



QR Codes for Food Labels

For Prelims: QR codes for Food Labels, [Food Safety and Standards Authority of India, Front-of-Pack Labeling \(FOPL\), Quick Response Code](#), Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, Food Safety and Standards (Labelling and Display) Regulations, 2020.

For Mains: QR Codes for Food Labels, Food Processing and Related Industries in India Scope' and Significance, Inclusive growth and issues arising from it.

[Source: TH](#)

Why in News?

Recently, [Food Safety and Standards Authority of India \(FSSAI\)](#) has recommended the inclusion of **QR codes on food products** for accessibility by visually impaired individuals stating that this will ensure **Access to Safe Food** for all.

- The FSSAI in 2019 proposed the [Front-of-Pack Labeling \(FOPL\)](#), a key strategy to alert and educate consumers in making an informed choice.

What is QR Code?

- A [QR \(Quick Response\) code](#), is a type of **two-dimensional matrix barcode** that can store various types of data, such as alphanumeric text, website URLs, contact information, and more.
- It was invented in **1994 by the Japanese company Denso Wave**, primarily for the purpose of **tracking and labeling automobile parts**.
- QR codes are characterized by their distinctive square shape and a pattern of black squares on a white background, which can be **scanned and interpreted using a QR code reader or a smartphone camera**.

What are the Key Recommendations of the FSSAI in this Regard?

- **FSSAI's Food Safety and Standards (Labelling and Display) Regulations, 2020:**
 - The Recommendations are consistent with the **FSSAI's Food Safety and Standards (Labelling and Display) Regulations, 2020**.
 - It ensures that food manufacturers adhere to labeling requirements, which are essential for food safety and consumer protection.
- **Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016:**
 - By including QR codes for accessibility by visually impaired individuals, the move is in accordance with the **Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016**.
 - It promotes inclusivity and equal access to essential information.
- **Information Provided by QR Codes:**
 - The QR codes will encompass **comprehensive details about the product**, including, but

not limited to, ingredients, nutritional information, allergens, manufacturing date, best before/expiry/use by date, allergen warning, and contact information for customer enquiries.

- The inclusion of a QR code for the **accessibility of information** does not replace or negate the requirement to provide mandatory information on the product label, as **prescribed by relevant regulations**.

What are the Present Concerns Related to Access to Safe Food?

- India is experiencing a significant rise in [Non-Communicable Diseases \(NCDs\)](#), such as obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases.
- The [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) has noted a global increase in NCDs over the last two decades.
- These diseases are partly attributed to the **consumption of aggressively marketed, cheaper, and easily available** pre-packaged foods, which are becoming increasingly popular among consumers.

What is the Significance of the Move?

- **Accessibility for Visually Impaired Individuals:**
 - These codes can be scanned using smartphone applications, which can then read out the information to the user.
 - This ensures that visually impaired consumers have the **same access to critical information about food products** as sighted individuals, promoting inclusivity and equal access to safe food.
- **Comprehensive Information:**
 - The level of details provided in the QR code empowers all consumers, including those with dietary restrictions or allergies, to make informed choices, reducing the risk of adverse reactions or health issues.
- **Informed Decision-Making:**
 - Consumers can quickly verify the claims made by manufacturers and make choices that support their health and dietary needs.
 - This is particularly crucial in a market saturated with pre-packaged foods, as consumers **can distinguish between healthier and less healthy options**.
 - By providing nutritional information and allergen warnings through QR codes, consumers are better equipped to make healthier food choices.
- **Global Significance:**
 - The use of QR codes on food products is not unique to India. Countries like the US, France, the U.K., and India are prominent users of QR codes on food products.
 - This aligns with global trends, as consumers worldwide increasingly use QR codes to access **information about the products they purchase**.

