

**GOVERNANCE****Challenges in India's Rooftop Solar Program**

According to the data available on the website of the Union Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), India could install just 6GW of Rooftop Solar (RTS) power by the end of October 2021 under the rooftop solar scheme. Although utility-scale solar has seen tremendous progress with leading players lining up for projects, tariffs spiralling down and government agencies pushing mega projects, RTS has continued to remain neglected.

**Rooftop Solar**

- Rooftop solar is a photovoltaic system that has its electricity-generating solar panels mounted on the rooftop of a residential or commercial building or structure.
- Rooftop mounted systems are small compared to ground-mounted photovoltaic power stations with capacities in the megawatt range.
- Rooftop PV systems on residential buildings typically feature a capacity of about 5 to 20 kilowatts (kW), while those mounted on commercial buildings often reach 100 kilowatts or more.

**Key Points****Rooftop Solar Scheme:**

- The major objective of the scheme is to generate solar power through the installation of solar panels on the roof of the houses.
- Also, the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has announced the implementation of Phase 2 of the grid-connected Rooftop Solar Scheme.
- The aim of the scheme is to achieve the final capacity of 40 GW from Rooftop Solar Projects by 2022.
- The 40GW goal is part of India's ambitious target to achieve 175GW renewable energy (RE) capacity that includes 100GW of solar power by 2022. According to a report released in September, 2021, the lockdowns slowed renewable energy installations in the country and the pace of such installations is lagging India's 2022 target.

**Challenges:****• Flip-Flopping Policies:**

1. Although many companies began using solar energy, flip-flopping (sudden real or apparent change of policy) policies remained a major hurdle, especially when it came to power distribution companies (discoms).
2. Industry executives point out RTS was becoming attractive for several consumer segments when discoms and state governments started tightening regulations for the sector. India's Goods and Service Tax (GST) Council recently hiked the GST of many components of the solar system from 5% to 12%. It will increase RTS's capital cost by 4-5%.

**• Regulatory Framework:**

1. The growth of the RTS segment is highly dependent on the regulatory framework.
2. Slow growth has been primarily caused by the absence or withdrawal of state-level policy support for the RTS segment, especially for the business and industrial segment, which makes up the bulk of target consumers.

**• Inconsistent Rules on Net and Gross Metering:**

1. Net metering regulations are one of the major obstacles facing the sector.
2. According to a report, Power ministry's new rules that excludes rooftop solar systems above 10 kilowatts (kW) from net-metering would stall adoption of larger installations in India affecting the country's rooftop solar target.
  - ✓ The new rules mandate net-metering for rooftop solar projects up to 10 kW and gross metering for systems with loads above 10 kW.
  - ✓ Net metering allows surplus power produced by RTS systems to be fed back into the grid.
  - ✓ Under the gross metering scheme, state power Distribution Companies (DISCOMS) compensate consumers with a fixed feed-in-tariff for the solar power supplied to the grid by the consumer.

**• Low Financing:**

1. Commercial, institutions, and residential sectors are keen to install grid-connected RTS by getting bank loans.
2. The Union Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) has advised banks to give loans for RTS at subsidised rates. However, nationalised banks hardly offer loans to RTS.

3. Thus, many private players have come into the market that offer loans for RTS at higher rates like 10-12%.

#### **Schemes for Promoting Solar Energy**

- **Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan (PM-KUSUM):**The scheme covers grid-connected Renewable Energy power plants (0.5 – 2 MW)/Solar water pumps/grid connected agriculture pumps.
- **Scheme for Development of Ultra Mega Renewable Energy Power Parks:**It is a scheme to develop Ultra Mega Renewable Energy Power Parks (UMREPPs) under the existing Solar Park Scheme.
- **National Wind-Solar Hybrid Policy:**The main objective of the National Wind-Solar Hybrid Policy, 2018 is to provide a framework for promotion of large grid connected wind-solar PV hybrid systems for optimal and efficient utilisation of wind and solar resources, transmission infrastructure and land.
- **Atal Jyoti Yojana (AJAY):**The AJAY scheme was launched in September 2016 for the installation of solar street lighting (SSL) systems in states with less than 50% households covered with grid power (as per Census 2011).
- **International Solar Alliance:**The ISA, is an Indian initiative that was launched 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.
- **One Sun, One World, One Grid (OSOWOG):**It focuses on a framework for facilitating global cooperation, building a global ecosystem of interconnected renewable energy resources (mainly solar energy) that can be seamlessly shared.
- **National Solar Mission :** It is a part of the National Action Plan on Climate Change.
- **Suryamitra Skill Development Programme:** To provide skill training to rural youth in handling solar installations.

