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**GS 2 : Polity, Governance, International Relations**

**1. PM MITRA**

**In News:** The Ministry of Textiles has issued the Notification on 21 October 2021 for setting up of 7 PM MITRA Parks as announced in Union Budget for 2021-22 and approved by the Central Government.

- PM MITRA Parks is envisaged to help India in achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 9 (“Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation”).
- The scheme aims to position India strongly on the Global textiles map.
- PM MITRA is inspired by the 5F vision of Hon’ble Prime Minister. The ‘5F’ Formula encompasses –
  - Farm to fibre;
  - fibre to factory;
  - factory to fashion;
  - fashion to foreign.
- The scheme is to develop integrated large scale and modern industrial infrastructure facility for entire value-chain of the textile industry. It will reduce logistics costs and improve competitiveness of Indian Textiles.
- The scheme will **help India in attracting investments**, boosting employment generation and position itself strongly in the global textile market.
- These parks are envisaged to be located at sites which have inherent strength for Textile Industry to flourish and have necessary linkages to succeed.
- The 7 PM Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel (PM MITRA) Parks will be setup at **Greenfield / Brownfield sites** located in different willing States.
- Proposals of State Governments having ready availability of contiguous and encumbrance-free land parcel of 1,000+ acres along with other textiles related facilities & ecosystem are welcome.
- For a Greenfield PM MITRA park, the GOI Development Capital Support will be 30% of the Project Cost, with a cap of ₹500 Cr.
- For Brownfield sites, after assessment, Development Capital Support @30% of project cost of balance infrastructure and other support facilities to be developed and restricted to a limit of Rs. 200 Crore. State Government supports will include provision of 1,000 Acre land for development of a world class industrial estate.

- **Competitiveness Incentive Support (CIS)** of ₹300 Crore will also be provided to each PM MITRA park for early establishment of textiles manufacturing units in PM MITRA Park.
- PM MITRA park will be developed by a **Special Purpose Vehicle** which will be owned by State Government and Government of India in a Public Private Partnership (PPP) Mode.
- The Master Developer will not only develop the Industrial Park but also maintain it during the concession period. Selection of this Master Developer will happen based on objective criteria developed jointly by State and Central Governments.

## 2. General consent to CBI

### In News :

A suit was filed by the West Bengal Government against the Union of India under **Article 131 of the Constitution**.

- The State has challenged **the CBI's jurisdiction to register FIRs and conduct investigations in the State** in myriad cases.
- West Bengal said it had withdrawn **"general consent"** to the CBI way back in 2018.

### West Bengal's concerns:

The State said the CBI's actions were a direct attack on the federal structure of governance and aimed to harass ruling Trinamool Congress leaders in the State.

### Centre's response:

- State governments do not have any "absolute" power to keep **the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)** from investigating crimes inside the State.
- Not even the Union government", has the authority to rattle the autonomy of the premier agency to conduct investigations.
- Also, withdrawal of general consent would not stand in the way of constitutional courts entrusting the CBI with the cases "where it is found that the State Police would not effectively conduct a fair and impartial investigation".

- Besides, the CBI was empowered to probe cases concerning any of the Central subjects enumerated in the Union List in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution.

### Why is consent necessary?

The CBI is governed by **the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act** that makes **consent of a state government mandatory for conducting investigation in that state.**

### There are two kinds of consent:

**Case-specific and general-** Given that the CBI has jurisdiction only over central government departments and employees, **it can investigate a case involving state government employees or a violent crime in a given state only after that state government gives its consent.**

- **“General consent”** is normally given to help the CBI seamlessly conduct its investigation into cases of corruption against central government employees in the concerned state.

### What does withdrawal mean?

It simply means that CBI officers will lose all powers of a police officer as soon as they enter the state unless the state government has allowed them.

- The decision means **the CBI will now have to get consent from the state government for every case it registers in Maharashtra.**

### Under what provision can general consent been withdrawn?

In exercise of power conferred by **Section 6 of the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946**, the state governments can withdraw the general consent accorded.

**Can withdrawal mean that the CBI can no longer probe any case?**

No. The CBI would still have the power to investigate old cases registered when general consent existed. Also, cases registered anywhere else in the country, but involving people stationed in states which have withdrawn consent, would allow CBI's jurisdiction to extend to these states.

