

## Mains Master

X factor

### Context:

- **Farmer protests:** Throughout 2023 and 2024, farmers in India have engaged in large-scale protests against agricultural reforms. These protests have faced significant resistance from the government.

### Background:

- **Internet shutdowns:** State governments, particularly in Haryana and Rajasthan, have repeatedly imposed internet shutdowns during the protests. These shutdowns often affect large areas and last for several hours or even days.
- **Social media restrictions:** The Union government has also used its influence to pressure social media companies like X to block accounts and content related to the protests. This often occurs without clear justifications or following due process.
- **Legal challenges:** Twitter (now X) previously challenged such restrictions in the Karnataka High Court, arguing that blanket blocking orders were excessive and violated free speech principles.

### Present Crisis:

- **X's transparency reports:** Since Elon Musk's acquisition of X, the platform has stopped publishing transparency reports detailing government content blocking requests. This lack of transparency raises concerns about potential censorship under Musk's leadership.
- **Problematic court judgment:** The single-judge bench in the Karnataka High Court upheld the government's right to issue broad content blocking orders without notifying users or providing specific reasons. This judgment sets a concerning precedent and empowers excessive government censorship.

### Democracy at Peril:

- **Threat to free speech:** These actions by both the government and X directly threaten free speech and open communication in India. This undermines a fundamental pillar of a democratic society.
- **Impact on social media presence:** Concerns about censorship could deter social media companies from operating in India, limiting access to information and platforms for public discourse.
- **Damage to India's image:** The international community views India's approach to internet freedom with increasing concern. This approach risks tarnishing India's reputation as a free and open society.

### Wayforward:

- **X's appeal:** The ongoing appeal against the Karnataka High Court judgment holds immense significance. A favorable outcome could clarify the rights and obligations of social media platforms regarding content moderation, promoting a more balanced approach.
- **Government transparency:** The government needs to address concerns about transparency and due process by providing clear justifications for internet shutdowns and content blocking orders. Open dialogue and collaboration with civil society and stakeholders are crucial.
- **Protecting free speech:** Upholding free speech and open internet access is essential for a healthy democracy. This requires a commitment from all stakeholders, including the government, social media companies, and civil society, to work towards a more balanced and responsible approach to online communication.

Changing the growth paradigm

### Context:

- The Reserve Bank of India expressed concern about the well-being of Indian citizens despite impressive GDP growth.
- It argued that focusing solely on GDP ignores the need for equitable income distribution and decent job creation.

### Historical Look at Growth Trajectory:

- Both the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) and the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) governments prioritized GDP growth during their tenures, achieving an average of 7.2%.
- While this led to economic expansion, it failed to address structural issues like income inequality, lack of job creation, and inadequate rural development.

### Key Issue in GDP-Growth-Only Approach:

1. **Ignoring Equity:**
  - **Widening Inequality:** This model often benefits wealthy individuals and corporations disproportionately, leading to a significant income gap between the rich and poor. This not only creates social unrest but also hinders long-term economic growth as a large portion of the population remains excluded from participating fully in the economy.
  - **Lack of Social Mobility:** The focus on aggregate growth often ignores the plight of marginalized communities and individuals, making it difficult for them to climb the economic ladder and improve their living standards. This perpetuates existing inequalities and creates a sense of hopelessness.
  - **Eroding Social Fabric:** Rising inequality can lead to social tensions, decreased trust in institutions, and even political instability. This can undermine the overall well-being of society and hinder progress in other areas.
2. **Unsustainable Development:**
  - **Environmental Degradation:** Reliance on fossil fuels for industrialization and urbanization contributes to air and water pollution, climate change, and depletion of natural resources. This not only harms the environment but also creates long-term economic costs associated with healthcare, climate mitigation, and resource scarcity.
  - **Resource Depletion:** Unsustainable practices can lead to the depletion of critical resources like water, fertile land, and minerals. This can have a devastating impact on future generations and limit the potential for long-term economic growth.
  - **Climate Change Vulnerability:** India is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, such as extreme weather events and rising sea levels. This model's contribution to climate change further exacerbates these vulnerabilities and threatens the well-being of millions of people.
3. **Neglecting Rural Populations:**
  - **Limited Opportunities:** The focus on large-scale industries and urban centers often overlooks the potential of rural areas for economic development. This leaves rural communities with limited access to jobs, education, and healthcare, perpetuating poverty and migration to urban areas.
  - **Underutilized Resources:** Rural areas often have abundant natural resources, manpower, and cultural heritage that remain untapped due to insufficient investment and infrastructure. This represents a missed opportunity for inclusive and sustainable growth.
  - **Widening Urban-Rural Divide:** Neglecting rural areas widens the gap between urban and rural communities in terms of income, infrastructure, and quality of life. This can create social and economic disparities that hinder overall national development.
4. **Climate Crisis Conflict:**
  - **International Pressure:** India's reliance on fossil fuels for economic growth puts it at odds with global climate goals set in agreements like the Paris Agreement. This creates international pressure and potential trade sanctions, hindering India's economic integration with the global community.
  - **Financing Challenges:** Transitioning to a low-carbon economy requires significant investments in renewable energy, clean technologies, and climate adaptation measures. This model makes it difficult to secure the necessary financing and technology transfer from developed nations.
  - **Reputation Damage:** India's stance on climate change can negatively impact its international reputation and its ability to attract foreign investment and partnerships for sustainable development.



