

CURRENT AFFAIRS

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1. Delhi dispute: SC may send case to Constitution Bench: The Hindu – Page 1,8

Why is it in news?	The Supreme Court recently said it may refer the Delhi government's petition against a Central Ordinance, which effectively gives power over civil services in the national capital to the Lieutenant-Governor, to a Constitution Bench for an authoritative pronouncement.
UPSC SYLLABUS RELEVANCE for prelims and Mains	<p>Prelims: Indian Polity and Governance</p> <p>Mains: General Studies II - Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein.</p>
Important concepts	National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Ordinance, 2023 Article 239AA
<p style="text-align: center;">Today's prelims practice question:</p> <p>Q. Consider the following statements about Delhi:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Entry 41 in the state list deals with the State's power over the "State public services and the State Public Service Commission". Article 239 AA was inserted in the Constitution following the recommendations of the Jaydev Singh Committee. <p>Which among the statements mentioned above is/are correct?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 only 2 only Both 1 and 2 Neither 1 nor 2 <p>Correct answer: A</p> <p>Explanation: The Chief Justice observed that the effective transfer of power over the civil services amounted to nullifying Entry 41 of the State List of the Constitution. Entry 41 in the state list deals with the State's power over the "State public services and the State Public Service Commission". Article 239 AA was inserted in the Constitution by the Constitution (69th Amendment) Act, 1991</p>	

to give Special Status to Delhi following the recommendations of the S Balakrishnan Committee that was set up to look into demands for statehood for Delhi.

Mains PYQ exercise:	Discuss the essentials of the 69th Constitutional Amendment Act and anomalies, if any, that had led to recent reported conflicts between the selected representatives and the institution of the Lieutenant Governor in the administration of Delhi. Do you think that this will give rise to a new trend in the functioning of the Indian federal politics. (2016)
Today's mains practice question:	Analyse the impacts of the National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Ordinance, 2023 on the administration in Delhi.

DETAILED EXPLANATION OF IMPORTANT CONCEPTS

National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Ordinance, 2023:

Promulgation of the Ordinance:

- The Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Ordinance, 2023 was promulgated by the President in May 2023 to provide for a comprehensive scheme of administration of services in Delhi.
- The ordinance came after the Supreme Court handed over the control of services in Delhi, excluding police, public order and land, to the elected government.
- The May 11 judgment of a Constitution Bench led by the Chief Justice had limited the role of the Lieutenant Governor, considered an arm of the Centre, over bureaucrats in the capital to three specific areas — public order, police and land.
- The Ordinance was promulgated within eight days of the Supreme Court verdict, which had upheld the authority of the Delhi government to make laws and administer civil services in the national capital.

About the Ordinance:

- The ordinance seeks to set up a National Capital Civil Service Authority (NCCSA) for the transfer of and disciplinary proceedings against Group-A officers from services in the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi.

- The issuance of the Ordinance empowers the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi with control over services, thereby challenging the elected government's authority in matters of officials' transfer and posting.
- This development raises significant constitutional apprehensions regarding the delicate balance of power between the elected government and the Lieutenant Governor.

Issues with the Ordinance:

- **Power Struggle:**
 - ✓ The ordinance has led to a power struggle between the elected government and the Lieutenant Governor.
 - ✓ The elected government claims that the ordinance undermines their authority and violates the Constitution.
 - ✓ The Lieutenant Governor argues that the ordinance is necessary to ensure proper governance in Delhi.
- **Constitutional Issues:**
 - ✓ The elected government claims that the ordinance violates the Constitution, which gives them the power to make appointments and transfer officials.
 - ✓ The Lieutenant Governor's increased powers are a violation of the principle of federalism, which is enshrined in the Constitution.
- **Issue of “Triple Chain of Accountability”:**
 - ✓ In May 2023, the Supreme Court explicitly recognised this by formulating the concept of the “triple chain of accountability”.
 - ✓ The triple chain of accountability is integral to representative democracy and proceeds as follows:
 - Civil servants are accountable to the cabinet.
 - The cabinet is accountable to the legislature, or the Legislative Assembly.
 - The Legislative Assembly is (periodically) accountable to the electorate.
- Any action that severs this “triple chain of accountability” fundamentally undermines the core constitutional principle of representative government, which is at the bedrock of our democracy.
- **Governance Issue:**

- ✓ The ordinance has created confusion and uncertainty among the civil service officers working in Delhi government departments.
- ✓ The ordinance has also affected the delivery of public services and welfare schemes in Delhi.

