

**INTERNATIONAL RELATION****Violence in South Africa**

Recently, Riots and looting in South Africa have left more than 70 people dead, hurt thousands of businesses and damaged major infrastructure. It is the worst civil unrest since the end of white minority rule in 1994.

**Key Points****Reason for Recent Violence:**

- Protests began over calls for release of former president Jacob Zuma, who served the country from 2009-18 and is facing corruption charges.
- 1. Former Cabinet ministers, high-ranking government officials and executives of state-owned enterprises have implicated Jacob Zuma in corruption.
- 2. Many feel that his successor as president, Cyril Ramaphosa, has failed to provide decisive leadership - either to calm anger over Zuma's imprisonment or to reassure South Africans that they will be safe.
- While the violence may have been spurred on by the imprisonment of Jacob Zuma, it's being fanned by underlying problems in the country amid a raging pandemic and failing economy.
- 1. In 2020, the country had witnessed its sharpest decline in annual Gross Domestic Product since 1946.
- 2. Unemployment stood at a record high of 32.6% in the first three months of 2021.

**Government's Response:**

- The government has condemned the violence and has stated that there is no justification for the violence. A lot of criminals or opportunistic individuals are trying to enrich themselves during this period.
- It has deployed its army to support the South African police, however, the rioting and looting haven't stopped.

**India- South Africa Relations****Background:**

- India's links with the struggle for freedom and justice in South Africa date back to the period during which Mahatma Gandhi started his Satyagraha movement in South Africa over a century ago.
- India was at the forefront of the international community in its support to the anti-apartheid movement; it was the first country to sever trade relations with the apartheid Government (in 1946) and subsequently imposed a complete -- diplomatic, commercial, cultural and sports -embargo on South Africa.
- After a gap of four decades, India re-established trade and business ties in 1993, after South Africa ended its institutionalised racial segregation (apartheid). In November 1993, diplomatic and consular relations were restored.

**Political Relations:**

- After South Africa achieved democracy in 1994, it was the Red Fort Declaration on Strategic Partnership between India and South Africa, signed in March 1997 which set the parameters for a rekindled relationship.
- The Strategic Partnership between the two countries was again reaffirmed in the Tshwane Declaration (October 2006). Both these declarations have been instrumental mechanisms that have contributed in the past to both South Africa and India for achieving their respective national objectives.
- India and South Africa have a long history of working together by coordinating their views and efforts in institutions of global governance/multilateral fora, in order to achieve greater autonomy and ensure that the agenda of 'South' is prioritised. For Example: BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), IBSA (India, Brazil, and South Africa), G20, Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and World Trade Organisation (WTO).

**Economic:**

- India is South Africa's fifth-largest export destination, and fourth-largest import origin and is the second-largest trading partner in Asia. Both countries are working to boost trade volumes in the coming years. Bilateral trade between India and South Africa currently stands at USD 10 billion.
- In 2016 both the countries agreed to collaborate in the defence sector, especially in terms of the opportunities available for South African private sector under 'Make in India' initiative, energy sector, agro-processing, human resource development, and infrastructure development.

**Science & Technology:**

- The Department of Science and Technology of both countries have collaborated, especially in the Square Kilometer Array (SKA) project.

**Culture:**

- With the help of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), an intensive programme of cultural exchanges is organised throughout South Africa including scholarships for South African nationals.
- The 9th World Hindi Conference was held in September 2012 at Johannesburg.

**Indian Community:**

- The major part of the Indian origin community came to South Africa from 1860 onwards as farm labour to serve as field hands and mill operatives in the sugar and other agricultural plantations.
- South Africa is home to the highest number of Indian Diaspora in the African continent, with a total strength of 1,218,000 thereby constituting 3% of South Africa's total population. Since 2003 onwards, India has celebrated Pravasi Bhartiya Divas (PBD) each year on 9th January (the day Mahatma Gandhi returned from South Africa to India).

