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Editorial Discussion & Analysis (EDA)

6th & 7th August 2021

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Note -

- The Newspaper clippings pasted in PDF are important from Mains point of view as it contains the fodder material for Mains Answer Writing.
- Also watch DND video lectures everyday @ 4 PM on Sleepy's YouTube channel in order to understand how to get the most out of everyday's Newspaper.

Click [here](#) to watch the following topics on YouTube

1. Indian Economy

1.1. Rewiring India Inc. (Indian Express)

Context- 30 years post L.P.G reform

Challenges brought about by the LPG reforms-

- Entry of MNCs through Joint Venture Mode- India attracted them to quickly conclude JVs without doing complete due diligence on the Indian partners.
- In hindsight, it seems that perhaps Government and Companies both kept Consumer at the core of these reforms, who till 1991 did not have a choice.
- Indian companies faced real competition from other Indian as well as foreign companies.
- Reduced customs duties and industrial licensing disappearing, removed the protection umbrella and Indian companies.
- Government-Industry partnership became a reality (PPP). It was impossible for both to collaborate PRE LPG times!
- Level of aspirations of the Industry-
 - ✓ IT industry led by TCS, Infosys and Wipro played a major role. They showed that Indian engineers and managers were the best in the world.
- Entrepreneurship- Not just the big boys of the industry, but also, the small and medium sectors that became part of the new energy in industry.
- Infrastructure- Earlier this had always been the preserve of the public sector.
 - ✓ Now even the private sector was invited to participate, to get into public- private partnerships and end the government's monopoly.
- Banking - Reforms of 1991 gave birth to a new private sector bank HDFC Bank, which, after due diligence by the government and the Reserve Bank of India, opened its doors in 1994.

1.2. South Asia's Emerging Digital Infrastructure (The Hindu)

Context- Digital Dividend in South Asia via E commerce

Issues

- As one of the world's poorest regions, a wide digital divide persists in access and affordability, between and within the countries of South Asia.
- 50% of India's population are without Internet with 59% for Bangladesh and 65% for Pakistan.
- Children too were at the receiving end, with 88% lacking access to Internet powered home schooling.
- Many South Asian firms failing to embrace e-commerce or other cloud- based technologies to survive the financial chaos of the Pandemic.

Harnessing Digital Dividend

- Digital transformation is a global imperative with adoption of advanced technologies such as cloud computing, artificial intelligence, the Internet of things, Big Data, etc., key to success.
- ASEAN- Singapore, Japan, and South Korea recognised as global technological hubs.
- China's e-commerce industry is said to reach \$3 trillion in 2024
- E-commerce could drive the post-pandemic growth in South Asia, providing new business opportunities and access to larger markets.
- In India, e-commerce could create a million jobs by 2030 and be worth \$200 billion by 2026.
- Digital Bangladesh Vision 2021 envisages transforming Bangladesh into a prosperous, digital society.
- Pakistan's digital financial sector could boost GDP by 7%, if faster payment gateway, lower costs and fast track licensing are put in place

Way Forward

- Investments- India alone needs an annual investment of \$35 billion to be in the top 5 global digital economy.
- Regulatory roadblocks need to be addressed as e-commerce regulations are weak in South Asia.
- No digital revolution without universal digital literacy.
- Stringent cyber security measures as many have experienced painful lessons in data privacy during the pandemic.
- In South Asia, only a third of the inter-regional trade potential has been exploited, losing out on \$23 billion in revenue.
- South Asia has the potential to emulate the European Union's Digital Single Market Proposal.

2. Governance

2.1.State of Food Insecurity (Indian Express)

- Context- Food Security Amidst Pandemic
- State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) Released by-
 - ✓ Food and Agriculture Organization
 - ✓ International Fund for Agricultural Development
 - ✓ United Nations Children's Fund
 - ✓ World Food Programme
 - ✓ World Health Organization

What did the Report Observed?

- ✓ Pandemic and failure on the part of state to combat its effects, has led to a significant increase in the prevalence of hunger and food insecurity.
- ✓ Severe food insecurity in India rose by about 6.8% in 2018-20.
- ✓ South Asia alone accounts for 36 per cent of Global Food Insecurity.
- ✓ Food insecurity presented in the SOFI report are based on two globally- accepted indicators of food insecurity.
 - ❖ Prevalence Of Undernourishment (POU)- Proportion of people suffering from chronic deficiency of calories.
 - ❖ (Prevalence of Moderate and Severe Food Insecurity (PMSFI)-
- Capture people's experiences of food insecurity (such as eating less, modifying diet to eat cheaper food, skipping meals etc)

Why is this Concerning?