Conclusion

- The inclusion of QR codes on food products in India is a significant step toward improving public health, enhancing consumer protection, and promoting inclusivity. It aligns with global trends in food labeling and empowers consumers to make informed choices about their dietary preferences.
- This initiative demonstrates the commitment of Indian authorities to address the challenges associated with the growing consumption of pre-packaged foods and the rise of NCDs.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. Consider the following statements: (2018)

1. The Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 replaced the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954.
2. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is under the charge of Director General of Health Services in the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (a)

Exp:

- Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is an autonomous body under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, GoI. It has been established under Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 which consolidates various acts and orders that have hitherto handled food related issues in various Ministries and Departments.
- The Food Standards and Safety Act, 2006 replaced several Acts and Orders like the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954; Fruit Products Order, 1955; etc. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- FSSAI is headed by a non-executive Chairperson, appointed by the Central Government, either holding or have held a position not below the rank of Secretary to the GoI. It is not under the charge of Director General of Health Services. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**
- FSSAI has been created for laying down science based standards for articles of food and to regulate their manufacture, storage, distribution, sale and import to ensure availability of safe and wholesome food for human consumption.
- Therefore, option (a) is the correct answer.

Multilingualism in India

For Prelims: Indian Languages, Multilingualism, [Eighth Schedule](#)

For Mains: Protection and Promotion of Indian Languages, Diversity of India

[Source:LM](#)

Why in News?

In today's interconnected world, multilingualism has garnered increasing recognition for its multifaceted significance. This includes not only its [cognitive advantages](#) but also its potential to **enrich diverse cultures**.

- A prime example of the importance of **embracing multilingualism is India**, with its abundance of languages and scripts.

What is India's Multilingual Landscape?

- **Multilingual Landscape:**
 - India is one of the most linguistically diverse countries in the world, with **over 19,500 languages spoken throughout the nation**.
 - This diversity offers a unique opportunity for Indians to be multilingual, which means being able to **use more than one language in communication**.

- According to the 2011 Census of India, **more than 25% of the population speaks two languages**, while about **7% speak three languages**.
 - Studies state that young Indians are **more multilingual** than their elder generation with about half the **urban population aged 15 to 49 years speaking two languages**.
- **Contribution of Multilingualism to India's Diversity:**
 - India's multilingualism is not only a matter of numbers, but also of culture, identity, and history.
 - India's languages reflect its diverse and **pluralistic society**, where people from **different religions, ethnicities, castes, and classes coexist and interact**.
- **Benefits of Multilingualism:**
 - Multilingualism can enhance cognitive abilities, such as **memory, attention, problem-solving, and creativity**.
 - Research has shown that bilinguals and multilinguals have better **executive functions**, which are responsible for planning, organizing, and controlling mental processes.
 - Multilingualism can also improve **social and emotional skills**, such as empathy, perspective-taking, and intercultural competence.
 - By learning different languages, people can access **different cultures, values, and worldviews**, which can help them understand and appreciate diversity.
 - Multilingualism can also offer practical advantages, such as career opportunities, travel experiences, and access to information and entertainment.
 - By knowing more than one language, people can communicate with more people, explore more places, and enjoy more resources.

What are the Constitutional Provisions Related to Languages in India?

- **Article 29:**
 - It protects the **interests of minorities**. It ensures that all citizens have the right to **preserve their distinct language, script, or culture**.
 - It also prohibits discrimination based on race, caste, creed, religion, or language.
- **Eighth Schedule:**
 - It lists the official languages of the republic of India. **Part XVII of the Indian constitution** deals with the official languages in **Articles 343 to 351**.
 - The [Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution](#) recognizes **22 official languages**:
 - Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, Bodo, Santhali, Maithili and Dogri.
 - All the **Classical Languages** are listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution.
 - Six languages in India currently have 'Classical' status listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution.
 - Tamil (declared in 2004), Sanskrit (2005), Kannada (2008), Telugu (2008), Malayalam (2013), and Odia (2014).
- **Article 343:**
 - It states that the official language of the Union government is **Hindi in Devanagari script**, and numerals should follow the international form of Indian numerals.
 - This Article also states that English will continue to be used as an official language for 15 years from the commencement of the Constitution.
- **Article 345:**
 - The legislature of a State may by law adopt any **one or more of the languages in use in the State** or Hindi as the Language or Languages to be used for all or any of the official purposes of that State.
- **Article 346:**
 - It recognizes India's linguistic diversity by allowing **multiple languages to be used in official communications**. It also provides a mechanism to ensure effective communication between states and between a State and the Union.
- **Article 347:**
 - It gives the President the power to **recognise a language as an official language of a given state**, provided that the [President](#) is satisfied that a substantial proportion of that

state desires that the language be recognised. Such recognition can be for a part of the state or the whole state.