### **3. 43 countries call on China at UN to respect Uighur rights**

**Context:**

Forty-three countries have called on China to “ensure full respect for the rule of law” for the Muslim Uighur community in Xinjiang.

**Uighurs**

- The Uighurs are a minority Turkic ethnic group originating from and culturally affiliated with the general region of Central and East Asia.
- The Uighurs are recognized as native to the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China.
- They are considered to be one of China's 55 officially recognized ethnic minorities.
- The Uighurs have traditionally inhabited a series of oases scattered across the Taklamakan Desert comprising the Tarim Basin, a territory that has historically been controlled by many civilizations including China, the Mongols, the Tibetans and the Turkic world.
- An estimated 80% of Xinjiang's Uyghurs still live in the Tarim Basin. The rest of Xinjiang's Uyghurs mostly live in Urumqi, the capital city of Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (UAR), which is located in the historical region of Dzungaria.

**Details:**

- The declaration, signed by the United States as well as several European and Asian member states and others, accused China of a litany of human rights violations against the Uighurs, including torture, forced sterilisation and forced disappearances.
- In a joint statement, the countries called on China to allow immediate, meaningful and unfettered access to Xinjiang for independent observers, including the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

- The countries argued that credible reports indicate the existence of a large network of 'political re-education' camps where over a million people have been arbitrarily detained.

#### China's Stand:

- While experts have estimated that more than one million people are incarcerated in camps, China has for long denied accusations of ethnic cleansing against Uighurs and other Muslim Turkic people in Xinjiang.
- It has said that while it is willing to host a friendly visit to the region, it would not agree to an inquiry by the UN human rights commissioner.

### GS 3 : Economy, Science and Technology, Environment

#### 4. A clean energy transition plan for India

##### Context

India has a long way to go in providing electricity security to its people since its per capita electricity consumption is still only a third of the global average.

##### Ensuring energy security and role of coal

- **Energy security** warrants the uninterrupted supply of energy at affordable prices.
- Thanks to the Electricity Act of 2003, the **installed coal-fired thermal power plant (TPP)** generation capacity in India more than doubled from **94 GW to 192 GW between March 2011 and 2017**.
- This sharp increase in the installed capacity has enabled the government to increase per capita electricity consumption by 37% while reducing **peak demand deficit from 9.8% (2010-11) to 1.6% (2016-17)**.
- TPPs contributed 71% of the 1,382 billion units (BU) of electricity generated by utilities in India during FY 2020-21 though they accounted for **only 55% of the total installed generation capacity of 382 GW (as of March 2021)**.
- Coal, therefore, plays a vital role in India's ongoing efforts to achieve **Sustainable Development Goal 7**, which is "to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all".

##### Renewable energy utilisation issue and implications for consumers

- While **variable renewable energy (VRE)** sources (primarily, wind and solar) account for 24.7% of the total installed generation capacity, as of March 2021,

they contributed 10.7% of the electricity generated by utilities during FY 2020-21.

- However, the ramp-up of VRE generation capacity **without commensurate growth in electricity demand** has resulted in lower utilisation of TPPs whose fixed costs must be paid by the distribution companies (DISCOMs) and passed through to the final consumer.
- The current level of VRE in the national power grid is increasing the cost of power procurement for DISCOMs, **leading to tariff increases for electricity consumers.**
- Therefore, India must implement a plan to increase energy efficiency and reduce the emissions of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) and airborne pollutants from TPPs without making power unaffordable to industries that need low-cost 24×7 power to compete in the global market.

### Way forward: time-bound transition plan

- **Phasing out:** The plan should involve the progressive retirement of TPPs (unit size 210 MW and below) based on key performance parameters such as **efficiency, specific coal consumption, technological obsolescence, and age.**
- **Increasing utilisation:** The resulting shortfall in baseload electricity generation can be made up by increasing the utilisation of existing **High-Efficiency-Low-Emission (HELE)** TPPs that are currently under-utilised to accommodate VRE and commissioning the 47 government-owned TPPs.
- In addition, the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) is also constructing 11 nuclear power plants with a total generation capacity of 8,700 MW that will supply 24×7 power without any CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.
- The combined thermal (220 GW) and nuclear (15 GW) capacity of 235 GW can meet the baseload requirement (80% of peak demand) during the evening peak in FY 2029-30 without expensive battery storage.
- The optimal utilisation of existing and under-construction HELE TPPs with faster-ramping capabilities and lower technical minimums also facilitates VRE integration.
- Since HELE TPPs minimise emissions of particulate matter (PM), SO<sub>2</sub>, and NO<sub>2</sub>, the transition plan offers **operational, economic, and environmental benefits** including avoidance of sustenance Capex and FGD costs in the 211 obsolete TPPs to be retired besides savings in specific coal consumption and water requirement leading to reductions in electricity tariffs and PM pollution.

