

**9pm**

# **Compilation**

**April, 2021 (Second Week)**

**General Studies - 1**

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1. Empowerment of Transgender community in India
2. Refugee problem in India and its solutions
3. Gyanvapi Mosque dispute and the Places of worship Act 1991

**General Studies - 2**

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# General Studies Paper - 1

## General Studies - 1

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### 1. Empowerment of Transgender community in India

Source: [click here](#)

Syllabus: GS 1

**Synopsis:** The introduction of 13 members of the transgender community into the Chhattisgarh police is an encouraging step.

#### Introduction

13 members of the transgender community selected as constables under the Chhattisgarh police.

This move is truly historic and exciting for this community. The Tamil Nadu police also welcomed a few transgender earlier. Their entry into the law and order system would ensure the empowerment of the transgender community.

- Their community had no legal recognition till the Supreme Court judgment in **NALSA vs. Union of India (2014)**. It ruled that transgender persons have the right to decide their self-identified gender.
- This move may help in changing the opinion of people.

#### Steps taken for Empowerment of Transgender community

Post the 2014 Supreme Court judgment, the Chhattisgarh government created the Third Gender Welfare Board. It takes various welfare measures in favor of trans people.

- **Firstly, all departments were asked to include the third gender** as an option in official documents that need mention of gender or sex of a person.
- **Secondly, district-level committees were established** to recognize members of the transgender community. It will help in the implementation of welfare schemes for their benefit.
- **Thirdly, sensitisation workshops** were held at State and district levels by the police department and police officers.
- **Fourthly, training capsules were prepared for police training** institutes with the help of transgender members of the Welfare Board.
- **Fifthly, the police permitted the use of their sports ground** for practice and also helped the trans-genders in preparing for the written examination. It was the hard work of the transgender people which ensured their success and marked their presence in the department.

#### Various institutional developments for the empowerment of transgender Community

The recently passed **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019** is used for issuing a certificate of transgender identity.

- **It has the essence of international conventions** like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966, and the Yogyakarta Principles, 2006.
- **The Act recognizes the legal right to have a self-perceived gender identity.** It is in accordance with the principle of the Psychological Test instead of the Biological Test. In employing people, any discrimination against the transgender is against the law.
- The Kerala High Court allowed a petition by a **transwoman seeking admission into the National Cadet Corps** based on her self-claimed gender identity. The court noted that the NCC Act cannot prevent the operation of the Transgender Persons Act.

### The way forward

- It requires more effort to bring about changes in the view of people towards this marginalized community. Implementation of the law must be in letter and spirit to fulfill its objective.
- Society needs to remove its biases and accept transgender people as equal human beings with humility.

## 2. Refugee problem in India and its solutions

**Source:** [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus:** GS-1: Population and Associated issues

**Synopsis:** By introducing appropriate legal and institutional measures India has to solve the issue of [refugee problem in India](#).

### Introduction

The fleeing Myanmar citizens were turned away at the Indian border in the Northeast. This revived the debate about protecting refugees in India. Rohingyas also faced similar problems earlier.

- India was witnessing the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 and its impact on those seeking refugees. Now, the refugees from Myanmar will not get any benefit under the law.
- India wants an end to the illegal immigration from neighbouring countries. Illegal immigration is a **threat to the socio-political fabric** of India.

### What refugee problems India have?

The issue of refugees often gets included under illegal immigration. These two different issues get jumbled together. Policies and solutions to deal with these issues suffer from a lack of clarity.

- **Firstly, confusion in policies** is because as per Indian law, both categories of people are viewed as the same. They both are **covered under the Foreigners Act, 1946**. The definition of a foreigner in the act is a person who is not a citizen of India.
- **Secondly, India lacks legal provisions** to deal with them separately. India is **not a part of the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol**. The absence of such convention and its legal framework leads to policy vagueness.
  - It also increases the risk of the domestic politicisation of protecting the refugees.
- **Thirdly, informal methods** allow the government **to pick and choose the refugees** it wants to admit or send back.
- **Fourthly, India is concerned that their decision might annoy the Generals** in Myanmar. Further, protecting refugees will also bring closer China-Myanmar ties. This will hurt India's interests in Myanmar.
- **Fifthly**, The CAA is not the solution to the refugee problem. Because it is discriminatory in nature based on religion. The CAA is an act of refugee avoidance, not refugee protection.

### Should India become a part of the refugee convention?

India has the largest number of refugees in the world. Even though, it was not a part of the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol.

- The definition of refugees in the 1951 convention only refers to **the violation of civil and political rights, but not economic rights**. If economic rights were to be included, then it would pose a major burden on the developed world.
- Scholar B.S. Chimni suggested that **India should not agree to the 1951 convention** when the European countries themselves violating the provisions of it.

He mentioned the **no entry regime** of Western countries as a clear violation of the 1951 convention.

- **The non-entrée regime** is constituted by several legal and administrative measures. This includes Indirect policies to reject refugees like,
  - Visa restrictions, carrier sanctions and interdictions.
  - Restrictive interpretations of the definition of a refugee.
  - Removal of social welfare benefits to [asylum seekers](#) etc.

### **Suggestion to improve the Refugee situation in India:**

India must use its history of refugee protection to begin a global conversation on the refugee problem.

- **Creation of New domestic law aimed at refugees.** In the absence of proper legal measures, refugee documentation, and work permit, refugees may end up becoming illegal immigrants. So, such a law should include certain essential provisions. Such as,
  - Allowing refugees for temporary shelter and providing work permits.
  - Differentiate between temporary migrant workers, illegal immigrants and refugees.
  - The law should deal with each of them differently through proper legal and institutional mechanisms.

### **3. Gyanvapi Mosque dispute and the Places of worship Act 1991**

**Source:** [The Hindu](#)

**Gs1:** Communalism, Regionalism & Secularism.

**Synopsis:** The recent ruling by Varanasi civil court in the Gyanvapi Mosque dispute threatens the secular feature of India.

#### **Background**

- Earlier, the representatives of the Hindu faith had filed a petition to reclaim the Gyanvapi mosque land.
- Now, a civil court in Varanasi directed the **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** to conduct a survey. In that, the ASI will confirm whether the Gyanvapi mosque was built over a demolished Hindu temple or not.
- But any attempt to bring back the buried disputes is a threat to secularism and peaceful coexistence

#### **What does the Place of worship act 1991 say in this regard?**

- The [Places of worship Act](#) declares that the religious character of a place of worship shall continue to be the same as it was on August 15, 1947.
- It says no person shall convert any place of worship of any religious denomination into one of a different denomination or section.
- **Exemptions under the Act:** There are few exceptions under the Act. Such as,
  - The Act will not apply to ancient and historical monuments and archaeological sites. Because these are covered under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958.
  - The Act exempted the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute.

#### **Challenges with the recent Case:**

- **One**, it will open the floodgates for another prolonged religious dispute.
- **Two**, the order is a gross violation of the [Place of worship act](#) that prohibits any litigation over the status of places of worship.

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- **Three**, the Allahabad High Court reserved its order on the maintainability of the suit on March 15. Further, the High Court is yet to pronounce its ruling. So, the implementation of the judgement might change after the High Court Judgement.

ForumIAS

# General Studies Paper - 2

## General Studies - 2

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### 1. India-NATO alliance – Why India Should think About it?

**Source:** [Indian Express](#)

Gs2: Important International Institutions, agencies, and fora – their Structure, Mandate.

**Synopsis:** India maintains a distance from the NATO alliance due to various reasons. However, it is not the right strategy to continue in the present scenario. [India NATO alliance will be in line with India's present policies.](#)

#### Introduction

- NATO ([North Atlantic Treaty Organization](#)) is an intergovernmental military alliance between 30 North American and European countries. Its independent member states agree to mutual defence in response to an attack by any external party.
- India, as per its non-alignment strategy, still maintains a distance from the NATO alliance.
- This stand is not in line with some steps taken by India
  - India is doing military exercises with countries like China and Pakistan.
  - India already has military engagements with many NATO members, such as the US, Britain, and France.

Then, why India cannot have a military alliance with NATO?

#### What are the arguments favouring India NATO Alliance?

- Engagement with NATO could facilitate productive developments against terrorism, changing geopolitics, the evolving nature of military conflict, the role of emerging military technologies, and new military doctrines.
- Further, it would be easier for India to deal with the military establishments of its 30 NATO member states.
- On a bilateral front, each of the members of NATO can support in strengthening India's national capabilities.

#### Why India didn't give much attention to Join NATO?

- **First**, India has viewed European Powers with suspicion. This mindset is due to India's historical struggle against European powers-The France, Portuguese, Dutch.
- **Second**, India's reliance on Russia during the Cold War years due to the political divide between the west.
- **Third**, after the end of the Cold War, the India-Europe tie could not be strengthened due to a lack of high-level political interest. This prevented India from taking full advantage of a re-emerging Europe.