▪ **Article 348(1):**

- It provides that all proceedings in the [Supreme Court](#) and in every High Court shall be in **English language** until Parliament by law otherwise provides.

▪ **Article 348(2):**

- Provides further that notwithstanding the provisions of Article 348(1), the [Governor](#) of a state may, with the previous consent of the President, authorise the use of Hindi or any other language used for any official purpose, in proceedings in the High Court.

▪ **Article 350:**

- Every person shall be entitled to submit a representation for the redress of any grievance to any officer or authority of the Union or a State in any of the languages used in the Union or in the State, as the case may be.
- **Article 350A** of the Indian Constitution provides that every state must **provide primary education in a mother tongue**.
- **Article 350B** provides for the appointment of a "**Special Officer**" for linguistic minorities.

▪ **Article 351:**

- It gives power to the union government to issue a directive for the **development of the Hindi language**.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. Consider the following statements:(2021)

1. 21st February is declared to be the International Mother Language Day by UNICEF.
2. The demand that Bangla has to be one of the national languages was raised in the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (b)

Q2. With reference to India, the terms 'Halbi, Ho and Kui' pertain to (2021)

- (a) dance forms of Northwest India
- (b) musical instruments
- (c) pre-historic cave paintings
- (d) tribal languages

Ans: (d)

Q.3 Which one of the following was given classical language status recently? (2015)

- (a) Odia
- (b) Konkani
- (c) Bhojpuri
- (d) Assamese

Ans: (a)

Carbon Nanoflorets

For Prelims: Carbon nanoflorets, [Carbon footprint](#).

For Mains: Science and Technology- Developments and their Applications and Effects in Everyday Life, Achievements of Indians in Science & Technology.

[Source: TH](#)

Why in News?

Recently, researchers at IIT Bombay have created **carbon nanoflorets** capable of converting **sunlight into heat** with unmatched efficiency.

- This innovative development holds the potential to revolutionize sustainable heating solutions while minimizing the [carbon footprint](#).

What are Carbon Nanoflorets?

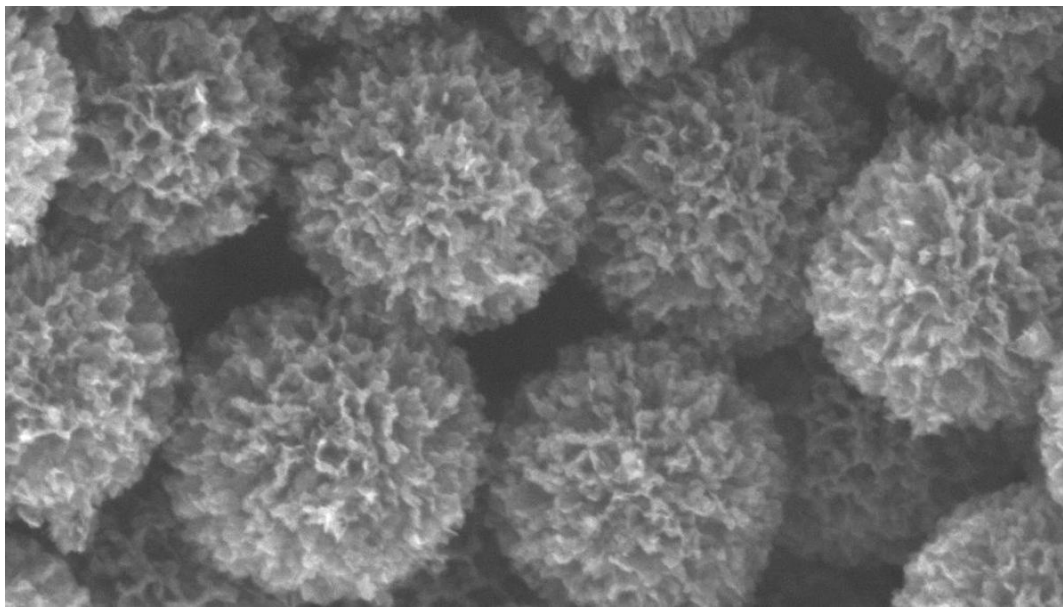
- **About:**

- The carbon nanoflorets, developed by researchers from IIT Bombay, demonstrate an impressive **light absorption efficiency of 87%**.
- They can absorb multiple frequencies of sunlight, including infrared, visible light, and ultraviolet, in stark contrast to **traditional solar-thermal materials** that typically **absorb only visible and ultraviolet light**.