- Since the outbreak of the pandemic, the Indian government has not undertaken any official assessment of food insecurity in the country.
- PMFSI estimates are the only national-level valid and reliable estimates available on the impact of the pandemic on food insecurity in India.
- As a result of the pandemic-related disruptions, Food Insecure People increased from 43 Crore to 52 Crore.

Conclusion

- India is self-sufficient in the production of major food commodities, BUT problems of hunger and food insecurity are grave in India!
- This is because of widespread economic distress, high unemployment and high levels of inequality.
- High food prices, shrinking public investment and the economic slowdown have compounded the distress.

Way Forward

- Government must establish systems for regular monitoring of the food security situation in the country.
- Universalise access to the public distribution system in the longer run.

2.2.The Parliament We Deserve (Indian Express)

Context- Crisis of a Parliamentary Democracy

Conflict Between Defection and Democracy

- Defection has ended up completely sucking out the essence of democracy from our legislative institutions.
- MPs and MLAs are precluded from exercising their wisdom in terms of their conscience, common sense and constituency interests.
- Political party that gives any person a ticket to contest on its symbol exerts complete control over their mind and soul.
- If electoral preferences were meant to be exercised by an individual elector then why is legislative power residing in a political party?

Parliamentary Immaturity

- Hardly any bills get referred to the parliamentary standing committees.
- No motivation for MPs to make better laws for the country.
- Legislators have no interest in burning the midnight oil reading bills have an incentive in disrupting the House.
- State legislatures are worse as they barely meet for less than a month in a year.
- Constituents (electors) also do not want to look at the merits of any laws for they know they have no role in their formulation.
- MP's use their Political influence not in Parliament while debating legislations, but to swing contracts for local developmental works towards their favored backers.

Conclusion

- Thousands of crores are spent on election cycles every year. Non- functional legislatures are of no use to the country.
- India can very well function with a directly elected executive and a judiciary to exercise oversight, if the legislatures remain to be useless noisy chambers.
- Vital legislation that has a bearing on India's future and needs to be deliberated with seriousness.

2.3.India's School Children need their Childhood back (The Hindu)

Context- Opening of Schools is Essential

Issue

- We need to stop asking whether schools are safe and start acknowledging that in-person school is essential.
- Children are not super-spreaders, schools are not hotspots or driving viral spread.
- WHO- AIIMS Serosurvey- More than 50% of children and in some areas, more than 80% of children from both urban and rural areas had antibodies.
- Many countries in which parents can go out and have a nice steak dinner, but their seven-year-old is not going to school!!!

Suggestions

- Engage relevant experts to undertake public campaigns to make school staff and parents aware of the low risk of transmission in schools.
- Call for lists of school staff and procure full vaccination for them.
- Encourage Parents to be ever-vigilant and keep a sick or exposed child home.
- Facilitate a hybrid system of learning where parents who do not wish to send their children to school.
- Formulate and issue guidance on COVID-19 protocols to be adopted by school.
- Ventilation- Even the humble pedestal fan can do wonders for ventilation.
- Ensure availability of medical consultation so that staff and parents need not scramble for assistance.
- Mutual trust among governments, schools, and citizens.