**Way Forward**

- India-South Africa partnership is progressive and forward looking. Their rich culture and people-to-people contacts lends character and quality to India-South Africa ties.
- It is natural that South Africa needs other partners in Asia just as India is engaged in forging other partnerships in Africa. However, both India and South Africa will need to keep in mind constantly that their own bilateral relationship deserves priority and has immense potential that is yet to be realized.

**2.G7's Build Back Better World Initiative**

The G7 (Group of Seven) Countries proposed a 'Build Back Better World (B3W) initiative' at the recent 47th G7 summit to counter China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

**Group of Seven**

- It is an intergovernmental organisation that was formed in 1975.
- The bloc meets annually to discuss issues of common interest like global economic governance, international security and energy policy.
- The G7 countries are the UK, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the US. All the G7 countries and India are a part of G20.
- The G7 does not have a formal constitution or a fixed headquarters. The decisions taken by leaders during annual summits are non-binding.

**Key Points****About:**

- It aims to address the infrastructure investment deficit in developing and lower income countries - the space which has been increasingly captured by China through 2,600 BRI projects with trillions of dollars of investment.
- 1. BRI projects are perceived as corrosive tactics or debt traps laid by China for its strategic dominance in trade, foreign policy and geopolitics in the world.
- 2. The overall focus is on developing transportation, logistics and communications, which would reduce trade and transaction cost for China's trade, give more market access to Chinese markets and ensure stable supply of energy and other resources.
- This infrastructure plan is being led by the United States. B3W initiative will provide a transparent infrastructure partnership to help narrow about \$40 trillion needed by developing nations by 2035.
- It calls for spending hundreds of billions of dollars in collaboration with the private sector while adhering to climate standards and labour practices.
- However, the announcement is yet to be made about how exactly the plan would work or how much capital it would ultimately allocate.

**China's BRI:****About:**

- It was launched in 2013. It involves development and investment initiatives that would stretch from Asia to Europe and beyond.
- More than 100 countries have signed agreements with China to cooperate in BRI projects like railways, ports, highways and other infrastructure.

**China's Investment through BRI:**

- Since its inception, outward investment has been aggressive as China's FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) outflow to inflow ratio increased to 1 from around 0.34 during 2001-10.
- In volume terms, the FDI outflow increased to an average of \$140 billion in 2016-19 from an annual average \$25 billion during 2001-10.

- China is investing in Africa to lay a comprehensive transportation network. China has also signed various contacts with the East Asian region, mostly focusing on transportation, railways, roadways and waterways, for better integration between China and ASEAN countries.

**Important Projects:**

- China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the Bangladesh-China, the Myanmar Economic Corridor (BCIM) and the Colombo Port City Project in Sri Lanka, amongst others, are important BRI projects.
- China has a plan to complete 4,000 km of railways and 10,000 km of highways within the Central Asian region as part of BRI.

**India's Concerns:**

- India has expressed concerns about the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), as it traverses through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). The massive infrastructure project connects China's Xinjiang province with Gwadar port in Pakistan's Balochistan province.
- India refused to join the Chinese initiative in the past and raised its voice against the BRI.
- India also sees an adverse trade impact on its products' competitiveness, market access, resource extraction etc. due to Chinese competition.

**Significance of B3W:**

- The re-emergence of China as a leading global power is considered to be one of the most significant geo-political events of recent times, alongside the 1991 fall of the Soviet Union that ended the Cold War.
- China in 1979 had an economy that was smaller than Italy's, but after opening to foreign investment and introducing market reforms, it has become the world's second-largest economy and is a global leader in a range of new technologies.
- However, the West had failed to offer a positive alternative to the "lack of transparency, poor environmental and labour standards, and coercive approach" of the Chinese government that had left many countries worse off.

**Way Forward**

- The counter proposal of B3W is certainly a welcome step to contain the adverse implications of a Chinese mega plan. However, B3W lacks coherent thoughts and proper planning at this stage. Nevertheless, it is better late than never.
- Moreover, it remains to be seen what role India will play in B3W since it has been a strong opponent of China's BRI.
- The counter-strategy is necessary to bring down Chinese leverage. A macro view of BRI projects across geography — quantum and pattern of investment — clearly reflects the motive of China-centric international economic integration, production networks, hegemony in the Asia-Pacific region and, eventually, the global economy.