## Conclusion

The implementation of transition plan will enable India to safeguard its energy security and ensure efficient grid operations with lower water consumption, PM pollution, and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

## 5. Pinaka and Smerch rocket systems

**Context** The Indian Army has deployed Pinaka and Smerch long-range, multi-barrel rocket launch systems as well as BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles in the Tawang sector of Arunachal Pradesh closer to the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

### Key takeaways

- Smerch, procured from Russia, is the longest range conventional rocket system in the Army's inventory with a maximum range of 90 km.
- Pinaka, indigenously designed and developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation, has a range of 38 km.

### About BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles

- **Carried out by:** Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) from Balasore in Odisha.
- BrahMos surface-to-surface supersonic cruise missile features indigenous Booster and Airframe Section along with many other 'Made in India' sub-systems.
- The BrahMos Land-Attack Cruise Missile was cruising at a top speed of Mach 2.8.

## 6. Development that is mindful of nature

The article talks about the need for sustainable development with minimal effect on the environment in Kerala that has been a victim of environmental disaster yet again.

### Context:

- Unusually heavy rains have caused landslides in Kottayam and Idukki in Kerala.



- Flash floods, mudslides and landslides have been reported in most districts located between central and southern Kerala. Some bridges and a number of roads have been washed away.

In the backdrop of these environmental disasters and consequent loss of life, there is a dire need for a serious review of the land-use pattern in Kerala.

### **Land-use pattern in Kerala:**

- Historically, most of the settlements were concentrated in the coastal plain, the adjoining lowlands and parts of the midlands.
- At present, this scenario has altered with significant land-use change across topographic boundaries.
- Population growth, agricultural expansion, economic growth, infrastructure development – particularly road construction – and intra-State migration have all led to the settlement of the highlands.
- Kerala is experiencing high growth of residential buildings.
  - The Census records that during the decade between 2001 and 2011, the population grew by 5% whereas the number of houses grew by 19.9%.
- With a population density of 860 persons/sq. km against an all-India average of 368 persons/sq. km (Census 2011), Kerala experiences very high pressure on the land.

### **Concerns:**

- The rapid pace of construction has serious implications for the geo-environment.
  - Not only in terms of the locations for housing the settlements but also the demand for construction materials is altering the landscape in the state.
- The basin characteristics of all rivers have been altered.
  - It has resulted in gross disturbance of the character of the terrain evolved through weathering and formation of soil under natural vegetation cover.
  - Consequently, the water-absorbing capacity of the river catchment is lost, and has contributed to increasing surface run-off and reduction in groundwater recharge.
- Road construction in hilly areas has created conditions conducive to landslides.
  - Construction on hill slopes prone to disintegration during heavy rain is a threat not only to those who choose to live there but also to those who are in the path of the debris that gets dislodged in a landslide.

- In parts of the State, the hills have been overbuilt, posing a danger to life.
- Extremely complicated rules for registration of purchase and sale of property in Kerala are not matched by due diligence of building plans.
- While the idea of a construction-free Coastal Regulation Zone, instituted by the Government of India and applicable to the entire country, is fairly well recognised in the State, the Government of Kerala has not been proactive in enforcing similar regulation.
  - The hesitancy towards the implementation of the recommendations by the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel, commonly known as the **Gadgil Committee**, on protection of the Western Ghats is the best example of this.

### Way Forward:

Review of two projects:

The most recent landslide in Kerala should lead the government to immediately review two major projects with the potential to lower ecological security.

1. The Silver Line project – a light railway connecting the two extremities of the State.
  - Its potential to usurp agricultural land and cause ecological disturbance is well known.
  - The claim that it is vital to the development of the State is debatable.
  - Kerala's deficit is less with respect to transportation than what it is to power generation, urban infrastructure and a well-trained workforce.
2. Widening of the highway taking place in parts of the State.
  - Entirely under the authority of the Government of India, this has involved mass felling of trees and the removal of habitation on both sides of the road.
  - The loss of vegetation and tree cover is sure to have an impact on local climate and water retention, impacting its availability.
  - It is not known whether the Government of India has consulted the people affected or just used the principle of eminent domain to have them evicted.
    - Eminent domain power is regarded as an inherent power of the State to take private property for a public purpose. This power depends on the superior domain of the State over all the property within its boundaries.

