reserve**.
- **Panna Tiger Reserve**: It is Biosphere Reserve and UNESCO included it in the Man and Biosphere reserve and World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

## Practice Questions

### Prelims:

**Q.** Arrange the following tributaries of Yamuna River from west to east direction

1. Betwa
2. Ken
3. Sindh
4. Chambal

Choose the correct option from the codes given below:

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

**Answer: a)**

### Mains (UPSC MAINS 2020):

**Q.** The interlinking of rivers can provide viable solutions to the multi-dimensional inter-related problems of droughts, floods, and interrupted navigation. Critically examine.

[15 marks, 250 words]

### DIY:

1. Syllabus Affairs dated: 24<sup>th</sup> March 2022 on Interlinking of Rivers (<https://t.me/DashoVidyaIAS/1442>)
2. <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1892042>



## TOPIC: Gaganyaan Mission

**Issue in brief** –The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), along with the Indian Navy, has conducted a trial for the Gaganyaan.

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/gaganyaan-mission-isro-navy-start-practicing-crew-recovery-8434302/>

### Where in Syllabus:

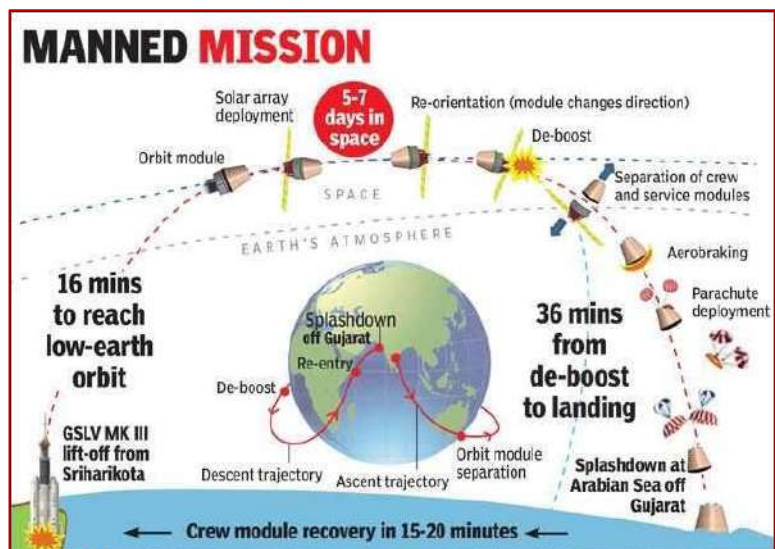
**GS 3: Indigenization of technology and developing new technology.**

### ❖ Why in news?

- ISRO & Indian Navy has carried out initial recovery trials of the Crew Module in the Navy's Water Survival Test Facility (WSTF) in Kochi.
- The trials were part of the preparation for crew module recovery operations for the Gaganyaan mission that will be carried out in Indian waters. The overall recovery operations are being led by the Indian Navy.

### ❖ Significance of the trial

- Need of recovery:**
  - According to ISRO, as the safe recovery of the crew is the final step to be accomplished for any successful human spaceflight, it is of paramount importance and it has to be carried out with the minimum lapse of time.
- Feedback operation:**
  - These trials assist in validating the Standard operating procedure (SoP), and training recovery teams as well as the flight crew.
  - They provide valuable inputs for the utilization of recovery accessories.
  - The feedback from the recovery team/trainers helps improve the recovery operations SoP, design various recovery accessories, and finalize the training plan.



### ❖ Gaganyaan Mission

- The Gaganyaan project envisages demonstration of human spaceflight capability by launching a crew of three members to **low earth orbit of 400 km for 5-7 days** and bringing them back safely to earth, by landing in Indian sea waters.
- The **first trial (uncrewed flight)** for Gaganyaan is being planned by the end of 2023 or early 2024. This will be followed by sending **Vyom Mitra**, a humanoid and then with the crew onboard.
- The payload will consist of:
  - Crew module** - spacecraft carrying human beings.



- **Service module** - powered by two liquid propellant engines.
- It will be equipped with emergency escape and emergency mission abort.
- This manned mission will be the **first of ISRO's human spaceflight missions**.
  - The **US, Russia and China** are the **only three countries** to have conducted human spaceflights yet.
- It would be launched by ISRO's **Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle GSLV Mk III (3 stages heavy-lift vehicle)**.