3. Environment & Ecology

3.1. India Nepal Flood Management needs Course Correction(TheHindu)

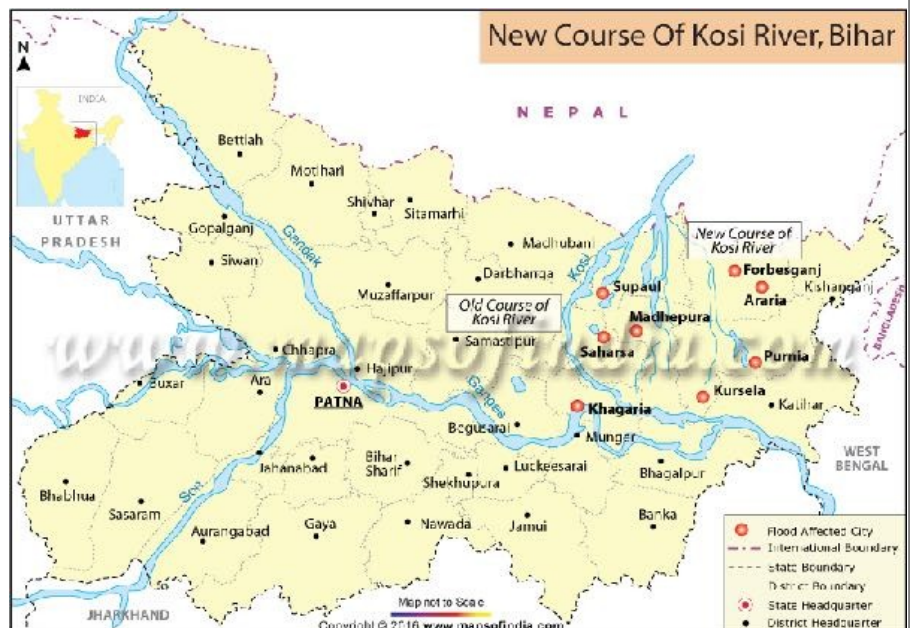
Context- Water Cooperation as a Common Cause

Sorrow Of Bihar- Kosi River

- Department of Water Resources, Government of Bihar estimates that 76% of the population in north Bihar faces the recurring threat of flood devastation.
- A large part of north Bihar, adjoining Nepal, is drained by a number of rivers that have their catchments in the steep and geologically nascent Himalayas.
- 65% of the catchment area of these rivers falls in Nepal/Tibet and only 35% of the catchment area lies in Bihar.
- Bihar witnessed high magnitudes of flood in last 30 years.
- To control the floodwater at Barahakshetra in Nepal, a high dam was thus planned and finally built after the devastating Kosi flood in 1953. (Saptakoshi High Dam)

History of Water Cooperation between India & Nepal

- Work on the Kosi embankments started in January 1955.
- Nepali soldiers came over voluntarily to join hands with Indian volunteers and start the working.
- Such Cooperation is not seen of lately.
- The Kosi Treaty of 1954- Was not Futuristic. Not enough provisions for the maintenance of embankments.
- Earlier there were not many artificial barriers, the flow of water used to aid farming in the region.
- 1954 agreement (revised in 1966) reached between India and Nepal over the Kosi project, the construction, repair and maintenance of the barrage located in Nepal has been Bihar's responsibility for which the state is reimbursed by the Centre.



Concerns Regarding Kosi

- The deposition of stones, sand, silt and sediment has led to river beds rising, changing course.

- Between the mid-18th and mid-20th centuries, the Kosi is said to have shifted over 100 km eastwards.
- Ironically, Flood affected regions also face the issue of drought and a sinking water table.

Way Forward

- India & Nepal need to re-establish water cooperation as a common cause and draw inspiration for joint action from the 1950s.
- India and Nepal need to be in dialogue to end the crisis of flooding every year.

4. International Relation

4.1. Ocean Keepers (Indian Express)

Relevance

- India holds the President's chair for one month at UNSC.
- Subject to be deliberated upon is "Enhancing maritime security: A case for international cooperation"

Issues surrounding Maritime Security

- Safety of merchant shipping- Drone attack on an Israeli-controlled tanker in the north Arabian Sea off Oman .
- Piracy and non-traditional challenges at sea such as gun-running and smuggling are old chestnuts
- South China Sea- Freedom of navigation (FON) rights in international waters and how China has laid claim to "territoriality" based on artificial structures.
- Accidents onboard large crude carriers and cargo vessels in the IOR have added to the anxiety about marine pollution and its downstream consequences for the health of the oceans.
- Environmental Concerns- Oceans have become more acidic as sea water absorbs more carbon dioxide.
- Because of Climate change, sea levels rising at a relentless pace for hundreds of years, potentially by 17 feet or more by 2300.

Way Forward

- Strategic and security issues such as the South China Sea and FON would find little consensus in the UNSC where China is a permanent member.
- Focus on Global Good- Welfare of seafarers who are the sinews of the global merchant marine
- Advocating correlation of globalisation, the blue economy and the health of the Indian Ocean.

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