

**DAILY
CURRENT
AFFAIRS
ANALYSIS**



LAKSHYA ACADEMY®

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1 - Giving the Poor, Young People, Women, and Farmers Priority:

GS II

Government Policies and Interventions

- **Context:**

- The Indian Prime Minister has emphasised how important it is to give the welfare of four categories first priority: the impoverished, young people, women, and farmers.
- This emphasis shows a dedication to upholding the respect and dignity of the underprivileged.

- **Index of Multidimensional Poverty:**

- In India, the impoverished number exceeds 230 million.
- About 415 million Indians were able to transcend poverty between 2005–06 and 2019–21, according to the 2023 Global Multidimensional Poverty Index, which was released by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
- As per the UNDP, 18.7% of the population is considered 'vulnerable' to multidimensional poverty.
- This describes people who have experienced deprivations in 20–33.3% of all weighted measures, but who are not considered poor.
- Housing, food, and cooking fuel are the three main elements of impoverishment. According to these different measurements, around 13.9%, 13.6%, and 11.8% of the population was considered disadvantaged.

- **Joblessness:**

- In October 2023, India's jobless rate reached its highest point in more than two years, with unemployment rising more in rural areas.
- Comparing 2022–2023 to 2017–18, the National Sample Survey Office's Periodic Labour Force Survey showed a decline in unemployment from 5.3% to 2.4% in rural areas and from 7.7% to 5.4% in urban areas.
- In the entire employed population, the percentage of self-employed workers climbed from 52% in 2018–19 to 57% in 2022–2023 years.
- Self-employment encompasses a wide range of occupations, including operating a tea shop, farming, helping out at home businesses, practicing medicine, and performing unpaid labour as part of one's economic endeavours.

- When self-employment is high, there aren't many other options available, thus people tend to stick with these lower-paying professions.
- Higher percentages of people work for themselves in nations with lower per capita incomes.

- **Ladies:**

- India improved by 1.4% points and eight places from 135 in 2022 to 127 out of 146 nations in the World Economic Forum's 2023 Global Gender Gap Report.
- The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) states that there were over 4.45 lakh offences against women in 2022, an increase of 4% from 2021.
- The majority of crimes were rape, kidnapping, violence, and abuse by husbands or other family members.
- The crime rate in 12 states and Union territory was greater than the national average.
- In order to reserve one-third of the seats in legislative assemblies and the Lok Sabha for women, the Women's Reservation Act, 2023, also known as the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, was approved.

- **Growers:**

- An abundance of unexpected rain caused farmers to lose their crops, which dealt a serious blow to their earnings.
- The Southwest monsoon was irregular and below average, which affected agricultural output for Kharif in various regions of the nation.
- States experiencing drought or conditions resembling drought include Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Jharkhand.
- Farmers' sorrow was exacerbated by ongoing losses resulting from the pink bollworm pest on the BT cotton crop in north India.
- According to NCRB data, there has been a rise in suicide fatalities among farmers.
- In India, there is an average of one farmer who commits suicide every hour; 11,290 suicides were recorded in 2022.
- Agricultural labourers accounted for 53% of suicide cases, a greater rate of suicide deaths than farmers and cultivators.
- The average agricultural household's reliance on farming earnings rather than crop production has been growing.

- **Young people:**

- The World Bank estimates that in 2022, India's youth unemployment rate was 23.2%, greater than those of its neighbours, Bhutan (14.4%), Bangladesh (12.9%), and Pakistan (11.3%).
- China had a 13.2% unemployment rate, South Korea 6.9%, and Singapore 6.1%.
- While it has decreased from 23.9% in 2021 to 22.9% in the Pre-Covid year of 2019, India's youth unemployment rate is still somewhat higher than that of the previous year.

- Those in the workforce between the ages of 15 and 24 who are unemployed but actively looking for work are referred to as youth unemployment rate.
- According to the State of Working India 2023 research, the unemployment rate for graduates under 25 was 42.3% in 2021–2022, compared to 8.7% for the general labour force.
- *Source → The Hindu*

2 - Technological Advancements Undertaken under the MGNREGA Programme:

GS II

Government Policies and Interventions

- **Context:**
- In response to complaints regarding the use of technology, specifically Aadhaar, in delaying salary payments under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) system and withholding welfare benefits to disadvantaged Indians, the Ministry of Rural Development has taken action.
- The ministry has addressed these worries by showcasing a number of technology advancements made possible by the MGNREGA, with the goal of improving efficiency and transparency in its execution.
- **The MGNREGA Scheme: What is it?**
- **About:**
- MGNREGA is one of the biggest work guarantee programmes in the world, having been introduced by the Ministry of Rural Development in 2005.
- This programme offers adult members of any rural home a legal guarantee of one hundred days of employment every fiscal year.
- Participants receive the statutory minimum wage for performing unskilled manual labour associated with public projects.