**GOVERNANCE****World Youth Skill Day**

Every year, 15th July is observed as the World Youth Skills Day. It was designated by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 2014.

**Key Points****About:**

- **Aim:**
  1. To equip young people around the world with essential skills for employment, work, and entrepreneurship.
  2. To achieve the Incheon Declaration: Education 2030, "which devotes considerable attention to technical and vocational skills development, specifically regarding access to affordable quality technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions." This vision is fully captured by Sustainable Development Goal-4, which aims to "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all".
  3. To eliminate gender disparity.
- **Theme for 2021:** 'Reimagining Youth Skills Post-Pandemic'.

**State of Youth Employment and Schools during Covid-19:**

- According to the estimates of UNESCO, schools were shut down for over 30 weeks in 50% of the countries between March 2020 and May 2021.
- Respondents to a survey of the TVET, which was jointly collected by UNESCO, the ILO and the World Bank, revealed that distance learning was the most common way of imparting skills.
- Youth employment fell 8.7% last year, compared with 3.7% for adults.

**Announcement by India:**

- The Prime Minister announced the 75 newly sanctioned Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSSs) and also launched a portal made specifically for JSS. JSSs aim to provide vocational training to non-literates, neo-literates as well as school dropouts in rural areas, by identifying skills that might be relevant to the market of that region.
- Curriculum was launched of 57 new courses aligned with industry demand.

**Steps taken by India for Skilling Youth**

- **Industrial Training Centres (ITIs):** Conceptualized in the year 1950, aims to expand and modernize the existing Long-Term Training ecosystem in India.
- **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY):** Launched in 2015, it aims to provide free skill training avenues to youths of India. Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 3.0: It is launched 2021 in a bid to empower India's youth with employable skills by making over 300 skill courses available to them.
- **Recognition of Prior Learning:** It was launched in 2015 to recognize the prior skills acquired by individuals. It is one of the key components of PMKVY. Under this an individual with a certain set of skills or with prior learning experience is assessed and certified under RPL with grade according to the National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF).
- **National Career Service Project:** Launched in 2015 to offer free online career skills training through its National Career Service (NCS) project for job-seekers registered with it.
- **Skill Management and Accreditation of Training Centres (SMART):** It provides a single window IT application that focuses on the accreditation, grading, Affiliation and Continuous monitoring of the Training Centres (TC) in the skill ecosystem.
- **Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood (SANKALP):** Its focus is on district-level skilling ecosystem through convergence and coordination. It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme which is collaborated with the World Bank.
- **Skills Strengthening for Industrial Value Enhancement:** STRIVE scheme is a World Bank assisted-Government of India project with the objective of improving the relevance and efficiency of skills training provided through ITIs and apprenticeships.
- **Pradhan Mantri YUVA Yojana (Yuva Udyamita Vikas Abhiyan):** Launched in the year 2016, it aims at creating an enabling ecosystem for Entrepreneurship development through Entrepreneurship education and training; Advocacy and easy access to entrepreneurship support network and Promoting social enterprises for inclusive growth.
- Young, Upcoming and Versatile Authors' (YUVA) scheme, a mentorship programme to train young authors.
- Kaushalacharya Awards: Launched to recognize the contribution made by skill trainers and to motivate more trainers to join the Skill India Mission.
- **Scheme for Higher Education Youth in Apprenticeship and Skills (SHREYAS):** The scheme is to provide industry apprenticeship opportunities to the general graduates exiting in April 2019 through the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS).
- **Atmanirbhar Skilled Employee Employer Mapping (ASEEM):** Launched in 2020, it is a portal to help skilled people find sustainable livelihood opportunities.