## Solutions:

- **Local Systems Approach:** Empower local communities to develop solutions for climate change and inequality tailored to their specific contexts and needs. This could involve promoting renewable energy sources, sustainable agriculture practices, and community-driven economic development initiatives.
  - **Rural Focus:** Shift priorities towards revitalizing rural India by:
    - **Investing in rural infrastructure:** Improve access to education, healthcare, and digital connectivity.
    - **Supporting small-scale industries and agriculture:** Provide financial assistance, technical expertise, and market access to small businesses and farmers.
    - **Encouraging rural entrepreneurship:** Foster innovation and create opportunities for rural youth.
  - **Policy Shift:** Move away from Western-dominated economic models that prioritize growth over equity and sustainability. This could involve:
    - **Revisiting Gandhian principles:** Draw inspiration from Gandhi's philosophy of self-reliance, localism, and social justice to guide economic development.
    - **Developing alternative economic models:** Explore and implement models that focus on well-being, sustainability, and equitable distribution of resources.
    - **Prioritizing social indicators:** Include metrics like poverty reduction, healthcare access, and education attainment alongside GDP when measuring economic progress.
- Conclusion:**

India needs a new paradigm for economic development that goes beyond simply chasing GDP growth. This new model should prioritize inclusive and sustainable development, with a strong focus on empowering local communities, revitalizing rural India, and adopting policies that promote well-being and equity for all. By embracing this new approach, India can create a more prosperous, just, and sustainable future for its citizens and the world.

## Centre amends surrogacy rules, allows couples to use donor gametes

### Surrogacy Rules Amended: Key Points with Explanations

#### Changes:

- **Donor Gametes Allowed:** Couples can now use donor eggs or sperm for surrogacy if a medical condition prevents one partner from providing their own gamete. This overturns the March 2023 ban on donor gametes and expands access to surrogacy for couples facing infertility due to various conditions.
- **Single Women Restrictions Remain:** The amendment only applies to "intending couples," meaning single women (widow or divorcee) still need to use their own eggs for surrogacy. This has been challenged in court, raising questions about the exclusion of single individuals and same-sex couples.

#### Implications:

- **Wider Access for Couples:** This change allows older couples and those with specific medical conditions, like Mayer-Rokitansky-Küster-Hauser (MRKH) syndrome, to consider surrogacy as an option for parenthood.
- **Limited Impact:** Experts estimate that less than 1% of women with infertility would need both a donor egg and surrogacy. However, it provides a crucial option for those facing specific challenges.

#### Contentions:

- **Exclusion of Others:** The amendment continues to exclude single individuals, unmarried couples, and LGBTQ+ couples from accessing surrogacy. This raises concerns about discrimination and limitations on family formation rights.
- **Single Women's Egg Restriction:** A Delhi High Court case challenges the requirement for single women to use their own eggs, arguing that it's medically unnecessary and discriminatory at their age. This could lead to further changes in the future.

#### Who is Surrogacy Intended For?

- **Uterine Issues:** Women with missing or abnormal uteruses, or those who have had their uterus removed due to medical conditions, are primary candidates for surrogacy.