Technical expertise needed:

- Kerala's longitudinal topographic grain combined with its east-west-running rivers gives rise to an alternating ridge-valley landform.
  - Given this feature, the construction of roads or any structure with a north-south alignment involves cutting across the valleys and lowlands, impacting natural drainage and overall landscape ecology.
  - Therefore, development interventions should be cautious and ecologically sensitive to avoid unwarranted consequences and to be sustainable.
- Evaluating ecosystem services lost in a developmental overdrive is a difficult exercise. Economic consequences of the actions towards nature are immediately not known. However, there is a need to acknowledge this.
- Technical expertise is needed when re-engineering the earth.
  - Earth scientists, independent public policy experts, elected representatives and citizens from the affected areas must be duly consulted before taking up such developmental projects.

Rushing through developmental projects in the face of intimations from nature through disasters such as landslides would be a case of utter ignorance. Projects such as the new railway lines and highway widening should be undertaken only after public hearings open to citizens.

## THE INDIAN EXPRESS

## GS 2 : Polity, Governance, International Relations

### 1. Need for internal democracy in political parties

#### In News :

It is obvious that institutional intermediaries in a representative democracy must themselves be democratic. However, beyond the rhetoric, internal democracy in a political party is less straightforward.

#### How democratic accountability in a political party is different from that in a country

- Democratic accountability in a political party is qualitatively different from that in a country.

- A political party is a collaborative platform to capture state power to achieve a certain **vision for society**.
- In a country, there are **sharp differences between citizens** on the vision and values themselves and the role of democracy is not just to create a framework to negotiate conflict but to ensure that the state is representative of the largest section of the electorate through periodic elections.
- Thus, while democracy at the level of the country is a bottom-up opportunity to change direction altogether, democratic accountability in a political party exists within an ideological framework.

### Is internal elections for party leadership a solution?

- **Subversion of internal institutional process:** Proponents underestimate the ability of existing repositories of power to subvert internal institutional processes to consolidate power and maintain the status quo.
- **Independence of lower level:** the assumption that the lower levels would be independent and hold the higher levels of leadership to account glosses over the many ways power asserts itself.
- **Independence and quality of electorate:** The outcome of internal elections is contingent on the independence and quality of the electorate.
- **In indirect elections** (through delegates), the electorate would likely mirror the existing balance of power.
- **In direct elections**, there is a concern of ideological dilution and/or capture through opportunistic membership.
- It is evident that internal elections may factionalise power but cannot establish normative accountability, which extends to all members of the party along three interconnected axes of ideology, organisation and competence.
- Normative accountability is thus rooted in a dynamic context and is necessarily a deliberative process.

### Democratic functioning in political parties is not an end in itself

- Unlike for the state, democracy is not an end in itself for a political party.
- The highest possible attainment of individual well-being and individual self-will through a democratic state is an end in itself.
- The purpose of a political party is the acquisition of state power.
- Democratic functioning may be an ideological imperative, operational choice, or legitimising tactic but it is not an end in itself for a political party.

### Way forward

- Instead of looking at internal party processes, one way to decentralise power is by **getting rid of the anti-defection law**.

- The need to **canvass votes in the legislature** will create room for negotiation in the party organisation too.
- Most importantly, this reform will impose a similar burden on all political parties and may create space to change the overall political culture.

## Conclusion

The role of democracy is not just to create a framework to negotiate conflict but to ensure that the state is representative of the largest section of the electorate through periodic elections.

## 2. Turkey on FATF Grey List:

### In News :

The **Financial Action Task Force (FATF)** has added **Turkey**, along with **Jordan and Mali**, in its revised list of “**jurisdictions under increased monitoring**”, also known as **the FATF grey list**. There are now 23 countries in the list.

### What prompts FATF to place countries under the grey list?

If countries fail to prevent international money laundering and terrorist financing, then they shall be placed on the list.

### What does ‘increased monitoring’ mean?

According to the FATEF, when a jurisdiction is placed under increased monitoring, “it means the country has committed to swiftly resolve the identified **strategic deficiencies within agreed timeframes** and is subject to extra checks”.

