



FORTUNE WEEKLY DIGEST



› Zero Hunger

› Speaker

› New Criminal Laws

**BHARATIYA NYAYA SANHITA**

**BHARATIYA NAGARIK  
SURAKHSA SANHITA**

**BHARATIYA SAKSHYA  
ADHINIYAM**

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

As UPSC aspirants, it is essential to stay updated on current affairs to excel in the examination. This **Fortune Weekly Digest (ForWarD)** brings you the latest news and developments from around the world, carefully curated and analyzed to help you prepare for the Civil Services (Main) Examination.

We understand that time is precious, and we have made sure to present the information in a concise and easy-to-understand manner.

The magazine is divided into different sections. Mains relevant topics have been covered in detail with a UPSC previous year question perspective. The jot downs are examples and interesting facts to enrich your answer writing. Cherrypicks has some key words from the week, helpful again in answer writing and essay. We have also included essay topics and sample questions to help you gauge your preparation.

We have designed this magazine to best supplement the daily current affairs notes we have launched by the name of **FIND (Fortune IAS News Daily)** and **FINDER (Fortune IAS News Daily Explainer)** and the **Fortune Prelims Precise** monthly compilation. This magazine will be explained in detail and your queries addressed in a live class we conduct.

At a time when there is no dearth of current affairs materials, our hope is help you get a one-stop solution for all your current affairs needs.

This magazine is a work in progress and your feedback will be appreciated.

We hope that this magazine will serve as a valuable resource for your exam preparation and contribute to your success in the UPSC examination.

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**FIRST ATTEMPT TOPPERS FROM  
OUR PRELIMS CUM MAINS BATCH**



**KASTURI SHA**  
AIR 68

**MANJIMA P**  
AIR 235

**SWATHI S BABU**  
AIR 522

**FABI RASHEED**  
AIR 71

**OORMILA J S**  
AIR 561

**WOMEN IN POWER**

*Congratulations*

EMPOWERED BY



**FORTUNE  
IAS ACADEMY**

# ZERO HUNGER

**"Food security is defined when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life."**

-World Food Summit of 1996

**Syllabus: GS II - Issues relating to poverty and hunger**

## PYQ MAPPING

**Q1** How far do you agree with the view that the focus on lack or availability of food as the main cause of hunger takes the attention away from ineffective human development policies in India? (2018)

**Q2** There is a growing divergence in the relationship between poverty and hunger in India. The shrinking of social expenditure by the government is forcing the poor to spend more on Non-Food essential items squeezing their food – budget. - Elucidate. (2019)

## SHORT TAKES

- **The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** They are a collection of 17 global objectives designed to address a range of social, economic, and environmental challenges by 2030. Established in 2015, the SDGs aim to promote prosperity while protecting the planet, ensuring that all people enjoy peace and equity.
- **International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES-Food):** It is a global think tank that provides independent research and policy recommendations on sustainable food systems, aiming to promote food security, environmental sustainability, and social equity.
- **Zero food children:** Children between 6-23 months who had not consumed any animal milk, formula, solid, or semisolid food in the last 24 hours of a survey conducted as part of a study published in JAMA Network Open journal. However, the government of India has criticised this classification calling it non-standardised definition and for non-inclusion of breast milk.

## WHY IN NEWS

The recently released "Food From Somewhere" report by the International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES-Food) highlights that progress on global hunger has reversed. Nearly 30 percent of the world's population now faces food insecurity, and 42 percent are unable to afford a healthy diet. The report, published on July 2, 2024, projects that around **600 million people will face hunger by 2030**, pushing the world further away from achieving the 'zero hunger' goal.

## INTRODUCTION

Zero Hunger is a global initiative and one of the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 2)**, aimed at ending hunger, achieving food security, improving nutrition, and promoting sustainable agriculture by 2030. This ambitious goal addresses the fundamental human right to adequate food and aims to eliminate all forms of malnutrition while supporting sustainable food systems that can withstand climate change and economic shocks.

## GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Global progress on reducing hunger has stalled and even reversed.

- **Food Insecurity:** Nearly 30% of the world's population faces food insecurity, meaning they lack consistent access to enough nutritious food.
- **Unaffordable Healthy Diets:** An even larger portion, 42%, cannot afford a healthy diet.
- **Zero Hunger Goal Stalled:** The UN's goal of "zero hunger" by 2030 seems further away than ever.
  - The number of people facing hunger is expected to rise to around 600 million by 2030.
- **Global Report on Food Crises (GRFC) 2023:**
  - **Hunger Statistics:** The report estimates that between 691 million and 783 million people globally suffered from hunger in 2022.

- o **Pandemic Impact:** While the number of people experiencing hunger didn't significantly increase during the initial years of the COVID-19 pandemic (2020-2021), it remains significantly higher compared to pre-pandemic levels (2019).



## END HUNGER, ACHIEVE FOOD SECURITY AND IMPROVED NUTRITION AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

### ZERO HUNGER GOAL AT RISK

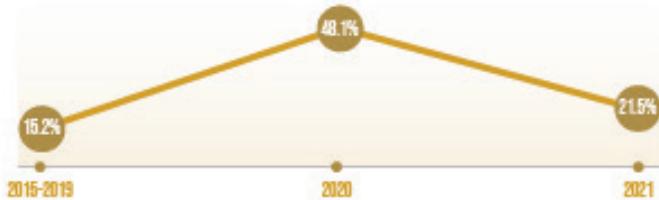


MORE THAN **600 MILLION** PEOPLE WORLDWIDE  
ARE PROJECTED TO **FACE HUNGER IN 2030**

DESPITE DROPPING IN 2021,

**HIGH FOOD PRICES CONTINUE TO PLAGUE MANY NATIONS**

SHARE OF COUNTRIES EXPERIENCING MODERATELY  
TO ABNORMALLY HIGH FOOD PRICES:



**LITTLE TO NO PROGRESS**  
HAS BEEN MADE IN REDUCING  
ANAEMIA WORLDWIDE SINCE 2000



PREVALENCE OF ANAEMIA IN  
**WOMEN AGED 15-49**  
HAS REMAINED STAGNANT  
AT AROUND 30%

**1 IN 3 PEOPLE**



WORLDWIDE STRUGGLE  
WITH MODERATE TO SEVERE  
**FOOD INSECURITY**

### MALNUTRITION PERSISTS WORLDWIDE, JEOPARDIZING CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

CHILDREN UNDER AGE-5  
AFFECTED BY:  
[2022]



THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS REPORT 2023: SPECIAL EDITION- [UNSTATS.UN.ORG/SDGS/REPORT/2023/](http://UNSTATS.UN.ORG/SDGS/REPORT/2023/)

## INDIA PERSPECTIVE

- **Study in JAMA Network Open journal:** A peer-reviewed study published in the medical journal found that 19.3% of children aged 6 months to 23 months in India are classified as "zero food" children. It ranked India third globally for this issue better than only Guinea (21.8 per cent) and Mali (20.5 per cent).
- **Study in eClinical Medicine (part of Lancet Discovery Science):** Published in 2023, this study specifically focused on Uttar Pradesh and found that it has the highest percentage (28.4%) of "zero food" children in India.
- **Significant Improvement:** A substantial decrease in **poverty levels**, with the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MDPI) by NITI Aayog suggesting 135 million lifted out of poverty between 2015-16 and 2019-21. The UNDP report (2005-2021) estimates an even larger reduction of 415 million. This is considered a significant accomplishment.

## REASONS

- **Price Increases:** Rising food and energy prices make it difficult for people, especially those with limited income, to afford enough nutritious food.
- **Conflict and Instability:** Wars and civil unrest disrupt food production, distribution, and access, leading to hunger in affected areas.
- **Extreme Weather Events:** Droughts, floods, and other weather disturbances can devastate crops and livelihoods, causing food shortages.
- **Inequality:** Unequal distribution of resources and wealth means some populations are more vulnerable to hunger even when food is available.
- **Unsustainable Food System:** The fundamental lack of resilience in the global food system, making it vulnerable to shocks.
- **Criticism of Corporate Food Systems:** The concerns about corporate-controlled food supply chains.
  - » **Vulnerability:** They are more susceptible to disruptions in trade, climate impacts, and market fluctuations.
  - » **Small Producer Impact:** These corporate systems may be undermining the livelihoods of small-scale food producers.
- **Policy and Investment Barriers:** The trade and investment policies, along with agricultural subsidies,

as factors that can penalise local food markets. These policies might favour large-scale industrial agriculture.

- **Lack of Infrastructure:** Local food systems often lack adequate infrastructure, such as sanitation facilities and storage solutions. This can limit their efficiency and effectiveness.
- **Causes of Zero-Food Children:** Experts attribute this issue to a combination of factors:
  - » **Poverty and Marginalisation:** Underprivileged families often lack resources to provide proper nutrition.
  - » **Rapid Urbanisation:** The influx of people into urban areas strains traditional support systems and increases workload on mothers, leaving less time for child feeding.
  - » **Nuclear Families:** Smaller family structures may lack the traditional support network for childcare and meal preparation.
  - » **Lack of Awareness:** Inadequate knowledge about children's nutritional needs contributes to the problem.
  - » **Social Misconceptions:** Potential biases against feeding methods or the role of fathers might further hinder proper nutrition.

## WAY FORWARD

- **UN Review:** The UN's High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) is happening from July 8th to 17th, 2024.
  - During this forum, they will be specifically reviewing progress towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG 2) - ending hunger, achieving food security, improved nutrition, and promoting sustainable agriculture.
- **Localised Food Supply Chains:** Such as public markets, street vendors, cooperatives, urban agriculture, and online direct sales, provide a more resilient and equitable approach to food security by relying on smaller-scale food producers and vendors to serve communities.

- ✿ **Public Procurement Shift:** Redirect public procurement practices to support sustainable small-scale producers. This could involve prioritising local food sources for government institutions and programs.
- ✿ **Subsidy Shift:** Shift agricultural subsidies from large-scale producers to investments that directly benefit local food systems. This could involve funding infrastructure development for local markets and producer networks.
- ✿ **Building Resilience:** Climate-resilient infrastructure, like the raised roads and markets built in Bangladesh, ensures continued market access for farmers and consumers in the face of extreme weather events.
- ✿ **Protecting Local Markets:** Implement policies that safeguard local markets from being taken over by large corporations. This could involve regulations to ensure fair competition and prevent unfair practices.
- ✿ **Promoting Sustainable Practices:** Encourage sustainable and biodiverse farming practices within local food systems. This might involve supporting organic farming methods and promoting crop diversity.
- ✿ **Increased R&D Investments:** Doubling or tripling R&D expenditure in agriculture is suggested to enhance productivity and create a more climate-resilient food system.
- ✿ **Dietary Diversity:** Advocate for dietary shifts that encourage diverse and healthy diets as part of a sustainable food system.
- ✿ **Connecting Producers and Markets:** Creating strong links between small-scale farmers and markets is crucial.