- **Failed IVF:** Women who have undergone multiple failed IVF cycles without success may also consider surrogacy, depending on the specific reasons for failure.
- **Pregnancy Risks:** Surrogacy can be an option for women with conditions that make carrying a pregnancy dangerous or impossible.
- **Endometrial Lining Issues:** A thin endometrial lining (less than 8 mm) can make it difficult to carry a pregnancy to term. Surrogacy might be considered in such cases.

#### Points to Consider:

- **Complications:** Surrogacy involves complex ethical and medical considerations. Potential complications include the child inheriting the surrogate's immune system and missing out on early breastfeeding.
- **Alternatives:** Not all IVF failures automatically necessitate surrogacy. Exploring other options and understanding the success rates is crucial.
- **Womb Environment:** The surrogate's uterine environment, including nutrition and hormone levels, can impact the child's long-term health. Careful selection and monitoring are essential.

## Grey-zone warfare latest entry in lexicon of warfare, says CDS

### Key Points:

- **Concept:** Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Anil Chauhan highlights the growing concern about "grey-zone warfare," a military strategy falling below the threshold of conventional war, making it difficult to respond traditionally.
- **Examples:** Gen. Chauhan cites China's actions in the South China Sea and along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) as potential instances of grey-zone warfare.
- **Characteristics:** Grey-zone warfare involves actions like hybrid tactics (blending military and civilian elements), economic coercion, disinformation campaigns, and cyberattacks. These actions aim to achieve strategic goals without triggering a full-blown conflict.
- **Challenges:** Responding to grey-zone warfare is complex, as it requires identifying and countering subtle aggression below the threshold of war.
- **Potential Benefits:** The "dividend" of grey-zone warfare, according to Gen. Chauhan, may be achieved gradually over time, making it difficult to detect and counter effectively.
- **Historical Context:** He suggests historical disputes often fuel grey-zone tactics, implying China's maritime claims in the South China Sea and unresolved border issues with India contribute to the current situation.

#### Additional Information:

- Grey-zone warfare is a relatively new concept, and its implications are still being debated by military strategists and international relations experts.
- The rise of grey-zone warfare reflects the changing nature of conflict in the 21st century, where states are increasingly seeking to achieve their objectives through non-traditional means.
- Effective responses to grey-zone warfare require a multi-pronged approach, including diplomatic efforts, economic sanctions, cyber defense capabilities, and military preparedness.

## Will fast unto death if talks on Sixth Schedule for Ladakh fail: Wangchuk

### Context:

- Ladakh, a Union Territory formed after the abrogation of Article 370, is demanding statehood and inclusion in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.
- Talks between Ladakhi leaders and the Ministry of Home Affairs have not yielded concrete solutions.

#### Demands:

- **Statehood:** Ladakh argues that statehood would grant them greater autonomy and political representation.
- **Sixth Schedule:** Inclusion in the Sixth Schedule would provide tribal safeguards, job reservation, and parliamentary seats.

## Concerns:

- Industrial exploitation: Wangchuk fears Ladakh is vulnerable to exploitation by industrial lobbies, similar to Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.
- Lack of local control: He criticizes the Lieutenant Governor's unilateral power in decision-making and resource allocation.
- Broken promises: Wangchuk highlights the BJP's manifesto promises of granting Sixth Schedule status, which haven't been fulfilled.

## 6th Schedule of the Indian Constitution: Understanding the Demands and Differences

The 6th Schedule of the Indian Constitution is a special provision that applies to certain tribal areas in the Northeastern states of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Tripura. It aims to safeguard the rights and interests of the tribal communities residing in these areas.

### Why people demand 6th Schedule status:

Several groups in India, particularly in areas not currently covered by the 6th Schedule, are demanding inclusion under it. The reasons vary depending on the specific context, but some common arguments include:

- **Autonomy and self-governance:** The 6th Schedule grants greater autonomy to tribal communities in managing their internal affairs, including control over land, forests, and customary laws. This is seen as a way to protect their unique culture and traditions from outside interference.
- **Development and welfare:** Proponents argue that the 6th Schedule fosters inclusive development by ensuring that tribal communities benefit from resource management and economic activities within their territories.
- **Political representation:** The schedule provides for reserved seats in state legislatures and autonomous councils, ensuring greater political representation for tribal communities.
- **Protection from exploitation:** Inclusion under the 6th Schedule is seen as a safeguard against exploitation by outsiders, including corporations and the government, protecting tribal land, resources, and cultural practices.