**Special Initiatives for Tribal Community**

- 'Going Online As Leaders' -GOAL are helping tribal population with areas like art and culture, handicraft, textiles and digital literacy among tribal areas leading to entrepreneurship development among the tribal population.
- Similarly, Van Dhan Yojna is effectively connecting the tribal society with new opportunities.

**2. Draft Drone Rules, 2021**

The Ministry of Civil Aviation has unveiled the Draft Drone Rules, 2021 based on "trust, self-certification and non-intrusive monitoring". The new rules would replace the existing Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) Rules, notified in March, 2021.

**Key Points****Aim:**

- To create a "digital sky platform" as a business-friendly single-window online system for procuring various approvals. There will be minimal human interface on the digital sky platform and most permissions will be self-generated.

**Provisions:**

- **Approvals:** Abolish the need for various approvals, including certificate of conformance, certificate of maintenance, import clearance, acceptance of existing drones, operator permit,

authorisation of R&D organisation and student remote pilot licence. Fee reduced to nominal levels. No linkage with the size of the drone.

- **Digital Sky Platform:** The government will be developing a digital sky platform that will have an interactive airspace map dividing the country into green, yellow, and red zones. It will provide a secure and a scalable platform that supports drone technology frameworks, such as NPNT (no permission, no take-off), designed to enable flight permission digitally and manage unmanned aircraft operations and traffic efficiently.
- **Reduced Airport Perimeter:** The draft rules reduced the airport perimeter from 45 km to 12 km. The rules state that no flight permissions would be required to fly upto 400 feet in green zones and upto 200 feet in the area between 8 and 12 km from the airport perimeter.
- **Pilot License:** No pilot licence would be needed for micro drones for non-commercial use, nano drones and for R&D organisations. There would be no restriction on drone operations by foreign-owned companies registered in India.
- **Drone Corridor:** The Ministry will also facilitate development of drone corridors for cargo deliveries and a drone promotion council will be set up to facilitate a business-friendly regulatory regime.
- **Safety Features:** The draft rule also provides for safety features such as real-time tracking beacon, and geo-fencing, which are expected to be notified in future and a six-month lead time will be provided for compliance.
- **Increased Coverage of Drones:** The coverage has been increased from 300 kg to 500 kg and will cover drone taxis, while the Issuance of Certificate of Airworthiness has been delegated to Quality Council of India and certification entities authorized by it.

**Analysis:**

- The decision to liberalize the drone policy even after the recent drone incidents in Jammu showcases the government's bold approach to promote the use of the drone and focus on the development of counter-drone technology to address the threat posed by rogue drones.
- The current draft is a welcome move and will go a long way in facilitating investments in drone technology in India.

**Rules for Drone Regulations in India:**

- Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) Rules, 2020.
- National Counter Rogue Drones Guidelines 2019.

**Drone**

- Drone is a layman terminology for Unmanned Aircraft (UA). There are three subsets of Unmanned Aircraft- Remotely Piloted Aircraft, Autonomous Aircraft and Model Aircraft. Remotely Piloted Aircraft consists of remote pilot station(s), the required command and control links and any other components, as specified in the type design.
- Remotely piloted aircraft have been divided into five categories based on their weight (existing rules)-
  1. Nano : Less than or equal to 250 grams.
  2. Micro : From 250 grams to 2kg.
  3. Small : From 2 kg to 25kg.
  4. Medium : From 25kg to 150kg.
  5. Large : Greater than 150kg. The Ministry of Civil Aviation has unveiled the Draft Drone Rules, 2021 based on "trust, self-certification and non-intrusive monitoring".

**ECONOMY**

**India's Textile Sector**

Recently, the Union Minister of Textiles held an in-depth review of initiatives undertaken by the Ministry of Textiles for giving a boost to the textiles sector.

**Key Points**

**About:**

- Textiles & garments industry is labour intensive sector that employs 45 mn people in India is second only to the agriculture sector in terms of employment.
- India's textiles sector is one of the oldest industries in the Indian economy, and is a storehouse and carrier of traditional skills, heritage and culture.
- It can be divided into two segments-
  1. The unorganised sector is small scale and uses traditional tools and methods. It consists of handloom, handicrafts and sericulture (production of silk).
  2. The organised sector uses modern machinery and techniques and consists of the spinning, apparel and garments segment.