## CONCLUSION

Achieving zero hunger is critical for global stability and development, as it addresses one of humanity's most fundamental needs. Efforts to eradicate hunger must include sustainable agricultural practices and policies that prioritise the most vulnerable populations. With coordinated global action and innovative solutions, we can make significant strides toward a world where everyone has access to sufficient, nutritious food.

### SAMPLE QUESTION

**Q)** Discuss the global challenges and opportunities in achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal of Zero Hunger by 2030. Evaluate the impact of recent global crises on the progress towards this goal **(10 marks)(150 words)**



**OUR  
14 TOPPERS FROM  
PRELIMS CUM MAINS BATCH**

**5 TOPPERS IN FIRST ATTEMPT**

				
KASTURI SHA AIR 68	FABI RASHEED AIR 71	SIDDHANT KUMAR AIR 114	MANJIMA P AIR 235	
				
PARVATHY GOPAKUMAR AIR 282	SWATHI S BABU AIR 522	DEVIKRISHNA P AIR 559	OORMILA J S AIR 561	MRIDUI DARSAN AIR 630
				
SAYANTH K AIR 701	ANUSHA R CHANDRAN AIR 791	SWATHY S AIR 827	SACHIN ANAND AIR 855	RAVEEN K MANOHARAN AIR 888

**BEST RESULTS FROM CLASSROOM PROGRAM  
(PCM BATCH) IN KERALA**

# SPEAKER

## ***Syllabus: GS II - Union and State Legislatures***

## PYQ MAPPING

**Q) 'Once a Speaker, Always a Speaker'! Do you think this practice should be adopted to impart objectivity to the office of the Speaker of Lok Sabha? What could be its implications for the robust functioning of parliamentary business in India? (2020)**

**Q) Discuss the role of the Vice –Presidents of India as the chairman of the Rajya Sabha. (2022)**

## WHY IN NEWS

Om Birla was elected Speaker of the 18th Lok Sabha on Wednesday, defeating Kodikunnil Suresh of the Congress in a voice vote, as the Opposition did not press for a division of votes.

## INTRODUCTION

- » The Lok Sabha, India's highest legislative body and Lower House of Parliament, is presided over by the Speaker, who serves as both the constitutional and ceremonial head of the House.
- » **Articles 93** and **178** of the Indian Constitution mandate that the Lok Sabha and state assemblies, respectively, must select a Speaker and Deputy Speaker from among their members "as soon as may be" after the House convenes.
- » Notably, in the 72 years of the Lok Sabha Assembly, the election for the Speaker post has taken place thrice, i.e. in 1952, 1976 and 2024.

## SHORT TAKES

 Division of vote and voice vote

- » The division of votes in Parliament refers to the process by which votes are cast and counted during decision-making on various matters, including legislation, motions, and resolutions.
- » The division of votes in the Indian Parliament is mentioned in the rules and procedures of both Houses

## » Types of Voting Methods

## 1. Voice Vote:

- o Members respond orally.
- o The Speaker asks those in favour to say 'Aye' and those against to say 'No'.
- o The side with the louder response is considered to have won.
- o Used for non-controversial matters.

## 2. Division Vote:

- Conducted if a member requests a formal count after a voice vote.
- Members register their votes using an electronic voting system or by physically dividing into separate lobbies.

### 3. Electronic Voting:

- o Members press buttons to record their votes electronically.
- o Results are displayed on screens in the House.
- o Most commonly used for important decisions.

#### 4. Secret Ballot:

- o Used in exceptional cases where anonymity is crucial, such as the election of the President or Vice-President.

## 5. Ballot Vote:

- o Members cast their votes on ballot papers.
- o Used when the electronic system is not functional or for specific circumstances.

### 💡 **The panel of Chairpersons of Lok Sabha:**

- » Under the Rules of Lok Sabha, the Speaker nominates from amongst the members a panel of not more than ten chairpersons.
- » Any of them can preside over the House in the absence of the Speaker or the Deputy Speaker.
- » She / He has the same powers as the Speaker when so presiding.
- » When a member of the panel of chairpersons is also not present, any other person as determined by House acts as the Speaker

## RECENT CONTROVERSIES ON SPEAKER ELECTION

### 🌀 **REASONS:**

#### 👉 **Pro-tem Speaker Appointment:**

- The appointment of BJP leader Bhartruhari Mahtab as the pro-tem Speaker has sparked disputes.
- The Opposition, particularly the Congress party, criticised this choice, arguing that it deviates from the tradition (convention) of appointing the senior-most MP. They pointed out that K Suresh, an eight-term member and Dalit leader, was overlooked for the post.

#### 👉 **Delay in Deputy Speaker Election:**

- There has been significant delay in electing a Deputy Speaker for the Lok Sabha, a position that traditionally goes to an opposition member.
- This delay has led to accusations from the Opposition that the ruling party is deliberately avoiding the election to prevent the Opposition from gaining the post.
- The post has been vacant since the last lok sabha 2019.

#### 👉 **Partisan Allegations:**

- The opposition has alleged that the election process for the Speaker and Deputy Speaker has become increasingly partisan, with accusations that the ruling party is using its majority to sideline opposition candidates and influence the election outcomes in its favour.

🌀 These controversies led to election of speaker as Opposition fielding **Kodikunnil Suresh** as their candidate.

🌀 However with the numbers on the NDA's side, BJP MP **Om Birla** was elected Lok Sabha Speaker for a second consecutive term by a **voice vote**.

## IMPORTANT CONSTITUTIONAL ARTICLES RELATED TO THE OFFICE OF SPEAKER

### 💡 **Article 93:**

- » "The House of the People shall, as soon as may be, choose two members of the House to be respectively Speaker and Deputy Speaker thereof and, so often as the office of Speaker or Deputy Speaker becomes vacant, the House shall choose another member to be Speaker or Deputy Speaker, as the case may be."

### 💡 **Article 94:**

- » It outlines the procedures for vacation, resignation, and removal from the positions of Speaker and Deputy Speaker.

### 💡 **Article 95:**

- » It provides provisions regarding the "power of the Deputy Speaker or other person to perform the duties of the office of, or to act as, Speaker."

### 💡 **Article 96:**

- » It specifies the powers of the Speaker and Deputy Speaker during consideration of a resolution for their removal from office. It says, "The Speaker or the Deputy Speaker is not to preside while a resolution for his removal from office is under consideration."

### 💡 **Article 97:**

- » It provides for the "salaries and allowances of the Chairman and Deputy Chairman and the Speaker and Deputy Speaker."

## ELECTION OF SPEAKER AND DEPUTY SPEAKER

- ♣ The election of the Speaker of the Lok Sabha is a significant event, typically one of the first acts of a newly constituted Lok Sabha.
- ♣ Both the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker are elected from among the members of the Lok Sabha by a simple majority of members present and voting in the House.
- ♣ **The Constitution of India does not specify qualifications for becoming a Speaker, allowing any member of the House to be considered.**
- ♣ The Speaker's post is distinct from other members of the House, with responsibilities outlined in parliamentary procedures.
- ♣ The **process and timing of these elections are not specified in the Constitution, leaving it to the discretion of the respective legislatures.**
- ♣ In the Lok Sabha and state legislatures, the **President/Governor** sets a date for the election of the Speaker, and the **Speaker decides the date for the election of the Deputy Speaker.**
- ♣ There are two methods for appointing a Lok Sabha Speaker:
  - The ruling party nominates a candidate after formal consultation with the opposition, which is the most commonly practised method.
  - Less commonly, both the ruling and opposition parties nominate candidates, and the Speaker is elected based on votes cast by the MPs present on the day of the election.

## POWERS OF THE SPEAKER

### Conducting house:

- The Speaker, in consultation with the Leader of the House, determines how government business is conducted.
- Members must obtain the Speaker's permission to ask questions or discuss any matter in the House.

### Interpreter of constitutional provisions:

- He is the final authority on the interpretation of the provisions of the Constitution of India, the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business of the Lok Sabha, and the parliamentary proceedings within the House.
- Their rulings on such matters are binding on the members of the House.

### Presiding over joint sessions:

- The Speaker presides over joint sittings of both houses of Parliament, which are summoned by the President to resolve deadlocks between the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha on a particular bill.

### Maintaining order and decorum:

- The Speaker has the power to adjourn the House or suspend a meeting in the absence of one-tenth of the total strength of the House, known as the quorum.
- This authority is crucial for maintaining order and ensuring the proper conduct of parliamentary proceedings.

### Deciding on money bills:

- The Speaker has the exclusive authority to decide whether a bill is a "money bill" or not, and this decision is final and cannot be challenged.

### Question and Records:

- The Speaker decides the admissibility of questions raised by members and oversees the publication of House proceedings.
- The Speaker can expunge remarks deemed unparliamentary, including critical remarks against the ruling party, before publication.

### Chairing committees and groups:

- The Speaker acts as the ex-officio chairman of the Indian Parliamentary Group (IPG), which serves as a link between the Parliament of India and the various parliaments of the world.
- He also chairs the conference of presiding officers of legislative bodies in the country.

### Constituting committees:

- The committees of the House are constituted by the Speaker and function under his/her overall direction.
- The chairpersons of all parliamentary committees, the Business Advisory Committee, the General Purposes Committee, and the Rules Committee work directly under the Speaker's chairpersonship.

## Protecting the House's privileges:

- o The Speaker is the guardian of the rights and privileges of the House, its committees, and its members.
- o It depends solely on the Speaker to refer any question of privilege to the Committee of Privileges for examination, investigation, and report.

## Casting Vote:

- o According to **Article 100 of the Constitution**, which talks about voting in the Houses, the Chairman of Rajya Sabha or Speaker of Lok Sabha, or any person acting as such, "shall not vote in the first instance, but shall have an exercise a casting vote in the case of any equality of votes".

