



WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

JANUARY, 2024

Week-3

15-21 Jan., 2024

★★ Useful for ★★

**CSE, ESE, PSUs, State Services Exams,
SSC and Banking Exams**

15th JANUARY, 2024

Economic Divide in India's States

- **Context:** The growing economic gap between India's states over the last 30 years.

Key Highlights:

- Wealthier states are mainly south, west, and northwest, while poorer states are in the north, center, and east.
- The economic divide is marked by a 2.5 times higher per capita GDP in wealthier states compared to poorer ones in 2019-20, growing from a 1.7 times difference in 1990-91.
- The gap in manufacturing between higher- and lower-income states grew significantly, with the former's per capita GDP being 3.6 times higher in 2019-20, up from 2.4 times in 1990-91.
- In services, the gap also widened, with a rise in the GDP ratio from 2.0 to 2.9 during the same period. Post-liberalization, the growth in services, particularly IT companies, has been significant, contributing to the economic disparity.
- Despite having comparable road and rail infrastructure, lower-income states, particularly in the Gangetic and eastern regions, lag in per capita power availability.
- There's been a shift from public to private sector investment. The public sector's share in gross fixed capital formation dropped from 40% to 23% between 1990-91 and 2019-20, while the private sector's share rose from 18% to 38%, leading to a concentration of investment in wealthier states.
- Lower-income states (especially in the north and central regions), have lower urban labor force participation rates and fewer workers with regular wage/salary income, affecting their industrial growth.
- The higher-income states accounted for around 75% of organized-sector factories in 2019-20.

Additionally, out of 91 richest Indians residing in India, 87 live in these high-growth states.

- About 70% of engineering seats in India are in higher-income states, indicating a major imbalance in access to higher education and consequently, a disparity in attracting high-tech industries.
- To bridge India's economic divide, it's essential to boost entrepreneurship and skill development in the poorer states, upgrade power infrastructure in regions like the Gangetic and eastern areas and expand access to technical education.

RBI's New Regulatory Framework

- **Context:** Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is shifting towards a new regulatory framework. It focuses on self-regulation within banks and financial institutions and promoting self-regulatory organizations (SROs) for different financial sectors to manage risks better and reduce regulatory burdens.

Key Highlights:

- RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das has initiated one-on-one discussions with bank CEOs, enabling RBI to quickly identify industry trends and inform its regulatory actions.
- RBI aims to foster self-regulation at two levels: within individual entities and across the industry. The idea is that banks and financial groups, having more information, can take timely and effective action to manage risks.
- RBI is working on a framework for recognizing SROs in different financial sectors, like banking and fintech, to manage industry-specific regulations and standards.

About Self-Regulatory Organizations (SROs):

SRO is a non-governmental organization that sets and enforces rules and standards relating to the conduct of entities in the industry (members) to protect the customer and promote ethics, equality and professionalism.

16th JANUARY, 2024

Green Fuels Alliance India (GFAI)

- **Context:** Danish government, in collaboration with A.P. Moller–Mersk and other partners, has announced the formation of the Green Fuels Alliance India (GFAI) to advance their joint global goal towards carbon neutrality.

Key Highlights:

- The alliance is underpinned by the Green Strategic Partnership (GSP) signed between India and Denmark in 2020.
- Green Fuels Alliance India (GFAI) is an alliance between the Denmark and India to boost collaborative efforts in the sustainable energy solutions sector.
- Its aim is to advance the green fuels sector, including green hydrogen, through innovation and partnerships.
- To promote sustainable energy growth in India by establishing an ecosystem that encourages collaboration among businesses, government entities, research institutions, and financial stakeholders.

Quantum Gates

- **Context:** Devices that translate quantum effects to computing awesomeness: Quantum gates.

Key Highlights:

- Quantum gates are fundamental components in quantum computing that manipulate quantum bits or qubits.
- These gates perform operations on qubits, allowing the creation of quantum circuits that execute complex calculations.
- Unlike classical bits in traditional computing, which can only be in a state of 0 or 1, qubits can exist in superpositions of both states simultaneously.

