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MK Yadav Sir

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# ECONOMIC SURVEY ON MGNREGS

## (Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Economy)

# NREGS demand not true indicator of rural distress: Survey

HARIKISHAN SHARMA
NEW DELHI, JULY 22

THE DEMAND under MGNREGS is not a real indicator of rural distress but is rather predominantly linked to a state's institutional capacity and, to some extent, different minimum wages and other considerations, said the Economic Survey 2023-24 tabled by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Lok Sabha on Monday.

Noting that a state's institutional capacity is "crucial" for effectively tapping MGNREGS funds, the survey, citing several studies, said literature establishes a link between per-capita income and institutional quality.

And, discussing factors that explain differences in MGNREGA work demand across states, it said MGNREGS fund usage and employment generation are not proportional to poverty levels. Additionally, it said, "calculations reveal there is little correlation between MGNREGS fund usage and rural unemployment rates."

"It is evident from the data... that MGNREGS work demand does not directly correlate with increased rural distress at a micro level," the survey said.

"States with lower per-capita incomes and higher poverty levels often have weaker institutions, thereby tapping fewer funds per work executed and generating less employment per capita for the rural poor... states with higher institutional capacities plan and coordinate better, executing costlier works in rural infrastructure or natural resources management," it said.

The survey also highlighted differences in registering demand and increased leakages in MGNREGS.

"Variations in MGNREGS fund usage arise from irregularities and leakages observed across states... Over four years, Social Audit Units found Rs 935 crore misappropriated under MGNREGS... It also noted that transparency, accountability, and record-keeping processes were often violated in MGNREGA implementation," it said.

"From the above diagnostic analysis, it can be concluded that demand under MGNREGS is not a real indicator of rural distress but is rather predominantly linked with the State's institutional capacity and to some extent also different minimum wages and other considerations," the survey said.

**Context:** The Economic Survey presented by the Finance Minister in the Lok Sabha highlighted that demand under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) reflects institutional capacity and other factors rather than solely indicating rural distress.

**Key Findings of Economic Survey**

- **Tamil Nadu's Share of Funds**: Despite having less than one percent of the country's poor population, Tamil Nadu received nearly 15% of all MGNREGS funds released in FY-24.
- **Kerala's Fund Usage**: Kerala, with only 0.1 percent of the poor population, utilized almost 4 percent of the MGNREGS funds according to the survey report.
- **Contrast with Bihar and Uttar Pradesh**: Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, which together account for about 45 percent of the poor population (20% and 25% respectively), received only 17% of MGNREGS funds (6% and 11% respectively) and generated 53 crore person-days of employment.
- **Correlation Between Poverty and Fund Usage**: The correlation coefficient between state-wise multidimensional poverty index and person-days generated is 0.3, suggesting that MGNREGS fund usage and employment generation are not proportional to poverty levels.
- **Ad-Hoc Minimum Wage Fixation**: Minimum wage fixation in the MGNREGS is ad-hoc and not aligned with per-capita income or poverty headcount ratios.
- States like Haryana, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka have relatively high wage rates compared to their per capita incomes, affecting state-wise MGNREGS fund usage, with the wage component fully covered by the Central Government.

**Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS)**

- **About:** MGNREGS is a demand-driven scheme, that seeks to provide guaranteed 100 days of wage employment per year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.
- **Objective**: To provide at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.
- **Features:** Legal right to work, a time-bound guarantee of work and unemployment allowance (within 15 days), Decentralised planning – i.e., Gram Sabha recommends work, demand-driven scheme.

HINDUSTAN TIMES
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# INS BRAHMAPUTRA
(Syllabus GS Paper 3 – Sci and Tech)

## INS Brahmaputra suffers damage, listing to its left

Rahul Singh
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**NEW DELHI:** An Indian warship, the locally made INS Brahmaputra, tipped over at the naval dockyard in Mumbai on Monday after a fire broke out on board the vessel the previous day, and a search was on for a sailor who was on board and went missing during the incident, according to officials aware of the matter. The cause of the vessel tipping over towards port, or the left, was not immediately known. Firefighting units had pumped huge quantities of water to douse the flames, the officials cited above said. →P9



The accident site. ANI

**Context**: Indian Navy warship INS Brahmaputra suffered significant damage due to a fire at Mumbai's Naval Dockyard. During the incident, the frigate listed heavily to the port side.