## Disqualification of members:

- o The **Tenth Schedule or the anti-defection law**, introduced to the Constitution through the **Fifty-Second (Amendment) Act, 1985**, gives the Speaker of the House the power to disqualify legislators who 'defect' from a party.
- o In the landmark case ***Kihoto Hollohan versus Zachillhu*** in 1992, the Supreme Court upheld the power vested in the Speaker and said that only the final order of the Speaker would be subject to judicial review.
- o In 2020, the Supreme Court ruled that Speakers of Assemblies and Lok Sabha must decide disqualification pleas within three months except in extraordinary circumstances.

## WHY IS IT CRUCIAL FOR THE SPEAKER TO MAINTAIN NEUTRALITY?

## Crucial Role in Democracy:

The Speaker is essential for a vigilant and well-functioning Parliament, responsible for maintaining decorum and ensuring effective proceedings.

## Neutrality and Trust:

Neutrality is crucial for the Speaker to earn the trust of Members of Parliament (MPs) in running the House impartially.

## CHALLENGES TO NEUTRALITY

- The Speaker's neutrality has been questioned due to instances where decisions may appear biased towards their political party.
  - **Dependence on Political Party:** Speakers depend on their political party for re-election, which can create pressures to align with party interests rather than maintain impartiality.
  - **Lack of Security in Office:** The absence of guaranteed tenure makes Speakers susceptible to influence from their party, potentially affecting their neutrality in conducting Lok Sabha proceedings.

## Use of Discretion:

- o There have been instances where the Speaker has been accused of using his discretion in an arbitrary or biased manner.
- o This can lead to perceptions of unfairness or lack of transparency in the decision-making process.

## HOW CAN ENSURE NEUTRALITY OF SPEAKER

### ✓ Resignation from Political Party:

- The Speaker could resign from their political party upon assuming office.
- This step would remove direct party affiliation, reducing pressures to favour party interests in parliamentary proceedings.
- Several **Supreme Court judgments** on anti-defection laws, noting a common issue of partisan conduct by Speakers in state assemblies.
- This partisan behaviour has compromised their impartiality and independence.
- **Example: N Sanjiva Reddy**, who resigned from his party upon becoming Speaker in 1967, as a model for ensuring Speaker independence and impartiality.

### ✓ Election by Consensus:

- Ensuring that the Speaker is elected through consensus among major political parties rather than a purely partisan vote can promote neutrality and reduce perceptions of bias.

### ✓ Adherence to Parliamentary Rules:

- The Speaker should strictly adhere to parliamentary rules and precedents in making procedural decisions, such as allowing debates, deciding on the admissibility of questions, and expunging remarks.

### ✓ Consultation with Opposition:

- Regular consultation with opposition leaders and parties on matters of parliamentary conduct and procedures can help build consensus and ensure fair treatment for all members.

### ✓ Training and Guidance:

- Providing training and guidance to Speakers on parliamentary practices, ethics, and the importance of neutrality can enhance their ability to perform their role impartially.

### ✓ Transparency:

- Ensuring transparency in the Speaker's decisions and actions, such as publishing reasons for procedural rulings and making proceedings accessible to the public, can enhance accountability and trust.

### ✓ Committee Oversight:

- Strengthening the role of parliamentary committees, such as the Committee of Privileges, in overseeing the Speaker's conduct and decisions can provide checks and balances to ensure impartiality.

### ✓ Constitutional Reform:

- Consideration of constitutional reforms that institutionalise the requirement for Speakers to be impartial, potentially including provisions for their tenure and removal based on impartiality criteria.

## CONCLUSION

The Speaker of the Lok Sabha wields substantial influence beyond presiding duties, playing a pivotal role in shaping parliamentary proceedings and balancing the interests of the ruling party and opposition, especially in coalition governments. Despite the importance and respect accorded to the Speaker's constitutional position, it remains susceptible to criticism and controversy. Therefore, it is crucial for the Speaker to maintain fairness, impartiality, and transparency in carrying out their responsibilities.

### SAMPLE QUESTION

**Q)** Should the practice of expecting the Speaker to be above parties and politics be adopted to enhance objectivity in the office of the Speaker of the Lok Sabha, and what implications could this have for the robust functioning of parliamentary business in India **(15 marks)(250 words)**

### Pro-tem Speaker

- » Article 94 of the Indian Constitution states: “Whenever the House of the People is dissolved, the Speaker shall not vacate his office until immediately before the first meeting of the House of the People after the dissolution.”
- » In the new Lok Sabha, until the selection of the new Speaker, a pro-tem Speaker is chosen to administer some important duties.
  - The main responsibility is to administer oaths to the new members and to enable the House to elect the new Speaker.
- » ‘Pro-tem’ essentially means ‘for the time being’ or ‘temporarily’.
- » Selection of Pro-tem Speaker
  - The Constitution does not mention the post. However, the official ‘Handbook on the Working of Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs’ speaks about the ‘Appointment and Swearing in of Speaker pro tem’.
    - The handbook states when the Speaker post falls vacant before a new Lok Sabha, “the duties of the Speaker are to be performed by a Member of the House appointed for this purpose by the President as Speaker pro tem”.
  - Administering oaths to the new MPs is the pro-tem Speaker’s primary duty.
  - Under Article 99 of the Constitution, “Every Member of the House shall, before taking his seat, make and subscribe before the President or some person appointed in that behalf by him, an oath or affirmation according to the form set out for the purpose in the Third Schedule of the Constitution.”
  - Normally, three other elected members of the Lok Sabha are also appointed by the President for the MPs to take oath before them.
    - According to the handbook, the senior most members (in terms of number of years of membership of the House) are generally chosen for this purpose, though there have been exceptions.
  - As soon as the new government is formed, the Legislative I Section of the Government of India prepares a list of the seniormost Lok Sabha members.
  - This list is then submitted to the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs or the Prime Minister for identifying an MP as Speaker pro-tem and another three members for oath-taking.
  - After the Prime Minister’s approval, the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs obtains the consent of the selected members, usually by telephone.
  - The Minister submits a note to the President for approval of the Speaker pro-tem and the other three members, as well as the date and time of the swearing-in ceremony.
  - Upon the President’s approval, the Ministry informs the Speaker pro-tem and the other members about their appointments.
  - The President administers the oath to the Speaker pro-tem at the Rashtrapati Bhawan.
  - The Speaker pro-tem administers the oath to the other three members in the Lok Sabha.
  - The Speaker pro-tem, assisted by the three members, then administers the oath/affirmation to the newly elected members.



### Deputy Speaker

- » According to Article 95(1), the Deputy Speaker performs the duties of the Speaker if the post is vacant.
  - The Deputy Speaker has the same general powers as the Speaker when presiding over the House.
  - All references to the “Speaker” in the Rules are deemed to be references to the Deputy Speaker as well

for the times when he or she presides.'

- » Article 93 states that "The House of the People shall, as soon as may be, choose two members of the House to be respectively Speaker and Deputy Speaker".
- » Article 178 contains the corresponding provision for the Speakers and Deputy Speakers in the state Assemblies.
- » Constitutional experts have noted that while the Constitution does not specify a specific timeframe for making appointments, both Article 93 and Article 178 use the terms "shall" and "as soon as may be," emphasising the mandatory nature of appointing the Speaker and Deputy Speaker promptly.
- » The current Lok Sabha does not have a deputy speaker, and the post has been vacant since 23 June 2019.
- » M Thambi Durai of the AIADMK, a BJP ally at the time, was Deputy Speaker of the 16th Lok Sabha (2014-19).

#### Election Process

- » The Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Lok Sabha are elected from among the members by a simple majority of members present and voting.
- » Typically, the Speaker is elected in the first session of the new Lok Sabha, often on the third day after oath-taking.
- » The election of the Deputy Speaker generally occurs in the second session, but it can take place in the first session if circumstances allow.

#### Rules Governing Deputy Speaker's Election

- » Rule 8 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha governs the election of the Deputy Speaker.
- » The Speaker determines the date of the election, and the Deputy Speaker is elected when a motion proposing their name is carried by the House.

#### Tenure and Vacating Office

- » According to Article 94 (and Article 179 for state assemblies), the Speaker or Deputy Speaker must vacate their office if they cease to be a member of the House.
- » They can also resign by submitting their resignation to the other members of the House or be removed by a resolution passed by a majority of all members of the House.

#### Continuation in Office

- » Once elected, the Deputy Speaker usually remains in office until the dissolution of the House, unless they vacate office due to resignation, ceasing to be a member, or removal by a resolution of the House.



# NEW CRIMINAL LAWS IN FORCE

**Syllabus: GS II - Government policies and interventions for development**

## PYQ MAPPING

**Q1** *Mob violence is emerging as a serious law and order problem in India. By giving suitable examples, analyse the causes and consequences of such violence. (2015)*

**Q2** *We are witnessing increasing instances of sexual violence against women in the country. Despite existing legal provisions against it, the number of such incidences is on the rise. Suggest some innovative measures to tackle this menace. (2014)*

## SHORT TAKES

- **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA):** Amended in 2019, grants the central government expanded powers to designate individuals as terrorists and seize their properties, aiming to enhance India's counter-terrorism framework.
- **Zero FIR:** Zero FIRs, allows any police station to register a First Information Report (FIR) for a cognizable offence irrespective of where it occurred.

## WHY IN NEWS

Three new criminal laws, the **Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita (BNS)**, **Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS)**, and **Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA)**, will replace the Indian Penal Code (IPC), Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), and Indian Evidence Act starting July 1.



## INTRODUCTION

- ➔ In 2023, Parliament passed three criminal laws, which President Droupadi Murmu assented to in December of that year, with the laws taking effect on July 1, 2024.
- ➔ The Indian Parliament has taken a transformative step in the criminal justice system by replacing three historic laws: the Indian Penal Code of 1860, the Code of Criminal Procedure of 1973, and the Indian Evidence Act of 1872.
- ➔ These have been replaced with the Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita, 2023, the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023, respectively.
- ➔ These new laws, grounded in **Indian values of justice (nyaya)**, signify a shift from a punitive to a justice-oriented approach, reflecting Bhartiya Nyaya Paddhati.