### ❖ Significance of the Gaganyaan Mission

- **Atma Nirbhar/Self-reliance:**
  - It will help India in **achieving self-reliance** by boosting our capacity in launching satellites under the Make in India Initiative. It is in line with the vision of **Atma Nirbhar Bharat**
  - It will reduce India's dependence on foreign nations and help in developing **strategic autonomy**.
  - It will boost private sector participation in the space sector.
- **R&D and robotic programme:**
  - It will push the research and development (R&D) in the space sector. It will attract youth in the field of space sector.
- **Robotic programme:**
  - It is in line with India's progress towards a sustained and affordable human and robotic programme to explore the solar system and beyond.
- **Focus on regional needs:**
  - Gaganyaan will focus on regional needs because one International Space Station (ISS) may not be enough to cater to global requirements.
- **International cooperation:**
  - The programme will strengthen international partnerships and global security through the sharing of challenges and peaceful goals.

### ❖ Challenges

According to NASA, manned spaceflight missions are associated with the following challenges:

- **Environmental Hazards for crew members:** Hostile space environment with a lack of gravity and atmosphere and danger of radiation.
- **Astronauts may have medical issues due to:**
  - **Microgravity:**
    - Transition from one gravity field to another affects hand-eye and head-eye coordination leading to orientation-loss, vision, muscle strength, aerobic capacity, etc.
  - **Isolation:**
    - Behavioural issues are likely to crop up when astronauts are confined into small spaces and have to rely on limited resources. They may suffer from depression, cabin fever, fatigue, sleep disorder and other psychiatric disorders.
- **Artificial Atmosphere:**
  - There are two choices for an artificial atmosphere, either an Earth-like mixture of oxygen in inert gas or pure/concentrated oxygen.
  - A pure oxygen atmosphere is toxic and has fire risk, especially in ground operations.
- **Aerospace Technology Challenges:**
  - Space flight requires much higher velocities than air transportation. Travelling in a rocket is like sitting on an exploding bomb with a speed increasing from 0 to over 25,000 km per hour in a few minutes.
  - Anything may go wrong during the launch and pre and post phases, including the explosion of the rocket.



## ❖ Way Ahead

- **Environmental Control and Life Support System (ECLSS)** needs to be developed to supply the essentials, maintain the acceptable environment and deal with the management of waste products.
- **Conduct all the tests first properly before launching. Tests include: Ground testing**, followed by **tests in the space orbit** while simulating **zero gravity and deep vacuum**.
- **Launch escape system safety features** have to be built to minimize the loss and warning of anything abnormal
- **Extensive training of the crew and mission control team** is required.

### **Basic terms/related concepts and facts:**

- **GSLV Mk-III (LVM3)**: is the new heavy lift launch vehicle of ISRO for achieving a 4000 kg spacecraft launching capability to GTO (Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit) in a cost effective manner. LVM3 is a three stage launch vehicle consisting of two solid propellant S200 strap-ons and core stages comprising of L110 liquid stage, C25 cryogenic stage, the equipment bay (EB) and the Encapsulated assembly (EA).
- **Navy's Water Survival Test Facility (WSTF)**: WSTF, Kochi, is a state-of-the-art facility of the Indian Navy that provides realistic training of aircrew for escape from a ditched aircraft under varied simulated conditions and crash scenarios. WSTF simulates different sea state conditions, environmental conditions, and day/night conditions.

## Practice Questions

### **Prelims:**

**Q.** Consider the following statements regarding India's Gaganyaan mission:

1. It will put a manned spacecraft in a Medium Earth Orbit (MEO).
  2. It will use GSLV Mk III as a launch vehicle.
  3. If successful India would become the 4th nation in the world to have sent crews to space
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

**Answer: b)**

### **Mains (UPSC 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 mission. What are the main obstacles to launching a manned space mission, both in terms of technology and logistics? Discuss.

**(15 marks, 250 words)**

### **DIY:**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/isro-gaganyaan-mission-engine-function-7734354/>  
<https://www.nasa.gov/hrp/5-hazards-of-human-spaceflight>



### TOPIC: Left Wing Extremism

**Issue in brief** – Recent statement of Home Minister on reduction of deaths due to Left Wing Extremism (LWE) presents an opportunity to understand the Government's approach to curb LWE. <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/number-of-deaths-due-to-left-wing-extremism-came-down-under-100-in-2022-shah-8430413/>

#### Where in Syllabus:

GS 3: Linkages between Development and Spread of Extremism.

#### ❖ Why in news?

- **Recently, the Union Home Minister Amit Shah said** that for the first time in four decades, the number of deaths of civilians and security forces in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) came down under 100 in 2022.
- He chaired the meeting of the Parliamentary Consultative Committee of the Ministry of Home Affairs to discuss Left Wing Extremism, said the MHA is determined to destroy the entire ecosystem of LWE by "*financial choking*".