**INS Brahmaputra**

- **Origin of the Name**: The name "Brahmaputra" is inspired by the prominent river flowing through Assam, India.
- **Significance:** The river is revered for its cultural and ecological importance.
- **Representation of Naval Prowess**: It embodies the nation's naval strength and maritime spirit.
- **The Brahmaputra-Class Frigate:**
  - **First of Its Class**: INS Brahmaputra is the inaugural vessel of the Brahmaputra-class guided-missile frigates.
  - **Indigenous Shipbuilding:** Represents India's advancing self-reliance in naval construction.
  - **Versatile Maritime Operations**: Designed for a wide range of operations from coastal defense to blue-water missions.
  - **Dimensions and Size**: Displacement of 5,300 tonnes, 125 meters in length, and a 14.4-meter beam.
- **Capabilities:**
  - **Advanced Sensors and Weaponry**: Equipped with modern sensors, medium-range and close-range guns, and various missiles.
  - **Helicopter Operations:** Capable of operating Seaking and Chetak helicopters.
  - **Multi-Role Functionality**: Effective in surface warfare, air defense, and anti-submarine operations.
  - **Strategic Asset:** A crucial component of the Indian Navy's strategic capabilities.

# UPPER KARNALI POWER PROJECT

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – IR)

# IREDA to invest ₹290 crore in Nepal's 900 MW hydroelectric project

**Context:** The Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IREDA) will invest in the Upper Karnali Hydro-Electric Power Project, enhancing India's renewable energy portfolio.

**Upper Karnali Hydro-Electric Power Project**

- **About**: It is a 900 MW run-of-the-river hydropower project being developed on the Karnali River in Nepal.
- **Power Distribution**: The project will supply power to Nepal, India, and Bangladesh for a contracted period of 25 years.
- **Project Award and Developer:** The Government of Nepal awarded the project to GMR Upper Karnali Hydro Power Limited (GUKHL), a subsidiary of GMR Group India, under a memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed in January 2008.
- **Development Model**: GMR is developing the project on a build-own-operate-transfer (BOOT) basis.
- **Equity and Agreement Terms:** The Nepal Government received 27% free equity in the project as part of the MoU with GMR.
- **Environmental Impact**: It is estimated to generate 3,466 million units of electricity, while offsetting approximately two million tons of greenhouse gas emissions a year.

**Karnali River**

- **About**: It is a perennial trans-boundary river originating in the Himalaya Mountains on the Nepal side of the Tibet border across from holy Mt. Kailash.
- **Length and Basin**: It is the longest and largest river in Nepal, at 315 miles. More than 90% of the basin lies in Nepal.
- **Course and Confluence**: It cuts through the Himalayas in Nepal and joins the Sharda River at Brahmaghat in India.
- **Formation of Ghaghara River:** Together, they form the Ghaghara River, a major left bank tributary of the Ganges.

# Who is Manoj Soni: UPSC chairman who resigned 5 years before completion of tenure for 'spiritual calling'

**Context**: Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) Chairperson Dr. Manoj Soni has resigned from his position five years before the end of his term in 2029, citing "personal reasons."