## COMPARISONS

Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita (BNS)	Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita	Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» <b>Replaces:</b> Indian Penal Code (IPC)</li> <li>» <b>Total sections:</b> 358 (reduced from 511)</li> <li>» <b>Similarities in Structure:</b> Both the BNS and IPC begin with chapters on general principles like exceptions, punishments, and abetment, reflecting a common structure for criminal law.</li> <li>» <b>Shifting Priorities: In the BNS,</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» <b>Replaces:</b> Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC)</li> <li>» <b>Total sections:</b> 531 (increased from 484)</li> <li>» <b>Key changes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ 177 provisions altered</li> <li>◦ 9 new sections and 39 new subsections added</li> <li>◦ 44 new provisions or clarifications introduced</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» <b>Replaces:</b> Indian Evidence Act</li> <li>» <b>Total provisions:</b> 170 (increased from 167)</li> <li>» <b>Key changes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ 24 provisions altered</li> <li>◦ 2 new provisions and 6 new sub-provisions added</li> <li>◦ 6 provisions repealed</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<p>crimes against women (Chapter V) come before offences against the state (like sedition). This suggests a possible prioritisation of crimes against women by the BNS.</p> <p>» <b>Key changes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Addition of 20 new crimes</li> <li>◦ Increased imprisonment sentences for 33 crimes</li> <li>◦ Higher fines for 83 crimes</li> <li>◦ Mandatory minimum punishments for 23 crimes</li> <li>◦ Community service as a penalty for 6 crimes</li> <li>◦ Repeal of 19 sections</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Timelines added to 35 sections. Strict timelines for delivering trial judgments within 45 days and framing charges within 60 days.</li> <li>◦ Audio-video provisions incorporated at 35 locations</li> <li>◦ 14 sections repealed</li> </ul>	
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## BHARATIYA NYAY SANHITA (BNS)

### Features

- » **Clause 69:** Penalises **sexual intercourse obtained through deceitful means**, including false promises of marriage, employment, or identity concealment, with up to 10 years of imprisonment and a fine.
- » **Clause 103:** Introduces a new criminal offence specifically for **murder motivated by race, caste, or community**.
  - This provision is seen as a response to the Supreme Court's 2018 directive, urging the central government to consider a **separate law for lynchings**.
- » **Clause 111(1):** Defines **organised crime** to include a range of activities such as kidnapping, robbery, vehicle theft, extortion, land grabbing, contract killing, economic offences, cyber-crimes with severe consequences, human trafficking for prostitution or ransom, and trafficking in illicit goods.
  - Integrates offences previously covered under specific laws like the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) for terrorism and state laws such as the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA)
- » **Clause 304(1):** Introduces snatching as a distinct crime separate from theft.
  - **Definition:** Snatching is defined as the act of suddenly, quickly, or forcibly seizing, securing, grabbing, or taking away movable property from any person or their possession with the intention to commit theft.
  - **Punishment:** Both theft and snatching under the BNS carry a maximum punishment of up to three years of imprisonment.
- » **Community service as an alternative punishment:** Introduced under Section 4 of the BNS, it is applicable for certain offences like small theft, defamation, obstructing a public official from performing her duty, public misconduct by intoxicated individuals, and failure to comply with specified proclamations under Section 84(1) of the BNS.
  - This aims to reduce overcrowding in prisons, particularly benefiting first-time offenders and those convicted of minor offences.
- » **Expansion of Definition of Rape:** **Sexual intercourse with a minor wife is now categorized as rape** under the BNS, addressing a loophole in the IPC which previously exempted intercourse with a wife not under 15 years from being considered rape.
  - The change aligns with the Supreme Court's 2017 ruling that deemed the IPC provision contradictory to child rape laws in the POCSO Act.

🌀 **Emphasis on Speedy Trials:** The BNS emphasises the use of video-conferencing for trials and mandates timelines for swift resolution of cases.

- o Courts have to **issue rulings within 45 days of completion of arguments**, unlike earlier when no such time period was defined. Similarly, **charges in a trial have to be framed within 60 days** of the first hearing.

🌀 **Offence Of Adultery Omitted:** In light of the Supreme Court's decision in the Joseph Shine case, the offence of adultery has been abolished. However, BNS retains Section 498 of the IPC (Section 84), which penalises a man for enticing another man's wife to engage in sexual intercourse with any person.

🌀 **Attempt to Suicide:** Section 309 of the IPC, which penalized attempted suicide, has been **omitted** in the BNS, removing the stringent punishment associated with it.

- o However, Section 226 of the BNS criminalizes attempts to commit suicide aimed to compel or restrain any public servant from discharging his official duty.
- o It is punishable by up to one year of simple imprisonment, a fine, or community service.

## Criticism

▼ **Criminalisation of consensual relationships:** Critics argue that Clause 69 could criminalise consensual relationships and be misused to support the "love jihad" narrative, targeting interfaith relationships and increasing societal tensions.

▼ **Criticism of Vague Definitions:**

- o Critics have raised concerns over ambiguous terms like "cyber-crimes having severe consequences," urging clarity to prevent potential misuse and ensure legal precision.
- o Critics argue that the BNS lacks a clear definition of community service, leaving its interpretation to judicial discretion.

▼ **Reintroduction of Sedition:** Contrary to the government's announcement of doing away with sedition, the BNS reintroduces the offence with a broader scope. It **replaced the term "rajdroh" with "deshdroh,"** incorporating Supreme Court guidelines from the Kedarnath Singh case of 1962, which upheld its constitutionality.

▼ **Exclusion of Section 377:** The BNS omits Section 377 of the IPC, which was partially struck down in 2018 for criminalizing consensual same-sex relations but remained applicable for cases of non-consensual sex, including **rape of men.**

- o Current laws primarily protect women as victims of rape, lacking specific provisions for male victims.

## BHARATIYA NAGARIK SURAKSHA SANHITA

## Features

🌀 **Clause 187(3):** The BNSS introduces a **significant increase regarding detention** in police custody compared to the CrPC (Code of Criminal Procedure).

- o The **CrPC (Section 167(2))** restricts police custody of an accused to a maximum of **15 days**.
- o **Clause 187(3) of the BNSS** alters this significantly by removing the phrase "otherwise than in police custody." This allows the police to potentially hold an accused for up to **90 days** for all offences.

🌀 **Victim-Centric Approach:** Prioritises victims by introducing **stricter timelines** for trial completion, aiming to expedite justice delivery and reduce delays in legal proceedings.

- o In cases where the punishment is seven years or more, **the victim shall be given an opportunity of being heard before withdrawal of the case** by the government.

🌀 **Introduction of Trials in Absentia:** Allows for the trial and conviction of individuals accused of crimes even if they are not present in court.

- o This provision aligns with existing practices under stringent laws like the UAPA, aiming to streamline legal proceedings and address delays caused by absconding accused persons.

- 🌀 **Removal of Statutory Bail Provision:** The provision for statutory bail is removed if an accused has multiple offences against them.
  - o Previously, under the CrPC, an accused could be granted bail after serving half of the maximum sentence for the offence to prevent prolonged incarceration without trial.
- 🌀 **Documentation:** Police raids and seizures will need to be mandatorily videotaped and forensic experts have to mandatorily visit a crime scene for serious offences
- 🌀 **Zero FIR:** BNSS mandates the registration of Zero FIR under Section 173 and stipulates that such information can be given orally or electronically, requiring prompt recording and subsequent transfer to the appropriate jurisdiction.
- 🌀 **e-FIR:** The process for filing an e-FIR under the BNSS allows complainants to submit information **electronically via the police portal or website.**
  - o Upon submission, the complaint **must be signed by the complainant within three days** for it to be officially recorded by the police.
  - o After signing, the complaint undergoes **initial verification** by the investigating officer to determine if a *prima facie* case exists, as per Section 173(3) of the BNSS.
  - o This verification process **may include a preliminary enquiry within fourteen days**, as necessary.

## Criticism

- ▼ **Reversal of Burden of Proof:** Unlike traditional criminal proceedings where the burden of proof lies with the state, trials in absentia shift this burden to the accused.
  - o Critics argue that this **undermines the principle of innocence until proven guilty** and places an unfair onus on individuals to prove their innocence, potentially compromising their right to a fair trial and due process.
- ▼ **Prolonged detention:** Critics argue that removing statutory bail could lead to prolonged detention of individuals awaiting trial, potentially violating their right to a speedy trial and presumption of innocence.
  - o **Example:** The case of JNU student Sharjeel Imam, who was granted bail by the Delhi High Court, highlights concerns over prolonged incarceration.
- ▼ **Police Custody Period:** Critics and civil rights activists are concerned that the new law, may potentially permit the police to detain an accused person for extended periods ranging from 60 to 90 days after their arrest, in addition to the initial 15-day remand period

## BHARATIYA NAGARIK SURAKSHA SANHITA

## Features

- 🌀 **Electronic Records:** Electronic records are classified as primary evidence. It expands such records to include information stored in semiconductor memory or any communication devices (smartphones, laptops).
- 🌀 **Joint Trial:** A joint trial refers to the legal proceeding where **multiple individuals are tried together** for the same offence or related offences.
  - o In such trials, evidence and testimonies presented against one accused may affect the others involved in the case.
  - o The BSA elaborates that if one accused confesses and implicates others, and if any accused is absconding or has not responded to an arrest warrant, this confession will be considered against all the accused in the trial.

## Criticism

- ▼ **Risk of tampering:** While the act provides for the admissibility of electronic records, there are no safeguards to prevent the tampering and contamination of such records during the investigation process

## GENERAL CRITICISM

- **Retention of Old Provisions:** Critics argue the new laws largely retain existing provisions, merely renumbered and relabeled, offering little substantive reform.
- **Learning Curve:** The reorganised laws impose a significant learning curve on legal professionals, potentially causing confusion and inefficiencies in the criminal justice system.
- **Parallel Application:** With old laws applicable to pending cases until July 1, 2024, dual application could lead to legal ambiguities and procedural challenges.
- **Expanded Police Powers:** Concerns over expanded police custody powers under the new provisions raise civil liberties and due process concerns.
- **Judicial Challenges:** Supreme Court's refusal to entertain PILs on procedural grounds has been criticised for sidelining substantive legal issues.
- **Infrastructure Needs:** Chief Justice Chandrachud stressed the need for infrastructure investments to ensure effective implementation, highlighting potential shortcomings in the new laws' impact and fairness.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, while the introduction of India's new criminal laws under the BNS, BNSS, and BSA represents a significant attempt to modernise and streamline the legal framework. However, concerns over lack of clarity in definitions and challenges in implementation underscore the need for careful monitoring and review as these laws are rolled out nationwide. Balancing legal reform with protection of individual rights will be crucial in shaping their impact on India's justice system.