#### What are the arguments against India NATO Alliance?

1. **First**, the Idea of **Non-alignment** after the Cold War years has little relevance. **For example**, after the Cold War years, NATO built partnerships with many neutral and non-aligned states.
2. **Second**, most of the NATO members are well-established partners of India. **For example**, India has military exchanges with many members of NATO — including the US, Britain, and France
3. **Third**, for the European and NATO members to play any role in the Indo-Pacific, they need partners like India, Australia, and Japan.
4. **Fourth**, if India wants to draw Russia into discussions on the Indo-Pacific then, engagement with NATO is significant. Because, NATO has regular consultations with both Russia and China.

5. **Fifth**, Russia and China have intensive bilateral engagement with Europe, India cannot afford to miss out.
6. **Sixth**, India's worry that joining NATO will upset Russia-India relation is groundless. As engagement with Quad and a closer alliance with the US have already strained India-Russia relations. Further, deepening ties between China and Russia calls for India's application of **Strategic Autonomy**.

#### What are the present issues in the NATO alliance?

1. **One**, it is divided on how to share the military burden and balance between NATO and the EU's willingness for an independent military role.
2. **Two**, there is no convergence in decision-making in matters related to Russia, the Middle East, and China.
3. **Three**, conflicts among NATO members have increased. **For example**, Greece and Turkey.
4. **Four**, NATO's recent adventures in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya have not been successful.

#### Way Forward

- The present government efforts to end the prolonged political neglect of Europe is a significant improvement in building India-Europe ties. For example,
  - Deepening maritime partnership with France since 2018.
  - Joining the Franco-German Alliance for Multilateralism in 2019Further India needs to strengthen this by joining NATO.

## 2. Significance of Circuit Benches

**Source:** [Click Here](#)

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – Structure, organization and functioning of the Judiciary

**Synopsis:** Virtual hearings started during the pandemic provided much relief. However, now focus should be on other measures like the establishment of circuit benches.

#### Background:

- The pandemic saw the initiation of virtual proceedings in the Supreme Court. It was because the physical hearing was not possible due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- This new method ensured fair and equal access to justice for many people. Now, many are demanding a continuation of this novel practice even in a post-pandemic scenario.
- However, it will not be sufficient. For increasing accessibility more circuit benches

#### What are circuit benches?

- A dedicated place in Delhi is provided for the functioning of the Supreme Court (SC).
- The Constitutional makers wanted the Court to have a specified place of sitting so that litigants can approach it.
- They were also aware of the geographical constraints of India. Hence, they empowered the Chief Justice to establish circuit benches.
  - These are temporary courts that hold proceedings for a few selected months in a year.Nonetheless, no circuit benches have been established despite [rising Pendencies](#).

#### The adverse impact of Fixed Location:

- **Denial of Justice:** Many litigants are discouraged to travel to Delhi from far away locations like south or northeast India.

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- Further, as per a report of Centre for Policy Research, a disproportionately high number of cases filed in the Supreme Court originates in **High Courts closer to Delhi**.
  - Almost 18% of all cases in the Supreme Court originate from Punjab and Haryana. They have less than 5% of the total population share.
  - But States like West Bengal, Bihar, and Andhra Pradesh which make about 20% population, contributed to less than 10% of cases.

**Appearance in SC** has become an **exclusive domain of limited lawyers** located around Delhi. This also puts an **additional financial burden** on litigants as they can't hire their local lawyers.

However, these constraints were effectively tackled by Virtual proceedings during the pandemic that resulted in more equitable access to justice.

### Way Forward:

- The chief justice must establish circuit benches as recommended by multiple law commissions and parliamentary committees.
- For the time being, SC must continue with the virtual proceedings along with physical proceedings in order to prevent denial of justice. The court can also continue it as a matter of just and equitable policy if not as a matter of right.

### 3. Need for Police Reforms in India

**Source:** [The Hindu](#)

**Gs2:** Role of Civil Services in a Democracy.

**Synopsis:** Police reforms require urgent attention. There have been many instances of Police-politician nexus. It is not right for democracy.

#### Background

- The 21<sup>st</sup> century witnessed many crises. For instance,
  - One, the 2007-08 financial crisis affected the growth of many economies and the recovery process has been slow.
  - Two, the most recent **impact of the Pandemic**, it has affected every sphere of Human activity.
  - Three, the crisis of **Disinformation** and **fake news** became a big menace for society.

All these circumstances expose the fragility of today's party-based democracies. Also, it exposed the inability to manage such problems. However, finding an optimal combination of authoritarian, populist and democratic trends will not be easy. It could give way to the rise of new **political oligarchies**, and the creation of new elites. They may identify themselves as the defenders of democracy. Recent trends within the country suggest the starting of such problems.

#### What are the recent issues affecting democracy in India?

1. **First**, the concept of the **free and fair election** itself is under threat. This new reality gives way to authoritarian methods over democratic means. For instance,
  - a. One, in most electioneering campaigns personal remarks dominate political debates, instead of developmental issues or policies.
  - b. Two, the use of Money power and Violence during elections is very much evident.
  - c. Three, the verdict of the election does not reflect the true will of the electorates.

2. **Two**, the most worrying issue is the collapse of systems of governance in many States. For example, the recent case of Maharashtra after the **Antilia bomb case**.
  - a. The event highlights the issues in the police system.
  - b. Police made no or very little effort to discover the truth and the involvement of assistant police inspector, S. Vaze. It signifies the decline in standards of police mores.
  - c. This incident is a prime example that reflects the problems in the law and order system across the country.

#### What needs to be done?

Police reforms by establishing a new police commission will not yield results. Because police commissions cannot change the system that compels police to operate by the politicians, bureaucrats, and others in authority.

So, we need to think of other alternatives to address the issue.

1. **First**, nurture courageous police leadership that can stand up for the right policies and punishes officers indulged in wrongdoings.
2. **Second**, create and execute a national public awareness campaign against the kind of excesses that have been allowed to continue. Creating such a movement and sustaining it will not be easy, but if the system is to be saved, there is a need to consider such real alternatives.

#### 4. Performance Analysis of Lok Adalats in India

**Source:** [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – Statutory, regulatory, and various quasi-judicial bodies.

##### Synopsis:

The Lok Adalats (People's Court) have been functioning in India since the last 38 years. They have successfully solved lakhs of cases that have reduced the judicial burden. However, some experts question their efficacy as they tend to neglect justice for speedier resolution.

##### Background:

- Lok Adalats established to provide quick, accessible and affordable justice to masses. This prevents delay in justice delivery as justice delayed is justice denied.
- It is a type of Alternate Dispute Resolution mechanism outside the formal judicial process.

##### History of Lok Adalats:

- They were popularised by Harivallabh Parikh (a disciple of Mahatma Gandhi) in Rangpur, Gujarat in 1949.
- Later on, the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 passed by Parliament to achieve the constitutional mandate of Article 39A. The article aims to ensure equal justice and free legal aid for everyone.
- The act aimed to
  - Provide free and competent legal services to weaker sections of the society
  - Organise Lok Adalats that would give people an equal opportunity to seek justice.

##### Why do people go to Lok Adalats?

- **Huge Pendency in Formal Judicial System:** As per National Judicial Data Grid there exists enormous pendencies in the formal judicial setup.
  - More than 3 crore cases are pending in district and subordinate courts, over 57 lakhs in high courts and above 66000 in supreme court.

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- As per a rough estimation, it will take around 320 years to settle the existing backlog.
- **Greater Control:** As it is a party-driven process, it encourages parties to reach an amicable settlement.
- **Speed:** Sometimes lakhs of cases are disposed in a single day which is not possible even in other Alternate mechanisms like arbitration, conciliation, etc.
- **Flexibility:** Lok adalat is not bound by procedural laws like the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, or the Indian Evidence Act, 1872.
- **Affordability:** No fees are charged from parties by the Lok Adalat.
- **Finality of Awards:** The award of Lok Adalat is like a civil court's decree but can't be appealed in the formal courts. Hence, cases are not dragged on for years and speedier settlement takes place.

### Performance:

- They are regularly organised to help parties reach a compromise. Core Subject matters of Lok Adalats include motor-accident claims, disputes related to public-utility services, cases related to dishonour of cheques etc.
- As per the estimates of National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) – State Adalats disposed of around 52 lakh cases between 2016-20.
- Similarly, the (National Lok Adalats) NLAs have disposed of a total of 2.93 crore cases in the same period.
- E-Lok Adalats were organized at both the national and State level to overcome the pandemic challenge. The first national e-Lok Adalat disposed of around 10.5 lakh cases.

### Issues:

- A **fall in performance** is witnessed since 2017. NLAs now cover a variety of subjects while earlier they were subject matter-specific. The average cases settled by NLAs in 2015 were around 18 lakhs. It has now reduced to 13.3 lakhs in 2019 as per NALSA's data.
- Similarly, the **efficiency of E-Lok adalats is not at par with physical Lok adalats.**
- It is **conciliatory in nature.** Therefore, it is alleged that justice is sometimes undermined to do speedy disposal as conciliation doesn't always lead to justice delivery.
- **Unequal bargaining power exists** between the parties. Strong parties like insurance companies, electricity boards etc. can easily put pressure on a poor person to accept discriminatory awards.

### Way Forward:

- The Lok Adalats must look **beyond swift disposal of cases and focus on just and fair outcomes as justice hurried is justice buried.**
- There is a need to take **some concrete and innovative steps** by the legislature or the judiciary to improve the quality of justice rendered by Adalats.