**Significance of the Textiles Sector:**

- It contributes 2.3% to Indian Gross Domestic Product, 7% of Industrial Output, 12% to the export earnings of India and employs more than 21% of total employment.
- India is the 6th largest producer of Technical Textiles with 6% Global Share, largest producer of cotton & jute in the world. Technical textiles are functional fabrics that have applications across various industries including automobiles, civil engineering and construction, agriculture, healthcare, industrial safety, personal protection etc.
- India is also the second largest producer of silk in the world and 95% of the world's hand woven fabric comes from India.

**Challenges of the Textiles Sector:**

- **Highly fragmented:** The Indian textile industry is highly fragmented and is being dominated by the unorganized sector and small and medium industries.
- **Outdated Technology:** The Indian textile industry has its limitations of access to the latest technology (especially in small-scale industries) and failures to meet global standards in the highly competitive market.
- **Tax Structure Issues:** The tax structure GST (Goods and Service Tax) makes the garments expensive and uncompetitive in domestic as well as international markets. Another threat is rising labour wages and workers' salaries.
- **Stagnant Exports:** The export from the sector has been stagnating and remained at the USD 40-billion level for the last six years.
- **Lack of Scale:** The apparel units in India have an average size of 100 machines which is very less in comparison with Bangladesh, which has on an average of at least 500 machines per factory.
- **Lack of Foreign Investment:** Due to challenges given above the foreign investors are not very enthusiastic about investing in the textile sector which is also one of the areas of concern. Though the sector has witnessed a spurt in investment during the last five years, the industry attracted Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) of only USD 3.41 billion from April 2000 to December 2019.

**Major Initiatives:**

- **Amended Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme (ATUFS):** In 2015, the government approved "Amended Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme (ATUFS)" for technology upgradation of the textiles industry.
- **Scheme for Integrated Textile Parks (SITP):** To assist small and medium entrepreneurs in the textile industry to clusterize investments in textile parks by providing financial support for world class infrastructure in the parks.
- **SAMARTH (Scheme For Capacity Building In Textile Sector):** To address the shortage of skilled workers, the government launched the Scheme for Capacity Building in Textile Sector (SCBTS) and named it SAMARTH Scheme.
- **North-East Region Textile Promotion Scheme (NERTPS):** This is a scheme for promoting textiles industry in the NER by providing infrastructure, capacity building and marketing support to all segments of the textile industry.
- **Power-Tex India:** It comprises new research and development in power loom textiles, new markets, branding, subsidies and welfare schemes for the workers.
- **Silk Samagra Scheme:** It focuses on improving the quality and productivity of domestic silk thereby reducing the country's dependence on imported silk.
- **Jute ICARE:** This pilot project launched in 2015 is aimed at addressing the difficulties faced by the jute cultivators by providing them certified seeds at subsidized rates, and by popularizing several newly developed retting technologies under water limiting conditions.
- **National Technical Textile Mission:** It aims to position the country as a global leader in technical textiles and increase the use of technical textiles in the domestic market. It aims to take the domestic market size to USD 40 billion to USD 50 billion by 2024.

**Way Forward**

- The Textile sector has great potential and it should be realised by using innovations, latest technology and facilitations.
- India can make the sector organised by setting up mega apparel parks and common infrastructure for the textile industry. Focus should be on the modernisation of obsolete machinery and technology.
- India needs a comprehensive blueprint for the textile sector. Once that is drawn up, the country needs to move into mission mode to achieve it.

**BIODIVERSITY & ENVIRONMENT**

**Amazon Forests: No Longer Carbon Sinks**

According to a recent study, Amazon Forests have started emitting Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) instead of absorbing it. Growing trees and plants have taken up about a quarter of all fossil fuel emissions since 1960, with the Amazon playing a major role as the largest tropical forest.