- **Present Situation with MGNREGA:**

- A total of 25.25 crore workers, of whom 56.83% are active workers, and 14.32 crore registered Job Cards, with 68.22% active Job Cards, are available.

- **Applied Technological Innovations:**

- **Integration of Aadhaar:**

- For the purpose of de-duplication and authenticating real beneficiaries, Aadhaar seeding is the process of continuously connecting an Aadhaar number to a primary bank account number.
- 14.08 crore (98.31%) of the active workforce have already had their Aadhaar seeded. A total of 13.76 crore Aadhaar have been validated against these seeded Aadhaar, making 87.52% of active workers eligible for the Aadhaar Payment Bridge System (APBS).
- Through the APBS payment system, government subsidies and benefits are electronically transferred to beneficiaries' bank accounts connected to their Aadhaar numbers.
- Gramme Panchayats may apply for individual APBS exemptions until the issues are resolved if they are experiencing technical or Aadhaar-related difficulties.
- Data from the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) shows that when Aadhaar is enabled for DBT, the success rate is 99.55% or higher.
- Beneficiaries who show up for wage work will receive payment via APBS.
- There is little significance to the recent worries that 34.8% of all registered workers and 12.7% of active workers are still not qualified for the ABPS.
- Considering that the APBS is only applicable in the event that a registered beneficiary shows up for paid work.
- The NEFMS, or National Electronic Fund Management System,
- In order to provide recipients with direct wage payments, NEFMS was introduced in FY 2016–17.
- Beneficiaries' bank or post office accounts receive a direct credit for more than 99 percent of wage payments.

- **Monitoring in real time via NMMS:**

- The beneficiaries' attendance at work is recorded in real time using the National Mobile Monitoring System (NMMS) app.
- Transparency is increased because workers' attendance may be verified by recipients and citizens.

- **Geotagging Resources:**

- employs remote sensing technologies to geotag items developed as part of the programme.
- The technique of detecting and tracking an area's physical properties from a distance by measuring its reflected and emitted radiation is known as remote sensing (usually from satellite or aeroplane).

- ensures accountability and public scrutiny by supplying location-specific data.
- **Updated Job Card:**
 - States and UTs regularly update or remove job cards through exercise.
 - A job card may be removed if it is a fraudulent (inaccurate) job card, a duplicate job card, a home unwilling to work, a family moving permanently out of the Gramme Panchayat, or if there is only one employee listed on the job card and their employment has expired.
 - Approximately 2.85 crore job cards have been destroyed since April 2022.
 - Drone utilisation is being tested in a pilot programme to increase real-time monitoring and data collection for better decision-making.
- *Source → The Hindu*

3 – Inflation in India:

GS III

Indian Economy

- **Context:**
 - India's inflation rate has been a constant source of worry recently, but the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) latest observations point to shifting dynamics driven by supply and demand.
 - Approximately 55% of the headline inflation rate of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) between January 2019 and May 2023 may be traced to supply-side factors, while demand drivers accounted for 31% of the inflation.
- **What has been the recent cause of inflation in India?**
 - Inflation during the two Covid-19 waves was mostly caused by disruptions in the supply chain.
 - Lockdowns during the beginning of the pandemic significantly reduced demand and production, which sharply slowed economic development.
 - Because of the weaker demand during this era, commodity prices also decreased.
 - Demand rebounded more quickly than supply as the economy started to recover with the release of pent-up demand and the distribution of vaccines. Rising pressure on commodity prices was the outcome of this imbalance.
 - The start of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine in 2022 made supply chain difficulties even more severe and increased the pressure on commodities prices.