#### ❖ What is Left Wing Extremism?

- **Left Wing Extremism** or Naxalism is a violent movement that claims to fight for the social and economic rights of underprivileged groups who want to overthrow the Indian Government and replace it with a different regime.
- **Ideology of Naxalism:** The Naxalite ideology is broadly based on Comrade Charu Majumdar's historic Eight Documents and creative application of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung thought in Indian conditions.  
**Ideology of Mao:** Political power **grows** out of the **barrel** of a **gun**.
- **Origin:** The term "Naxalites" comes from Naxalbari, a small village in West Bengal where a section of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI-M) led by Charu Majumdar, Kanu Sanyal, and Jangal Santhal initiated a violent uprising in 1967.



#### **Naxalite Attacks**

- 2021: At least 22 personnel lost their lives in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur attack
- 2019: Landmine blast in Maharashtra's Gadchiroli
- 2017: Twelve CRPF personnel were killed in Sukma, Chhattisgarh.
- 2010: Jnaneswari Express train derailment
- In terms of states, the top five worst-affected states in 2020 were Chhattisgarh (375 incidents), Jharkhand (246 incidents), Maharashtra (109 incidents), Odisha (73 incidents), and Bihar (60 incidents).





### ❖ The Government's approach to deal with LWE

- The principal strategy used by the government is the 'Law and Order Approach'. This can be established by the fact that around 532 companies of central paramilitary forces have been deployed in the affected states. The MHA has set up a special 'institutional mechanism' for counter-insurgency (COIN) tactics. It consists of
  - ✓ A high-level task force named the 'Review Committee' under the Cabinet Secretary for promoting coordinated efforts for development and security measures.
  - ✓ An Inter-Ministerial Group under the Ministry of Home Affairs headed by Secretary, Naxal Management Division – to review the implementation of development programmes in the Naxalite-affected areas.
  - ✓ A Task Force on inter-State coordination headed by Special Secretary, Internal Security.
  - ✓ A coordination Centre headed by Union Home Secretary.
- The MHA's policy to deal with **LWE has three main pillars** –
  - ✓ Strategy to curb extremist violence with ruthless approach.
  - ✓ Better coordination between Centre and states.
  - ✓ Eliminating support for LWE through public participation in development.
- **The central government has adopted a policy of zero tolerance in this direction.** To combat the Left Wing Extremism (LWE) menace in a holistic manner, the Government of India has formulated a **National Policy and Action Plan**, which envisages a multi-pronged approach comprising security, development and ensuring rights and entitlements of local communities etc.
- **Security Related Measures:**
  - ✓ **The BSF air wing has been strengthened** with the induction of new pilots and engineers in the last one year to aid operations in LWE-affected areas and save lives of our soldiers
  - ✓ **Intelligence and Networking-** The government has set up Multi-Agency Centre (MAC) at the Central level and State Multi-Agency Centre (SMAC) at the state level.
  - ✓ **Operation Green Hunt** (2009), **Operation Prahar** (2018).
  - ✓ **Operation Samadhan:** Operation 'SAMADHAN' is the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)'s answer to the Naxal problem. The acronym SAMADHAN stands for Smart leadership, Aggressive strategy, Motivation and training, Actionable intelligence, Dashboard Based KPIs (key performance indicators) and KRAs (key result areas), Harnessing technology, Action plan for each theater, and No access to financing.
  - ✓ **Specialized Commando Battalion (CoBRA)** that are equipped and trained in guerrilla and jungle warfare techniques and deployed to the worst-affected districts.
  - ✓ **Black Panther Combat Force for Chhattisgarh** on the lines of Greyhound in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.
  - ✓ **Security Related Expenditure (SRE) Scheme:** This Scheme is being implemented as a sub-scheme of the Umbrella Scheme 'Modernization of Police Forces.
  - ✓ **Unified Command System:** In 2010, the Government established a Unified Command for inter-state coordination (in intelligence gathering, information sharing and police responses) between Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha and West Bengal. The Unified Command will have a retired major general as a member for advice and guidance in dealing with Naxalism.
- **Development Approach:** The 'Developmental Approach' can be best illustrated through the works of an expert committee (headed by D. Bandyopadhyay, the architect of "Operation Barga")
  - ✓ **Aspirational Districts Programme**
  - ✓ **LWE Mobile Tower Project:** To improve mobile connectivity in the LWE areas, the Government approved installation of mobile towers in LWE affected States and 2335 mobile towers have been installed in Phase 1.
  - ✓ **Road Requirement Plan:** This Scheme is being implemented by the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways for improving road connectivity.
  - ✓ **Skill Development Program:** ROSHNI

#### Case Study

##### **SARANDA Model**

- Focus on Infrastructure Development like Road & Offices.
- Integrated Development Centre will be opened that will provide subsidised ration under PDS, generate Employment under MGNREGA





# Dasho Vidya IAS–Syllabus Affairs

## Internal Security (February, 2023)

- **Media Management Measures:** Activities like Tribal Youth Exchange programmes, radio jingles, documentaries, pamphlets etc. are being conducted to check false Propaganda of Naxalism.