- **Designing Process of Carbon nanoflorets:**

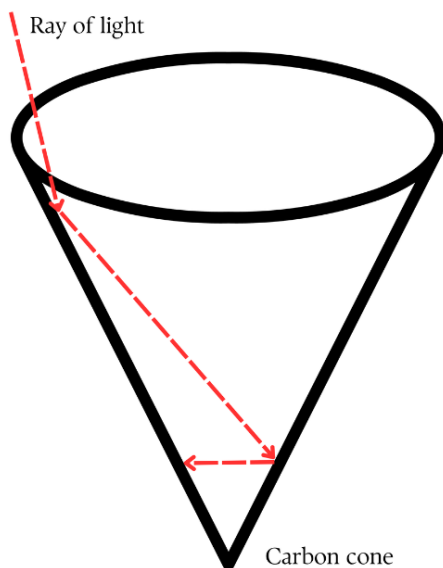
- A special form of silicon dust called DFNS (dendritic fibrous nanosilica) is heated in a furnace.
- Introduction of Acetylene gas in the chamber facilitates carbon deposition, turning it black.
- Then the black powder is collected and treated with a strong chemical that dissolves the DFNS away, leaving carbon particles behind, resulting in **spherical carbon beads with cone-shaped pits**, forming the carbon nanoflorets, resembling **marigold flowers** when observed under a microscope.

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▪ The Role of Unique Structure:

- The structure of the nanoflorets, composed of carbon cones, **minimizes light reflection and ensures maximum internal absorption.**
- This distinctive design captures and **retains sunlight, converting it into thermal energy.**



A simple schematic diagram showing the path of sunlight inside a carbon nanofloret.

▪ Minimal Heat Dissipation:

- The long-range disorder in the nanoflorets' structure ensures that heat generated within the material is **not carried over long distances.**
 - This characteristic reduces the dissipation of heat into the environment, allowing the nanoflorets to retain and utilize the generated thermal energy effectively.

What are the Applications and Commercial Potential of Carbon Nanoflorets?

▪ Heating Water Efficiently:

- A one-square-meter coating of carbon nanoflorets can vaporize approximately five litres of water within an hour, surpassing the performance of **commercial solar stills.**
 - Carbon nanoflorets are ideal for water heating applications, offering a **sustainable**

and cost-effective solution that reduces reliance on [fossil fuels](#).

- Nanoflorets can be applied to diverse surfaces, such as paper, metal, and terracotta clay, making them versatile for various applications.

▪ **Eco-Friendly Heating:**

- By utilizing nanofloret coatings, users can harness [solar energy](#) for heating their homes in an environmentally friendly manner, thereby reducing their carbon footprint.

▪ **Stability and Longevity:**

- Coated nanoflorets exhibit exceptional stability with a minimum **lifetime of eight years**.
 - Researchers are continuing to assess their durability under various environmental conditions.

Goa Maritime Conclave 2023

For Prelims: Goa Maritime Conclave 2023, Indian Ocean nations, [Indian Ocean Region \(IOR\)](#), Common Multilateral Maritime Strategy, Prisoner's Dilemma.

For Mains: Goa Maritime Conclave 2023, . Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

[Source: PIB](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the 4th edition of **Goa Maritime Conclave (GMC) - 2023** has been held by the Indian Navy under the aegis of **Naval War College, Goa**.

- The conclave was attended by delegates from twelve [Indian Ocean nations](#), including Comoros, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Myanmar, Seychelles, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.
- **Theme 2023: Theme 2023:** "Maritime Security in the Indian Ocean Region: Converting Common Maritime Priorities into Collaborative Mitigating Frameworks".

What are the Key Highlights of Goa Maritime Conclave?

▪ **About:**

- The GMC is a high-level gathering of naval and defense officials from various [Indian Ocean Region \(IOR\)](#) nations to discuss common maritime challenges and enhance regional cooperation.
- It is the Indian Navy's outreach Initiative providing a multinational platform to harness the collective wisdom of practitioners of maritime security and the academia **towards garnering outcome oriented maritime thought**.
- It provides a forum for exchange of views by the Chiefs of Navy/ Heads of Maritime Agencies on dealing with **contemporary and future maritime challenges**, as well as presenting cooperative strategies for enhancing interoperability amongst partner maritime agencies.