- **What is the Process for Determining the Causes of Inflation?**

- Whether inflation is supply-driven, where prices and quantities move in the opposite direction, or demand-driven, where prices and quantities move in the same way, is determined by unforeseen changes in prices and quantities within a month.
- Prices and quantities rise in response to increased demand, whereas they fall in response to decreased demand.
- If prices and quantities unexpectedly shift in the opposite directions, inflation is said to be supply-driven. In this instance, a fall in volume but a rise in price are associated with a decrease in supply, and vice versa.
- To calculate overall headline inflation, subgroup-level supply and demand parameters were integrated using the CPI weights.
- A measure of headline inflation takes into account the overall inflation in an economy, which includes the price of commodities like food and energy, which are frequently more volatile and prone to surges in inflation.
- The Consumer Price Index (CPI), which determines how much inflation is happening in the whole economy by calculating the cost to purchase a fixed basket of items, is used to report the headline inflation statistic.

- **What Does Inflation Mean?**

- **About:**

- According to the International Monetary Fund, inflation is the rate of price growth over a certain time period that includes both general price rises and increases for particular commodities and services.
- It shows how much a collection of commodities and/or services has increased in price over a given time period, generally a year, and reflects the rising cost of living.
- Due to its enormous population and economic inequality, India is particularly vulnerable to the effects of inflation.

- **Source** → *The Hindu*

4 - Global Geopolitical Difficulties and India's Opportunities:

GS II

International Relations & Issues

- **Context:**

- 2023 turned out to be a year of hostilities despite India's insistence that "this is not the era of war." The ongoing battle in the Gaza Strip and the Russia-Ukraine conflict are currently among the most destructive conflicts of the past few decades.
- These tensions, coupled with China's assertiveness, create serious obstacles and sabotage diplomatic attempts, worrying both the West and India.

- **What is the Global Geopolitical Trends and Challenges Outlook for India in 2023?**

- **Middle East Crisis:**

- After two years of persistent efforts to restore relations between Israel and the Arab world, the Hamas onslaught claimed the lives of over 1,200 civilians and military personnel and captured over 230 more.
- More than 20,000 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza as a result of Israel's irrational and furious response, which has drawn censure even from the US. Gaza's future is uncertain, and the process of rapprochement between the Israelis and Arabs has temporarily been stalled.
- India supported the two-state solution as a means of resolving the protracted Israel-Palestine conflict and establishing long-term peace in the unstable area.

- **India-US Ties Under Stress:**

- Following the successful trips of President Joe Biden and the Indian leader to each other's capitals, there are now challenges to bilateral ties due to claims that an Indian official was involved in a conspiracy to kill a Khalistani separatist in the US.
- India's answer differs from its response to Canada, where it was suspected that the death of another Khalistani in that nation was connected to the Indian government.
- India has stated its "commitment to the rule of law" and said it will "look into" any material that comes to light on the alleged US plot using Indian citizens.

- **War between Russia and Ukraine:**

- The West is having trouble financing the war as it rages on. Ukraine is hoping to get more than USD 8 billion from a US package that includes crucial military aid, as well as Euro 18.5 billion from the European Union.
- However, Hungary in the EU and Republicans in the US Congress have so far prevented the aid from being provided.
- Putin will undoubtedly be reelected as Russia's president in the interim. The Russian economy has shown resilience in the face of sanctions, and the West is concerned about Moscow's close proximity to Beijing.

- **Maldives' challenges for India:**

- The administration of President Mohamed Muizzu, who was elected on the platform of "India Out," has requested that India remove its military personnel stationed in the Maldives and announced its intention to break up a water survey agreement. It is thought that the Muizzu institution located near China.

- **China's Actions:**

- India's greatest concern and strategic obstacle remains China. Now in its fourth year, the Border Standoff is still being fought with a force posture that rivals the military might of China. Concern has increased due to Beijing's economic survival as Moscow, India's vital security partner, depends on it, and the Maldives' growing proximity to China in the Indian Ocean.
- The Global South and the G-20:
- It surprised many in the international world that India was able to negotiate a common declaration at the G20 conference.
- One important learning from the G20 process was the mobilisation of developing and less developed nations under the Global South's auspices in New Delhi.
- It is believed that the concept of leading the Global South carries on the Non-Alignment leadership tradition of India, albeit with modern adaptations.

- **Interaction with the Taliban:**

- The Afghanistan embassy in New Delhi has experienced a change of leadership, with the current ambassador departing and being replaced by the Afghan diplomats stationed in Mumbai and Hyderabad.
- India is relieved that they have promised not to fly the Taliban banner or use Taliban lingo in official correspondence.