### Data related to decline in LWE in India:

- LWE related violence in the country has declined by 77% from all time high of 2258 incidents in 2009 to 509 in 2021.
- The **geographical influence of Maoists** has contracted to only 41 districts in the country, a sharp reduction from 96 such districts in 10 States in 2010.
- **Surrender:** It has increased by 400% compared to 2013. In 2017 itself, more than 30 Maoist surrendered.

### ❖ What challenges still lies before the government to check Naxalism even after having such elaborate plans and policies?

- **Finance:** These groups have been known to fund themselves through various illegal means, such as extortion, kidnapping for ransom, and bank robberies. Additionally, they have been known to receive support from sympathizers and front organizations operating in India and abroad.
- ✓ **Link with Organised Crime:** Some reports have also emerged linking Naxalites to organised crime. In 2018, Indian police seized an amount of crude heroin equivalent to 700 million Rupees from Naxal areas. Officials speculated that following the crackdown of cross-border drug cartels along the Afghan-Pakistan trafficking route.
- ✓ Jharkhand is one of the Indian states heavily affected by the Maoist insurgency and the Maoists have been using **opium cultivation** as a source of revenue since 2007.
- **Lack of coordination and intelligence sharing** among the different security agencies and state governments.
- **Corruption and bureaucratic red tape** have hindered the implementation of development programs in the LWE-affected areas.
- **Lapse in Surrender Cum Rehabilitation Policy.**
- **Capacity Building of Forces** is lacking to tackle Guerrilla warfare.
- **External Connections:** The CPI-Maoist is a member of the Coordination Committee of Maoist Parties and Organisations of South Asia (CCOMPOSA), an umbrella organisation that serves as a discussion platform for Maoist parties in the subcontinent.
- ✓ GoI accuses the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) of working with the Naxalites to smuggle drugs and counterfeit money along the Indian-Bangladeshi border, in exchange for weapons and explosives from the ISI.
- ✓ Support from External Agents like China.

### ❖ Way forward

- **Use of technology:** The government can use technology such as drones, surveillance cameras, and GIS mapping to monitor the activities of the Naxalites and improve the efficiency of security operations. For example, the government of Telangana has launched an initiative called "Aerial Surveillance of Maoists" to monitor the activities of the Naxalites using drones.
- **Better inter-state coordination and intelligence sharing.** Joint Task Forces for operations along inter-State boundaries to be set up.
- **Forces should be more proactive and aggressive** in owning operations, rather than being reactive.
- **Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) to be reviewed** to ensure effective choking of fund flow to LWE groups.
- **Dialogues:** The government should initiate dialogue with the Naxalites to address their concerns, demands and grievances in a peaceful manner. This could help to bring the Naxalites into the mainstream and reduce the level of violence in the affected areas.



- **XAXA Committee:** Land Acquisition- Gram Sabha consent if forged, there should be Penalty.
  - ✓ Gram Sabha: Empower it to restore alienated land back to original owner, even while a case is pending in the court.
  - ✓ Mining: -It should be done by Tribal Cooperatives only as in Andhra.
  - ✓ Participative Policy: Like Tribal Health Policy with Special focus on Tribal health.

### Basic terms/related concepts and facts:

- **Surrender-cum-Rehabilitation**: This policy helps those Naxalites who want to abjure violence, surrender and join the mainstream. Surrender and rehabilitation policy is part of a multi-pronged conflict management and resolution strategy and is required to be implemented along with firm action by police against those who follow the path of violence.  
Objectives: The objectives of these Guidelines for surrender-cum-rehabilitation of naxalites in the naxal affected States are:
  - ✓ To wean away the misguided youth and hardcore naxalites who have strayed into the fold of naxal movement and now find themselves trapped into that net.
  - ✓ To ensure that the naxalites who surrender do not find it attractive to join the naxal movement again.
  - ✓ Tactical surrenders by those elements who try to make use of the benefits extended by the Government to further their vested interests should not be encouraged under the Scheme.