### SAMPLE QUESTION

**Q)** Examine the implications of India's new criminal laws introduced by the BNS, BNSS, and BSA. Discuss their impact on legal rights focusing on controversial provisions and their consequences. ( **(10 marks)(150 words)**

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# SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANISATION

**Syllabus: GS II - International Relations**

## PYQ MAPPING

**Q1** The newly tri-nation partnership AUKUS is aimed at countering China's ambitions in the Indo-Pacific region. Is it going to supersede the existing partnerships in the region? Discuss the strength and impact of AUKUS in the present scenario, (2021)

**Q2** How will I2U2 (India, Israel, UAE and USA) grouping transform India's position in global politics? (2022)

**Q3** Do you think that BIMSTEC is a parallel organisation like the SAARC? What are the similarities and dissimilarities between the two? How are Indian foreign policy objectives realized by forming this new organisation (2022)

## SHORT TAKES

### ➤ Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS):

- It is a permanent organ of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).
- RATS coordinates joint counter-terrorism activities, shares intelligence, and conducts training exercises to enhance the collective security of SCO member states.
- SCO RATS is based in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan.

### ➤ SCO Interbank Consortium:

- Facilitates financial and banking cooperation among member states.
- Consists of major banks from each member country.

## WHY IN NEWS?

Recently the 2024 Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit was concluded in Astana, Kazakhstan and brought together leaders from across the region.

## INTRODUCTION

The 2024 Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit in Astana, Kazakhstan, brought together regional leaders, with India playing a prominent role as the External Affairs Minister delivered the Prime Minister's message emphasizing the importance of combating terrorism and addressing climate change as key priorities.



## KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF SCO SUMMIT 2024

### ➤ New Membership:

- Belarus has become the 10th member state of the SCO. The Indian External Affairs Minister met with the Belarusian counterpart to strengthen bilateral ties.

### ➤ Astana Declaration:

- The 24th SCO Summit in Astana adopted the Astana Declaration and approved 25 strategic agreements covering energy, security, trade, finance, and information security.
- The Council of Heads of State adopted the SCO Development Strategy until 2035.
  - This includes resolutions on combating terrorism, separatism, and extremism, as well as strategies for anti-drug efforts, energy cooperation, economic development, and cooperation in protected areas and eco-tourism.
- The summit also included signing a memorandum to combat illicit drug trafficking and an interaction plan on international information security issues.

### ➤ India's Dialogue:

#### ○ India-China Relations at SCO Summit:

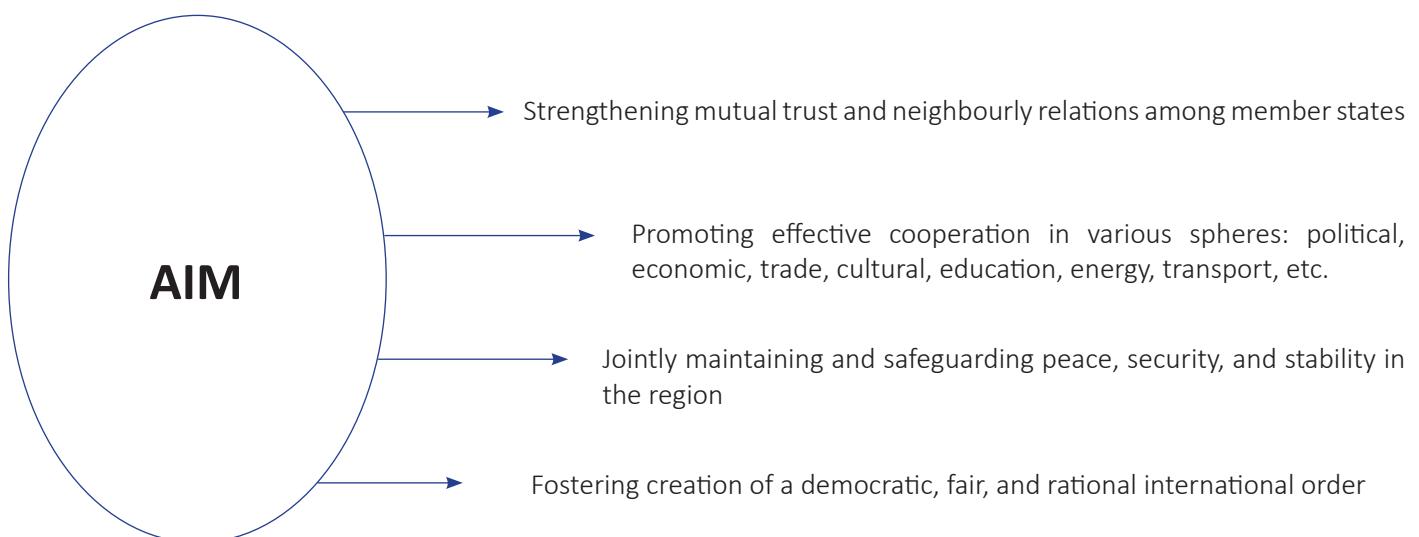
- The Indian External Affairs Minister met with the Chinese Foreign Minister at the SCO Summit in Astana, Kazakhstan.
- Both emphasised the urgent need for "**complete disengagement**" of troops and restoring peace along the **Line of Actual Control (LAC)**.
- Agreement reached to expedite diplomatic and military channels to resolve remaining issues in Eastern Ladakh.
- **Make in India and Global Economic Growth:**
  - '**Make in India**' initiative highlighted at the SCO Summit as a potential catalyst for global economic growth.
  - India expressed openness to partnering with Global South nations for capacity building and economic development.
- **Combatting Terrorism:**
  - India urged the global community at the SCO Summit to isolate countries supporting terrorism.
  - Emphasis on countering cross-border terrorism and reaffirmation of SCO's role in combating terrorism.

## WHAT IS SCO?

- ◎ The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is an intergovernmental organisation founded in 2001.
- ◎ It focuses on political, economic, and security-related cooperation among its member states, primarily located in Asia.
- ◎ The SCO aims to promote regional stability, peace, and cooperation. It addresses various issues, including counter-terrorism, economic collaboration, cultural exchange, and regional security.
- ◎ SCO Secretariat is based in **Beijing, China**.
- ◎ **Founding Members:** China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

As of 2024, the current members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) are:

1. <b>China</b>	6. <b>Uzbekistan</b>
2. <b>Russia</b>	7. <b>India</b> (joined in 2017)
3. <b>Kazakhstan</b>	8. <b>Pakistan</b> (joined in 2017)
4. <b>Kyrgyzstan</b>	9. <b>Iran</b> (joined in 2023)
5. <b>Tajikistan</b>	10. <b>Belarus</b> (joined in 2024)



## SIGNIFICANCE

### ☀ Security Focus and Asian Membership:

- The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is one of the few international organisations that address security issues and primarily consists of Asian members.
- Example:
  - The **Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS)** of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is a permanent organ of the SCO established to combat terrorism, separatism, and extremism within member states.

### ☀ Geopolitical Dynamics:

- Along with the BRICS grouping (which includes India, South Africa, and Brazil), Russia and China position themselves against US influence.
- Despite recent declarations of a "limitless friendship" between China and Russia, there is a sense of competition between them for greater influence in the SCO.

### ☀ Central Asian Influence:

- Central Asian republics have traditionally been part of Russia's sphere of influence.
- China leverages investments in oil and gas-rich Central Asian nations through massive infrastructure projects, as part of its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), to gain influence.

### ☀ India and Pakistan's Inclusion:

- India and Pakistan were included in the SCO in 2017, reflecting the geopolitical jostling.
- Russia supported India's entry as a strategic partner, while China backed its ally Pakistan to prevent a shift in power balance towards Russia.

### ☀ Iran's Inclusion:

- In 2023, Chinese state media noted that Iran's inclusion in the SCO would enhance the organisation's international status and influence.
- For Iran, joining the SCO is a step towards breaking the US diplomatic blockade.

## SIGNIFICANCE FOR INDIA

### ⌚ Regional Cooperation and Connectivity:

- SCO membership provides India with a platform to enhance cooperation with Central Asian countries, which historically have not had extensive bilateral relations with India.

### ⌚ Economic Opportunities:

- Being part of the SCO opens avenues for economic cooperation, including trade, investment, and infrastructure development projects under frameworks like the SCO Business Council and Interbank Consortium.

### ⌚ Geopolitical Influence:

- Membership in the SCO allows India to engage diplomatically with key regional players like Russia and China on common security concerns and geopolitical issues.
- It helps India maintain communication channels with countries crucial to its strategic interests in Eurasia.

### ⌚ Counter-Terrorism and Security:

- Participation in SCO initiatives strengthens India's capabilities in combating terrorism, extremism, and drug trafficking through joint exercises, intelligence sharing, and coordinated efforts under RATS.

### ⌚ Strategic Partnerships:

- SCO membership enhances India's stature as a responsible regional and global actor committed to peace, stability, and development in Eurasia.
- It provides a platform for India to assert its interests and perspectives on global issues such as climate change, energy security, and sustainable development.

## CHALLENGES FACED BY INDIA IN SCO

## ▼ Tense Relations with Member States:

- o **China:** India's border disputes and strategic rivalry with China, particularly the ongoing tensions along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), create friction within the SCO.
- o **Pakistan:** Historical and ongoing conflicts with Pakistan, including issues related to cross-border terrorism and Kashmir, complicate cooperation within the SCO framework.

## ▼ Differing Strategic Interests:

- o **BRI and CPEC:** India opposes the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), particularly the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) that passes through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, viewing it as a violation of its territorial sovereignty. This opposition can limit India's engagement with certain SCO economic initiatives.

## ▼ Balancing Relations:

- o **Russia and China:** While India has strong historical ties with Russia, it needs to balance its relationship with both Russia and China, who have their own strategic partnership and occasionally conflicting interests.
- o **Central Asian Republics:** India seeks to deepen its ties with Central Asian nations, which are traditionally within Russia's sphere of influence but increasingly targeted by China's economic initiatives.

## ▼ Operational and Institutional Challenges:

- **Consensus-Based Decision Making:** The SCO operates on a consensus basis, which can slow down decision-making processes and make it difficult to address contentious issues effectively.
- **Limited Enforcement Mechanisms:** The SCO lacks robust mechanisms for enforcing agreements and resolutions, which can limit the effectiveness of its initiatives.