**Union Public Service Commission**

- **About**: The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) is the central recruiting agency in India.
  - It is an independent constitutional body.
  - As per Article 312 of the Indian Constitution, the Parliament is entitled to create one or more All India services common to the Union and the States.
- **Constitutional Provisions**: The provisions regarding the composition of UPSC, appointment and removal of its members, and the powers and functions of UPSC are provided in Part XIV of the Indian Constitution under Article 315 to Article 323.
- **Term**: The Chairman serves for a term of 6 years or until the age of 65, whichever comes first.
- **Eligibility**: The Chairman must have served at least ten years either under the Government of India or under a State Government.
- **Ineligibility for Further Employment:** The Chairman cannot seek further employment with the Government of India or a State Government after leaving office.
- **Removal of UPSC Chairman:**
  - Adjudged insolvent.
  - Engages in paid employment outside the duties of the office during the term.
  - Found unfit to continue in office due to mental or physical infirmity.

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# DEEP SEA MINING

## (Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Economy/Environment)

### India seeks licences for Pacific deep-sea mineral exploration

India will apply for licences to explore for deep-sea minerals in the Pacific Ocean as it competes to secure supplies of minerals critical for energy transition technologies, a top government scientist told *Reuters*.

The UN-backed International Seabed Authority (ISA) has issued 31 deep-sea exploration licences, including two for India in the Indian Ocean, but is yet to allow mining because the 36-member body is still working on regulations. The 36-member ISA council is meeting in Jamaica this month to negotiate the latest draft of a mining code.

M. Ravichandran, the top scientist at ministry of Earth sciences, said his ministry will work closely with India's mining industry as it readies to apply next year for exploration of seabed minerals in the Pacific.

India plans to focus on the Clarion-Clipperton Zone, a vast plain between Hawaii and Mexico known to hold large volumes of polymetallic nodules containing minerals used in electric vehicles and solar panels including manganese, nickel, copper, and cobalt. REUTERS



The UN-backed ISA has issued 31 deep-sea exploration licences, including two for India in the Indian Ocean. BLOOMBERG

**Regional Focus: The Pacific Ocean**

- **Clarion-Clipperton Zone:** Much of the deep-sea mining activity is expected to occur in the Pacific Ocean, particularly in the Clarion-Clipperton Zone, which holds a significant cluster of deep-sea minerals.
- **Environmental Concerns:**
  - Pacific Island states that rely on sectors like fishing, tourism, and renewable energy are particularly concerned about the potential impacts of deep-sea mining on their economies and ecosystems.
  - The environmental impacts of deep-sea mining, including effects on migratory fish patterns, marine biodiversity, and long-term ecosystem health, are not well-understood and could be both immediate and irreversible.
  - A study simulating deep-sea mining disturbances found evidence of ecosystem disruption even twenty-six years after the disturbance, highlighting the potential for long-term environmental damage.

**Context**: India will seek licenses to explore deep-sea minerals in the Pacific Ocean as part of its strategy to secure resources essential for energy transition technologies.

**Deep-Sea Mining**

- **About:** It refers to three primary methods of mineral extraction, with the most common being the removal of polymetallic nodules from underwater environments.
- **Significance of Polymetallic Nodules:** It contain essential minerals such as cobalt, nickel, and manganese, which are crucial for clean energy technologies, including electric car batteries.
- **Global Competition for Resources**: The discovery of these nodules has sparked a race among high-income countries to secure underwater minerals necessary for the shift from fossil fuels to clean energy.
- **Political and Economic Implications:**
  - **Control of Critical Minerals**: Countries that dominate the supply of critical minerals will have significant influence over the global political economy of electrification and decarbonization.
  - **Current Mineral Supply Dynamics**: Currently, 70% of the world's cobalt is mined in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and 95% of lithium comes from Argentina, Chile, and China, creating supply chain vulnerabilities.
  - **Opportunities for Mineral-Poor States:** Deep-sea mining could potentially provide mineral-poor states with the chance to gain supply chain independence and access to emerging green technology markets.

HINDUSTAN TIMES

July 21

# ICCPR

## (Syllabus: GS Paper 2 - Social Issues)

# India completes UN human rights review




**Context:** India recently completed its fourth periodic review by the UN Human Rights Committee under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in Geneva.