### **POLITY**

#### **Lok Adalat**

Lok Adalat has emerged as the most efficacious tool of Alternative Dispute Resolution. A total number of 1,27,87,329 cases were disposed of in 2021. Due to technological advancement like E-Lok Adalats, Lok Adalats have reached the doorsteps of parties.

#### **Key Points**

##### **About:**

- The term 'Lok Adalat' means 'People's Court' and is based on Gandhian principles.
- As per the Supreme Court, it is an old form of adjudicating system prevalent in ancient India and its validity has not been taken away even in the modern days too.
- It is one of the components of the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) system and delivers informal, cheap and expeditious justice to the common people.
- The first Lok Adalat camp was organized in Gujarat in 1982 as a voluntary and conciliatory agency without any statutory backing for its decisions.
- In view of its growing popularity over time, it was given statutory status under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987. The Act makes the provisions relating to the organization and functioning of the Lok Adalats.

##### **Organization:**

- The State/District Legal Services Authority or the Supreme Court/High Court/Taluk Legal Services Committee may organize Lok Adalats at such intervals and places and for exercising such jurisdiction and for such areas as it thinks fit.
- Every Lok Adalat organized for an area shall consist of such number of serving or retired judicial officers and other persons of the area as may be specified by the agency organizing. Generally, a Lok Adalat consists of a judicial officer as the chairman and a lawyer (advocate) and a social worker as members.
- National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) along with other Legal Services Institutions conducts Lok Adalats.
- NALSA was constituted under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 which came into force on 9th November 1995 to establish a nationwide uniform network for providing free and competent legal services to the weaker sections of the society.

- The Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 was amended in 2002 to provide for the establishment of the Permanent Lok Adalats to deal with cases pertaining to the public utility services.

**Jurisdiction:**

- A Lok Adalat shall have jurisdiction to determine and to arrive at a compromise or settlement between the parties to a dispute in respect of:
  1. Any case pending before any court, or
  2. Any matter which falls within the jurisdiction of any court and is not brought before such court.
- Any case pending before the court can be referred to the Lok Adalat for settlement if:
  1. Parties agree to settle the dispute in the Lok Adalat or one of the parties applies for referral of the case to the Lok Adalat or court is satisfied that the matter can be solved by a Lok Adalat.
  2. In the case of a pre-litigation dispute, the matter can be referred to the Lok Adalat on receipt of an application from any one of the parties to the dispute.
- Matters such as matrimonial/family disputes, criminal (compoundable offenses) cases, land acquisition cases, labor disputes, workmen's compensation cases, bank recovery cases, etc. are being taken up in Lok Adalats.
- However, the Lok Adalat shall have no jurisdiction in respect of any case or matter relating to an offense not compoundable under any law. In other words, the offenses which are non-compoundable under any law fall outside the purview of the Lok Adalat.

**Powers:**

- The Lok Adalat shall have the same powers as are vested in a Civil Court under the Code of Civil Procedure (1908).
- Further, a Lok Adalat shall have the requisite powers to specify its own procedure for the determination of any dispute coming before it.
- All proceedings before a Lok Adalat shall be deemed to be judicial proceedings within the meaning of the Indian Penal Code (1860) and every Lok Adalat shall be deemed to be a Civil Court for the purpose of the Code of Criminal Procedure (1973).
- An award of a Lok Adalat shall be deemed to be a decree of a Civil Court or an order of any other court.
- Every award made by a Lok Adalat shall be final and binding on all the parties to the dispute. No appeal shall lie to any court against the award of the Lok Adalat.