### Practice Questions

#### **Prelims:**

**Q.** Operation Green Hunt, Operation Prahar, Operation Samadhan are launched by government to deal with which of the following:

- a) Naxalism
- b) Terrorism
- c) Fake Currencies
- d) Human Trafficking

**Answer: a)**

#### **Mains: (Level-Moderate)**

**Q.** Why has government not been successful in eliminating naxalism from its root? Suggest some measures in this regard. **[15 marks, 250 words]**



## TOPIC: India's Cyber Security Ecosystem

**Issue in brief** – With cyber threats capable of undermining our critical infrastructure, industry and security, a comprehensive cyber security policy is the need of the hour.

[https://epaper.thehindu.com/ccidist-ws/th/th\\_delhi/issues/26408/OPS/G21ATTR1D.1+GBNATU2P8.1.html](https://epaper.thehindu.com/ccidist-ws/th/th_delhi/issues/26408/OPS/G21ATTR1D.1+GBNATU2P8.1.html)

**Where in Syllabus:**

**GS 3: Basics of Cyber Security**

### ❖ Why in news?

- The past few weeks have highlighted the vulnerabilities of our fast expanding digital networks. First, the ransomware attack on the servers of India's premium institute, the AIIMS. Nearly 40 million health records were compromised and it took over two weeks for the systems to be brought online.
- Soon afterwards, a ransomware gang, BlackCat, breached the parent company of Solar Industries Limited, one of the Ministry of Defence's ammunition and explosives manufacturers, and extracted over 2 Terabyte of data.



### ❖ What is cyber security and why India needs increased cyber security measures?

- **Cybersecurity** refers to the practices, technologies, and processes that are put in place to protect computer systems, networks, devices, and data from unauthorized access or attacks that are aimed for exploitation of cyber-physical systems and critical information infrastructure.
- **Need for increased measures:**
  - ✓ Ransomwares have emerged as the most predominant of malicious cyberattacks. Here, the perpetrators demand hefty payments for the release of withheld data. Data show that over 75% of Indian organisations have faced such attacks, with each breach costing an average of ₹35 crore of damage.
  - ✓ With the lines between the physical and digital realms blurring rapidly, every critical infrastructure, from transportation, power and banking systems, would become extremely vulnerable to the assaults from hostile state and non-state actors.
  - ✓ Cyber capabilities are also playing a pivotal role, as seen in the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, where electronic systems in warheads, radars and communication devices have reportedly been rendered ineffective using hacking and GPS jamming.
  - ✓ Introduction of 5G and the arrival of quantum computing, the potency of malicious software, and avenues for digital security breaches would only increase.
  - ✓ Geopolitical Tensions: India's geopolitical tensions with its neighboring countries, especially China and Pakistan, have made it a potential target for state-sponsored cyber-attacks. These attacks can pose a significant threat to the country's critical infrastructure and national security.



- ✓ **Use of cyber space by terrorists:** Terrorist groups understand the nuances of modern weapons and information technology, and the dynamics of cyber and financial space very well. This transformation of terrorism from “dynamite to Metaverse” and “AK-47 to virtual assets” is definitely a matter of grave concern.
- ✓ **For Businesses:** Enterprise systems contain large amounts of data and information. Cyberattacks can lead to the loss of competitive information (such as patents and original works), the loss of employee/customer personal data, and the complete loss of public confidence in the integrity of the organization.

### ❖ India's approach to cyber security

- India's approach to cybersecurity involves **a multi-pronged strategy** that includes policy and regulation, capacity-building, and partnerships with the private sector and other countries.
- ✓ **Information Act 2000:** The Information Act, of 2000 is the primary law to combat cybercrime and digital commerce in India.
- ✓ **National Cyber Security Policy, 2013:** This policy provides a vision and strategic direction for protecting the nation's cyberspace.
- ✓ **CERT-In (Cyber Emergency Response Team – India):** In 2022, CERT-In introduced a set of guidelines for organisations to comply with when connected to the digital realm. This included **the mandatory obligation** to report cyberattack incidents within hours of identifying them, and **designating a pointsperson** with domain knowledge to interact with CERT-In.
- ✓ **National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre (NCIIPC)** is an organization of the Government of India created under the Section 70A of the Information Technology Act, 2000 (amended 2008), through a gazette notification on 16 January 2014.
- ✓ **India's Cyber Crime Coordination Center (I4C):** A comprehensive and coordinated response to all types of cybercrime.
- ✓ **Cyber Swachhta Kendra:** Launched in early 2017, Cyber Swachhta Kendra provides users with a platform to analyze and clean their systems from various viruses, bots/malware, Trojans, etc.
- ✓ **Cyber Surakshit Bharat:** The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology launched the Cyber Surakshit Bharat initiative to raise awareness of cybercrime and build the security response capabilities of the Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) of all government departments and his IT staff on the front lines.
- ✓ **Appointment of Chief Information Security Officers:** The Indian Government has published a written guideline for CISOs of government organizations, outlining best practices for safeguarding apps, infrastructure, and compliance. Chief Information Security Officers (CISOs) can identify and document the security requirements that may arise with each technical innovation.
- ✓ **Cybercrime prevention programs for women and children:** The program, run by the Ministry of Home Affairs, aims to prevent and reduce cybercrime against women and children.
- ✓ **India's draft Digital Personal Protection Bill 2022** proposes a penalty of up to ₹500 crore for data breaches.
- ✓ **Defence Cyber Agency (DCyA):** Created by India's armed forces which is capable of offensive and defensive manoeuvres.
- ✓ All Indian States have their own cyber command and control centres
- ✓ **Cybersecurity treaties:** India has already signed cybersecurity treaties, where the countries include the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, South Korea and the European Union.
- ✓ **Multinational frameworks** such as the Quad and the I2U2 (which India is a member of) there are efforts to enhance cooperation in cyber incident responses, technology collaboration, capacity building, and in the improvement of cyber resilience.