- **What New Obstacles Does India Face in 2024?**

- **Relations between the US and Canada:**

- It's difficult to resolve the US "assassination plot" controversy. The Quad summit was postponed due to annoyance about the US President's nonattendance at Republic Day.
- The claims from Canada strain relations as well, but India's stance is supported by the people. Since the US and Canada are very important to India, different strategies are required for their respective problems.

- **Relations with Pakistan:**

- Relations with Pakistan have been at an all-time low since 2019, when the Indian government was re-elected and the constitutional reforms in Jammu and Kashmir were impacted.
- The shift in leadership in Islamabad and Rawalpindi had no effect, and India continued to adhere to its policy of non-regard for Pakistan.
- Pakistan is currently due for elections, and after February 2024, a new administration may be in place.

- **Elections in Bangladesh:**

- Over the last fifteen years of Sheikh Hasina's rule, bilateral ties have grown, and Indians are eager to see her retake power in the elections that are scheduled for early January.
- India's decision in Dhaka is driven by security considerations; considering the opposition in Bangladesh's past under the Khaleda Zia administration in the early 2000s, this attitude is one of distrust and hostility.

- **China-Border Standoff:**

- Since 2020, there has been a deadlock at the border, and any new developments could have an effect on both the security situation and the internal political climate in India.
- When it comes to responding to a challenge from its greatest enemy, India will exercise exceptional caution. In the coming months and even years to come, India's diplomacy with China will be framed by this necessity.

- **Dynamics in West Asia:**

- India faces significant issues due to its changing posture in the Israel-Hamas conflict and its sophisticated diplomatic orientation in the area.
- Russian and American interests are being balanced:
- India's foreign policy strategy is shaped by juggling interests between pressure from the US and Russian oil supplies while the war is still raging.

- **The Way Ahead:**

- In order to benefit the region and both nations, India will be looking to step up efforts to improve connectivity between Bangladesh and its Northeast. India wants to maintain favourable bilateral ties with Sheikh Hasina's government while managing future power upheavals.
- India needs to keep changing its diplomatic posture in the Israel-Hamas conflict while striving for a middle ground between defending Israel and attending to the grievances of the Global South. It may be essential to look for methods to support humanitarian relief and make constructive contributions to peace-building initiatives.
- It is stated that the free trade agreements with the UK and other European countries are at a crucial point. The policy space and flexibility for negotiators is reduced by the 2024 elections to the EU parliament and maybe the UK. Nevertheless, these significant efforts in economic diplomacy might almost materialise by 2024.
- One area of related policy to watch out for is the discussions with the US and EU on trade and technology, with the goal of removing obstacles to India's access to advanced technologies in cybersecurity, AI, and quantum computing.

- **Source → The Hindu**

5 - Latest meteorological theories on the Red Sea's splitting:

GS I

World Geography

- **Context:**

- The Book of Exodus has a story of a miracle—the Red Sea dividing to allow the Hebrews to flee Egypt. However, other experts have now taken a different tack and used certain meteorological phenomena to explain this scenario.

- **What are the latest meteorological theories on the Red Sea's splitting?**

- Four possible climatic events are suggested by the researchers as reasons why the Red Sea's waves might have momentarily parted:
- Medicane: These hurricane-like storms in the Mediterranean can drive back coastal waters and expose landmasses due to extremely negative storm surges.
- The impact of Hurricane Irma on Florida's shoreline is cited by the researchers as a comparable illustration.

- Wind Setdown: Persistently strong winds may cause rising reefs in the Gulf of Suez to become temporarily visible, allowing navigation.
 - This event is consistent with the biblical account of the "east wind" during the Exodus.
 - Tidal Resonance: Unusually low tides and the exposure of huge stretches of seafloor can occur when outside factors, such as high winds, align with a place's inherent tidal cycles.
 - The North Atlantic's Bay of Fundy, which separates the United States and Canada, is a well-known example of this occurrence.
 - Water masses can be moved by Rossby Waves, which are large-scale waves brought on by Earth's rotation and found in the oceans and atmosphere.
 - Their appearance in the Red Sea may have given the Israelites a short-lived, dry road.
 - Crossing the Red Sea in the middle of tidal fluctuations was also referenced in Napoleon Bonaparte's historical narrative of his expedition in Egypt.
 - However, the study's conclusions are constrained by the inherent difficulties of modelling complex natural phenomena, as well as the uncertainties of ancient climate and topography. To support the evidence, more archaeological research and study are required.
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- *Source → The Hindu*



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