### Differences between 5th and 6th Schedule:

#### Constitutional and Legal Provisions of the 5th and 6th Schedule:

##### 5th Schedule:

- **Article 244(1):** Empowers the President to designate tribal areas as "Scheduled Areas" through public notifications.
- **Article 244(2) & (3):** Provides for the creation of Tribal Advisory Councils in these areas to advise the Governor on matters concerning the welfare and development of the tribes.
- **Article 244(4):** Empowers the Governor to make regulations for the administration of Scheduled Areas, including restrictions on transfer of tribal land and regulation of moneylending.
- **Fifth Schedule:** Lists specific provisions related to administration of Scheduled Areas, including:
  - Restriction on alienation of tribal land.
  - Regulation of moneylending to tribals.
  - Restriction on the right to practice non-tribal professions, trades, or business within the Scheduled Area.
  - Prohibition of the sale or consumption of alcohol within the Scheduled Area.
- Establishment of special courts for trial of certain offenses committed within the Scheduled Area.

##### 6th Schedule:

- **Article 244(2):** Empowers the President to designate certain tribal areas in the four Northeastern states as "autonomous districts" through public notifications.
- **Sixth Schedule:** Provides detailed provisions for the administration of these autonomous districts, including:
  - Creation of District Councils or Regional Councils with legislative, executive, and judicial powers.

- Reservation of seats in the state legislature for the autonomous districts.
- Special provisions for financial powers of the District Councils.
- Protection of customary laws and practices of the tribes.
- Provisions for the Governor to act in case of failure of constitutional machinery in the autonomous district.

### Key Differences:

- **Autonomy:** The 6th Schedule grants significantly greater autonomy compared to the 5th Schedule, with the creation of autonomous councils having legislative, executive, and judicial powers.
- **Representation:** The 6th Schedule guarantees reserved seats in the state legislature for the autonomous districts, while the 5th Schedule does not guarantee specific representation.
- **Geographical scope:** The 5th Schedule is applicable to Scheduled Areas across India, while the 6th Schedule is limited to the four Northeastern states.
- **Specificity:** The 6th Schedule provides a more detailed framework for the administration of autonomous districts compared to the broader provisions of the 5th Schedule.

### Criticisms of 6th Schedule:

Despite its benefits, the 6th Schedule also faces criticism:

- **Potential for isolation:** Creating autonomous areas might isolate tribal communities and hinder their integration with broader society.
- **Misuse of power:** There have been concerns about misuse of power by autonomous councils, leading to corruption and lack of accountability.
- **Inter-tribal conflicts:** The 6th Schedule sometimes exacerbates existing conflicts between different tribal groups within a territory.

### Conclusion:

The demand for 6th Schedule status reflects complex socio-political dynamics in India. While it offers potential benefits in terms of autonomy, development, and cultural protection, concerns regarding potential isolation, misuse of power, and inter-tribal conflicts need careful consideration. Evaluating the specific context and needs of each region is crucial before considering inclusion under the 6th Schedule.

## Prelims Booster

**ISRO: PAPA detects solar wind impact of coronal mass ejections**

- The Plasma Analyser Package for Aditya (PAPA) payload onboard the Aditya-L1 has been operational and successfully detected the impact of coronal mass ejections (CMEs), including those during February 10-11, 2024. 🌞
- PAPA is an energy and mass analyzer designed for in-situ measurements of solar wind electrons and ions in the low energy range, equipped with two sensors: the Solar Wind Electron Energy Probe (SWEEP) and the Solar Wind Ion Composition Analyser (SWICAR). 📡
- The sensors measure electrons in the energy range of 10 eV to 3 keV and ions in the energy range of 10 eV to 25 keV and mass range of 1-60 amu, and are also capable of measuring the direction of arrival of solar wind particles. 🌐
- The payload has been operational since December 12, 2023, and the SWEEP and SWICAR sensors are currently making continuous observations of solar wind electrons and ions, demonstrating their effectiveness in monitoring space weather conditions and analyzing solar phenomena. ☀️
- The PAPA payload is developed by the Space Physics Laboratory and Avionics Entity of the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC)/ISRO. 🚀