▪ **Defense Minister's Address:**

- During the Conclave Defence Minister of India referred to the concept of **"Prisoner's Dilemma"** to underscore the need for countries to collaborate with each other instead of working **at cross purposes**.
 - The concept of the Prisoner's Dilemma, when applied in the domain of international

relations, can explain and analyze various situations where countries face strategic decision-making challenges.

- For example, when two or more countries engage in an arms race, they often do so out of mutual fear and mistrust.
- The Indian Defense Minister stressed the need for **multinational collaborative mitigation frameworks in the IOR** to address common maritime challenges.
 - He emphasized the importance of self-reliance in the defense sector to enhance regional security and prosperity.
 - Also emphasized that a **free, open and rule-based maritime order is a priority for all of us.** 'Might is right' has no place in such a maritime order. Adherence to international maritime laws, as **enunciated in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) 1982**, must be our lodestar.

What is Prisoner's Dilemma?

▪ About:

- The Prisoner's Dilemma is a **fundamental concept in game theory**, a branch of mathematics and social science that analyzes **strategic decision-making in situations** where the outcome depends on the **choices of multiple participants**.

▪ Prisoner's Dilemma Scenario:

- The Prisoner's Dilemma is often illustrated using a scenario where two individuals, let's call them A and B, are arrested for a crime, and they are placed in separate interrogation rooms.
- The police lack concrete evidence, **but they offer each prisoner a choice:**
 - If both prisoners remain silent (cooperate), they both serve a relatively short sentence, If both prisoners confess, they both receive a moderately long sentence.
- The dilemma arises from the fact that each prisoner must decide without knowing the other's choice. The logical decision for each individual, considering their self-interest, is to confess because it ensures **the least severe outcome regardless of the other's choice**.

What is the Significance of the Secured Indian Ocean Region for India?

▪ Maritime Security:

- There is no universal definition of maritime security, but it **classifies issues in the maritime domain comprising** national security, marine environment, economic development, and human security.
- Besides the world's oceans, **it also deals with regional seas**, territorial waters, rivers and ports.

▪ Significance for India:

◦ National Security:

- For India, maritime security is an important aspect of **national security as it has a coastline of over 7,000 km.**
- With advancement in technology, physical threats in the maritime region have now been overshadowed by technological threats.

◦ For Trade Purpose:

- India's exports and imports have remained mostly across the shipping lanes of the Indian Ocean.
- Therefore, **Securing [Sea Lanes of Communication \(SLOCs\)](#)** have been an important issue for India in the 21st century.

◦ Countering China's Growing:

- India has expressed concerns about **China's growing presence in the Indian Ocean region**, particularly in countries like Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Maldives.
- The development of Chinese-controlled ports and military facilities in these areas has been seen as a challenge to India's strategic interests and regional security.

▪ Present Maritime Security Mechanism in India:

- Currently, coastal security of India is governed by a three-tiered structure.
 - The Indian Navy patrols the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL), while the [Indian Coast Guard \(ICG\)](#) is mandated to do patrolling and surveillance up to 200 nautical miles (i.e., [Exclusive Economic Zone](#)).
- Simultaneously, the State Coastal/Marine Police (SCP/SMP) performs boat patrolling in shallow coastal areas.
- The SCP have jurisdiction **up to 12 nautical miles from the coast**; and the ICG and the Indian Navy have jurisdiction over the entire maritime zone (up to 200 nautical miles), including the territorial waters (with the SMP).
- **India's Recent Maritime Engagements:**
 - To address shared concerns over maritime security, **Indian naval ships conducted coordinated patrols with countries like Mozambique, Seychelles, and Mauritius in 2023.**
 - These patrols aimed to combat piracy, smuggling, and illicit trafficking in the **Indian Ocean region.**
 - India has been actively involved in capacity-building activities to support African nations in achieving self-sufficiency and enhancing their maritime capabilities.
- **SAGAR Initiative:**
 - [Security and Growth for All in the Region \(SAGAR\)](#) was launched in 2015. It is India's strategic vision for the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
 - Through SAGAR, India seeks to deepen economic and security cooperation with its maritime neighbors and assist in building their maritime security capabilities.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q1. With reference to 'Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC)', consider the following statements: (2015)

1. It was established very recently in response to incidents of piracy and accidents of oil spills.
2. It is an alliance meant for maritime security only.