**Benefits:**

- There is no court fee and if court fee is already paid the amount will be refunded if the dispute is settled at Lok Adalat.
- There is procedural flexibility and speedy trial of the disputes. There is no strict application of procedural laws while assessing the claim by Lok Adalat.
- The parties to the dispute can directly interact with the judge through their counsel which is not possible in regular courts of law.
- The award by the Lok Adalat is binding on the parties and it has the status of a decree of a civil court and it is non-appealable, which does not cause the delay in the settlement of disputes finally.

**INTERNATIONAL RELATION****Homeland Security Dialogue between India and US**

Recently, a Homeland Security Dialogue was held between the officials of India and US. In October 2021 the Ministry of Defence signed a deal with the US Government for procurement of MK 54 Torpedo and Expendable (Chaff and Flares) for the Indian Navy, under Foreign Military Sale (FMS).

In July 2021 the US Secretary of State visited India.

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

- The Indo-US homeland security dialogue was launched in 2010 as the mechanism to a sequel to the signing of the India-US counter-terrorism initiative. First Homeland Security Dialogue was held in May 2011.
- The latest virtual meeting came after in March 2021, the US President Joe Biden administration had announced the re-establishment of the Homeland Security Dialogue which was discontinued by former US President Donald Trump's administration.
- There are six sub-groups formed under the Indo-US homeland security dialogue which cover the areas of:

1. Illicit finance, Financial fraud and counterfeiting.
2. Cyber information.
3. Megacity policing and sharing of information among federal, state and local partners.
4. Global supply chain, transportation, port, border and maritime security.
5. Capacity building.
6. Technology upgradation.

**India- US Relations:**

- **About:**

1. India-US bilateral relations have developed into a "global strategic partnership", based on shared democratic values and increasing convergence of interests on bilateral, regional and global issues.
2. In 2015, both the countries issued a Delhi Declaration of Friendship and adopted a Joint Strategic Vision for Asia-Pacific and the Indian Ocean Region.

- **Civil-Nuclear Deal:** The bilateral civil nuclear cooperation agreement was signed in October 2008.

- **Energy and Climate Change:**

1. As a priority initiative under the PACE (Partnership to Advance Clean Energy), the US Department of Energy (DOE) and the Government of India have established the Joint Clean Energy Research and Development Centre (JCERDC) designed to promote clean energy innovations by teams of scientists from India and the United States.
2. India-US Clean Energy Agenda 2030 Partnership was launched at the Leaders climate summit 2021.

- **Defence Cooperation:**

- ✓ Defence relationship has emerged as a major pillar of India-US strategic partnership with the signing of 'New Framework for India-US Defence Relations' in 2005 which was further updated for 10 years in 2015.
- ✓ India and US inked important defence pacts in the last few years and also formalised the four nation alliance of QUAD (India, US, Japan and Australia). The alliance is seen as an important counter to China in the Indo-Pacific.
- ✓ The Malabar exercise in November 2020 portrayed a high point in Indo-US strategic ties, it was the first time in 13 years that all four countries of QUAD came together sending a strong message to China.
- ✓ India now has access to American bases from Djibouti in Africa to Guam in the Pacific. It can also access advanced communication technology used in US defence.
- ✓ India and US have four foundational defence agreements:
  1. Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geospatial Intelligence (BECA).
  2. General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA).
  3. Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA).
  4. Communication Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA).
- ✓ India-US Counter-Terrorism Cooperation Initiative was signed in 2010 to expand collaboration on counter-terrorism, information sharing and capacity building.
- ✓ A tri-services exercise– Tiger Triumph– was conducted in November 2019.
- ✓ Bilateral and regional exercises include: Yudh Abhyas (Army), Vajra Prahar (Special Forces), RIMPAC, Red Flag.

- **Trade:**

1. The US is India's second largest trading partner and a major destination for India's exports of goods and services.
2. The US replaced Mauritius as the second largest source of foreign direct investment into India during 2020-21.
3. The previous US government ended India's special trade status (GSP withdrawal) and also imposed several bans, India also retaliated with bans on 28 US products.
4. Current US government has allowed all the bans by the previous government to expire.