## ▼ Perception of Bias:

- o **Neutrality of SCO:** There are concerns about the neutrality and effectiveness of the SCO in addressing security issues impartially, given the dominant roles of China and Russia.

## ▼ Inclusivity and Expansion:

- o **New Members:** The inclusion of new members like Iran could bring additional complexities and require adjustments in India's strategic approach within the organisation.
- o **Internal Dynamics:** The internal dynamics and varying priorities of member states can pose challenges to cohesive and unified action within the SCO.

## WAY FORWARD

## Strengthening Bilateral Relations:

- ✿ **Engage Central Asian Countries:** Deepen bilateral ties with Central Asian nations through economic, cultural, and strategic initiatives to build trust and cooperation.
- ✿ **Manage Relations with China and Pakistan:** Continue diplomatic efforts to manage tensions with China and Pakistan, using the SCO platform for dialogue and conflict resolution.

## Active Participation and Leadership:

- ★ **Lead Counter-Terrorism Efforts:** Take a proactive role in SCO's counter-terrorism initiatives, leveraging RATS to enhance regional security and intelligence sharing.
- ★ **Economic Initiatives:** Actively participate in SCO's economic forums and initiatives, proposing projects that align with India's interests and benefit the region.

## Promoting Multilateralism and Balance:

Neutral Stance: Advocate for a balanced and neutral approach within the SCO, ensuring that no single country

dominates the agenda.

- ✿ **Strengthen Alliances:** Collaborate with like-minded countries within the SCO to promote a multipolar world order and balance China's influence.

#### Focus on Connectivity Projects:

- ✿ **International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC):** Promote the INSTC as an alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative, enhancing connectivity between India, Central Asia, and beyond.
- ✿ **Chabahar Port:** Develop and utilise the Chabahar Port in Iran to improve trade routes and access to Central Asian markets.

#### Leveraging Soft Power:

- ✿ **Cultural Diplomacy:** Promote cultural exchanges, educational programs, and people-to-people contacts to build goodwill and strengthen ties with SCO countries.
- ✿ **Technology and Innovation:** Showcase India's strengths in technology and innovation, proposing collaborative projects in areas such as digital economy, space exploration, and sustainable development.

## CONCLUSION

The SCO presents a significant opportunity for India to enhance its economic and political relations with Eurasian countries. However, the organisation faces several challenges. Overcoming these challenges necessitates continuous dialogue, building trust, and fostering effective cooperation among member states within the SCO framework.

### SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) How can India strategically navigate within the SCO to address challenges, leverage opportunities, and enhance its influence in the region, contributing to a more balanced and cooperative international order? **(10 marks)(150 words)**

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# AGENDA OF THE 16TH FINANCE COMMISSION

**Syllabus: GS II - Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies.**

## PYQ MAPPING

**Q**) How is the Finance Commission of India constituted? What do you understand about the terms of reference of the recently constituted Finance Commission? Discuss **(2018)**

**Q**) How have the recommendations of the 14th Finance Commission of India enabled the states to improve their fiscal position? **(2021)**

## SHORT TAKES

➤ **Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS):**

Launched in 1993, allows MPs to recommend developmental projects in their constituencies. Each MP is allocated funds annually to create durable community assets in areas like infrastructure, health, education, and sanitation, addressing local needs directly.

## WHY IN NEWS

The 16th Finance Commission (FC) has begun its work, focusing on the devolution of the consolidated fund as per Article 280 of the Indian Constitution. Following the 73rd and 74th amendments, which enhanced the role of local bodies, the FC is now mandated to recommend measures to augment State consolidated funds for supporting panchayats and municipalities, highlighting the shift towards greater fiscal decentralisation.

## INTRODUCTION

The Finance Commission of India is a constitutional body established under Article 280 of the Indian Constitution to define the financial relations between the central government and the individual state governments. Tasked with making recommendations on the distribution of tax revenues, it plays a crucial role in ensuring a balanced fiscal framework that supports equitable development across the country. The Sixteenth Finance Commission was constituted on 31.12.2023 with Shri Arvind Panagariya, former Vice-Chairman, NITI Aayog as its Chairman.



## TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)

**Duration and Commencement of Recommendations:** The Sixteenth Finance Commission will provide recommendations covering a five-year period starting from April 1, 2026. The Union Cabinet has approved the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Commission, setting a deadline of October 31, 2025, for the submission of its recommendations.

- ♣ **Distribution of Tax Revenues:** The Commission will recommend the formula for sharing the net proceeds of taxes between the Central government and the States.
  - o It will also propose methods for allocating shares of these proceeds among the States.
- ♣ **Financial Support to Local Bodies:** To supplement the resources of panchayats and local bodies, the Commission will suggest measures to augment the Consolidated Fund of a State based on recommendations from State Finance Commissions.
- ♣ **Principles Governing Grants-in-Aid:** The ToR include recommendations on principles that should guide grants-in-aid from the Consolidated Fund of India to the revenues of the States.
  - o The Commission will specify the amounts to be paid to the States as grants-in-aid to support their revenues.
- ♣ **Review of Disaster Management Financing:** The Commission may review existing financing arrangements for Disaster Management initiatives and propose suitable recommendations in this regard.

### The criteria for horizontal devolution among States over the last five FCs

Criteria	11th FC 2000-05	12th FC 2005-10	13th FC 2010-15	14th FC 2015-20	15th FC 2021-26
Income Distance	62.5	50	47.5	50	45
Population (1971 Census)	10	25	25	17.5	-
Population (2011 Census)	-	-	-	10	15
Area	7.5	10	10	15	15
Forest cover	-	-	-	7.5	-
Forest and ecology	-	-	-	-	10
Infrastructure index	7.5	-	-	-	-
Fiscal discipline	7.5	7.5	17.5	-	-
Demographic performance	-	-	-	-	12.5
Tax effort	5	7.5	-	-	2.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

## ISSUES

- ▼ **Meeting the needs of Cities:** Cities contribute around 66% of India's GDP and 90% of total government revenues.
  - o Despite this, the economic scale is insufficient to meet rising needs, with the World Bank estimating a need for \$840 billion for urban infrastructure in the next decade.
- ▼ **Financial Devolution:** Five commissions since the 11th Finance Commission have made efforts, but financial devolution to cities remains inadequate.
  - o The fiscal health of municipalities is poor, affecting both city productivity and quality of life.
- ▼ **Low Intergovernmental Transfers (IGTs):** IGTs to Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) in India are about 0.5% of GDP, significantly lower than the 2-5% typical of other developing nations (South Africa 2.6%, Mexico 1.6%, Philippines 2.5%, Brazil 5.1%).
  - o IGTs constitute about 40% of ULBs' total revenue but face issues with predictability, earmarking for vulnerable groups, and horizontal equity.
  - o State Finance Commissions recommended only about 7% of States' own revenue to ULBs in 2018-19
- ▼ **Impact of GST on ULBs' Revenue:** GST introduction reduced ULBs' tax revenue (excluding property tax) from 23% in 2012-13 to 9% in 2017-18.
- ▼ **Urbanisation:** Rapid urbanisation without appropriate fiscal action adversely affects development.
- ▼ **Challenges from Parallel Agencies:** The 13th Finance Commission noted that parallel agencies emasculate local governments financially and operationally.
  - o Programs like MPLADS and MLALADS exacerbate this issue, distorting the federal structure.
- ▼ **Updated Census Data:** Reliance on 2011 data is inadequate; the absence of the 2021 Census necessitates capturing current urban demographics and migration trends.

## AGENDA FOR THE 16TH FC

- **Need for Stable Support:** Given the poor financial state of ULBs, stable intergovernmental transfers are crucial until their own revenues improve.
  - The 16th FC must ensure that intergovernmental transfers to urban areas are at least doubled to meet the growing infrastructure needs.
- **Recognition of Urban Growth:** India has around 4,000 statutory towns, an equal number of Census towns, and approximately 23,000 effectively urban villages that must be included in fiscal devolution considerations.
- **Migration to Tier-2 and Tier-3 Cities:** Significant migration to smaller cities should be acknowledged and factored into resource allocation.
- **Revisiting the 15th FC's Guiding Principles:** Principles needing attention include:
  - Enhancement of property tax collection in tandem with State's GST.
  - Maintenance of accounts by local bodies.
  - Allocation of resources for pollution mitigation.
  - Focus on primary health care, solid waste management, and drinking water.
- **Urban Infrastructure Investment:** Address warnings from the McKinsey Global Institute about inadequate urban infrastructure investment, leading to potential issues like water shortages and untreated sewage.

## CONCLUSION

The 16th Finance Commission faces a critical task in realigning fiscal devolution to address the dynamic urban landscape of India. With outdated census data and an expanding urban population, it is imperative to update the framework to reflect current realities. Priorities should include enhancing local revenue mechanisms, ensuring transparent financial practices, and allocating sufficient resources for essential services. By addressing these challenges, the 16th Finance Commission can pave the way for a more resilient and prosperous urban future for India.

### SAMPLE QUESTION

**Q)** Critically evaluate the role of the 16th Finance Commission in addressing the financial challenges faced by Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) in India. Suggest potential strategies the Commission can adopt to ensure sustainable urban development and improved quality of life for urban residents. **(10 M)(150 W)**



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# K-SHAPED RECOVERY

**Syllabus: GS III - Indian Economy**

## PYQ MAPPING

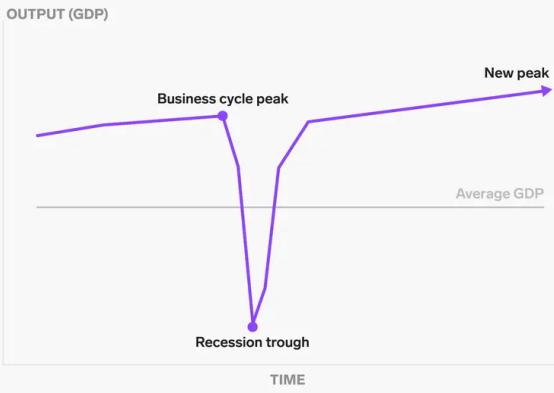
**Q1** Do you agree that the Indian economy has recently experienced V-shapes recovery? Give reasons in support of your answer. (2021)

### SHORT TAKES

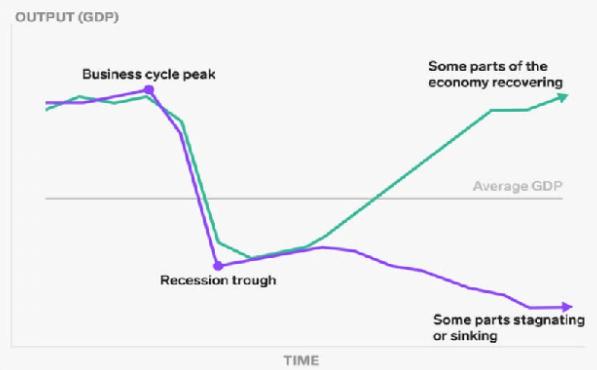
#### ➤ V-shaped recovery

- o An economy that has suffered a sharp economic decline experiences a fast and strong rebound.
- o In this, it is assumed that incomes and jobs are not permanently lost and the economic growth recovers sharply.