Revamping of Lok adalat along with initiation of phase 3 of e- courts project can be a game changer in improving the efficiency of the dispute settlement.

## 5. Chinese Threat to Hong Kong' Democracy

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS 2

**Synopsis:** The new electoral techniques represent the end of democracy in Hong Kong that was never truly democratic.

### Background

Hong Kong is a Special Administrative Region of China. Recently the Hong Kong's Chief Executive and members of its legislature were chosen in an undemocratic way. Adding to that, the Chinese government also made drastic changes to the process of choosing the Chief Executive and members of its legislature. This will further impact Hong Kong's democracy.

### Functioning of Hong Kong's democracy:

- The term democracy does not denote the western type of democracy in Hong Kong. They follow **Democracy with Chinese characteristics**.
- Under this concept, democracy stands for more than electoral campaigns, voting, etc.
- In Cantonese(a Sino-Tibetan language), **These characters are called manzyu**. Man means **people** and zyu means **rule**. In simple, People's rule.
- *Manzyu* suggests a system in which those who rule(zyu) have to listen and provide for the people(*man*).
- Under this, Rulers can be more responsive in different ways. Such as listening to protest slogans, reading petitions, and engaging in dialogue with representatives of social groups, etc.
- This makes Hong Kong a **hybrid regime**. It includes elements of liberal and illiberal institutions.
- Popular protests(*Man*) have earlier compelled officials(*Zyu*) to withdraw the public policies.

### Power of People(*Man*) in Hong Kong:

Local officials and opposition in Hong Kong often support the people(*Man*) to remove the unpopular proposals from the government(*Zyu*).

- In 2003, China wanted the Hong Kong government to pass a law on national security and sedition. But the people(*Man*) protests made the proposal to withdraw from the government(*zyu*).
- In 2012, the government tried to introduce Chinese mainland-style **patriotic education into local schools**. But the *Man*-made *Zhu* to withdraw that too.
- Earlier, Hong Kong citizens have forced one Chief Executive to step down before his term.

But the Future Hong Kong Chief Executive will not face such threat of removal by people(*Man*) protest. This is **because of the new electoral rules**. There is **less political space** for the creation of people(*man*) movements.

### Changes in new electoral rules of Hong Kong:

The new plan reduces the number of directly elected seats in the Legislative Council (Legco) from 35 to 20.

1. **Firstly, 40 representatives will be chosen by the Election Committee** of 1,500 members. They will select the Chief Executive.

2. **Secondly**, The Hong Kong government will pre-screen the individuals who run for the seats in the legislature. They will judge if **the person has sufficient patriotic credentials or not**.
3. **Thirdly**, When the application is rejected based on patriotism grounds, the person cannot appeal the rejection in **Hong Kong's courts**.
4. **Fourthly**, the new rules also **banned the protest marches**. These were legal earlier and one of the foundational character of Manzyu.
5. **Fifthly**, the popular television show, **Headliner has discontinued** under the new rules. The iconic show informed the Man(people) about the arbitrary policies of rulers(zyu). For example, it telecasted comic sketches on the policies of the colonial Governor and the Chief Executive policy during 1997.

### **The conclusion**

All these steps indicate the arrival of a more authoritarian and less responsive era in Hong Kong. The citizens of Hong Kong will continue to find ways to voice resistance. But will have to do so in indirect ways. There is significant power contrast between the zyu in Hong Kong and the far more powerful rulers in Beijing.

### **6. The MTP Amendment Act 2021 is against Women's Rights**

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Gs2: Government Policies and Interventions for Development in various sectors and Issues arising out of their Design and Implementation.

**Synopsis:** Though the MTP or Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Act 2021 act has progressive features. However, it fails miserably in acknowledging the bodily rights of Women.

### **Overview on The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971**

1. It was considered a progressive law then because it replaced the 100 years IPC (Indian penal code) that considers abortion a crime.
2. Section 3 of the act prescribes 20 weeks as the limit to allow for abortion.
3. Further, abortion requires the certification from two doctors that,
  - a. The pregnancy would involve a risk to the life of the woman or
  - b. Grave injury to her physical or mental health or
  - c. That there was a substantial risk that the child born would suffer from such physical or mental abnormalities.
4. Along with this, Section 5 gave an exception to the 20-week limit. An abortion can be done whenever it is immediately necessary to save the life of the pregnant woman.
5. The 1971 Act is based on "The Report of the **Shantilal H. Shah Committee**."
6. The committee had set a 20-week limit considering the fact that, abortions done after the 20th week will be hazardous for women due to limitations of technology.
7. But in the current situation, the improvement in technology has allowed to carry out abortions safely right up to full term.

### **Side effects of restricting abortion:**

It has pushed women to seek illegal abortions and terminations are carried out in unhygienic and dangerous places.

Even today about 800,000 illegal and unsafe abortions are performed every year in India. Many of them resulting in morbidities and death

### Role of Courts:

- The Bombay High Court stated that the court cannot overrule statutory restrictions in **Nikita Mehta vs State of Maharashtra**. It sparked the debate around the right to abortion in India.
- This led to the increasing number of PIL in the high court and supreme court.
- Later, the court has ignored the statutory provisions in many cases and routinely allowed abortions way past the 20-week limit. For example, **Murugan Nayakkar vs Union of India & Ors**, abortion was permitted at 31 weeks.

### What are the issues in The MTP Amendment Act 2021?

- **First**, it fails to recognize the absolute right of a woman over her body in taking decisions regarding abortions and reproductive health.
- **Second**, though the limit has increased from 20 to 24 weeks, this comes with the same conditionality.
- **Third**, the 24-week limit is not rational given today's technology where abortions can be done safely up to full term.
- **Fourth**, the requirement of the pregnant woman to approach a medical board in where she has crossed the 24-week limit is not justified, because,
  - **One**, it is a breach of Privacy as the women have to consult a minimum of three doctors.
  - **Two**, the Act provides for a single board for a State. Millions of abortions took place in India in past the 24 weeks. It is impossible for one board to handle all cases.
  - **Third**, records show that no State has the finances or the human resources to maintain the operation and functioning of these boards.
  - **Four**, the right to seek termination is restricted to "such category of women as may be prescribed by rules" is vague.

### Way forward

Boards are totally unnecessary and an invasion of privacy. Following the trend worldwide, pregnant women should have right to consult their gynaecologist in late-term pregnancies and carry out their abortion under the certificate of their own gynaecologist.

## 7. Why Pakistan Reverses its Decision on Trade with India?

Source: [The Hindu](#)

**Gs2: India and its Neighborhood- Relations.**

**Synopsis:** Pakistan recently took back its decision to allow trade with India. It is an evaluation of Pakistan's reversal of trade decision with India.

### Background

- Recently, the decision by Pakistan to [allow for the import of cotton and sugar](#) from India has been [withdrawn within a fortnight](#).
- It has been stated that restoration of J&K's special status will be the precondition for opening up trade with India.
- However, Pakistan's textile industry has not welcomed the decision. Because, for them, importing cotton yarn from India is an immediate need, else, it would impact their export potential.

### Evaluation of Pakistan's Decision

1. **First**, Pakistan's decision to import only three items from India, namely cotton, yarn and sugar was based on Pakistan's immediate economic needs. It is not a political confidence-building measure to normalise relations with India. This is clear by the following observations.
  - a. Cotton-related products (raw and value-added) earn close to half of the country's foreign exchange.
  - b. According to the latest Pakistan Economic Survey, 2019-20 cotton and sugarcane production were declining.
  - c. The Cotton industry estimates that in 2021, there would be a 50% decline (2020-21) in cotton production mainly due to supply chain disruption and decreasing yield in cotton areas.
  - d. This means that Pakistan's cotton export would reduce, creating a domino effect on Pakistan's garment industry.
  - e. So, to balance the loss in output, Pakistan decided to import cotton from India which is more practical and the most economic for Pakistan.
2. **Second**, the crisis in Pakistan's sugar industry due to a shortage of sugar for local consumption and increasing cost. Market manipulation and hoarding further resulted in the increased sugar price.
  - a. The sugar crisis was an outcome of Pakistan's sugar policy that primarily focused on exports over local distribution.
  - b. Again, in this case, importing sugar from India would not only be cheaper for the consumer market in Pakistan it will also help Pakistan's exports.
3. **Third, the U-turn to overrule the decision to open trade with India** highlights the supremacy of politics over economy and trade.
  - a. Not only in Pakistan, but this situation is also true to the whole of South Asia. This is the reason for very low intra-**South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) trade**.
4. **Fourth**, the emphasis on Jammu and Kashmir by Pakistan to start bilateral relations **goes** against any further developments in India-Pak relation. It also hints at Pakistan's precondition of revoking India's decision on Jammu and Kashmir to future engagements with India.

In conclusion, Pakistan has to move away from the politicization of all problems. Else it is only Pakistan that will suffer in the long run. So, it is only [friendly India-Pakistan relations](#) will benefit both.

### 8. Increasing Racial Discrimination: Causes and Way Forward

**Source:** [click here](#)

**Syllabus:** GS

**Synopsis:** **The use of internet also increased the prevalence of Racial Discrimination.** The only way to overcome racism is by anti-racism action.