- Quantum gates enable the implementation of quantum algorithms by performing operations such as the application of quantum logic gates like Hadamard gates, CNOT (controlled NOT) gates, and others.
- Quantum gates are used to construct quantum circuits, analogous to classical circuits in traditional computers.
- Quantum gates play a vital role in implementing quantum algorithms, such as Shor's algorithm for integer factorization and Grover's algorithm for unstructured search problems.
- Quantum gates are explored for applications in quantum machine learning algorithms.

India-Maldives Relations

- **Context:** The recent developments in India-Maldives ties, especially Maldives' insistence of the removal of Indian troops from Maldives.

Key Highlights:

- Since the election of Mohamed Muizzu as president, Maldives has been moving away from India and closer to China, as visible in the recent China-Maldives joint statement.
- Maldives has proposed the removal of Indian troops by March 15.
- The withdrawal of Indian troops was an election promise by the current political leadership. It is not a strategic concern as India reportedly has less than 90 soldiers in Maldives.
- Militarily, economically and strategically, India has a huge impact on its neighbors.
- Some aspects of India's internal politics, such as an expansionist rhetoric, religion, illegal migration, social media jingoism and calls for boycotting a smaller neighbor – may lead to an anti-India sentiment.
- Smaller countries like Maldives usually try to use the rivalries among greater powers (India and China) to their own advantage.

- Delhi must continue to engage with the political leadership of Maldives as well as its people. As External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar said – It can't be guaranteed that every country will support or agree with India every time. Hence, as the regional power, it should not overreact to Maldives' concerns.

17th JANUARY, 2024

India's multidimensional poverty

- **Context:** Recently, NITI Aayog has released a discussion paper 'Multidimensional Poverty in India since 2005-06'.

Key Highlights:

- India has registered a significant decline in multidimensional poverty in India from 29.17% in 2013-14 to 11.28% in 2022-23 (a reduction of 17.89 percentage points).
In numbers about 24.82 crore people escaped multidimensional Poverty in last 9 years.
- Uttar Pradesh topped the list with 5.94 crore people escaping poverty followed by Bihar and Madhya Pradesh.
- The paper reveals a faster decline in the poverty headcount ratio from 2015-16 to 2019-21 (10.66% annual rate) compared to the period 2005-06 to 2015-16 (7.69% annual rate).
- All 12 indicators of MPI have recorded significant improvement during the entire study period.
- India is poised to achieve single-digit poverty rates by the year 2024.
- India is likely to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1.2 (reducing multidimensional poverty by at least half) much ahead of 2030.

Kachchhi Kharek: Geographical Indication (GI) tag from Gujarat

- **Context:** Recently, Kachchhi Kharek, the indigenous variety of dates of Kutch, has become the second

fruit of Gujarat to get a geographical indication (GI) tag.

Key Highlights:

- It is the indigenous variety of dates of Kutch, Gujarat. The presence of dates in Kachchh (Kutch) is believed to be around 400–500 years old. It has become the second fruit of Gujarat to get a geographical indication (GI) tag, after Gir kesar mango.
- Unlike other countries, dates grown in Kutch are harvested at the khalal stage, as they can't withstand moist weather.
- Kutch is the only place around the world where fresh dates (Without wait for getting it dark or soft) are economically cultivated, marketed, and consumed. Whereas in other countries, growers wait to ripen it further till they become soft and dark brown or black in colour.
- The khalal stage occurs when fruits have matured, accumulated sucrose, turned red or yellow, but remain crisp.
- As these are seedling propagated palms, each of them is a unique palm in itself, representing a vast range of diversity in characteristics.
- Kutch is home to approximately two million date palms, with 1.7 million being seedling-origin palms of indigenous varieties.
- The Kachchh area is accounting for more than 85 % of total dates palm cultivation in India.

18th JANUARY, 2024

Samavesha Project

- **Context:** The I-STEM (Indian Science, Technology, and Engineering facilities Map) has launched the Samavesha project at IISc., Bengaluru.

Key Highlights:

- It aims to promote research collaboration in India by improving access to facilities and laboratories.