#### V-shaped recovery



#### K-shaped recovery



## MACRO IMPLICATIONS OF A K-SHAPED RECOVERY

### 1. Increased Inequality:

- o **Income and Wealth Disparity:** Recovery benefits upper-income households significantly more, leading to widen gaps in income and wealth.
- o **Social Inequality:** Disparities in income lead to unequal access to education, healthcare, and other essential services.

### 2. Consumption Patterns:

- o **Temporary Boost:** Upper-income households with pent-up savings may temporarily increase consumption, providing a short-term boost to the

## WHY IN NEWS

Recently, **HSBC report on India's inflation** highlights a concerning trend of K-shaped inflation especially in the rural economy.

## INTRODUCTION

- A K-shaped recovery is one in which the performance of different parts of the economy diverges like the arms of the letter "K". In a K-shaped recovery, some parts of the economy may experience strong growth while others continue to decline.
- **Example:** Households at the top of the pyramid are likely to have seen their in-comes largely protected, and savings rates forced up during the lockdown, increasing 'fuel in the tank' to drive future consumption. Meanwhile, households at the bottom are likely to have witnessed permanent hits to jobs and incomes.

economy.

- o **Sustained Low Demand:** Lower-income households face permanent income losses, resulting in reduced long-term consumption and economic drag.

### 3. Economic Growth:

- o **Short-term vs. Long-term:** Initial economic recovery appears strong due to increased spending by the wealthy, but long-term growth is hindered by decreased consumption from lower-income groups.

- o **Structural Weaknesses:** Persistent inequality may lead to underutilization of labour and resources, impeding overall economic potential.

#### 4. Labour Market:

- o **Job and Wage Losses:** Permanent loss of jobs and wage cuts for lower-income households lead to long-term demand issues and reduced economic stability.
- o **Labour Market Recovery:** Slow recovery in the labor market exacerbates economic disparities and hampers broad-based growth.

#### 5. Demand Implications:

- o **Higher Marginal Propensity to Consume:** Poor households tend to spend a higher proportion of their income. Income loss in this group significantly reduces overall demand.
- o **Demand Impediment:** Income transfer from poor to rich reduces aggregate demand because the rich have a lower marginal propensity to consume.

#### 6. Economic Productivity:

- o **Reduced Competition:** COVID-19 may reduce market competition, leading to monopolistic practices and lower innovation.

- o **Productivity Constraints:** Inequality in income and opportunities can reduce productivity growth by limiting access to education, skills, and resources.

#### 7. Political Economy:

- o **Political Constraints:** Increased inequality may tighten political economy constraints, limiting effective policy-making and governance.
- o **Social Unrest:** Growing disparities can lead to social discontent and unrest, further destabilising the economic environment.

#### 8. Long-term Growth:

- o **Trend Growth:** Inequality and reduced competition can hurt trend growth, making it harder for developing economies to achieve sustainable development.
- o **Inclusive Growth:** Policies need to focus on inclusive growth, ensuring benefits of recovery reach all segments of the population.

## VIEWS SUPPORTING INDIA'S K-SHAPED RECOVERY

- According to this theory, the top 10-20% of the Indian population has shown growth in incomes compared to the pre-pandemic levels while the rest has not yet recovered to the pre-pandemic levels even in FY23.
- As per a Pew Survey, “the number of people who are poor in India (with incomes of \$2 or less a day) is estimated to have increased by 75 million because of the COVID-19 recession.” (Source: S3)
- The above was largely substantiated by a World Bank study in 2022 which said that over 56 million Indians were pushed into poverty in 2020.

#### → More vulnerabilities of some sectors:

- o Sectors like supply chain, logistics, hospitality are dependent on human interactions which remain limited due to social distancing constraints.

#### → Role of technology:

- o Expansion of the digital economy and society through 4G, smart phones etc. have helped the service and knowledge sector to continue their economic activities, while limiting the activity in manufacturing.

#### → External factors:

- o Strong integration of the Indian economy with the global economy in addition to skewed import dependence of the Indian economy has impacted domestic recovery in different sectors in peculiar ways, such as disruptions from slowdown in import of raw goods and export of finished products.

## However, some experts are also hinting at a V-shaped recovery because:

#### → GDP Growth:

- o As per official data, the country's GDP grew by 20% in Q1 of FY 2021-22 in comparison to Q1 of FY 2020-21.

#### → Rise in Government Expenditure:

- o Total expenditure of the government rose, especially on the capital expenditure front as part of the Atmanirbhar Bharat package. This has led to recovery in all major sectors of the economy.

#### → Revival of consumption and trade:

- o There has been robust recovery in the services sector and robust growth in consumption and investment. India's exports and imports have reached pre-Covid-19 levels and even grown beyond it in some areas.

## → Record GST Collections:

- o The gross Goods and Services Tax collections have crossed 1 lakh continuously for many months now. The collection indicates that the economy continues to show signs of recovery since the pandemic.

## WHY "K-SHAPE" RECENTLY IN NEWS?

The recent **HSBC report on India's inflation** highlights a concerning trend of K-shaped inflation, where the effects of inflation are unevenly distributed across different sectors and regions of the country. Key points from the report are:

## Rural vs. Urban Impact:

- o Rural areas are experiencing significantly higher inflation rates compared to urban areas.
- o In May 2024, rural inflation outpaced urban inflation by 1.1 percentage points.
- o This disparity is primarily driven by soaring food prices, which have been exacerbated by ongoing heat waves causing crop damage and livestock mortality.

## Factors Driving Inflation:

- o The key drivers of this inflationary trend include higher food prices and lower core inflation.
- o Despite the government's efforts to cut fuel prices, these measures have not significantly alleviated the inflationary pressures in rural areas, where fuel consumption is relatively lower.

## 🌀 Agricultural Impact:

- o Rural areas, despite being major food producers, face higher inflation as farmers sell more produce to urban markets seeking better returns.
- o This shift further inflates food prices in rural regions.

## Monsoon Concerns:

- o The report warns that inadequate monsoon rains could worsen the inflation scenario.
- o With rainfall in June 2024 being 17% below normal, key agricultural regions are already severely affected, which could prevent the Reserve Bank of India from easing rates.

## WAY FORWARD

### ✳️ Targeted Subsidies and Support:

- **Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT):** Enhance DBT programs to provide immediate relief to rural populations suffering from high food prices.
  - This can include direct cash transfers and food subsidies
- **Fuel Price Stabilization:** Implement mechanisms to stabilize fuel prices to mitigate their indirect impact on food inflation and transportation costs in rural areas.

## ★ Agricultural Support:

- **Input Subsidies:** Provide subsidies on seeds, fertilizers, and other inputs to reduce the cost of production for farmers.
- **Insurance Schemes:** Strengthen crop insurance schemes to protect farmers from losses due to adverse weather conditions and ensure timely compensation.

## Supply Chain Improvements:

- o **Logistics and Storage:** Invest in improving rural logistics and storage facilities to reduce post-harvest losses and ensure a stable supply of agricultural products to both rural and urban markets.

## Long-term Measures

### ✳️ Infrastructure Development:

- **Irrigation and Water Management:** Expand and modernize irrigation infrastructure to reduce dependence on monsoon rains and improve agricultural productivity.
- **Rural Connectivity:** Improve road and transportation networks to facilitate better market access for rural producers and reduce transportation costs.

### ✳️ Agricultural Reforms:

- **Market Access:** Reform agricultural markets to provide better access for farmers to urban markets, ensuring fair prices and reducing the need for middlemen.
- **Diversification:** Encourage crop diversification and the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices to enhance resilience against climate change.

### ✳️ Economic Diversification:

- **Non-Farm Employment:** Promote non-farm employment opportunities in rural areas through skill development programs and incentives for small and medium enterprises (SMEs).
- **Digital Inclusion:** Enhance digital infrastructure to support e-commerce and digital financial services, enabling rural populations to participate in broader economic activities.

### ✳️ Policy and Institutional Reforms:

- **Cooperative Models:** Strengthen cooperative models and farmer producer organisations (FPOs) to enhance collective bargaining power and market access for small farmers.
- **Data-Driven Policy Making:** Utilise data analytics to monitor inflation trends and implement timely policy interventions.

## CONCLUSION

Addressing K-shaped inflation in India requires a balanced approach combining immediate relief measures with long-term structural reforms. By focusing on agricultural support, infrastructure development, and economic diversification, the government can mitigate the disparities caused by inflation and promote inclusive growth.

## SAMPLE QUESTION

**Q) In light of the recent HSBC report on inflation, how can India address the concerning trend of K-shaped inflation? (10 M)(150 W)**

## ETHICS - CASE STUDY

**Q**) You are a senior civil servant appointed as the project head of a newly proposed harbour development project. From the outset, the project has faced protests from coastal area inhabitants concerned about their rehabilitation and job opportunities. As the project progresses, the protests intensify, with people now blocking the transportation of materials to the site. The situation has become increasingly tense, as the protest has taken on a communal dimension, with leaders from the dominant religion spearheading the opposition. This has escalated pressure on the government.

- a. What are the options available before you to deal with this crisis?
- b. Analyse the pros and cons of each option and recommend the optimal course of action. Provide justification for your suggestion.