#### Introduction

Every year March 21 is considered as the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. This is a global movement to fight prejudice and intolerance. It provides an opportunity to explore the causes and consequences of modern racism and helps in fighting discrimination.

- Racial discrimination is a breach of human rights. It has harmful effects on human health and well-being. It leads to wider disturbances to social unity.
- In this context word of the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan are still relevant

*“Our mission is to confront ignorance with knowledge, bigotry with tolerance, and isolation with the outstretched hand of generosity. Racism can, will, and must be defeated.”*

### **What are the types of racism faced by people in society?**

Recent forms of racism and discrimination are complex and often hidden. The facelessness of the Internet allows racist stereotypes and incorrect information to spread online.

1. **Firstly, traffic to hate sites and posts against Asians** grew by 200% in the US during the pandemic. Social media groups and messaging platforms assist in social and economic boycotts of religious minorities. Minorities were falsely accused of spreading the virus in India and Sri Lanka.
2. **Secondly, structural forms of discrimination** which include micro-aggressions and everyday indignities are widespread. The use of new technologies and artificial intelligence in security raises the threat of techno-racism.
  - This is because facial recognition programmes can misidentify and target racialised communities. A study by The Lancet focussed on the social dimension of the [COVID-19](#) pandemic and the vulnerability of ethnic minorities.
3. **Thirdly, the World Health Organization has warned about the dangers of outlining and defaming communities.** It can lead to fear and the subsequent cover-up of cases and delays in detection.
4. **Fourthly, women and girls also experienced racial and gender-based biases.**

### **Suggestions to tackle Racial discrimination**

UNESCO suggested steps against racism through education, the sciences, culture, and communication.

1. UNESCO emphasizes **the role of education.** It provides young people with an understanding of processes that tolerate racism and encourages them to stand up for human rights.
2. UNESCO offers master classes to help students to become **campaigners of anti-racism in their schools and communities.** It will be helpful to remove harmful stereotypes and raise tolerance.
3. The International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities provides a platform for **city-level planning and a laboratory** for good practices in the fight against racism.
4. Renewed commitments are required to mobilize for equality. **Racism must be fought with anti-racist action.** A global culture of tolerance, equality, and anti-discrimination should be built in the minds of women and men.
5. UNESCO's headquarters in Paris hosted a **Global Forum against Racism and Discrimination** on March 22, 2021.
  - o Policymakers, academics, and partners were present at the Forum to initiate a new multi-stakeholder partnership on anti-racism. The new proposed map to tolerance calls for a multi sectoral effort to control the root causes of racism through anti-racist laws, policies and programmes.

# General Studies Paper - 3

General Studies - 3

1. Forest Fires in India – An analysis.

Source: [The Indian Express](#)

Syllabus: GS:3 Disaster Management

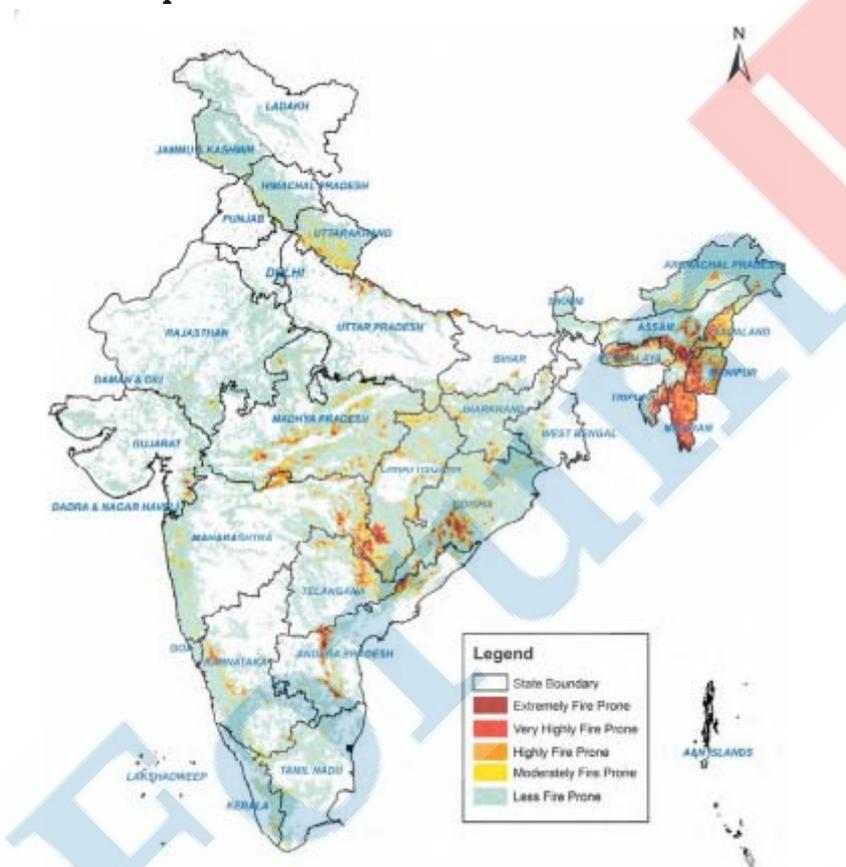
Synopsis: Forest fires in India occurring more frequently. But India is facing challenges in controlling them.

Introduction:

Most forest fires in India appeared between the April-May months. In recent years the forest fires have been more frequent than usual. For example, in few areas, forest fires occurred in the **winter months also**.

Uttarakhand alone witnessed more than 1000 forest fire incidents in the past six months. Since the start of 2021 forest fires has been seen in Himachal Pradesh, Nagaland-Manipur border, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, and Gujarat.

Prime hotspots of Forest Fires in India:



Forest Fires in India (Source:

ISFR-2019)

According to the India State Forest Report 2019, India's 21.67% of its geographical area is forest. Forests in Assam, Mizoram and Tripura have been identified as 'extremely prone to the forest fires.

States with large forest areas under the 'very highly prone' category include Andhra Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, etc.

Since the start of this year, prolonged fires are recorded in Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh (Kullu Valley) and Nagaland-Manipur border (Dzukou Valley). Further in recent months forest fires also occurred in Simlipal National Park in Odisha, Bandhavgarh Forest Reserve in Madhya Pradesh and in sanctuaries for the Asiatic lion and the great Indian bustard in Gujarat.

The present forest fire in Nainital started in March end.

### **Reason for Forest Fires in India:**

Forest fires occur in India both due to Natural and Man-made causes.

#### **Natural causes for Forest Fires in India:**

1. Massive fires in the Amazon forests in Brazil and in Australia are primarily due to Climate Change. The fires due to climate change have certain characteristics in common. It is also applicable to India. They are,
  - a. Longer duration of fires
  - b. High-intensity fires
  - c. Fires of high-frequency
2. In India the march and April month see more forest fires. This is due to the availability of large quantities of dry wood, logs, stumps, dead leaves, dry grass and weeds in forest lands.
3. Lack of soil moisture is also seen as a key factor. For example, the recent Uttarakhand forest fires are due to this.

#### **Man-Made causes for Forest Fires in India:**

But many major fires in India are triggered mainly by human activities.

1. Manmade fires are high particularly in places where people visit forests. People leave burning bidis, cigarette stubs or other inflammable materials inside the forest.
2. In some places, people deliberately cause a fire. For example, the recent fire in Simlipal National Park in Odisha is due to deliberation. Villagers set dry leaves to fire in order to collect mahua flowers. (The local people use these flowers in preparation for a local drink).

#### **Control of Forest Fires in India:**

Forest fires are difficult to control due to the following reasons.

1. **The locality of the forest and access** to the specific location is hard for firefighters.
2. **Shortage of Firefighters:** This creates challenges in the timely mobilisation of forest staff, fuel and fire fighting equipment, etc.
3. Impossible to **transport heavy vehicles** loaded with water into the thick forests. So, in extreme places helicopters are used.
4. **Wind speed and direction** can also play a crucial role in fire fighting.

#### **Importance of preventing Forest Fires in India:**

1. A healthy forest stores and sequesters more carbon than any other terrestrial ecosystem.
2. According to the 2011 census, 1.70 lakh villages in India have proximity to forests. The livelihood of several crores of people is dependent on fuelwood, bamboo, fodder, and small timber.
3. Forest fires can have multiple adverse effects on the forest. For example, forest cover, soil, tree growth, vegetation, and the overall flora and fauna all get impact due to forest fires.
  - o The heat generated during the fire destroys animal habitats.
  - o Soil quality decreases with the alteration in their compositions.
  - o The trees that survive fire often remain stunted and growth is severely affected.
  - o Soil moisture and fertility gets affected. Thus forests can shrink in size in the future.

### Government Initiatives to prevent Forest Fires in India:

1. Since 2004, the Forest Survey of India(FSI) developed a Fire Alert System. The system will monitor forest fires in real-time. In 2019, an advanced version of the system was also launched.
2. Using the MODIS sensors(Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer) Real-time fire information of fire hotspots is collected and sent to FSI. This is then forwarded by email to state, district, circle, division, range and beat levels. People in the locality will also receive SMS alerts.