**International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)**

- **About:** It is a key international human rights treaty, providing a range of protections for civil and political rights.
- **Adoption and Enforcement**: The Covenant was adopted by the U.N. General Assembly in 1966 and came into force in 1976.
- **Part of**: The ICCPR, together with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights, are considered the International Bill of Human Rights.
- **Obligations**: The ICCPR obligates countries that have ratified the treaty to protect and preserve basic human rights.
- **Basic Human Rights Protected:**
  - The right to life and human dignity
  - Equality before the law
  - Freedom of speech, assembly, and association
  - Religious freedom and privacy
  - Freedom from torture, ill-treatment, and arbitrary detention
  - Gender equality
- **Governmental Responsibilities**: The Covenant compels governments to take administrative, judicial, and legislative measures to protect the rights enshrined in the treaty and to provide an effective remedy.
- **Global Ratification**: As of 2024, 174 countries have been party to this Covenant.
- **India's Participation**: India became a party to the ICCPR in 1979 and has undergone three reviews so far, the last being in 1997.

# INDIA'S DEFENCE SECTOR

## (Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Security)

# With $2.5bn exports, India joins top 25 defence exporters' club

TEAM TOI

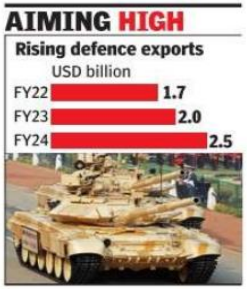
**New Delhi:** With defence production rising every year, India clocked the highest-ever arms exports of $2.5 billion (Rs 20,915 crore) in 2023-24, finding a place among the top 25 arms exporter nations.

"...there has been a rise in the number of export authorisations issued to defence exporters. From 1,414 export authorisations in FY23, the number has increased to 1,505 in FY24," the Economic Survey said.

Around 100 domestic companies are exporting a wide range of defence products and equipment, ranging from Dornier-228 aircraft, artillery guns and BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles to Pinaka multi-launch rocket systems, radars, simulators and armoured vehicles.

While the survey did not identify nations to which India was exporting arms, the former Soviet republic of Armenia has emerged as a major destination, with deals inked for Pinaka rockets and Akash air defence missiles. As per the defence ministry, India posted highest-ever annual domestic defence production in 2023-24, reaching Rs 1.26 lakh crore in terms of value, 16.7% higher over the previous fiscal.

India, of course, still remains in the strategically vulnerable position of being the world's largest arms importer, accounting for 9.8% of total global imports in 2019-23.




**Context**: India achieved record arms exports of $2.5 billion (Rs 20,915 crore) in 2023-24, marking its highest-ever figure and securing a spot among the top 25 arms exporter nations, thanks to rising defense production.

### India's Defence Sector

- **Record-High Production in FY 2023-24:** The value of defence production reached ₹1,26,887 crore, marking a 16.7% increase from the previous fiscal year.
- **Contribution Breakdown**: DPSUs and other PSUs contributed 79.2%, while the private sector contributed 20.8% to the total defence production in 2023-24.
- **Growth Since 2019-20:** Defence production has grown by over 60% in 2023-24.
- **Defence Exports Surge:** Defence exports in FY 2023-24 reached 32.5% increase from the previous fiscal year, demonstrating robust growth.
- **Range of Products Exported**: Around 100 domestic companies are exporting a diverse array of defense products and equipment, including Dornier-228 aircraft, artillery guns, BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles, Pinaka multi-launch rocket systems, radars, simulators, and armored vehicles.
- **Major Destination for Exports**: While the survey did not specify the exact nations, the former Soviet republic of Armenia has become a significant destination for Indian defense exports, with agreements for Pinaka rockets and Akash air defense missiles.
    - Russia continues to be India's main weapons supplier accounting for 36% of its arms imports
- **Record Domestic Production**: According to the defense ministry, India achieved its highest-ever annual domestic defense production in 2023-24, reaching a value of Rs 1.26 lakh crore, which is 16.7% higher than the previous fiscal year.
- **Strategic Import Reliance:** India continues to be the world's largest arms importer, accounting for 9.8% of total global arms imports from 2019 to 2023, reflecting its strategic vulnerability.