## ❖ Global Initiatives

- With most cyberattacks originating from beyond our borders, international cooperation would be critical to keep our digital space secure. This year, cybercrimes are expected to cause damage worth an estimated \$8 trillion worldwide.
- **UN Resolution:** United Nations General Assembly establish two processes on the issues of security in the information and communication technologies (ICT) environment.
  - Open-ended Working Group (OEWG), established through a resolution by Russia.
  - Continuation of Group of Governmental Experts (GGE), established through the resolution by the USA
- **Budapest Convention:** It is an international treaty that seeks to address Internet and computer crime by harmonizing national laws, improving investigative techniques, and increasing cooperation among nations. It came into force on 1st July 2004. India is not a signatory to this convention.
- **The Internet Governance Forum (IGF)** serves to bring people together from various stakeholder groups as equals, in discussions on public policy issues relating to the Internet.
- **Sydney Dialogue:** It is an annual summit of cyber and critical technologies to discuss the fallout of the digital domain on the law and order situation in the world.

## ❖ Limitations in India's cyber security architecture

- **Lack of cybersecurity tools:** Most organisations lack the tools to identify cyberattacks, let alone prevent them.
- **Scarcity of cybersecurity professionals:** India also faces an acute scarcity of cybersecurity professionals. India is projected to have a total workforce of around 3,00,000 people in this sector in contrast to the 1.2 million people in the United States.
- **Limited participation of private sector:** Most of our organisations are in the private sector, and their participation remains limited in India's cybersecurity structures.
- **No truly global framework, with many operating in silos:** The two antagonistic permanent members of the UN Security Council, counted among India's most important strategic partners, differ vastly on many aspects of the Internet, including openness, restrictions on data flow, and digital sovereignty. Amidst the turbulent current world events, these UN groups would struggle to have effective dialogues.
- **Inadequate Funding:** In FY2022-23, the centre's total allocation for the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) stood at Rs 14,300 crore. Out of this, the Digital India program was allotted funds worth Rs 10,676 crore. The cybersecurity projects had a small share of Rs 300 crore.
- **No procedural rules:** There are no separate rules of procedure for investigating cybercrime or computer crime.
- **Lack of Infrastructure – Cyber labs:** State cyber forensics labs need to be upgraded as new technologies emerge. Cryptocurrency-related crime continues to be underreported due to the limited ability to solve such crimes.

## ❖ Way forward

- **From Sectoral to Tailor-made Law:** The cybersecurity law paradigm in India comprises the IT Act and a mushrooming number of subordinate legislations in the form of “rules.” Whereas, the countries across the globe are legislating specialised law dealing with cybersecurity and CII like the Network and Information Security (NIS) Directive is the first piece of EU-wide legislation on cybersecurity.
- **Tapping the G20 Summit:** As a host nation for the G20 summit, India can use this opportunity to discuss cybersecurity and create a global framework of common minimum acceptance for cybersecurity.
- **Private companies are advised to look at the Digital Geneva Convention,** where over 30 global companies have signed a declaration to protect users and customers from cyber breaches, and collaborate with like-minded intergovernmental and state frameworks.





- **Research, innovation, skill building and technology development**: Investing in modernization and digitization of ICTS, setting up a short and long term agenda for cyber security via outcome based programs and providing investments in deep-tech cyber security innovations.
- **Crisis Management**: For adequate preparation to handle a crisis, Digital Security Council of India recommends holding cybersecurity drills which include real-life scenarios with their ramifications.
- **Cyber Diplomacy**: Cyber diplomacy plays a huge role in shaping India's global relations. To further better diplomacy, the government should promote brand India as a responsible player in cyber security and also create 'Cyber envoys' for the key countries/regions.