### Which countries were removed out of the list?

The FATF took two countries – **Botswana and Mauritius** – out of the grey list. It is because these countries had made significant progress in addressing the strategic **AML/CFT** (Anti-Money Laundering/Combating the Financing of Terrorism)

deficiencies identified earlier by the FATF and included in their respective action plans.

### **Blacklist and grey list:**

**Black List:** Countries known as Non-Cooperative Countries or Territories (NCCTs) are put in the blacklist. These countries support terror funding and money laundering activities. The FATF revises the blacklist regularly, adding or deleting entries.

**Grey List:** Countries that are considered safe haven for supporting terror funding and money laundering are put in the FATF grey list. This inclusion serves as a warning to the country that it may enter the blacklist.

### **3. Ramappa - Kakatiya Rudreshwara Temple**

The Union Minister for Culture, Tourism has unveiled the UNESCO World Heritage Listing plaque at Ramappa - Kakatiya Rudreshwara Temple in Palampet.

#### **Rudreswara Temple**

- The Rudreswara temple was **constructed in 1213 AD** during the reign of the Kakatiya Empire by **Recharla Rudra**, a general of **Kakatiya king Ganapati Deva**.
- It is also known as the **Ramappa temple, after the sculptor** who executed the work in the temple for 40 years.
- The main temple is flanked by the collapsed structures of the Kateshwarayya and Kameshwarayya temples in Palampet, about 220 km from Hyderabad.
- An inscription dates the temple to 1135 Samvat-Saka on the eighth day of Magha (January 12, 1214).
- It is India's **39<sup>th</sup> UNESCO World Heritage Site**. (Total 40 in number after Dholavira).

#### **Its architecture**

- The temple complexes of Kakatiyas have a distinct style, technology, and decoration exhibiting the influence of the Kakatiyan sculptor.

- The temple stands on a **6 feet high star-shaped platform** with walls, pillars, and ceilings adorned with intricate carvings that attest to the unique skill of the Kakatiyan sculptors.
- The foundation is built with the “**sandbox technique**”, the **flooring is granite**, and the **pillars are basalt**.
- The lower part of the temple is **red sandstone** while the **white gopuram** is built with light bricks that reportedly float on water.
- European merchants and travelers were mesmerized by the beauty of the temple and one such traveler had remarked that the temple was the “**brightest star in the galaxy of medieval temples of the Deccan**”.

### Surviving through ages

- According to the temple priest, some of the iconography on the temple was **damaged during the invasion of Malik Kafur** in 1310.
- Treasure hunters vandalized the rest.
- But the biggest test for the temple was an earthquake in the 17th century (one of the biggest was that of 7.7-8.2-magnitude on June 16, 1819).

### 4. Uyghur rights

**Context** 43 countries have called on China to “ensure full respect for the rule of law” for the Muslim Uyghur community in Xinjiang, in a statement read at the United Nations.

- The declaration was signed by the USA and several European and Asian member states and others.
- They accused China of a list of human rights violations against the Uyghurs, including torture, forced sterilisation and forced disappearances.

### Who are Uyghur Muslims?

- Uyghurs, are a minority Turkic ethnic group originating from and culturally affiliated with the general region of Central and East Asia.
- The Uyghurs are recognized as native to the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of the People’s Republic of China.
- China rejects the idea of them being an indigenous group
- Since 2016, it is estimated that over a million Uyghurs have been detained in Xinjiang re-education camps.(UN)
- International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ), the main feature of the camps is to ensure adherence to Chinese Communist Party ideology.

## 5. Global Food Security Index, 2021

**Context** India is ranked at 71st position in the Global Food Security Index which was released recently.

### Top ranking countries

- Ireland, Australia, the UK, Finland, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Canada, Japan, France and the US shared the top rank with the overall GFS score in the range of 77.8 and 80 points on the index.

### Bottom five countries are

- Malawi(109th), Sudan(110), Mozambique(111), Yemen(112) and Burundi(113).

### Performance of India and its neighbours

- India held 71st position with an overall score of 57.2 points on the GFS Index.
  - It fared better than Pakistan (75th), Sri Lanka (77th), Nepal (79th) and Bangladesh (84th).
  - But the country is way behind China (34th position).
- Pakistan (52.6 points) and Sri Lanka (62.9 points) scored better than India (50.2 points) in the category of food affordability.
- Over the past 10 years, India's incremental gains in overall food security score were lagging behind that of Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh.