- **Science & Technology:** Indian Space Research Organisation and National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) are working together to realise a joint microwave remote sensing satellite for Earth observation, named NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR).

**Indian Diaspora:** There is a growing presence of Indian diaspora in all spheres in the US. For example the current Vice-President (Kamala Harris) of the US has a strong Indian connection.

**Way Forward**

- The stage has been set for transforming India's partnership with the US. Afghanistan remains a key area of continuing concern for both India and the US and both sides are now looking at the bigger challenges emerging in the Indo-Pacific, driven by the rise and assertion of China.
- There is a huge potential to boost bilateral trade between the countries especially on account of increasing anti-China sentiment in both the nations.

**PRELIMS FACT****National Youth Day 2022**

National Youth Day (NYD) is held every year on 12th January to observe the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda. In 1999, the United Nations decided to commemorate International Youth Day every year on 12th August.

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

- In 1984, the Indian Government first declared to celebrate the birthday of Swami Vivekananda as National Youth Day. Since then the day has been celebrated as National Youth Day all over the country.
- The day is celebrated to highlight the youths who are the future of our country and to commemorate the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda who always motivated the youth of the country and spoke about the right use of the youth in the development of the country.

**Theme 2022:** It's all in the mind.

**25th National Youth Festival:**

- The Prime Minister inaugurated the 25th National Youth Festival which is a five-day festival.
- The main purpose to celebrate the festival is to increase bonding between the diverse cultures of the country to strengthen the unity of the nation.
- The festival is organized by National Service Scheme (NSS) and Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) under the aegis of Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.

**Related Initiatives:**

1. National Youth Policy-2014
2. Generation Unlimited in India (YuWaah)
3. Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana
4. YUVA: Prime Minister's Scheme For Mentoring Young Authors
5. World Programme of Action for Youth
6. Global Youth Summit
7. Global youth skills day

**Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902)**

- He was born as Narendranath Datta on 12th January, 1863.
- Introduced the world to the Indian philosophies of Vedanta and Yoga.
- He was the chief disciple of the 19th-century mystic Ramakrishna Paramhansa.
- Laid the greatest emphasis on education for the regeneration of our motherland. He advocated a man-making character-building education.
- Established the Ramakrishna Mission in 1897. It is an organization which works in the area of value-based education, culture, health, women's empowerment, youth and tribal welfare and relief and rehabilitation.
- He died at Belur Math in 1902. Belur Math, located in West Bengal, is the headquarters of Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission.

**2.Henley Passport Index 2022**

India has been ranked 83rd in the most powerful passport report 'Henley Passport Index 2022'. India's passport power has improved this quarter compared to 2021 climbing seven places from 90th rank last year.

The current rankings are for the first quarter of 2022.

**Key Points****About the Index:**

- The Henley Passport Index is the original ranking of all the world's passports according to the number of destinations their holders can access without a prior visa.
- Originally created by Dr. Christian H. Kaelin (chairman of Henley & Partners), the ranking is based on exclusive data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA), which maintains the world's largest and most accurate database of travel information.

- It was launched in 2006 and includes 199 different passports.
- It is updated in real time throughout the year as and when visa policy changes come into effect.

**Global Rankings:**

- Japan and Singapore top the index
- Germany and South Korea held onto the joint second spot on the latest ranking, while Finland, Italy, Luxembourg, and Spain shared third place.
- Afghanistan and Iraq continue to be in the 'worst passports to hold' category.

**India's Performance:**

- In 2020, India stood at 84 while in 2016, India was ranked 85th along with Mali and Uzbekistan.
- India (83rd in 2022) shares the position with Sao Tome and Principe in Central Africa, behind Rwanda and Uganda.
- India now has visa-free access to 60 destinations worldwide with Oman and Armenia being the latest additions. India has added 35 more destinations since 2006.

**DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE**

**Qns. Throwing light on the India-Myanmar relations in recent years, discuss the possible challenges posed by the current situation in Myanmar to India. What steps do you think India should take to navigate these challenges successfully? (250 Words)**

**Ans:**

**Introduction**

In a military coup in Myanmar, a state of emergency has been imposed for one year. The coup resulted in establishing military rule again in Myanmar. Myanmar conducted elections democratically in November 2020. Aung San Suu Kyi led Party won 396 out of 476 seats (combined lower and upper houses of Parliament) and won the elections. The military reserves 25% of seats as per their 2008 Constitution.

**Body**

**Background**

- Military (also called Junta and Tatmadaw) has alleged that the general elections held in November 2020 were full of irregularities and that therefore, the results are not valid.
- This marked the end of Myanmar's short-lived experience with democracy which began in 2011, when military implemented parliamentary elections and other reforms

**Challenges posed to India due to current situation in Myanmar**

- **Geopolitical interests:** Myanmar sits at the intersection of India's 'Neighbourhood First' and 'Act East Policy' policies, and therefore is an essential element in India's practice of regional diplomacy in the Indo-Pacific, and serves as a land bridge to connect South Asia and Southeast Asia. With an authoritarian government at the helm of affairs, overtures to China will increase and India's interest may suffer.
- **Strategic location:** It serves as a buffer between India and China. Myanmar has coastal access to the Bay of Bengal. It connects Bangladesh, China and the restive North eastern states of India. It is also close to India's Nicobar archipelago. Instability will have consequences on security situation in India.
- **National security:** Myanmar-China border has become the epicentre of local armed separatist groups operating on Myanmar soil, and Indian groups, ranging from ULFA in Assam to the NSCN (IM) in Nagaland.
- **Economic interests:** India has interests in natural resources of Myanmar and also developing certain projects like India-Myanmar-Thailand trilateral highway and Kaladan multi-modal project which is to link India's landlocked north-eastern States to the Myanmar Port of Sittwe, located in the Bay of Bengal. Instability in Myanmar will be a roadblock to these ambitions.
- **Countering China:** A weakened Myanmar falling into the clutches of China as a satellite state will pressurize India to do Beijing's bidding in regional affairs.

**Steps to navigate the above challenges**

- India can aid the democratically elected government if there was a request from Myanmar. Myanmar is India's strategic partner like Nepal, Bangladesh. India can help Myanmar like that of erstwhile Bangladesh in 1971.
- India has to strengthen the existing cooperation. India currently has an active co-operation with Myanmar in areas of security, counter-terrorism, trade and investment, energy co-operation. India has to encourage more active co-operation in these fields.

- India can formalise border trade with Myanmar. Currently, India's Border trade with Myanmar is at a very low level. 'By formalising border trade like that of Border Haats in India-Bangladesh and providing enough support, we can improve people to people tie. It will also provide peace in long run.
- India can assist Myanmar in the implementation of the Kofi Annan Advisory Commission report on Rohingya Refugee issues. The commission has recommended investing in infrastructure projects. The recent Indian government move in developing the Sittwe port in Myanmar's Rakhine state is one such move.

**Conclusion**

India should keep up the momentum by inviting Myanmar's Foreign Minister & other important stakeholders such as leaders of political parties, civil society and think tanks to India for deliberations with their counterparts here. The single goal should be to put Myanmar back on the path of becoming "a stable, democratic and federal union".

**DAILY QUIZ**

Q1. Good Governance Index 2021 was prepared by which of the following?

- NITI Aayog
- PRS Legislative Research
- Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances**
- Centre for Policy Research

Q2. Which of the following adopted a law on data protection and privacy for its citizens known as 'General Data Protection Regulation'?

- Australia
- Canada
- The European Union**
- The United States of America

Q3. Consider the following statements about DART Mission:

1. It is a joint project between NASA and the SpaceX.
2. It is aimed at testing a method of planetary defense against near-Earth objects (NEOs).

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- 1 only
- 2 only**
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

Q4. Consider the following statements with reference to Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA):

1. It gives armed forces the power to maintain public order in "disturbed areas".
2. Only President of India can declare the whole or part of the State or Union Territory as a disturbed area.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- 1 only**
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

Q5. In which one of the following states is Neora Valley National Park located?

- Assam
- West Bengal**
- Kerala
- Meghalaya