### Basic terms/related concepts and facts:

- India has signed Framework Arrangement on Cyber and Cyber-Enabled Critical Technology Cooperation with Australia.
- (CERT-In) in collaboration with Cyber Security Agency of Singapore (CSA), successfully designed & conducted the Cyber Security Exercise "Synergy" for 13 Countries as part of the **International Counter Ransomware Initiative-Resilience Working Group** which is being led by India under the leadership of National Security Council Secretariat(NSCS).

### Practice Questions

#### **Prelims:**

- Q. 'Exercise Synergy' has recently been in the news. It is related with which of the following?
- a) Multilateral naval exercise hosted by the Indian Navy.
  - b) To exchange experiences, best practices and the latest research on climate variability, adaptation and resilience.
  - c) To exchange best practices among Member-States to build network resiliency against ransomware & cyber extortion attacks.
  - d) To strengthen the financial sector and improving the functioning of financial markets.

**Answer: C)**

#### **Mains: (Level-Moderate)**

- Q. Recent cyber attacks have highlighted the vulnerabilities of our fast expanding digital networks. What has been India's approach in dealing with such attacks? Also, discuss the need of a comprehensive cyber security policy. **[15 marks, 250 words]**



## TOPIC: India's Lithium Reserve– Significance & Challenges

**Issue in brief** – The significance of lithium, the white gold in sustainable economic growth. The deposits found in Jammu and Kashmir will reduce India's dependence on imports for battery production and can boost the EV (electric vehicle) market.

[https://epaper.thehindu.com/ccidist-ws/th/th\\_delhi/issues/25166/OPS/G0SASK81M.1.png?cropFromPage=true](https://epaper.thehindu.com/ccidist-ws/th/th_delhi/issues/25166/OPS/G0SASK81M.1.png?cropFromPage=true)

### Where in Syllabus:

GS 1: Distribution of key natural resources across the world

### ❖ Why in news?

- Geological survey of India found out that Lithium deposits of 5.9 million tonnes may be present in the Salal-Haimana area of Reasi district, Jammu and Kashmir.
- If it turns out as expected, it could be a game changer in India's transition to a green economy.



### ❖ What is lithium and how is it significant?

- It is the **miracle element** found in alkali metal groups.
- It is the lightest solid element and reacts vigorously with water.
- Lithium metal is soft, white, and lustrous—and several of its alloys and compounds are produced on an industrial scale.
- **Multiple usage**-These metals are strategic in nature and have a wide range of applications in nuclear and other high-tech industries, including electronics, telecommunications, information technology, space, and military.
- **Lithium-ion batteries**- Batteries used in wind turbines, solar panels, and electric vehicles are made up of lithium. Due to its highest energy storage capacity and extremely lightweight, it is a perfect choice for electric car makers.
- The lithium battery can store 95-99% of the energy generated, while those of lead acid only reach up to 85%.

### ❖ Lithium reserves in India

- Around 1600 tonnes of lithium reserves were found in Mandya, Karnataka. However, there's no supply of the metal commercially from the site till now.
- **Lithium Exploration Programme** of the government in several states like- Arunachal Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Rajasthan. This might lead to discovery of some other potential lithium reserves.
- At present, India is dependent on imports of lithium for battery production.
- Khanij Bidesh Ltd (KABIL) is a state owned company, signed an agreement with Argentina to jointly prospect lithium.
- Government asked states to compete for establishing domestic manufacturing facilities for lithium-ion batteries. This led to Telangana announcement to avail 200 acres of land for 5GW lithium ion battery factory.

### ❖ Significance of the discovery

- **Climate targets**- Net zero by 2070 requires lithium as a critical component in EV batteries. As per the estimates of Central Electrical Authority of India, India will need 27GW of grid scale battery energy by 2030.
- **Support EV penetration**-It will also help in the government's ambitious plan of 30% of EV penetration in cars, 70% for commercial vehicles and 80% for two and three wheelers by 2030.
- **National Mission on Transformative Mobility and Battery Storage** is the framework for a Phased Manufacturing Program (PMP), aimed at localising the production of electric vehicles (EV) and its components within the country. The discovery will support the mission and its objective.
- **Rise in global demand**-World bank study suggests that the demand for critical metals such as lithium and cobalt is expected to rise by 500% in 2050.
- Address global shortage of lithium ions due to high demand for EV's and rechargeable batteries.
- **Reduce import dependence** and increase India's competence in the world market. India currently imports all of its Li from Australia and Argentina and 70% of Li-ion cells from China.