### About Global Food Security (GFS) Index

- The GFS Index was designed and constructed by London-based Economist Impact and is sponsored by Corteva Agriscience.
- It measures the underlying drivers of food security in 113 countries, based on the factors of affordability, availability, quality and safety, and natural resources and resilience.

## 6. UN Fund for 'People's Economy' in Afghanistan

**Context** The United Nations has set up a special trust fund to provide urgently-needed cash directly to Afghans through a system tapping into donor funds frozen since the Taliban takeover last August.

### Key takeaways



- With the local economy “imploding”, the aim is to inject liquidity into Afghan households to permit them to survive this winter and remain in their homeland despite turmoil.
- Cash will be provided to Afghan workers in public works programmes, such as drought and flood control programmes, and grants given to micro-enterprises.
- Temporary basic income would be paid to the vulnerable elderly and disabled.
- Germany, a first contributor, had pledged €50 million (\$58 million) to the fund.

### What is the Need of this Fund?

- The International Monetary Fund said that Afghanistan’s economy is set to contract up to 30% this year and this is likely to further fuel a refugee crisis that will affect its neighbouring countries, Turkey and Europe.
- The Islamists’ takeover saw billions in central bank assets frozen and international financial institutions suspended access to funds, although humanitarian aid has continued.
- Banks are running out of money, civil servants have not been paid and food prices have soared.
- The challenge is to repurpose donor funds already earmarked for Afghanistan.
- The UNDP had cost activities to be covered over the first 12 months at approximately \$667 million.

## GS 3 : Economy, Science and Technology, Environment

### 7. India’s gig economy and the question of quality jobs

Since the pandemic, there is a growing concern about the pay-out and job-securities of the delivery persons and other gig workers of the e-commerce companies.

#### Who are the Gig Workers?

- Gig worker is a person who works **temporary jobs** typically in the service sector as an independent contractor or freelancer.
- They have **freedoms as compared to full-timers**: setting their own hours, working from home, being their own bosses.
- They enter into **formal agreements** with on-demand companies to provide services to the company’s clients.

In this article, we shall particularly discuss about the delivery agents of various e-commerce companies.

### **E-com boom in India**

- E-commerce in India is a nascent industry that is probably less than 13 years old.
- In this short period, it has captured the collective imagination of the nation.
- The covid-19 crisis has accelerated its adoption, and even die-hard fans of shopping at a physical store have switched to shopping online.

### **Various issues faced by the gig workers**

- **Harsh working conditions**
- **Quality of work and the temporary nature of engagement**
- **Absence of a social security net**
- **Long hours**
- **Delayed pay-outs**
- **Pressure to maximize speed of delivery** (at the risk of road accidents)

### **E-coms under scanner**

The bigger an industry gets, and the more successful it is perceived to be, the more responsible and thoughtful it needs to be in everything it does.

- **Fairness in employment:** Some of the concerns are fair and call for introspection on the part of e-commerce companies.
- **Premature regulation:** There is a rising demand for regulation of the gig economy created by them.

### **Significance of e-commerce sector**

Anyone complaining about the quality of jobs being created by the e-commerce industry probably needs to spend some time understanding the history of job creation in India.

### **An attractive sector for India's 'jobs problem'**

- **Ample workforce:** India is a demographically youthful nation, and every year between 17 and 20 million people look for jobs.
- **Attractive sector:** This includes around 5 million people who are abandoning highly exploitative and less remunerative farm jobs every year to find employment in other sectors, mostly in the nearest urban districts.

- **Limited success of service sector:** The IT and business process outsourcing industry has less than 200,000 jobs a year during its 25 years of existence. This is just a minuscule 1% of the total number of jobs that need to be created.

### Data justifying un-steady flow of income

- According to CSO, only about 17% of India's workers are regular wage earners and less than 23% of Indian households have a regular wage earner.
- In other words, 77% of our households did not have a steady flow of income.
- Self-employed (46%) and casual labour (33%) together account for nearly 80% of the workforce and claimed to earn less than ₹10,000 per month.
- These are the realities that cannot be ignored.

### E-commerce: A game-changer

- The new-age platforms have done is nothing short of a miracle both in terms of creating jobs as well as paying a fair wage.
- It can be well established that it has provided a better remedy for unemployment in India.