Consequences of the Ordinance:

- It may create a constitutional crisis and a power tussle between the Centre and the Delhi government over the control of civil services in the national capital.
- It may undermine the autonomy and democracy of the Delhi government and the will of the people who elected it.
- It may hamper the effective administration and governance of Delhi, as the civil service officers may face uncertainty and confusion over their roles and responsibilities.
- It may invite legal challenges and judicial scrutiny, as the ordinance seems to violate the Supreme Court's judgment and Article 239AA of the Constitution.

Article 239AA of the Constitution:

- Article 239 AA was inserted in the Constitution by the Constitution (69th Amendment) Act, 1991 to give Special Status to Delhi following the recommendations of the S Balakrishnan Committee that was set up to look into demands for statehood for Delhi.
- It says that the NCT of Delhi will have an Administrator and a Legislative Assembly.
- Subject to the provisions of the Constitution, the Legislative Assembly "shall have power to make laws for the whole or any part of the NCT with respect to any of the matters in the State List or Concurrent List in so far as any such matter is applicable to Union territories" except on the subject of police, public order, and land.
- Further, the Article 239AA also notes that L-G has to either act on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers, or he is bound to implement the decision taken by the President on a reference being made by him.
- Also, Article 239AA, empowers the L-G to refer a difference of opinion on 'any matter' with the Council of Ministers to the President.

- Thus, this dual control between L-G and the elected government leads to a power tussle.

2. NITI Aayog report says 13.5cr. people lifted out of poverty: The Hindu – Page 1,8

Why is it in news?	India has registered a significant decline of 9.89 percentage points in the number of multidimensionally poor, from 24.85% in 2015–16 to 14.96% in 2019–2021, says the “National multidimensional poverty index: a progress review, 2023”, released by NITI Aayog on July 17.
UPSC SYLLABUS RELEVANCE for prelims and Mains	<p>Prelims: Economic and Social Development-Sustainable Development, Poverty, Inclusion, Demographics, Social Sector Initiatives, etc.</p> <p>Mains: General Studies II - Issues relating to poverty and hunger.</p>
Important concepts	Multidimensional Poverty Index

Prelims PYQ Exercise-Find answer:

Q. Assertion (A): Though three decades have passed since Independence, still many people are living below poverty line in India.

Reason (R): Five-Year Plans have failed to achieve the targeted growth rate. (1984)

- (a) A and R both are incorrect
- (b) A is correct but R is incorrect.
- (c) A and R are correct, and R is the correct explanation of A
- (d) A and R are correct, but R is not the correct explanation of A.

Today's prelims practice question:

Q. Consider the following statements about the Multidimensional Poverty Index:

- This was developed by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) in association with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
- Gujarat registered the largest decline in number of poor with 3.43 crore people escaping multidimensional poverty.

Which among the statements mentioned above is/are incorrect?

- A. 1 only

- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Correct answer: B

Explanation: The Multidimensional Poverty Index was developed by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) in association with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the year of 2010. Uttar Pradesh registered the largest decline in number of poor with 3.43 crore people escaping multidimensional poverty.

Mains PYQ exercise:

There is a growing divergence in the relationship between poverty and hunger in India. The shrinking of social expenditure by the government is forcing the poor to spend more on non-food essential items squeezing their food-budget- Elucidate. (2019)

Today's mains practice question:

Describe the role played by the Multidimensional Poverty Index in achieving the sustainable development goals.

DETAILED EXPLANATION OF IMPORTANT CONCEPTS

Multidimensional Poverty Index:

What is MPI?