### Government Initiatives to Boost Defence Exports

- **IDR Act Reform**: Rationalization of Defence Products list for Industrial License and extended validity from 3 years to 15 years.
- **iDEX and DTIS Schemes**: Initiatives like iDEX and DTIS foster innovation and strengthen defence testing infrastructure to enhance defence manufacturing capabilities.
- **FDI Policy Enhancement**: FDI limits in the Defence Sector increased up to 74% via Automatic Route and up to 100% via Government Route to attract foreign investments.
- **Defence Industrial Corridors**: Established in Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh to promote local defence manufacturing clusters leveraging existing infrastructure and human capital.

PIB July 22

# INDIA MARITIME CENTRE (IMC)

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Security)

## India Maritime Centre (IMC) moves closer to reality under the Maritime India Vision 2030

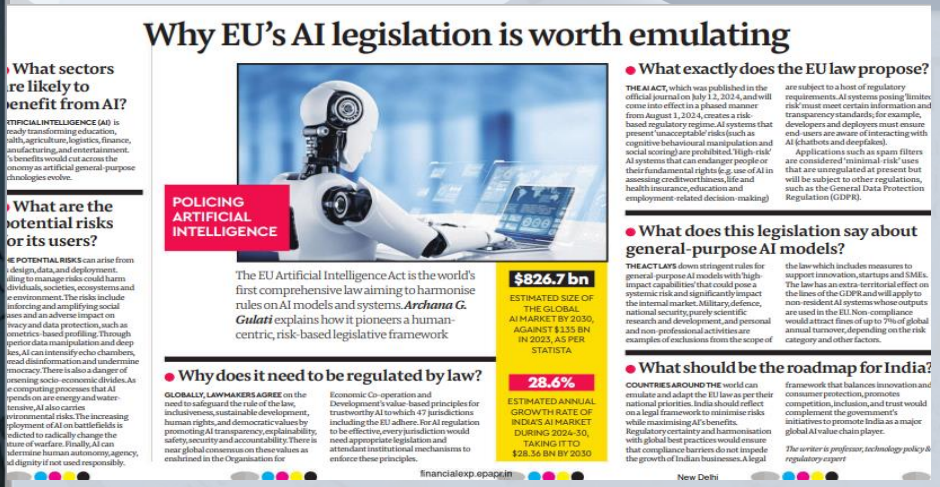
**Context:** India Maritime Centre (IMC) moves closer to reality under the Maritime India Vision 2030.

**India Maritime Centre (IMC)**

- **About**: It is a cornerstone initiative of the Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways (MoPSW) under the Maritime India Vision 2030.
- **Unified Platform**: The IMC aims to provide a unified platform for the Indian maritime industry, acting as a think tank for policy formulation and industry recommendations.
- **Pivotal Institution**: It is poised to be a pivotal institution in advancing India's maritime interests both domestically and internationally.
- **Objectives**:
  - Strengthening India's participation in the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and global maritime forums.
  - Creating a robust domestic maritime sector through a unified and synchronised approach.
  - Conducting flagship events to build a strong global brand for the Indian maritime cluster.
  - Providing expert analysis and recommendations for sustainable growth.
  - Establishing platforms for industry stakeholders to collaborate and network.
  - Creating a pool of funds to support the industry, including startups.
- **Location**: Mumbai has been finalised as the location for the IMC.
- **World-Class Secretariat**: The IMC Secretariat shall be built as a world-class facility, including equipped conference area and meeting rooms.

# EU ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ACT

## (Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Sci and Tech)



Why EU's AI legislation is worth emulating

What sectors are likely to benefit from AI?

What are the potential risks for its users?