- It will link researchers with scientific institutes via an online portal.
- The platform facilitates the connection of researchers and industries with institutions possessing the necessary equipment, allowing them to lease it for experiments.
- The initiative seeks to reduce capital expenditure for researchers, industries, and startups, and avoid the duplication of resources at the national level.
- It will provide access to cutting-edge research infrastructure for new-age researchers, startups, and industries nationwide, thereby facilitating innovation.
- To capture the entire MPLADS fund allocation cycle and provide greater convenience and accessibility in monitoring the scheme.
- It will bring forth a myriad of benefits, revolutionizing the way MPs engage with and manage development projects in their constituencies.
- It would offer convenience and accessibility, allowing MPs to propose, track, and oversee the projects at their fingertips.
- This real-time access enhances decision-making processes, enabling swift responses to emerging needs or issues.
- The application will streamline the communication between MPs and relevant authorities, facilitating a more efficient exchange of information.
- It will also promote transparency by providing MPs with instant updates on the status and progress of their proposed projects.

Kashmir and Ladakh are without snow this winter

- **Context:** Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh which are the key tourist destinations in India have seen little rainfall or snow this winter, leading to a decline in tourist numbers this season.

Key Highlights:

- According to data from the India Meteorological Department (IMD), Jammu and Kashmir recorded an 80% rainfall deficit in December and a 100% deficit (no rain at all) in January thus far.
- The decline in snowfall is associated with reduced western disturbance events and rising temperatures, signaling the impact of climate change.
- Scientists propose that the ongoing El Niño event in the eastern Pacific Ocean may also contribute to this year's observed conditions.

MPLADS e-SAKSHI Mobile Application

- **Context:** Recently, the MPLADS e-SAKSHI Mobile Application was launched by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).

Key Highlights:

- It is launched by Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).

19th JANUARY, 2024

Kerala Rehabilitation Project

- **Context:** The first-ever rehabilitation project launched by the Kerala government for individuals returning from Gulf countries has assisted nearly 7,000 returnees in the state.

Key Highlights:

- NoRKA Department Project for Return Emigrants (NDPREM) project Launched by Department of Non-Resident Keralites' Affairs (NoRKA).
- To help Gulf returnees set up self-employment ventures with the support of leading financial institutions.
- The initiative began in response to Saudi Arabia's implemented "Nitaqat" (naturalization) law in 2013, causing concerns among expats about potential job losses.
- The schemes have benefitted almost 7000 gulf emigrants thus helped in transforming the profile of returning emigrants.

- Recent significant changes in the industrial landscape and environment of Kerala have played a crucial role in involving distressed returnees in the retail sector.
- These schemes have also guaranteed the economic integration of returnees into society, with the local economy benefiting from their engagement.
- The introduction of the NoRKA business facilitation center, aimed at assisting non-resident Keralites and returnees in starting businesses in the state, has shown promising results.
- The state is considering expanding the loan scheme to encompass additional sectors and enhance the value addition of products, aiming to extend support to more returnees.

C4IR: Centre for Fourth Industrial Revolution

- **Context:** The World Economic Forum has agreed to set up its Centre for Fourth Industrial Revolution (C4IR) in Hyderabad.

Key Highlights:

- C4IR stands for the Centre for Fourth Industrial Revolution. It is an initiative by the World Economic Forum (WEF) to establish centers that focus on harnessing the potential of technological progress for human-centric transformation of industries, economies and societies.
- The agreement between Telangana government and WEF aims to use technology for improvement in the life sciences and healthcare sector. The focus of C4IR is to provide the best healthcare services to small towns and villages.
- The Fourth Industrial Revolution is the current and developing environment in which disruptive technologies and trends such as the Internet of Things (IoT), robotics, virtual reality (VR) and artificial intelligence (AI) are changing the way modern people live and work.

PM Modi visited Veerabhadra Temple in Lepakshi

- **Context:** The Prime Minister recently visited the Veerabhadra temple in Lepakshi, Andhra Pradesh. He is completing the 11-day special ritual for the consecration of the idol of Lord Ram at the Ayodhya Ram temple.