### 2. Alternatives to Inflation Targeting

Source: [Indian Express](#)

**Gs3:** Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment.

**Synopsis:** Many economists are criticizing the RBI's role in inflation targeting. They are suggesting alternatives to inflation targeting. Let's have a look at them.

#### Background

1. The central government confirmed the continuance of inflation targeting as a tool to monitor inflation within the same bandwidth.
2. The "inflation targeting" regime came into force in 2016. Recently [inflation targeting has been renewed](#) for another five years.
3. Following this, the RBI will continue to target maintaining retail inflation within the band of 2% to 6%.
4. RBI will use the **headline inflation** to control the inflation as it reflects the prices of essential consumer goods.
5. **Retail core inflation**, is the inflation rate without taking into account the fluctuations in the prices of fuel and food items.

#### Why many people have criticised RBI's role in inflation targeting?

Many have criticised the RBI's mandate of inflation targeting because of its contradictory role.

- RBI acts as a regulator to maintain financial stability and control prices in the economy by increasing interest rates. But this has a negative consequence on economic growth.
- Also, RBI is responsible to boost the economy by reducing repo rates. Because Cheaper loans will make it easier for firms and governments to borrow and spend/invest thus leading to economic growth.
- Between 2016 and 2020, many times RBI focused more on keeping retail inflation low by setting high interest. This has affected India's economic growth.

#### What are the alternatives suggested to inflation targeting?

1. **First, instead of headline retail inflation**, the RBI should **focus on the retail core inflation** rate. Because fuel and food prices often shoot up in the short-term due to supply disruption.
2. **Second**, RBI should not be looking at retail inflation. Instead, it should look at **wholesale inflation**. Because RBI's move to tweak interest rate affects the credit available to businesses. This, in turn, is affected by wholesale inflation, and not retail inflation.
3. **Third**, RBI should neither use the wholesale nor retail inflation rate as targets. Instead, the RBI should create a **Producer Price Index** to suit the RBI's need.

4. **Fourth**, a singular focus on maintaining price stability will be counter-productive for a developing economy such as India. They argue that the RBI should be working with the government towards ensuring fast economic growth rather than focusing on inflation targeting. Their argument is that inflation targeting is not the only way to be prudent about **macro-financial stability**.

### Why RBI should continue Inflation targeting?

There are many [benefits associated with Inflation Targeting](#). They are,

1. **First**, a high inflation rate is the most **regressive kind of tax**. The poorest people suffer the most. By targeting inflation India can avoid hurting poor people.
2. **Second**, as NPA's or bad loans are being recognised by banks, macro-financial stability will come into sharp focus. Inflation targeting can provide such macro-financial stability.
3. **Third**, Inflation targeting also takes care of supply-side bottlenecks. For example, India's inflation rate remains somewhat constant despite the [increasing fuel prices](#) and Covid-induced lockdowns in India.

But, Under the given circumstances, it is a wise decision by the government to allow RBI to focus on targeting retail inflation. This will ensure that India's poorest, who are the most hit by the pandemic will not be affected further.

### 3. An Overview of Kerala Model of Governance

Source: [The Hindu](#)

GS3: Issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

**Synopsis:** Kerala's model of Governance prioritise spending on Social infrastructure. It provides greater Economic security even during the time of adversities.

#### Background

- **'Kerala model' of governance** highlights that Human development welfare measures are effective even with low Economic growth.
- It has also highlighted the importance of the role of the People's movement. It pressurizes the government to adopt redistributive measures.

#### Kerala's growth story

- Many **economists predicted the failure of Kerala model of governance** during the economic stagnation in the 1970's and 1980's. The reason was that a slow-growing economy will not have enough fiscal capacity to fund its welfare programs.
- But after the 1980s, the growth in Agricultural income and remittance increased. It provided a long period for economic growth. During this growth period,
  - the workforce engaged in the secondary sector increased from 20% (1988) to 32% (2018-19).
  - The per capita income that was 10% lower than national average during 1990, raised to more than 65% of national average by (2019-20)
  - Health and education indicators improved, social security schemes were expanded.

One issue was the quality of infrastructure of public schools and public hospitals. The inadequate facilities forced many people towards the private sector.

#### Innovativeness to raise Funding

1. Kerala's welfare policies were hampered due to a lack of adequate financial resources due to harsh limits on state borrowings. The passage of **GST** disallowed

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states to tax commodities based on their priorities. It affected their avenues for resource mobilization.

2. In this context, KIFB was set up to raise funding from the financial market. The idea was that greater public spending will increase tax revenues by stimulating growth.
3. The government assured repayment of loans by legally committing to pay portion of its revenue from motor vehicle tax and petroleum Cess.

### Public Spending on Social infrastructure

- In the last 5 years, Kerala invested large amount in building up infrastructure for public schools and hospitals. For example, greater than 45000 classrooms were made 'Hi-tech' classrooms.
- The investments were sourced through '**Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board**' (KIFB).
- The result was, the number of students in public schools increased. The effectiveness of Kerala public hospitals were witnessed during the Pandemic.
- Apart from public schools, KIFB funding was used to build economic infrastructure such as industrial parks, bridges, Kerala fiber-optic network (K-FON), TRANSGRID 2.0.

### Implications of Investing in Social Infrastructure

- There are concerns over Kerala's unsustainable levels of Debt. For example, the debt to gross state domestic product is 36%
- Further, Kerala is very much vulnerable to shocks of the economy such as natural disaster (floods in 2018,2019 & the pandemic), job losses in west Asian countries, contradictory fiscal policy of center. All these can adversely impact its economic growth.
- However, public spending in social and economic infrastructure will create a more skilled, educated, healthier workforce along with quality infrastructure. This will ensure that even at times of adversities Kerala will be in a better position to absorb the shocks of the Economy.

## 4. Measures to address Inequality in India

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Gs3: Inclusive Growth and issues arising from it

**Synopsis:** Inequality in India is increasing. It needs an immediate solution to enable sustainable economic growth.

### Background

- According to a recent [Pew Research Report](#), one-third of India's middle-class has become poor due to the Pandemic. Whereas, poor people earning less than ₹150 per day have doubled.
- International organizations like the **World Bank**, the **International Monetary Fund**, and the **International Labour Organization** have also warned about [rising inequalities in India due to the pandemic](#).
- Also, many economists suggest India is witnessing a **k-shaped recovery** with rising inequalities.

### Why India is said to be witnessing a **K-shaped recovery**?

**K-shaped recovery** happens when, following a recession, different sections of an economy recover at starkly different rates or magnitudes. Some sections benefit from it and some bear a loss.

While the economy was slowing down even before the Pandemic, the impact of COVID-19 has further increased the inequality gap.

- **First**, the Covid-19 intensified the problems of unemployment, low incomes, rural distress, malnutrition, and inequality.
  - **For example**, the share of wages declined as compared to that of profits. The quarterly net profit of the BSE200 companies reached a record high of ₹1.67 trillion in the third quarter of FY21.
  - Whereas the informal sector and workers suffered the loss of incomes and employment in the last year. Women lost more jobs and many are out of the workforce. Inequalities also increased in health care and education.
- **Second**, the impact of the Pandemic is more on India's large informal sector than any other sector.

### What needs to be done to reduce Inequality in India?

To reduce inequalities, we need to concentrate on three basic parameters,

- Focus on increasing employment and wages,
  - Focussing on human development,
  - Also, Providing social security net through quasi-universal basic income
1. **First**, increasing employment and wages is central to the inclusive growth approach. Investment in infrastructure including construction can create employment. Further, we need to take measures to address the following seven challenges in employment,
    - i. Creating 7 to 8 million productive jobs per year.
    - ii. Correcting the mismatch between demand and supply of labor. For example, only 2.3% of India's workforce has formal skill training as compared to 96% in South Korea.
    - iii. Need to make manufacturing the growth engine to facilitate labour-intensive exports.
    - iv. Also, Focus on micro, small & medium enterprises and informal sectors including rights of migrants.
    - v. Furthermore, Preparedness for automation and technology revolution
    - vi. Social security and decent working conditions for all.
    - vii. Raising real wages of rural and urban workers and guaranteeing minimum wages.
  2. **Second**, improving human development by fixing the gap in health and education. Increasing public expenditure on health and education should be the way forward. Need to Prioritise universal **health care** and increase spending on health to 2%-3% of GDP.
  3. **Third**, providing **social safety nets** to absorb shocks in the economy. It can be done by providing a combination of cash transfers and an expanded guarantee scheme. For example,
    - i. Cash transfers to all women above the age of 20 years.
    - ii. Expanding the number of days provided under the **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act** and a **national employment guarantee scheme** for urban areas.
  4. **Fourth**, increase the income of small and marginal farmers. For that, Farmer producer organizations should be strengthened. States should have a bigger role in agri-marketing reforms.
  5. **Fifth**, the tax/GDP ratio has to be raised, with a wider tax base to increase governments' revenue. It can be used for spending for the above programs.

6. **Sixth**, resorting to fiscal federalism by reducing the inequalities between the Centre and States in finances. State budgets must be strengthened to improve capital expenditures on physical infrastructure and spending on health, education, and social safety nets.
7. **Seventh**, deepening democracy and decentralization can reduce inequalities. Unequal distribution of development is rooted in the inequalities of political, social, and economic power.