- The Multidimensional Poverty Index is a method of measuring poverty by a multi-directional approach.
- It reflects the multiple deprivations that poor people face in the areas of education, health, and living standards.
- MPI is based on the idea that poverty is not unidimensional but rather multidimensional.
- The global multidimensional poverty index considers data from 109 countries.
- The global MPI advances SDG 1 – ending poverty in all its forms everywhere.
- It also measures interconnected deprivations across indicators related to SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 11.
- MPI uses three dimensions and ten indicators to compile the ranks.

Who developed MPI?

- The Multidimensional Poverty Index was developed by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) in association with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the year of 2010.
- These results are released annually, and it comes under the UNPI's Human Development Report (HDR).

Dimensions of MPI:

- Like the global MPI, India's national MPI has three equally weighted dimensions – Health, Education, and Standard of living – which are represented by 12 indicators.

Key findings of 'National multidimensional poverty index: a progress review, 2023':

- India has registered a significant decline of 9.89 percentage points in the number of multidimensionally poor, from 24.85% in 2015-16 to 14.96% in 2019-2021.
- Nearly 13.5 crore people came out of multidimensional poverty during the period, assessed by identifying “acute deprivations in health, education and standard of living” using United Nations-approved parameters.
- The report said rural areas witnessed the fastest decline in poverty from 32.59% to 19.28%, mainly due to a decrease in number of multidimensionally poor in States such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and Rajasthan.
- Delhi, Kerala, Goa, and Tamil Nadu have the least number of people facing multidimensional poverty, along with the Union Territories.
- Bihar, Jharkhand, Meghalaya, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh top the chart.
- Multidimensional poverty in urban areas, during the same period, saw a decrease from 8.65% to 5.27%.
- Uttar Pradesh registered the largest decline in number of poor with 3.43 crore people escaping multidimensional poverty.
- The report has been prepared based on the latest National Family Health Survey of 2019-21 and is the second edition of the National Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI).
- The broad methodology followed is in consonance with the global methodology.

Parameters of the report:

- 12 parameters of health, education, and standard of living are examined in the report.
- These include nutrition, child and adolescent mortality, maternal health, years of schooling, school attendance, cooking fuel, sanitation, drinking water, electricity, housing, assets, and bank accounts.
- According to the report, between 2015–16 and 2019–21, the MPI value has nearly halved from 0.117 to 0.066 and the intensity of poverty has reduced from 47% to 44%.
- With our own national MPI, India is poised to gain a deeper understanding of poverty's complexities and forge solutions that ensure inclusivity for all.
- The district-wise estimation of the national MPI will also prioritise reaching out to the furthest behind first through focused efforts on specific indicators and dimensions.
- The results and findings of the index provide valuable insights for both policymakers and the wider community.
- It will help the country to achieve the target of reducing multidimensional poverty as per UN's Sustainable Development Goals

3. Russia 'exits' UN-brokered deal to export Ukrainian grain via Black Sea: The Hindu – Page 1,11

Why is it in news?	Russia halted a breakthrough major wartime deal on Monday that allows grain to flow from Ukraine to countries in Africa and Asia where high food prices have pushed more people into poverty.
UPSC SYLLABUS RELEVANCE for prelims and Mains	<p>Prelims: Current events of national and international importance.</p> <p>Mains: General Studies II - Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian diaspora.</p>
Important concepts	<p>Black Sea Grain Initiative</p> <p>Black Sea</p>
<p align="center">Prelims PYQ Exercise-Find answer:</p> <p>Q. (2019) Consider the following pairs:</p>	

Sea	Bordering country
1. Adriatic Sea	Albania
2. Black Sea	Croatia
3. Caspian Sea	Kazakhstan
4. Mediterranean Sea	Morocco
5. Red Sea	Syria

Which of the pairs given above are correctly matched?

- a) 1, 2 and 4 only
- b) 1, 3 and 4 only
- c) 2 and 5 only
- d) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

Today's prelims practice question:

Q. Consider the following statements about the Black Sea Grain Initiative:

- 1. Ukraine, Russia, Georgia, Turkey are the only bordering countries of Black sea.
- 2. The Black Sea Grain Initiative had been extended twice.