Key Highlights:

- 'Lepakshi' in Telugu means 'Rise, oh bird.' It is named in honor of Jatayu, the legendary bird that bravely fought Ravan while he was transporting Sita to Lanka on his Pushpaka Vimana after kidnapping her.
- According to the Ramayana, Lepakshi is believed to be the place where the wounded Jatayu fell during his fight with Ravan.
- The Lepakshi temple is also believed to have preserved footprints of Goddess Sita.
- Veerabhadra temple situated in Lepakshi, in the state of Andhra Pradesh, India. The temple is dedicated to the Virabhadra, a fierce incarnation of Lord Shiva. The primary deity of the main shrine is Lord Shiva, and there are additional shrines dedicated to Ganesha and Durga.
- The temple exhibits Vijayanagara-style architecture, adorned with intricate carvings and paintings on nearly every visible surface.
- The vibrant fresco paintings showcase intricate details in bright colors, depicting scenes from the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, and the Puranas.
- According to the Skanda Purana, the temple is a significant divyakshetra, a pilgrimage site dedicated to Lord Shiva.

20th JANUARY, 2024

Bamboo Composites Brief

- **Context:** Recently, at the India International Science Festival (IISF 2023) in Faridabad, technology related to 'Bamboo Composites Brief' was transferred to a prominent materials manufacturing company.

Key Highlights:

- Bamboo composites are materials that blend bamboo fibers with other substances to form composite materials.
- These composites utilize bamboo's strength, flexibility, and sustainability for versatile applications in construction, furniture, and various industries.
- In just 3-4 years, mature bamboo can be used for bamboo composites, contrasting with teak wood that takes 30-40 years to grow.
- The resulting bamboo composite product shares similarities with teak wood but boasts improved durability, dimensional stability, high strength, density, etc.
- The bamboo composite can be used in various sectors, especially for aerospace.
- It has the potential to yield future products akin to wood but with a harvest cycle ten times faster.
- The technology has the potential to attract micro, small, and medium enterprises, startups, etc., contributing to achieving sustainable goals like Aatmanirbhar Bharat, Swasth Bharat Abhiyaan, and Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan.

Khelo India Youth Games 2023

- **Context:** The Prime Minister recently inaugurated the opening ceremony of the Khelo India Youth Games 2023 in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

Key Highlights:

- The Prime Minister of India recently credited the various reforms undertaken by the Union government for India's success in sports.
- Highlighting those sports was not just limited to the field, but also presents a huge economic opportunity, he said the country's sports-related industry will be worth at least 1 lakh crore in a few years.
- He asserted that India has a vast pool of sporting talent and is prepared to host the 2036 Olympic Games.

- These are annual national-level multidisciplinary sports events held in India. KIYG is a part of the Khelo India Programme
- To revive India's grassroots sports culture by building a strong framework for all sports and establish the country as a great sporting nation.

21st JANUARY, 2024

Regulation of Coaching Centers, 2024 Guidelines

- **Context:** Recently, the Department of Higher Education of the Union Ministry of Education has published 'Regulation of Coaching Centers 2024' Guidelines.

Key Highlights:

- It comes following complaints received by the government about rising cases of student suicides, fire incidents, lack of facilities in coaching incidents as well as methodologies of teaching adopted by them.
- The guidelines will provide assistance to the students in any study programme, competitive examinations, or academic support.
- Qualification of tutors: Only those with a minimum qualification of graduation are eligible to teach.
- Coaching centres are prohibited from making false claims about ranks or marks to entice students. Any form of misleading advertisement related to the quality of coaching or results is banned.
- It prioritizes mental well-being, fair practices, and inclusivity.
- It bars coaching centres from enrolling students below 16 years of age, and stresses that student enrolment should be done only after secondary school examination.
- It advises coaching centres' focus on co-curricular activities as well for holistic development of students, and provides career guidance and psychological counselling for mental well-being of the students.

The Ayodhya Ram Temple: Nagara Style of Architecture

- **Context:** The Ram temple in Ayodhya is designed in the Nagara style of temple architecture.

Key Highlights:

- The Nagara style of temple architecture emerged sometime in the fifth century CE, during the late Gupta period, in northern India.
- It is seen in juxtaposition with the Dravida style of southern India, which too emerged in the same period.
- Nagara temples are built on a raised plinth, with the garbha griha (sanctum sanctorum) — where the idol of the deity rests — the most sacred part of the temple.
- Towering over the garbha griha is the shikhara (literally 'mountain peak'), the most distinguishable aspect of Nagara style temples.
- It also comprises a circumambulatory passage around the garbha griha, and one or more mandapas (halls) on the same axis as it. Elaborate murals and reliefs often adorn its walls.