## ETHICS - EXAMPLES

- 1. Gender Equality:** The NHRC issued a notice to the Union Ministry of Labour and Employment and the Tamil Nadu Chief Secretary, demanding a report on allegations that Foxconn systematically excluded married women from jobs at its iPhone assembly plant in Sriperumbudur. The NHRC highlighted that such discrimination violates the right to equality and equal opportunity, as mandated by the Indian Constitution.
- 2. Environment Ethics:** A petition by environmental activists against the proposed 6-lane flyover inside Bannerghatta National Park has garnered 16,606 signatures, highlighting concerns about cutting 1,288 trees and the disruption of wildlife habitats. The petition urges the Forest Advisory Committee to withhold clearance for the project due to environmental impacts.
- 3. Dereliction of Duty:** In July, 2024, Bihar experienced its 10th bridge collapse in just over a fortnight, with the latest incident in Saran involving a 15-year-old structure over the Gandaki river. The exact cause is yet to be determined, though recent desilting work might be a factor.
- 4. Dereliction of Duty:** In May 2024, a reactor explosion at a chemical factory in the Dombivli area in Maharashtra caused deaths, injuries, and property damage. Despite frequent industrial accidents in previous years and a 2022 decision to relocate 156 chemical factories to Patalganga, the Maharashtra government failed to act.
- 5. Environmental Ethics:** India's elephant population, now at 25,000 to 30,000 and endangered, suffers from severe habitat fragmentation, leading to frequent and dangerous road and railway crossings. AI-based systems like Gajraj help mitigate human-elephant conflicts by ensuring safer migration paths and reducing train speeds when elephants are detected.
- 6. Ethics in Public Life:** Barcelona witnessed recent demonstrations against tourist overcrowding with around 3,000 people protesting on streets shouting slogans like "tourists, go home.". Demonstrators symbolically sealed off hotels and restaurant terraces, calling for actions to curb tourism.
- 7. Accountability in Education:** The Holistic Progress Card (HPC) for secondary school students, introduced by PARAKH under NCERT, aims to go beyond traditional academic metrics to include life skills like time management and financial literacy.
- 8. Misuse of power:** IAS probationer Pooja Khedkar has been transferred from Pune to Washim for alleged misuse of power, including demanding privileges not accorded to trainees, using a red-blue beacon light, and installing a 'Maharashtra government' board on her private vehicle.

## MODEL ESSAY

***"The Journey of a Thousand Miles Begins with a Single Step"***

### Introduction

- Quote by Chinese Philosopher Lao Tzu
- Meaning: Starting small is crucial for achieving big goals.

### Importance of small beginnings

- Overcoming inertia: first step breaks the resistance to action.
- Consistent progress: continuous small steps lead to significant progress.
- The snowball effect: Demonstrate how small actions can snowball into larger achievements over time.
- Building Confidence: Starting small builds confidence- competence-fosters a positive feedback loop
- Learning and Adaptation: Small beginnings gives opportunities to test strategies and make adjustments

### Challenges and Overcoming Obstacles

- Fear of Failure: Fear often prevents people from taking the first step.
- Perfectionism: Waiting for the perfect moment or conditions delays progress
- Lack of Clarity: Uncertainty about the path forward can be paralysing.
- External Resistance: External factors such as criticism or scepticism can be discouraging.
- Impatience: Impatience for immediate results can lead to frustration and premature abandonment.

### Examples

- Author Stephen King faced countless rejection slips before achieving his dream of becoming a published writer.
- Jeff Bezos founded Amazon in 1994 as an online

bookstore run from his garage. His consistent efforts eventually transformed Amazon into an e-commerce giant.

- J.K. Rowling, the author of the Harry Potter series, faced numerous rejections from publishers before her first book was accepted. Staying determined, she eventually became one of the most successful authors.

### Way Forward

- Set Clear, Achievable Milestones by breaking down big goals into smaller, manageable milestones
- Embrace Continuous Learning and Adaptation by learning from experiences and adjusting approaches.
- Build Momentum through Consistency by committing to taking small actions consistently over time
- Stay Focused on the Vision: Keep the bigger picture in mind to stay motivated and remind yourself why you started
- Celebrate Small Wins: Recognize and celebrate small achievements to maintain motivation and a positive mindset.

### Conclusion

- Emphasise that even small beginnings hold immense power.
- Persistence and consistency turn aspirations into reality, no matter how daunting the journey may seem.

### Sample Quotes

- » *A smooth sea never made a skilled sailor - F D Roosevelt*
- » *It is not the mountain we conquer, but ourselves - Edmund Hillary*
- » *The quieter you become, the more you can hear- Rumi*

## MAINS JOT DOWN



### GS- III - SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

- ➡ Researchers at **Government College for Women in Thiruvananthapuram** have developed a method to produce activated carbon for **supercapacitors** using **coconut husks**.
- ➡ This innovation offers a sustainable and efficient green solution for creating high-performance supercapacitors.
- ➡ **Activated carbon** is an ideal material for supercapacitors due to its high surface area.
  - It is also known as activated charcoal, is a form of carbon that has been processed to have a large surface area and high porosity.
  - This makes it highly effective at adsorbing and trapping impurities, chemicals, and gases.
- ➡ The Global **INDIAai Summit 2024**, hosted by India as the lead chair of GPAI for the year, recently concluded.
  - India emphasised the importance of democratising AI and ensuring its accessibility for everyone.
  - The **OECD-OCDE** (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) and **GPAI** (Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence) announced a new integrated partnership on AI.
  - GPAI members reached a consensus on the future vision of GPAI, recognizing the New Delhi 2023 GPAI Ministerial Declaration.



### GS- III - DEFENCE

- ➡ India successfully test-fires first indigenous anti-radiation missile '**Rudram-1**'.
- ➡ It is an **Air-to-Surface missile** developed by **DRDO** for Indian Air Force (IAF).
- ➡ Allows IAF to conduct Suppression of Enemy Air Defence (SEAD) operations deep within enemy territory, neutralising critical air defence installations
- ➡ Features:
  - Launch platform: Sukhoi-30MKI fighter jets.
  - It has Inertial Navigation Systems (INS)-GPS navigation and Passive Homing Head for final attack, allowing it to accurately hit radiation-emitting targets.
  - Range: Height ranging from 500 metres to 15 km, and can hit radiation-emitting targets within 250 km.



### GS- II - INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

- ➡ India chaired its first meeting as Chair of the **Colombo Process** at the Permanent Representative Level Meeting in Geneva on 28 June 2024, at the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) Headquarters.
- ➡ **Colombo Process:**
  - Regional Consultative Process that provides a platform for consultations on the management of overseas employment and contractual labour.
  - Comprises 12 Member States of Asia such as Bangladesh, Sri Lanka etc.
  - India is one of the founding members.
  - The Secretariat of the Colombo Process is hosted by IOM with its headquarters in Geneva.



### GS- III - AGRICULTURE

- ➡ 'Impact of Climate Change on Marginal Farmers' Report by **Forum of Enterprises for Equitable Development (FEED)**
  - Over 1/3rd of marginal farmers had to cope with extreme weather events at least twice in five years.
  - Over 86% of farmers altered their occupations due to climate impacts.



## GS- II - GOVERNMENT POLICIES

- ➡ **SEHER** aims to provide comprehensive financial literacy content and essential business skills to **women entrepreneurs**.
- ➡ It will facilitate their access to financial tools crucial for **business growth and employment creation**.
- ➡ The program includes personalised resources on financial literacy, emphasising the importance of building a strong credit history and CIBIL score.



## GS- III - ECONOMY

- ➡ India's **Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR)** initiated an **anti-dumping investigation** into glass fibre imports from China, Thailand, and Bahrain.
- ➡ The investigation was prompted by a complaint from Owens-Corning (India), a domestic manufacturer of insulation, roofing, and fibreglass.
- ➡ **Dumping** is said to occur when the goods are exported by a country to another country at a price lower than its normal value.
  - This is an unfair trade practice which can have a distortive effect on international trade.
- ➡ The **Reserve Bank of India** has instructed banks to narrow the gap between credit and deposit growth and to lower the **Cash Deposit (CD) ratio**.
  - It is a financial metric that indicates the percentage of loans a bank has issued compared to its total deposits.
- ➡ According to the **RBI's Financial Stability Report**, the CD ratio has been increasing since September 2021, reaching a peak of 78.8% in December 2023.
- ➡ Over 75% of banks with CD ratios above 75% are private sector banks.
- ➡ **Implications of High CD ratio:**
  - Pressure on Net Interest Margins (NIM): NIM measures the net return on a bank's earning assets, such as investment securities and loans.
  - Liquidity risk: Banks may struggle to meet payment obligations in a timely manner.
  - Credit risk: Borrowers might default on their contractual obligations.



## GS- II - HEALTH

- ➡ The Ministry of Science and Technology launched the **Indo-French Liver and Metabolic Disease Network (InFLiMeN)** in collaboration with the Government of France.
  - It is a joint research programme that aims to foster scientific exchanges and enhance joint research projects to tackle health challenges associated with liver and metabolic disorders.
  - It has been established at Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences, New Delhi.



## GS- III - POLLUTION

- ➡ A multi-city study on the short-term health effects of air pollution in India has been published in **The Lancet Planetary Health**.
  - Approximately **33,000 annual deaths** can be attributed to PM 2.5 pollution in 10 cities of India.
  - Deaths are higher in Delhi, Varanasi, Kolkata etc because of higher average exposure, possibly the nature of sources and population.

## CHERRYPICKS OF THE WEEK

### T CRB

- The Blaze Star, also known as T Coronae Borealis (T CrB), is a celestial object located 3,000 light-years away from our solar system.
- It is a recurrent nova, a binary star system consisting of a red giant star and a white dwarf star orbiting each other.
- It is located in the constellation Corona Borealis, also known as the "Northern Crown," between Boötes and Hercules.

### SNOWBLIND

- It is a malware that targets Android devices to steal banking and other sensitive information.
- It repackages an app to avoid detection and misuses accessibility features to steal sensitive information and control the app remotely.

### SYNTRICHLIA CANINERVIS

- It is a desert moss which is able to withstand Mars-like environment conditions.
- It is widespread in some of Earth's harshest locations including Antarctica and the Mojave Desert.
- It could be the first possible pioneer species for the colonisation of Mars.

### GROYNES

- They are shore protection structures built perpendicular to the shoreline of coast or river.
- They trap sediments from longshore drift so that the coast behind the sand layer is protected from erosion.
- Rock, wood, steel and sand-filled bags are often used for constructing groynes.

### PUMP PRIMING

- It is the action taken to stimulate an economy usually during a recessionary period, through government spending, and interest rate and tax reductions.
- It involves introducing relatively small amounts of government funds into a depressed economy in order to spur growth.



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