**Key Points****Findings:**

- A significant amount of deforestation (over the course of 40 years) in eastern and southeastern Brazil has turned the forest into a source of CO<sub>2</sub> that has the ability to warm the planet. It might have also affected a long-term decrease in rainfall and increase in temperatures during the dry season.
- Not only the Amazon rainforests, some forests in Southeast Asia have also turned into carbon sources in the last few years as a result of formation of plantations and fires.
- Forest fires have doubled since 2013. One reason that they happen is when farmers burn their land to clear it for the next crop. Most of the emissions are caused by fires.
- A part of the Amazon emitting carbon even without fires was particularly worrying. This was most likely the result of each year's deforestation and fires making adjacent forests more susceptible the next year.

**Reasons for Deforestation:**

- State policies that encourage economic development, such as railway and road expansion projects have led to "unintentional deforestation" in the Amazon and Central America.
- Deforestation started in the 1970s and 1980s when large-scale forest conversion for cattle ranching and soy cultivation began.

**Amazon Rainforests**

- These are large tropical rainforests occupying the drainage basin of the Amazon River and its tributaries in northern South America.
  1. Tropical forests are closed-canopy forests growing within 28 degrees north or south of the equator.
  2. They are very wet places, receiving more than 200 cm rainfall per year, either seasonally or throughout the year.
  3. Temperatures are uniformly high - between 20°C and 35°C.
  4. Such forests are found in Asia, Australia, Africa, South America, Central America, Mexico and on many of the Pacific Islands.
- The Amazon rainforests cover about 80% of the Amazon basin and they are home to nearly a fifth of the world's land species and is also home to about 30 million people including hundreds of indigenous groups and several isolated tribes.
  1. The Amazon basin is huge with an area covering over 6 million square kilometres, it is nearly twice the size of India.
  2. The basin produces about 20% of the world's flow of freshwater into the oceans.
- Comprising about 40% of Brazil's total area, it is bounded by the Guiana Highlands to the north, the Andes Mountains to the west, the Brazilian central plateau to the south, and the Atlantic Ocean to the east.

**Way Forward**

If the ability of tropical forests to act as carbon sinks is to be maintained, fossil fuel emissions need to be reduced and temperature increases need to be limited as well.

**IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIM****Emerging Market for Renewables**

According to a recent report, fossil fuel electricity generation has peaked worldwide as emerging markets seize the opportunities of low-cost renewables. The Report was published by India's Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) and the financial think tank Carbon Tracker (both are not-for-profit organisations).

**Key Points****Findings:**

- **Emerging Market are Key to Global energy Transition:**
  1. Emerging markets are key to the global energy transition, accounting for 88% of all expected growth in electricity demand from 2019-2040.
  2. Overall, 82% of current emerging market electricity demand and 86% of expected demand growth comes from countries that import coal and gas, and they have powerful incentives to switch to solar and wind.
  3. With the right policies in place, technology and cost barriers to change can be crossed.
  4. The transition is different in emerging markets because they have electricity demand growth from a lower base as well as the need to provide access to hundreds of millions of people.

5. In developed markets, demand for fossil fuels for electricity generation has fallen by 20% since it peaked in 2007.

**Four Key Groups of Emerging Markets:**

1. China, which is nearly half the electricity demand, and 39% of the expected growth.
2. Other importers of coal and gas such as India or Vietnam, which are a third of the demand and nearly half the growth.
3. Coal and gas exporters such as Russia or Indonesia, which are 16% of demand but only around 10% of the growth. Resistance to the energy transition is likely to be more entrenched in coal and gas exporting countries.
4. 'Fragile' states such as Nigeria or Iraq which are 3% of demand and around the same share of growth.