Which among the statements mentioned above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Correct answer: B

Explanation:

On July 22, 2022, the UN and Turkey got Russia to agree to the Black Sea Grain Initiative, under which cargo ships would be allowed to travel from and to three Ukrainian ports of Odesa, Chornomorsk and Pivdennyi (Yuzhny), after inspection that they weren't carrying arms. This initiative was agreed by Russia, Ukraine, Türkiye and the UN in Istanbul last July along with a parallel accord between the UN and Russia on grain and fertilizer exports from that country. The

safe passage in the Black Sea was 310 nautical miles long and three nautical miles wide. The deal had been extended twice.

DETAILED EXPLANATION OF IMPORTANT CONCEPTS

Black Sea Grain Initiative:

About the initiative:

- The Initiative eased Russia's naval blockade and saw the reopening of three key Ukrainian ports.
- The UN and Turkey brokered the deal in July 2022, allowing cargo ships to travel between Ukrainian ports and undergo inspections to ensure they were not carrying arms.
- The deal has been extended twice but is set to expire on July 17, 2023.
- The agreement created procedures to safely export grain from certain ports to attempt to address the 2022 food crisis.
- It provides a safe maritime humanitarian corridor for Ukrainian exports (particularly for food grains) from three of its key ports, namely, Chornomorsk, Odesa and Yuzhny/Pivdennyi in the Black Sea.

Reasons to launch this initiative:

- Russia's invasion and blockade of Ukrainian ports raised concerns about food security and soaring prices globally.
- Ukraine is a significant exporter of foodgrains, including wheat and corn, and contributes to the UN's food aid programs.

Outcomes of this deal:

- Approximately 9.8 million tonnes of grains have been shipped so far since the deal was brokered.
- People hoarding the grain in the hope of selling it for a sizable profit owing to the supply crunch were now obligated to sell.
- The initiative has also been credited for having made a huge difference to the global cost of living crisis.

Reasons for Russia's Opposition:

- Russia argues that promises made under the deal have not been fulfilled, affecting its own agricultural exports and fertilizers due to Western sanctions.
- Russia faces challenges with payment platforms, insurance, shipping, and logistics, even though there are no direct restrictions on its agricultural products, making it an obstacle to agricultural exports.
- Russian President expressed frustration and stated that Russia has shown goodwill in extending the deal but feels enough is enough.
- Russia claims the deal was meant to ensure global food security, but Ukraine has mainly exported to high- and middle-income countries, while the UN notes that food prices have cooled down, benefiting poorer nations. So, there is a shift in grain destinations.

Impact on Grain Exports and Production:

- Russia remains the world's top wheat exporter, primarily targeting the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia.
- Ukraine's grain shipments are projected to more than halve, with production at an 11-year low.
- Ukraine's grain markets have shifted from Asia and North Africa to Europe, driven by ease of shipment, causing a glut of Ukrainian grain and protests from farmers in Eastern European countries.

About the Physical Geography of Black Sea:

- Black Sea is bound by Ukraine to the north and northwest, Russia and Georgia to the east, Turkey to the south, and Bulgaria and Romania to the west.
- Bordering Countries: Ukraine, Russia, Georgia, Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania.
- Also known as the Euxine Sea.
- Surrounded by the Pontic (south), Caucasus (east), and Crimean Mountains (north).
- The Turkish straits system - the Dardanelles, Bosphorus and Marmara Sea - forms a transitional zone between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.

- Sea of Azov forms a northern extension of the Black Sea linked by the Strait of Kerch.
- It links to the Sea of Marmara through the Bosphorus and then to the Aegean through the Dardanelles.
- Has anoxic water; significant absence of oxygen in the water.

What is the importance of Black Sea for Russia?

- Black Sea has traditionally been Russia's warm water gateway to Europe.
- For Russia, the Black Sea is a stepping stone to the Mediterranean.
- It acts as a strategic buffer between NATO and itself.
- It showcases the Russian power in the Mediterranean and to secure the economic gateway to key markets in southern Europe.
- Russia has been making efforts to gain complete control over the Black Sea since the Crimean crisis of 2014.