Which of the statements given above is/ are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (d)

Mains

Q. With respect to the South China sea, maritime territorial disputes and rising tension affirm the need for safeguarding maritime security to ensure freedom of navigation and overflight throughout the region. In this context, discuss the bilateral issues between India and China. **(2014)**

Minimum Wage Policy and Gig Workers

For Prelims: [Minimum wage](#), [e-Commerce Platforms](#), Bigbasket, Flipkart, Urban Company, Fair Pay, Fair Conditions, Fair Contracts, Fair Management, Fair Representation.

For Mains: Need and significance of minimum wages in promoting [inclusive growth](#) and development.

Source: TH

Why in News?

The **fifth annual study** conducted across **12 e-commerce platforms** by **Fairwork India**, presents a grim picture of working conditions for [India's gig workers](#).

- Fairwork is a **team of researchers part of International Institute of Information Technology**, Bangalore's Centre for IT and Public Policy.
- Five Fairwork principles such as Fair Pay, Fair Conditions, Fair Contracts, Fair Management and Fair Representation were examined in the study.

What are the Key Highlights of the Study?

- **Minimum Wage and Worker Alienation:**
 - The study highlights that **only three platforms, including Bigbasket, Flipkart, and Urban Company, have minimum wage policies** to ensure workers earn at least the local minimum wage.
 - However, no platform guarantees that workers earn a living wage. This year's study **explores how working conditions contribute to alienation, often linked to discrimination** based on factors like caste, class, gender, and religion.
- **Safety, Contract Clarity, and Worker Protections:**
 - Some platforms also **offer accident insurance coverage and compensation for income loss due to accidents or medical reasons**.
 - Additionally, companies have **taken measures to ensure contract clarity, data protection, and processes for handling worker issues**, such as appealing disciplinary actions.
 - Unfortunately, **no platform received points for Fair Representation, indicating a lack of recognition for collective worker bodies** despite increased worker collectivization in recent years.

What is the Scenario of the Gig Economy in India?

- **Definition:**
 - The gig economy refers to a labor market characterized by the prevalence of **short-term contracts, freelance work, and temporary positions, as opposed to permanent employment**.
 - In the gig economy, individuals often **work on a project-by-project basis, taking on various "gigs" or tasks**, rather than being traditional full-time employees of a single company.
- **Growth Scenario:**
 - As per the [Economic Survey 2020-21](#), India has emerged as one of the world's largest countries for flexi staffing, or gig workers.
 - As per [Niti Aayog](#)'s report on **Gig Economy**, the latter employs **approximately 7.7 million workers**, with the number **expected to rise to 23.5 million by 2029-30**, comprising around **4% of overall livelihood** in the country.
 - Currently, about **31% of gig work is in low skilled jobs** such as cab driving and food delivery, **47% in medium-skilled jobs** such as plumbing and beauty services, and **22% in high skilled jobs** such as graphic design and tutoring.
- **Major Issues Faced by Gig Workers:**
 - Gig workers are often **excluded from social security and labor legislation** due to their

ambiguous employment status.

- Social security and other basic labor rights like minimum wage, limits on working hours, etc. **hinge on “employee” status**, the independent contractor status of gig workers excludes them from getting such benefits and legal protections.
- In the event of disability or a worker's death, Social Security provides benefits to eligible individuals and their families. **Gig workers may have lower coverage for these benefits, which can affect their financial security in challenging circumstances.**

▪ Government's Initiatives:

- The [Code on Social Security \(2020\)](#) contains a separate section on ‘gig economy’ and **imposes an obligation on gig employers** to contribute to a Social Security Fund to be handled by a government-led board.
- The [Code on Wages, 2019](#), provides for universal minimum wage and floor wage across organized and unorganized sectors, including gig workers.



What is the Minimum Wage Policy of India?