**India has set an Example:**

- India, which accounts for 9% of emerging market electricity demand and 20% of expected demand growth, illustrates the speed and scale of change.
- From less than 20GW of solar in 2010, it has grown to 96GW of solar, wind biomass and small hydro in May 2021.
- Including large hydropower, renewables now provide 142GW or 37% of the country's power capacity, and it has a target of 450GW by 2030.
- Demand for fossil fuel generation reached a plateau in 2018, and fell in 2019 and 2020.
- While fossil fuel demand might again increase in the near-term to meet latent electricity demand, India has demonstrated how a double leapfrog - connecting nearly all households to electricity and its renewable energy rollout - can be driven with policy priorities and market design.

**Suggestions:**

- A supportive policy environment is the key to driving growth in renewables.
- If countries liberalise markets and introduce competitive auctions, they can cut costs and attract international finance as capital markets turn their backs on fossil fuels. Auctions have helped India drive the cost of solar down to one of the world's lowest levels.
- Developed countries can speed up the transition to renewables in emerging markets by providing policy support, technology expertise and by using development finance to reduce the cost of capital.

**Indian Initiatives for Renewable Energy**

- **Hydrogen Energy Mission:** The Union Budget for 2021-22 has announced a National Hydrogen Energy Mission (NHM) that will draw up a road map for using hydrogen as an energy source. The initiative has the potential of transforming transportation.
- **Jawaharalal Nehru National Solar Mission (JNNSM):**
  1. It was launched in 2009 with a target for Grid Connected Solar Projects of 20,000 MW by 2022.
  2. The sector has witnessed rapid development with installed solar capacity increasing rapidly from 18 MW to about 3800 MW during 2010-15.
- **International Solar Alliance:** It was launched by the Prime Minister of India and the President of France on 30th November 2015 in Paris, France on the side-lines of the Conference of the Parties (COP-21), with 121 solar resource rich countries lying fully or partially between the tropic of Cancer and tropic of Capricorn as prospective members.
- **PM- KUSUM:**
  1. KUSUM stands for Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan.
  2. Its objective is to provide financial and water security to farmers through harnessing solar energy capacities of 25,750 MW by 2022.
- **National Wind-Solar Hybrid Policy:**
  1. The main objective of the policy is to provide a framework for promotion of large grid connected wind-solar photovoltaic (PV) hybrid systems for optimal and efficient utilization of wind and solar resources, transmission infrastructure and land.
  2. The wind-solar PV hybrid systems will help in reducing the variability in renewable power generation and achieving better grid stability.
- **Rooftop Solar Scheme:**
  1. Its objective is to generate solar power by installing solar panels on the roof of the houses.
  2. The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy is the implementing agency of the Grid-connected Rooftop Solar Scheme (Phase II).

**DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE**

**Qns. Greater choice for women over their sexual and reproductive rights will lead to a healthier and productive society. Comment. What steps should be taken in our society in this regard?**

**Ans:**

**Introduction**

The journey of women's emancipation in India has been truly dynamic with women participating in nationalist movements, to being pushed into the domestic household space, to their resurgence as super-women today; women in our country have seen it all. It has been 70 years since India got independence and there cannot be a more right time to analyse the position and 'space' that women in India enjoy today.

**Body**

- However, the recognition of sexual and reproductive rights of women in the country still remains negligible. Reproductive rights in India are understood only in the context of selective issues like child marriage, female foeticide, sex selection and menstrual health and hygiene issues.
- This is reflected in election manifestos of various parties where political parties have promised to make registration of marriages compulsory, implement the laws prohibiting child marriages, provide reproductive and menstrual health services to all women across India, make marital rape an offence and to ensure strict implementation of the Pre-conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act (PCPNDT) Act.