Reducing income inequalities is also important for improving demand that can raise private investment, consumption, and exports for higher and sustainable economic growth.

### 5. Tarrem attack – How Maoists Still Manage to Attack Security Forces?

**Source:** [click here](#)

**Syllabus:** GS 3

**Synopsis:** Tarrem attack points out that the declining Maoists remain a strong military threat.

#### Introduction

Over 20 paramilitary personnel died in an encounter with the Maoists in the Tarrem area near Chhattisgarh's Sukma district. There is a long-running conflict in this remote tribal region.

- **Reports point out a Maoist surprise attack** on the paramilitary personnel.
- Forces were performing **search operations in Maoist strongholds**. The timing of these search operations matches with the Maoists' attempt to disrupt the construction of a road near Silger-Jagargunda.

#### How has the Maoist presence evolved over the years in the impacted area?

**The Maoist insurgency first began as the Naxalite movement** in the 1970s and then intensified after 2004. Later two prominent insurgent groups merged together and this remains a mindless guerrilla-driven militant movement.

Security forces managed to clear the majority of the areas of the Maoists. The majority of their leaders are either killed or caught. However, their stronghold in the south Bastar is still intact. It is due to the following reasons:

1. **First**, there is a lack of road and telecommunications infrastructure in these remote areas. Maoists are able to use the terrain to their advantage.
2. **Second**, These groups still manage to recruit people from these remote areas. People living in these tribal areas either untouched by welfare or there are discontents due to state repression.
3. **Third**, Maoists also know that state crackdown after the violence provides them with more recruits. Thus, violence is useful for them.

#### Suggestions

- The State also knows that the route to violence provides Maoists with new supporters. Thus, methods other than the crackdown are required.
- Before Tarrem attacks came right after a recent peace march held by civil society activists. They were asking for a dialogue between the Maoists and the Chhattisgarh government to end the violence. According to the South Asia Terrorism Portal the violence has claimed more than 10,000 lives since 2000 alone.
- Thus, the Civil Society's call for peace should not be ignored. This is the only way for lasting peace in the region.

## 6. Net Zero Emission Principle is not in line with India's National Ambitions

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Gs3: Conservation, Environmental Pollution, and Degradation, Environmental Impact Assessment

**Synopsis:** The principle of Net Zero emission is against Climate Justice. It needs to be reworked considering the national priorities of developing countries like India.

### Background

- The Paris Agreement, explicitly recognized that the peak of emissions will take longer for developing countries. It is to be achieved in the context of “sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty”.
- However, this balance enshrined in the Paris Agreement is being upset by enforcing a common ‘**Net Zero emission**’ targets on all countries.

### What are the issues in the Paris treaty?

1. **First**, the Paris Climate Treaty does not consider the equity principle. For example,
  - India annual carbon emissions is just 3% compared with 26% for the United States and 13% for China.
  - According to the United Nations, the richest 1% of the global population emits more than two times the emissions of the bottom 50%.
  - Yet, developing countries like India needs to contribute equally in controlling carbon emission.

**Second**, the treaty does not focus on the cause of the problem that is the excessive use of energy for high levels of well-being. For instance,

- It focuses on physical quantities such as, emissions of carbon dioxide, increase in global temperature, impacts on nature. And It suggests finance and technology transfer as solutions to solve the problem.
- But the solutions require an analysis of drivers, trends and patterns of resource use.

**Third**, the recommendations ignore the costs for the poor. It states that early capping of energy use will not affect the growth of the poor.

### Why adopting Net zero emission targets will be disastrous for India?

For developed countries, peaking of emissions came 20 years after infrastructure saturation levels were reached. However, developing countries cannot adopt Zero emissions because;

1. First, the development of infrastructure is vital for developing countries. It will contribute to carbon emissions. For example, China's emissions increased three times in the period 2000-2015, driven largely by infrastructure.
2. Second, the middle class of developing countries requires infrastructure, mobility, buildings, and diet. There will be a need for half the available carbon space for their development.
3. Third, India has a young population and much of the future emissions in India will come from infrastructure, buildings and industry. This cannot be altered much if India wants to reach comparable levels of well-being with major economies.

### What needs to be done?

India must highlight unique national circumstances with respect to the food, energy and transportation systems that have to change. For example,

1. First, India should stress on change in dietary patterns of western countries. Consumption of meat contributes to a third of global emissions. Indians eat just 4 kg

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a year compared with around 68 kg in the European Union and twice of that in the U.S.

2. Second, India should stress on cutting down the Transport emissions. Because transport emissions account for a quarter of global emissions. For example, transport emissions have surpassed emissions from generation of electricity in the US
3. Third, India should stress on finding alternatives for coal use. Need to shift focus on renewable energy and hydrogen as a fuel for electrification.

### What changes should be brought to the Paris treaty?

1. First, the Paris Agreement should have changes in line with the sustainable development of countries with per capita emissions below the global average
2. Second, the verifiable measure should be well-being within ecological limits.
3. Third, international cooperation to facilitate sharing technology of electric vehicles and hydrogen as a fuel.

## 7. Suggestions to Improve India-Pakistan Relations

**Source:** [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus:** India and Neighbourhood relations

**Synopsis:** India and Pakistan have to improve their engagement further if they want to improve bilateral ties.

### Introduction:

India and Pakistan have improved their engagement in recent times. For example,

1. India and Pakistan issued a joint statement to strictly **observe all the agreements on a ceasefire** along the LoC and other sectors
2. [Permanent Indus Commission](#) meeting on the [Indus Water treaty](#),
3. [Resuming trade with India](#). Under this, Pakistan allows the import of sugar and cotton from India. However, later retracted from this stand.
4. Issuing of sporting visas and other measures like official speech on regional rapprochement, etc.

### The U-turn of Pakistan:

Despite the development, the External Affairs Ministers of both sides did not meet and greet each other at the [Heart of Asia conference](#) held last week. Further, Last week reversed few earlier developments as well. Such as,

1. Pakistan's foreign minister was the one who led the charge of Cabinet Ministers. He and his colleagues opposed the move of Pakistan's Economic Coordination Committee to reopen imports of Indian cotton and sugar.
2. He was of the opinion that the move would violate Pakistan's commitments to Kashmir.
3. Further, the Pakistan Army General also stressed the need for **Geo-economics**.
4. Following these developments, the Pakistan **cabinet rejected the import proposal of Cotton last week**.
5. Apart from that, the Pakistan cabinet also announced that they will not normalize India Pakistan ties until the revocation of steps of August 2019. (on Jammu and Kashmir and Article 370).

The U-turn in India Pakistan relations is not a new one. India did not comment on the unworkable demand on Article 370.

### Suggestions:

Pakistan has to explore options for more ties with India. This can be achieved by steps such as,

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1. Restoration of High Commissioners in each other's capitals.
  2. Opening up of [cross border LoC trade](#) that was suspended for security reasons in 2019
  3. Valuable commitments from Pakistan on issues such as cross-border terrorism, etc.
- Both India and Pakistan have to capitalise on the nascent re-engagement. But the only solution is to improve their engagement further.

### 8. Ways to Restore Democracy in Myanmar

**Source:** [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus:** India and its neighbourhood- relations

**Synopsis:** Myanmar's military is unwilling to give power to the democratically elected government. It is time for the regional countries to put pressure to end the military rule in Myanmar.

#### **Introduction:**

Myanmar celebrated its Armed Forces Day on March 27. But violence broke out during the celebration. It led to the killing of more than 100 protesters. [After the military coup in February](#), this once again brought back the demand for Rule of Law in Myanmar.

#### **India and Myanmar:**

[India maintains a cordial relationship with Myanmar](#). An Indian representative was sent to attend the Armed forces Day. Along with India, 7 other countries sent representatives to attend the Armed forces' day celebrations in Naypyidaw. This includes China, Pakistan, Russia, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand.

When the military conducted parades, the police and soldiers in other parts of Myanmar used lethal force [against unarmed people](#). This resulted in the killing of more than 100 unarmed protesters.

India condemned the "use of violence". Further, India also asked Myanmar for the "restoration of democracy".

#### **Difference between past and present protests:**

The [history of Independent Myanmar](#) is a swing between democratic and military rule. Earlier the military rule relied on swift actions to curb protesters in 1988 and 2007. According to independent agencies, the military has so far killed more than 570 civilians, including 46 children, since the coup. But the protests are increasing day by day and not reducing like the past ones. This is due to the following reasons,

1. The **military rule at present followed after a decade of partial democracy**. The people enjoyed their freedoms under the elected government for a decade. So, people are opposing military rule at present.
2. The **challenge with the banking system**. Apart from street protests, the banks in Myanmar are also on the brink of collapse. Most of the bank staff are on strike against military rule. This resulted in a **shortage of cash and inflation** of essential goods.
3. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was also intensified by the **protests of the Industrial Workers**.
4. **Support of armed insurgent groups for protesters**. The insurgent groups oppose the military as they are they take strict measures to control the insurgents. So, the insurgent groups provide support to the protesters.

#### **Suggestions to bring back normalcy:**

India and China initially remained silent on the Coup. However, now their stand is changing as unstable Myanmar is not in the interest of any country.