### ❖ Worldwide Lithium reserves & Production

- **Lithium triangle**-More than 50% of lithium *reserves* are found in Chile, Argentina and Bolivia.
- China is the largest market of electric vehicles; it controls both the demand and supply side of the lithium industry.

Lithium Reserves and Production in the World	
Reserves	Production
1. Bolivia (21%)	1. Australia (52%)
2. Argentina (17%)	2. Chile (25%)
3. Chile (9%)	3. China (13%)



### ❖ Challenges with lithium mining

- **Environmental challenges**- It may lead to water, soil and air pollution.
  - It is a highly water intensive process. Industrial estimates suggest that this process consumes 170 cubic metres of water and releases 15 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> for every tonne of Li extracted.
  - Open-pit-mining, refining, and waste disposal from these processes substantially degrades the environment, including depletes and contaminates waterways and groundwater, diminishes biodiversity, and releases considerable air pollution.
- **Geopolitical concerns**-Union territory of J&K (previously a state) has been the site of historical cross-border tensions between India and Pakistan, domestic insurgency, and terrorism. So, this new discovery has geostrategic implications considering the geopolitical sensitivity of the location.
- **Geographical challenges**- In Australia, Li-bearing pegmatite deposits are found in the ancient geological regions of Pilbara and Yilgarn cratons, whose continental rocks have been stable for over a



billion years. *Himalaya on the other hand is the youngest mountain range in the world and is much more unstable.*

- **Social challenges**–May impact the overall food security as it may lead to water scarcity and land degradation.

Indigenous resistance in South America and increased awareness of the environmental impact of Li-mining has prompted global carmakers like- Mercedes and Volkswagen to look for Li mined from lowest socio-ecological impact.

### ❖ Way forward

Lithium is called the white gold because of the widespread usage in products indispensable to modern life. According to the International Energy Agency, the world could face a lithium shortage by 2025. However, India has the potential reserves to increase the lithium supply in the global market.

- With ***R&D in the refining and manufacturing***, India can also become a leading producer of lithium goods, surpassing China.
- There's a need for ***strong regulatory apparatus*** that can address both environmental and social consequences of Li mining.
- ***Involvement of local communities*** in the Li exploration

Till we achieve success in Lithium mining and production, reducing luxury consumption and promoting public transport should also be an important part of the agenda of a just transition.

#### Basic terms/related concepts and facts:

Inferred resources is a resource for which quantity, grade and mineral content are estimated only with the low level of confidence.

- It is based on the classification by United Nations International Framework Classification for Reserves/Resources-1997.
- UNFC-1997- It has been developed by the UN Economic Commission of Europe.
- It provides a basis for comparing reserves and resources data between countries.

Geological Survey of India- It is an attached office under the Ministry of Mines.

- It was set up in 1851, over years it has grown into a repository of geo-science information.
- Headquarter- Kolkata and 6 regional offices located at Lucknow, Jaipur, Nagpur, Hyderabad, Shillong and Kolkata.



### Practice Questions

#### Prelims:

**Q.** Consider the following statements about District Mineral Foundation (DMF):

1. Central Government is mandated to establish DMF in every district affected by mining related operations.
2. DMF should work for the interest and benefit of persons and areas affected by mining related operations.

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

**Answer: b)**

#### Mains: (Level-Moderate)

**Q.** Recent discovery of Lithium reserve in J & K region is seen as a game changer in India's impending transition to green economy, however, its extraction and processing poses various socio-environmental challenges. Explain. **[10 marks, 150 words]**





## **OUR ONGOING INITIATIVES**

**1**

### **ANSWER WRITING PROGRAMS**

- Daily Answer Assessment Programs (DAAP, DAAP Plus & DAAP Advance) 2023
- Comprehensive Mains Answer Assessment Program (C-MAAP) 2023
- Mini Revision Tests (MRT) 2023

**2**

### **Essay Assessment Program (EAP) 2023**

**3**

### **Syllabus Affairs**

**Comprehensive Analysis of Relevant News)**

**4**

### **Relevant News Listing**

**-What to read daily from Newspaper**

**5**

### **Daily Answer Writing Practice**

**-A Free Initiative on Current Affairs**

**Website : [www.dashovidya.in](http://www.dashovidya.in)**

**Email : [contact@dashovidya.in](mailto:contact@dashovidya.in) / [dashovidya.upsc@gmail.com](mailto:dashovidya.upsc@gmail.com)**

**Contact : 8595852855 / 9643493743**

**Telegram : @Mentor\_DashoVidya**