**Challenges**

- According to UNICEF India and World Bank data, India counts among the highest number of maternal deaths worldwide. India witnesses 45,000 maternal deaths every year, coming to an average of one maternal death every 12 minutes.
- Unsafe abortions are the third leading cause of maternal deaths in India. Researches have shown that half the pregnancies in India are unintended and about a third result in abortion. Only 22% of abortions are done through public or private health facilities.
- Lack of access to safe abortion clinics, particularly public hospitals, and stigma and attitudes toward women, especially young, unmarried women seeking abortion, contribute to this.
- Doctors refuse to perform abortions on young women or demand that they get consent from their parents or spouses despite no such requirement by law. This forces many women to turn to clandestine and often unsafe abortions.
- The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971 provides for termination only up to 20 weeks. If an unwanted pregnancy has proceeded beyond 20 weeks, women have to approach a medical board and courts to seek permission for termination, which is extremely difficult and cumbersome.
- The law does not accommodate non-medical concerns over the economic costs of raising a child, effects on career decisions, or any other personal considerations.
- The silence around unsafe abortion leads to deaths of women and hides important problems that lie at the intersection of these concerns, such as the formidable barriers for adolescent girls to access reproductive health services, including abortion services.

**Judicial Rescue**

- The Supreme Court has been extremely progressive on women's reproductive rights.
- By decriminalising adultery and homosexuality (Navtej Johar judgment) the court has held clearly, that women have a right to sexual autonomy, which is an important facet of their right to personal liberty.
- The Puttaswamy judgment specifically recognised the Constitutional right of women to make reproductive choices, as a part of personal liberty under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution.
- In the case of Independent Thought v. Union of India in the context of reproductive rights of girls SC held, "the human rights of a girl child are very much alive and kicking whether she is married or not and deserve recognition and acceptance". These judgments have an important bearing on the sexual and reproductive rights of women. The right to safe abortion is an important facet of their right to bodily integrity, right to life and equality and needs to be protected.

**Way Forward**

- Sexual and reproductive rights in India must include:
- A concern with maternal deaths,
- Access to maternal care to safe abortions,
- Access to contraceptives,
- Recognition of adolescent sexuality,
- Prohibition of forced medical procedures such as forced sterilisations
- Removal of stigma and discrimination against women, girls and LGBTI persons on the basis of their gender, sexuality and access to treatment,

- The MTP Act needs to be reformed comprehensively so, that it can be more inclusive and sensitive towards the plight of married women who are forced to conceive and carry a pregnancy to term against their will. It should also include the economic burden a woman has to undertake in raising a child.
- Access to legal and safe abortion is an integral dimension of sexual and reproductive equality, a public health issue, and must be seen as a crucial element in the contemporary debates on democracy that seeks to provide the just society that abhors all sort of discrimination.
- The responsibility also lies with civil society and development actors to bring up these issues for public debate and in demands.

Over the years, women have made great strides in many areas with notable progress in reducing gender gaps. Yet realities of women and girls getting trafficked, maternal health, deaths related to abortion every year has hit hard against all the development that has taken place, even negating it sometimes.

**Conclusion**

As in the words of Swami Vivekananda “It is impossible to think about the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is impossible for a bird to fly on only one wing.”

**DAILY QUIZ**

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Bharat Interface for Money (BHIM) is a payments application and wallet, which allows users to make instant bank transfers.
2. National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) charges user for transacting on BHIM.
3. BHIM features can be availed without internet on any mobile phone.

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

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

Q2. Recently, which of the following Central Public Sector Undertakings has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with UT of Ladakh to set up the country’s first Green Hydrogen Mobility project?

- a. Power Grid Corporation of India (POWERGRID)
- b. Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL)
- c. **National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC)**
- d. Projects and Development India Limited (PDIL)

Q3. Consider the following statements:

1. The cryptogamic species monitors air pollution and prevents soil erosion.
2. The first cryptogamic garden in India was inaugurated recently in Kerala.

Which of the given above statements is/are correct?

- a. **1 only**
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q4. Which of the following pairs is/are correctly matched?

1. Tirthan Wildlife sanctuary: Himachal Pradesh
2. Turtle Wildlife Sanctuary: Odisha
3. Tal Chhapar Sanctuary: Rajasthan

Select the correct answer using the code below:

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

Q5. Consider the following statements about Avicennia marina:

1. It is one of the most prominent mangroves species found in all mangrove formations in India.
2. It can excrete 40% of the salt through the salt glands in the leaves.

Which of the given above statements is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. **Both 1 and 2**
- d. Neither 1 nor 2