MODEL MAINS ANSWER FOR TODAY'S EXPECTED MAINS QUESTION

Q. Describe the role played by the Multidimensional Poverty Index in achieving the sustainable development goals.

<p>Why this question</p>	<p>The question theme is reflected several times in UPSC (including prelims) and APPSC mains.</p> <p>UPSC PYQs</p> <p>There is a growing divergence in the relationship between poverty and hunger in India. The shrinking of social expenditure by the government is forcing the poor to spend more on non-food essential items squeezing their food-budget- Elucidate. (2019)</p>
<p><u>First step is to understand the demand of the</u></p>	<p>Question has two parts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is MPI? 2. What is the role played by MPI in achieving the SDGs?

<u>question</u>													
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Multidimensional Poverty Index is a method of measuring poverty by a multi-directional approach. It reflects the multiple deprivations that poor people face in the areas of education, health, and living standards. 												
Body	<table> <tr> <th data-bbox="427 589 654 647">Dimension</th><th data-bbox="654 589 1319 647">Content</th></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="427 647 654 949">What is Poverty?</td><td data-bbox="654 647 1319 949">It is a condition where a person does not have the minimum amount of income needed to meet the minimum basic requirements like food and clothing over an extended period of time.</td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="427 949 654 1308">How to capture poverty?</td><td data-bbox="654 949 1319 1308">Focusing on income only is not enough to capture the true reality of poverty as poor can suffer from multiple disadvantages at the same time e.g. poor health, malnutrition, a lack of clean water or electricity, poor quality of work or lack of education schooling.</td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="427 1308 654 1610">Who developed MPI?</td><td data-bbox="654 1308 1319 1610">The Multidimensional Poverty Index was developed by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) in association with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the year of 2010.</td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="427 1610 654 1792">When is MPI released?</td><td data-bbox="654 1610 1319 1792">These results are released annually, and it comes under the UNPI's Human Development Report (HDR).</td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="427 1792 654 2024">What are the Dimensions of MPI?</td><td data-bbox="654 1792 1319 2024">Like the global MPI, India's national MPI has three equally weighted dimensions – Health, Education, and Standard of living – which are represented by 12 indicators.</td></tr> </table>	Dimension	Content	What is Poverty?	It is a condition where a person does not have the minimum amount of income needed to meet the minimum basic requirements like food and clothing over an extended period of time.	How to capture poverty?	Focusing on income only is not enough to capture the true reality of poverty as poor can suffer from multiple disadvantages at the same time e.g. poor health, malnutrition, a lack of clean water or electricity, poor quality of work or lack of education schooling.	Who developed MPI?	The Multidimensional Poverty Index was developed by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) in association with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the year of 2010.	When is MPI released?	These results are released annually, and it comes under the UNPI's Human Development Report (HDR).	What are the Dimensions of MPI?	Like the global MPI, India's national MPI has three equally weighted dimensions – Health, Education, and Standard of living – which are represented by 12 indicators.
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About SDGs

SDG's by highlighting the need to achieve multiple goals can address the multidimensional need of development.

There are 17 SDGs, they recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality and spur economic growth.

What is the role played by MPI in achieving the SDGs?

Dimension	Content
SDG 1	Removal of poverty is the Goal 1 of SDG. It identifies income criteria for removal of poverty.
Good health	SDGs make sure everyone has health coverage and access to safe and effective medicines and vaccines.
Hunger and malnutrition	These health issues have long term impact on earning capacities of individuals thus impacting their capacity to raise their income and account for a crucial form of deprivation. Thus, addressing malnutrition goes well beyond the basic need for food and income.
Sanitation	The access to safe water and sanitation is necessary for good health as well as nutritional needs of individuals. Poor sanitation has health effects, for example, debilitating diseases like Polio are caused by poor sanitary conditions.

	Education	Education has direct impact on quality of life of individuals e.g. level of income, ability to choose profession of one's preference etc.	
Conclusion:	The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are recognition of the fact that poverty cannot be addressed merely by enhancing incomes. Development is a multidimensional construct as illustrated by Human development index. Thus, policy makers in developing societies should try to address the intertwined issues of development to address poverty. In the context of India, Aspirational Districts Programme strives to address health & nutrition, education, agriculture & water resources, financial Inclusion & skill Development, and basic infrastructure in right direction. A multidimensional approach to assess deprivation is important to combat poverty and to achieve the sustainable development goals.		