So far, the military Generals are unwilling to give up power. The only way is the involvement of India, China, and other countries in ASEAN to put pressure on the military to [restore democracy in Myanmar](#).

## 9. Flaws in India's Internal Security Management

**Source:** [Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Role of external state and non-state actors in creating challenges to internal security

### Synopsis:

The recent attack in tekulgada area in the Bastar region of Chhattisgarh exposed flaws in India's internal security management. Hence, there is a need to bring robust reforms in the security architecture that can prevent attacks by Left Wing Extremists in the future.

### Background:

- Recently a combing operation by local police and central police forces in the Bastar region turned into a grave Maoist attack. The attack took the lives of around 22 security personnel while several others got wounded.
  - Combing operations involves searching a place or an area very carefully in order to find something.
  - The operation was carried on to find a local Maoist leader (Madvi Hidma) and his syndicates.
- This has highlighted the flaws in India's internal security management especially in the case of Left Wing Extremism (LWE).

### About Left Wing Extremism:

- LWE or Naxal-Maoist insurgency is prevalent in India for decades in the region denoted by the red corridor. The corridor includes states from eastern, southern, and central India.
- The Maoists aim to capture State power through a combination of armed insurgency, mass mobilization, and strategic alliances.
- It is one of the 3 major internal security challenges. The other two being
  - a proxy war and terrorism in Kashmir,
  - sub-national separatist movements in the Northeast
- The government has been able to contain these but little progress is achieved in the domain of combating Left Wing Extremism (LWE).
- Around 15,000 lives have been lost due to LWE violence over the last three decades.

### Rationale behind origin and sustenance of LWE:

- **First**, the poor nature of governance has resulted in the persistent neglect of tribal populations in LWE regions. This has deprived them of the fruits of development.
- **Second**, an oppressive/exploitative hierarchy of the state and society has pushed the residents in these regions to the margins of survival.

### Flaws in Internal Security Management:

- **Operational Challenges:**
  - **Leadership failure** was seen in recent attacks. Security personnel left their dead comrades in the grip of Maoists rather than trying to regroup and attack the Maoists.
  - **Lacunae in the intelligence network** were also unearthed as the security personnel got trapped in the plan of Maoists.

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- **Use of large and diverse forces** (CAPF, COBRA commandos, local police) adversely impacted the covert nature of the operation. It made detection easier.

### **Strategic Challenges:**

- There has been **no meaningful policy review** of the IS (internal security) challenge. However, LWE was recognized as the most important security challenge by the PM in 2005.
- Further, there has been ignorance of Kargil review committee (1999) recommendations that show a **deficiency in higher IS management**.
  - The committee desired the restructuring of command, control, and leadership functions of paramilitary forces in situations of proxy war and large-scale terrorism.
  - Till date, many police officers inducted into leadership positions into paramilitary forces. They have good training to maintain law and order. However, they lack the skill set to manage an insurgent operation which results in grave tragedies like the recent Bastar attack.

### **Way Forward:**

- A detailed investigation should be carried out to find out the real reason behind the tragedy.
- There is a need to enhance cooperation between center and state government in the security domain. This will prevent such grave attacks in the future.
- The political leadership of the country must realize its responsibility towards internal security challenges. They must inculcate a will to revamp the capacity of security personnel and usher in the desired reforms.

## **10. Need of State Support for Agricultural development**

**Source:** [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Major crops-cropping patterns in various parts of the country.

**Synopsis:** The current situation of the agricultural sector demands state support to tackle future challenges. This will ensure sustainable benefits for both – farmers and consumers.

### **Background:**

- Countries across the globe are focusing on the gradual reduction of state's role in almost every sector (including agriculture). Their objective is to bring greater economic development.
- In India, the government's focus is more on developing the industrial and service sector since the 2nd five-year plan of 1956. Its aim is to move excess people from agriculture into other sectors and attain better growth.
- However, some experts still believe that state support is necessary for agricultural development.

### **Factors inducing the state support:**

1. **Poor State of Resources:** The fertility of agricultural land is declining coupled with scarce water availability.
2. **Resistance to other occupation:** People in agriculture don't shut down their farming in case of rising costs. Rather they employ family labour in farm and non-farm activities. This allows them to stick to farming despite lower returns and excessive work.

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3. **Difficult to streamline the production:** The production process can't be strengthened by building an assembly line. It is connected to the annual climatic cycle which is volatile and makes farming difficult.
4. **Size of Farmers:** Around 86% of farmers are small and medium. They can't access good storage, transportation and marketing facilities. This leads to distress sales in agriculture.
5. **Price Inelastic nature:** It means demand for Agri products will not witness a major change with a change in the price of Agri products.
  - **For instance,** a bumper crop reduces the price of Agri product as supply gets increased. This is not followed by a corresponding increase in demand that can push the price upwards. Hence, less income is generated by farmers.
6. **Tackling Emergencies:** State support is desirable to provide quality food grains at affordable price in case of emergencies like drought, pandemic etc.
7. **Accommodating the Demographic profile:** Despite the push towards urbanization, the UN estimates that around 800 million people will reside in rural areas in 2050. It requires proactive action by the state.

### Past Performance with State support:

The state initiated the green revolution in the 1960s. It established the Food Corporation of India (FCI) and Agricultural Prices Commission in 1965.

### Positives:

- Surplus production allowed India to attain food security.
- Farmers were incentivised to grow as they enjoy a safety cushion based on FCI's procurement guarantee.
- Quality grains at low prices through the [PDS](#) enhanced consumer welfare.

### Concerns:

- Post green revolution, a decline in quantity as well quality of water is witnessed.
- The yield from chemical-based farming is also declining.
- The sector is mainly growing rice and wheat due to MSP (minimum assured price) availability. This is hampering crop diversification and encouraging more water usage as they are water-intensive crops.
- Agriculture became unviable in some regions. It led to over 3 lakh farmer suicides in the last 3 decades. This is an unprecedented event for the country.

### Way Forward

1. The **government should diversify the procurement basket.** It should include more crops (like pulses, millets etc.) and more regions.
  - It can procure 25% of the actual production of the commodity for that particular season. This was proposed under the 2018 Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay SanraksHan Abhiyan (PM-AASHA) scheme.
2. Further the **procurement process should respect the regional agroecology.** Eg – don't procure water-intensive crops from water-stressed regions.
3. The **locally procured crops must be linked to Anganwadi and mid-meal centres.** This will give a good market to farmers and improve nutrition of children.
4. The government should do **greater investment in specific infrastructure** for pulses, millets, etc. crops that are low-priced and provide better nutrition.
5. The **network of Mandis should be expanded.** This will protect farmers from exploitation of large retailers.

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- Currently, there are 2,477 mandis and 4,843 sub-mandis and only 17% of farm produce pass through them. However, the need is to create a network of 42000 mandis that will enable the selling of goods within a 5 km radius.

### 11. India's policy towards Climate change

**Source:** [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Conservation, environmental pollution, and degradation, environmental impact assessment

**Synopsis:** India adopted a liberal policy towards climate change in the pandemic era. This might generate significant negative impacts, thus demanding a comprehensive review.

#### Background:

- Recently a meeting took place between U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, John Kerry and PM Narendra Modi. The U.S has shown commitment to support India's initiatives to combat climate change.
- After this, demand is raised to review India's policy towards climate change and consider the proposal of adopting a net-zero emission target.
  - It is a situation in which a country balances its emissions with sufficient removal measures.

#### Should India adopt Net Zero Emission Target?

- **Arguments in Favour:**
  - India is among the top 5 largest emitters of carbon dioxide.
  - An increase in intense storms, drought, and heat waves is seen in India due to enhanced climate change.

#### **Arguments against adoption:**

- A substantial cost would be incurred towards this strategy. It can hamper India's socio-economic programs. The country needs to focus on millions of people that live in energy poverty and underdevelopment.
- India is not a legacy emitter like the U.S, U.K, etc. Legacy emitters have a greater responsibility towards climate change.

However, whether it adopts a net-zero emission target or not, a review of the present approach is desired.

#### Why Government needs to review its policies?

- The government took various decisions (especially during the Covid pandemic) that will hamper the environment and enhance climate change. This includes:
  - Giving approval to projects that might hamper the environment.
  - Extending the deadline for coal plants to adopt strict pollution control.
  - Drafting liberal environmental impact assessment norms.

Similarly, the strategy of imposing a higher tax on fuel prices is not paying a significant environmental dividend. Rather the poor are facing undue problems due to rising inflationary pressures.

#### Way Forward:

- India should come up with a **comprehensive domestic climate plan** before the next UN Convention on Climate Change.
  - It should have reduction targets for every sector
  - It should enlighten the citizens towards the government's green development path for the next decade

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- Such a plan will induce the biggest historical contributors (U.S, U.K, Europe, etc.) to do more reduction. It will provide greater support to the developing countries.
  - They should provide more funds and technology as per the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.
- In the meanwhile, India can impose **an emission tax** on luxury items like air conditioners, big properties or aviation, etc. The collected proceeds can then be used for specified green development outcomes.

### 12. Rupee depreciation and its management

Source: [Indian Express](#)

**Gs3: Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment.**

**Synopsis:** Rupee depreciation and its impact and solutions to protect from currency volatility risks.

#### Background of Rupee depreciation

- Recently, the rupee fell sharply by 105 paise. It is considered as one of the biggest single-session falls in 20 months.
- Currently, the rupee stands at 74.47 against the US dollar.