POLICING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

The EU Artificial Intelligence Act is the world's first comprehensive law aiming to harmonise rules on AI models and systems. *Archana G. Gulati* explains how it pioneers a human-centric, risk-based legislative framework

$826.7 bn
ESTIMATED SIZE OF THE GLOBAL AI MARKET BY 2030, AGAINST $135 BN IN 2023, AS PER STATISTA

28.6%
ESTIMATED ANNUAL GROWTH RATE OF INDIA'S AI MARKET DURING 2024-30, TAKING IT TO $28.36 BN BY 2030

Why does it need to be regulated by law?

What exactly does the EU law propose?

What does this legislation say about general-purpose AI models?

What should be the roadmap for India?

financialexp.epapr.in

New Delhi

**Context:** The EU Artificial Intelligence Act, the world's first comprehensive law, aims to harmonize regulations for AI models and systems.

### EU Artificial Intelligence Act

- **About:** It established in 2021, categorizes AI technology into different risk levels, with "unacceptable" risk warranting a ban and other levels categorized as high, medium, and low hazards.
- **Features**: This definition includes adaptiveness after deployment and the ability to generate outputs like predictions, content, or decisions, relevant for chatbots and job application screening tools.
    - **Horizontal Approach**: The EU AI Act applies to all areas where AI is utilized.
    - **Prohibited AI Systems**: Systems that breach fundamental rights or pose unacceptable dangers, like social assessment tools generating biased risk profiles.
    - **High-Risk AI**: Systems significantly impacting people's lives and rights, including biometric identity, essential infrastructure, and applications in education, health, and law enforcement.
    - **Limited-Risk AI**: Systems requiring user involvement, such as chatbots and recommendation systems, which must be transparent and allow users to opt out.
    - **Minimal Risk AI**: Systems with little or no risk, such as spam filters and smart appliances, which are generally exempt from specific AI rules but must adhere to existing laws like consumer protection and product safety.

### Roadmap for India

- **Adaptation of EU Law**: Countries around the world can emulate and adapt EU laws to align with their national priorities.
- **Legal Framework Reflection**: India should develop a legal framework that minimizes risks while maximizing AI's benefits.
- **Regulatory Certainty**: Ensuring regulatory certainty and alignment with global best practices will prevent compliance barriers that could hinder business growth.
- **Balancing Innovation and Protection**: A legal framework should balance innovation with consumer protection to foster a competitive and inclusive environment.
- **Complementing Government Initiatives**: Such a framework would support the government's efforts to position India as a key player in the global AI value chain.

PIB July 22

# WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

(Syllabus: GS Paper 1 – Art and Culture)

## PM inaugurates 46th Session of World Heritage Committee at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi

**Context**: India is hosting the World Heritage Committee Meeting for the 1st time at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi.

**World Heritage Committee**

- **About:** It is a committee of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) that selects the sites to be listed as UNESCO World Heritage Sites.
- **Aim**: It is responsible for managing all matters on World Heritage and deciding on sites to be inscribed on the World Heritage list.
- **Meetings**: The committee meets annually.
- **Objective**: The committee focuses on Credibility, Conservation, Capacity building, Communication, and Communities.
- **Representation**: It consists of representatives from 21 of the States Parties to the Convention elected by their General Assembly.
- **Bureau of the World Heritage Committee**: The Bureau consists of 7 States Parties elected annually by the Committee: a chairperson, 5 Vice-Chairpersons, and a Rapporteur.
    - The Bureau of the Committee coordinates the work of the Committee and fixes the dates, hours, and order of business of meetings.
- **Tenure**: Committee members' term of office is for 6 years, but most States Parties choose voluntarily to be Members of the Committee for only 4 years to allow other States Parties to be on the Committee.
- **Powers**
    - The Committee is responsible for implementing the World Heritage Convention, defining its use, and allocating financial assistance upon requests from States Parties.
    - It has the final say on whether a property is inscribed on the World Heritage List, examines reports on the conservation of inscribed properties, and asks States Parties to act when properties are not being properly managed.
    - It also decides on the inscription or deletion of properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

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