### Why do e-marketplaces matter?

- **Failure of Skills:** Neither skill nor knowledge is enough to ensure one generates income.
- **Technology dependency and free market:** Efficient marketplace which are enabled by technology, matters.
- **Common platform:** A startup such as the Urban Company is an example of a technology-powered marketplace for common services such as plumbing, carpentry, beauty, and house-cleaning, among others.
- **Single marketplace:** They brought consumers and suppliers of services (based on skills) on a common platform and made the whole process of matching demand and supply pretty seamless.

### Benefits offered

- **Decent pay:** A consumer of a service is willing to pay more for better quality of service if there is a consistent and reliable process of evaluating the capability of service providers.
- **Self-employment:** Most of these workers are always self-employed and even with these platforms, they operate in a gig mode which isn't structurally different.
- **Better livelihood:** Youth from rural India had been joining the Ola and Uber platforms in large numbers, many of whom were either unemployed or heavily under-employed.

- **No skill-compulsion:** When skilling is voluntary and driven by a free market mechanism, the outcomes are magical.
- **Industrializing the services:** These platforms did 'industrialize' the services – industrialization allowed effortless consumption and created structured mechanisms to scale services and service capabilities.
- **New consumption pattern:** The technology enabled markets resulted in 'new consumption' which, in turn, led to creation of more goods and service providers.

### Way forward

- As far as the e-commerce industry is concerned, there are several obvious lessons that can contribute towards its growth, going ahead.
- Also it is not fair to paint the entire industry as exploitative or be unduly critical of the gig model which is actually a very good model.
- Many of the gig workers themselves would be reluctant to take up full time and fixed salaried jobs. Pushing for premature regulation could be lethal.
- And finally, it is unrealistic to expect the e-commerce industry to create jobs that are probably as well paying like the IT industry.

### Conclusion

- Creating high-paying jobs was never easy and will never be easy.
- Nor is it realistic that everyone, or even a majority of the 20 million, will be employed in high-paying jobs.

### Prelims Practice Questions

1 'Right to Protest' is considered as an implicit part of which of the following fundamental rights?

- a. Article 14
- b. Article 19
- c. Article 21
- d. Article 32

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

- Article 19 offers the right to protest. Although the word protest is not explicitly mentioned in the fundamental rights of the Indian Constitution, it is implicitly derived from the in-depth reading of Article 19.
- The right to protest is protected under Article 19(1)(a), Article 19(1)(b) which gives citizens the right to freedom of expression and the right to meet peacefully without weapons. These two articles constitute the right of protest on the basis that a protester can exercise his right to hold a protest against any issue of national or social interest.
  - The right to freedom of expression means that each person has the right to freely express his or her opinions through a means such as gesture or mouth, etc.
  - The right to peaceful assembly without weapons is to hold public meetings or to close a procession.

## 2. Why are dewdrops not formed on a cloudy night?

- a. Clouds absorb the radiation released from the Earth's surface.
- b. Clouds reflect back the Earth's radiation.
- c. The Earth's surface would have low temperature on cloudy nights.
- d. Clouds deflect the blowing wind to ground level.

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

- Dewdrops are formed due to the condensation of water vapour in the air.
  - When humid air comes into contact with some cold surface, water vapour present in it condenses on the cold surface in the form of droplets. These tiny drops of water are called dew drops.
- On a cloudy night, the clouds reflect back the heat emanating from the ground. Hence the ground never gets cold enough for the dew to be formed.

## 3. Consider the following statements:

1. Hornbills are found in tropical Africa and Asia.
2. Southern India has the highest diversity of hornbill species within India.
3. The Hornbill festival is celebrated by the Nyishi community of Arunachal Pradesh.

Which of the statements given above is/are not correct?

- A 1 only
- B 2 and 3 only
- C 3 only
- D 1 and 3 only

Answer : B

Explanation

- The **hornbills** are a family of birds found in **tropical and subtropical Africa and Asia. hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- India is home to nine species of hornbills.
  - The **northeastern region has the highest diversity** of hornbill species within India. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**
- Hornbills are the cultural symbols of some ethnic communities in the northeast, specifically the Nyishi of Arunachal Pradesh.
  - The **Hornbill festival celebrated in Nagaland** is named after the bird – Hornbill which is the most revered and admired bird for the **Nagas. Hence, statement 3 is not correct.**
- Hornbills have a symbiotic relationship with several canopy trees in tropical forests. The forest patches that have rare trees like Canarium, attract hornbills in large numbers (for food).
  - In turn, hornbills end up dispersing seeds of a diverse array of plant species in higher numbers in these patches