#### What are the reasons for rupee depreciation?

A combination of factors are responsible for rupee depreciation, such as

1. One, concerns over Covid-19 has created **uncertainty in the market**. This affected the FDI(Foreign Direct Investment) and FII(Foreign Institutional Investment). So the rupee weakens further.
2. Two, RBI's **Government Securities Acquisition Programme** (G-SAP) that seeks to buy bonds worth Rs 1 lakh crore might be one of the reasons. It is a **quantitative easing policy** followed by RBI. The policy supported the government's increased borrowing Programme through the infusion of liquidity.
3. Three, the **strengthening of the dollar against the euro** also contributed to rupee depreciation.
4. Four, RBI's **status-quo on policy rates** is not helping to increase demand in the local economy. This will further impact the rupee.
5. Further, the value of the rupee will also be impacted by the **high bond yields in the US** and the inflow of dollars into the US.

#### What are the impacts of Rupee depreciation?

It has both positive and negative impacts. For instance,

1. Depreciation has a positive impact for an NRI. As they are sending money back home they will get more rupees per dollar.
2. Similarly, Depreciation will have negative impacts on fuel costs and education cost in abroad. For example,
  - One, A depreciating rupee increases the cost of crude import. A rise in cost of crude raises fuel prices and inflation. Crude import accounts for almost 20% of India's imports.
  - Two, higher education in the US might cost an annual fee of US\$ 50,000. A 5% depreciation in the rupee (For example, from 72.5 to 76.125) will raise the cost for one year from Rs 36.26 lakh to Rs 38.06 lakh (Net loss Rs 1.8 lakh)

### How to eliminate the Rupee depreciation and currency risk?

There are multiple options to cover the currency volatility risk. They are,

1. **Investing in international funds** that invest in global markets through fund of funds. While the Indian investors invest in rupees, in the fund of funds the money gets invested in dollars at the current exchange rate. In case of rupee depreciation, this fund will fully protect against the currency depreciation risk.
2. In this case, if a person planning for a quick investment (4-5 months) in foreign currency, there are two options to eliminate currency risk.
  - o One, **creating a deposit account in the US** and transferring the fund abroad.
  - o Two, **going for a currency hedge** in the exchanges **by investing in future contracts** that will mature in 4-5 months. For example,
    - o A future contract worth \$50,000, maturing in July at the rate of 74.5, will pay Rs 37.25 lakh.
    - o If in December, the rupee depreciates to \$77, Then the contract will yield a profit of Rs 1.25 lakh.

### 13. Why India should avoid Carbon Neutrality targets?

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Gs3: Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation, Environmental Impact Assessment.

**Synopsis:** India must reject carbon neutrality as it would lead India into a low-development trap.

#### Background

- Achieving [carbon neutrality by midcentury](#) is conceived as a scientific approach to limit temperature rise by 2°C
- According to **the Energy and Climate Intelligence Unit (ECIU)**, nearly 32 countries had declared their intention to achieve carbon-neutral status by 2050.
- Many global civil society organisations are persuading all countries, especially India, to make explicit declarations on achieving Carbon Neutrality.
- Article 4.1 of the Paris Agreement gives impetus for pushing towards carbon-neutral economies.
  - o It states that to achieve the long-term temperature goal, Parties should aim to reach global peaking of greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible.
  - o Since peaking will take longer for developing countries, countries should take initiatives to achieve the removal of greenhouse gas emissions at least in the second half of this century. (Carbon Neutrality might come under this article).
  - o Further, the article also mentions that this will be on the basis of **equity**. Apart from that, it should also aim to achieve **sustainable development** and efforts to eradicate poverty.

#### What are the issues in achieving Carbon neutrality?

- **First, the** achievement of carbon neutrality is not compatible with achieving 1.5°C or 2 °C goals of the Paris agreement. The current pledges are highly inadequate. For example,
  - o The **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change** Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C mentions some key points. Such as the World now left with only 480 Giga-tonnes or Gt (billion tonnes) of carbon space for restricting to 1.5 °C targets.
  - o At the current rate of emissions of about 42 Gt of CO<sub>2</sub>(GtCO<sub>2</sub>) equivalent per year. The world will reach this in just 12 years.

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- So, to keep within the 480 Gt budget, global carbon neutrality must be reached by 2039.
- **Second**, the commitments made by the US and the European Union to achieve carbon neutrality targets is not compatible with achieving the 1.5 °C or 2 °C goals. For example,
  - In the case of the US, even if it reaches carbon neutrality by 2050, it will consume 106 GtCO<sub>2</sub> carbon space. That is 22% of the total remaining carbon budget for the whole world.
  - To stay within its fair share of the remaining carbon budget, the US has to reach net-zero emissions by 2025.
  - Even then it has to owe a carbon debt of 470 GtCO<sub>2</sub> ((\$14 trillion) to the rest of the world. This is for its past usage and providing a fair share of carbon space.
  - This is applicable to the EU also. The EU has to reach net-zero by 2033. And the EU owes the world a carbon debt of about \$9.3 trillion for its past emissions.

### Why India should not join Carbon Neutrality?

India has [many reasons to avoid Carbon neutrality](#). These are,

- **First**, India **needs to focus on development** and its aspirational goal. Though sustainable development is feasible, the question of how low India's future carbon emission will look is highly uncertain.
- **Second**, India **does not owe a carbon debt to the world**. Further, India's current per capita emissions are very low compared to the developed countries. Also, India's mitigation efforts are quite compatible with a 2 °C target.
- **Third**, India has a twin burden of **low-carbon development and adaptation to climate impacts**. So, If India announces Carbon-neutrality now, then it will become a triple burden.

In conclusion, India should avoid announcing such carbon neutrality targets. That too, without making the developed countries liable for their past emission is risky. Further, It will also lead India into a low-development trap.

### 14. Strengthening the National small savings schemes

**Source:** [Indian Express](#)

Gs3: Inclusive Growth and issues arising from it.

**Synopsis:** The government need to implement the recommendation of high-level committees in determining the interest rate of small saving schemes

#### Background

- Recently, the government notified on reducing the interest rates on **National small savings schemes**.
- However, the decision to reduce the interest rates on small savings schemes was reversed within 12 hours of notification.
- Reducing the interest rate of **National small savings schemes** will adversely impact middle class, lower middle class and lower-income groups. As they are already facing the crisis of job losses and higher food price due to the Pandemic.

#### Types of Small saving schemes in India

1. **Post office Deposits**
2. **Savings Certificates: National Savings Certificate and Kisan Vikas Patra**

3. **Social Security Schemes: Public Provident Fund, Senior Citizens Savings Scheme and Sukanya Samridhi Account.**

**Significance of Small Saving schemes;**

- One, Small savings schemes (SSS) have contributed to overall economic growth. Because, money pooled from SSS have been used by centre and state governments to fund development programmes.
- Two, they are an important source of household savings. (social security net)
- Three, they offer a safe and secure source of income to senior citizens.

**How the Interest rate of National small savings schemes are decided currently?**

- The small savings rates are linked to **G-sec yields** (the rate at which the government borrows money through sovereign bonds) currently. Further, it is revised quarterly.
- The rationale for linking small savings rates to G-sec is that money collected through these schemes is invested in central and state government securities.

**What are the recommendations of various high-level committees in this regard?**

1. Various committees such as **Y V Reddy committee**, the **Rakesh Mohan committee**, **Shyamala Gopinath Committee** have recommended **linking small savings rates to G-sec yields**.
2. The important recommendations of these committees are, For example,
  - One, The Reddy committee suggested small savings rates should be reset once a year. Instead of the current practice of revising it quarterly.
  - Two, the Reddy Committee recommended that the **rates should never be revised more than 50 basis points**. On the other hand, the Gopinath Committee recommended that the **rates should never be revised more than 100 basis points** in a year.
    - However, due to quarterly revisions, many times the basis points have reduced by more than 100 owing to low G-sec yields.
    - For example, Interest in the Senior Citizens' Saving Scheme was cut to 7.4 per cent, effective from April 2020, from 8.7 per cent before.
  - **Rakesh Mohan Committee** recommended using a weighted average of G-sec yields over the preceding two years in calculating interest rates of SSS.  
However, the present move is contradictory to the current approach of the Finance ministry.

**The justification given by the government for reducing the interest rate of SSS:**

- One, people's dependence on small savings schemes had significantly declined due to the expansion of the banking sector.
- Two, for those who used small savings as safety nets there were other alternatives such as an old-age pension scheme.
- Three, a market-determined rate will provide a fair outcome. But this is not true because many times **RBI has intervened in the market to reduce G-sec yields** that directly affect the interest rate of SSS.

**What is the way forward?**

- One, the government Should **reset the rates annually** in line with various high-level committee recommendations.
- Two, the government **should keep the revision under 100 basis points** and allowing small savings rates a spread of at least 50 basis points over and above the G-sec yields.

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- Revisiting the suggestion made by the **Rakesh Mohan Committee** to use a weighted average of G-sec yields over the preceding two years.

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