**4. Which of the following Wildlife Sanctuaries (WLS) is situated near the Hirakud dam?**

- A Gahirmatha WLS
- B Nandankanan WLS
- C Baisipalli WLS
- D Debrigarh WLS

Answer : D

Explanation

- Recently, the Odisha Government has decided to relocate around 420 families from four zero-connectivity villages in **Debrigarh wildlife sanctuary.**

- It is **situated in the Bargarh district of Odisha near Hirakud dam** (Mahanadi River) and covers an area of 346.91 square kilometers.
  - It is bounded on the east and north by the huge Hirakud reservoir.
- It is an important site for in situ conservation of wildlife and its habitat in the state of Odisha.
- **Gahirmatha** Marine Sanctuary is the **mass nesting spot in the Indian Ocean region** and the only turtle sanctuary in Odisha.
  - It is the world's largest nesting beach of Olive Ridley Sea Turtles.
- **Nandankanan** Zoological Park is **located near Bhubaneswar, Odisha**.
  - Unlike other zoos in the country, **Nandankanan is built right inside the forest** and set in a completely natural environment.
  - Nandankanan is among the six participating zoos for the conservation breeding of White-backed vultures.
- **Baisipalli** Wildlife Sanctuary gets its name from the 22 settlements existing within its span. It was given the status of sanctuary in May 1981.
  - It is **located where the Mahanadi River passes through a gorge in the Eastern Ghats** mountains in Nayagarh District. ★
  - The whole area is a part of the Deccan Peninsula Biogeographic Zone, Eastern Plateau province and Eastern Ghat sub-division.
- **Hence, option D is correct.**

##### 5. Consider the following statements regarding the 'Net-Zero Emissions'?

1. It is a state in which the greenhouse gases going into the atmosphere are balanced by removal out of the atmosphere.
2. India is the third-largest emitter of CO<sub>2</sub>, behind China and the USA.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A 1 only
- B 2 only
- C Both 1 and 2
- D Neither 1 nor 2

Answer : C

Explanation

- **Net-Zero Emissions** refers to achieving an overall balance between greenhouse gas emissions produced and greenhouse gas emissions taken out of the atmosphere. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
  - First, human-caused emissions (like those from fossil-fueled vehicles and factories) should be reduced as close to zero as possible.
  - Second, any remaining GHGs should be balanced with an equivalent amount of carbon removal, for example by restoring forests.
- As of June 2020, twenty countries and regions have adopted net-zero targets.
  - The Kingdom of Bhutan is already carbon-negative, i.e. absorbs more CO<sub>2</sub> than it emits.
- India's per capita CO<sub>2</sub> emissions – at 1.8 tonnes per person in 2015 – are around a ninth of those in the USA and around a third of the global average of 4.8 tonnes per person.
  - However, overall, India is now the planet's **third-largest emitter of CO<sub>2</sub>, behind China and the USA. Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- Recently, Indian Railways (IR) has announced that it is likely to become world's first 'net-zero' carbon emitter by 2030.
  - IR is taking a multi-pronged approach to go green and decarbonise - from increasing its sourcing of Renewable Energy (RE) to electrifying its traction network and reducing its energy consumption

**6. The Right to Protest involves the exercise of which of the following fundamental rights?**

1. Equality before Law
2. Freedom of Resistance
3. Freedom to assemble peacefully
4. Freedom of speech and expression

Select the correct answer using the codes given below.

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

Answer : b



The right to protest involves the exercise of two fundamental rights

1. Freedom of speech and expression under Article 19 (1) (a)
2. Freedom to assemble peacefully under Article 19 (1) (b)

### **Mains Practice Questions**

**1Q. Discuss how the policies of Jawaharlal Nehru helped in the nation-building and post-independence consolidation of India.**

#### **Approach**

- Start the answer by briefly explaining the challenges faced by the newly independent India.
- Discuss Nehru's role in post independence consolidation and nation building.
- Conclude Suitably.

**2Q. Citizen initiatives to fight corruption come from an active social consciousness. Discuss.**

#### **Approach**

- Start the answer by mentioning the ethical dimension of corruption.
- Mention measures that can promote public participation in anti-corruption drives.
- Conclude Suitably.