▪ Code of Wages Act 2019:

- The Code aims to transform the old and obsolete labour laws into more accountable and transparent ones and seeks to pave the way for the introduction of minimum wages and [labour reforms in the country](#).
- It universalizes the provisions of [minimum wages](#) and timely payment of wages to all employees irrespective of the sector and wage ceiling and seeks to ensure "**Right to Sustenance**" for every worker and intends to increase the legislative protection of minimum wage.
- The Central Government is **empowered to fix the floor wages by taking into account the living standards of workers**. It may set different floor wages for different geographical areas.
 - The **minimum wages decided by the central or state governments must be higher than the floor wage.**

▪ Fixation of Floor Wage:

- The **Code on Wages Rules, 2020** mentions the concept of a **floor wage**, which empowers the central government to fix floor wages taking into account the minimum living standards of workers.
 - The floor wage is a baseline wage below which minimum wages **cannot be fixed by state governments**.
 - The Wage Code permits the fixation of **different floor level wages for different geographical areas**. However, this has given rise to the fear of flight of capital from areas where the wage is higher to areas where the wage is lower.

Way Forward

- **Worker Classification:** Define clear guidelines for the **classification of gig workers (e.g., independent contractors, employees)** to ensure they receive appropriate legal protections and benefits. India's labor laws have been evolving to address this issue, and the **distinction between gig workers and traditional employees is a key consideration.**
- **Social Security and Benefits:** Explore options for providing gig workers with access to social security benefits, such as **retirement savings, health insurance, and unemployment benefits**, potentially through a portable benefits system.
- **Wage Protection:** Implement mechanisms to ensure gig workers receive fair compensation, and consider setting minimum wage standards for specific gig roles to prevent exploitation.
- **Skill Development:** Encourage continuous skill development and training for gig workers to **enhance their employability and earnings potential.** Government and industry partnerships can help in providing training programs tailored to gig economy needs.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims:

Q. In India, which one of the following compiles information on industrial disputes, closures, retrenchments and lay-offs in factories employing workers? **(2022)**

- (a) Central Statistics Office
- (b) Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade
- (c) Labour Bureau
- (d) National Technical Manpower Information System

Ans: (c)

Mains:

Q. Examine the role of 'Gig Economy' in the process of empowerment of women in India. **(2021)**

Rapid Fire Current Affairs

World Cities Day 2023

World Cities Day, designated by the [United Nations General Assembly](#), is celebrated **annually on 31st October and was first celebrated in 2014.**

- The Day serves as an opportunity to promote the **international community's interest in [global urbanization](#)**, push forward cooperation among countries in addressing challenges of urbanization and contribute to sustainable urban development around the world.
- **Theme for 2023:** "Financing sustainable urban future for all."
- The UN-Habitat programme promotes the development of **sustainable cities in line with [sustainable development goal 11](#)**.
 - The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) is the United Nations agency for human settlements and sustainable urban development.

Read more: [World Cities Day](#)

Rajyotsava Awards in Karnataka

On **Karnataka Rajyotsava Day**, celebrated on **1st November**, Karnataka government bestows the prestigious **Rajyotsava Award, the state's second-highest civilian honor**.

- Rajyotsava Award recognizes exceptional contributions of Individuals in diverse fields.
- Karnataka Formation Day(Rajyotsava Day), celebrated on November 1st, marks the state's birth in **1956**. It resulted from **merging Kannada-speaking regions of South India**.
 - At India's independence, South India was ruled by Mysuru, **Nizams of Hyderabad, Madras Presidency, and Bombay Presidency**. To improve administration, regions were **redefined based on language**.
 - In 1956, Mysuru's boundaries were adjusted to include Kannada-speaking areas.
 - The name changed from '**Mysuru**' to '**Karnataka**' on **November 1, 1973**. Since then each year **November 1 marks the celebration of state formation**.

Ballon d'Or 2023

Lionel Messi secured his **eighth Ballon d'Or**, a record in football history, and **Aitana Bonmati** claimed the **Ballon d'Or Féminin Award** for her exceptional contributions to Spain's Women's World Cup win and Barcelona's success.

- The Ballon d'Or is an annual football award presented by French news magazine France Football since 1956.
- The Ballon d'Or awards are based on a **player's individual performance in the previous season**. This is a change from previous criteria, which were based on player performance during the calendar year.
- The award was temporarily merged with the **FIFA World Player of the Year** from 2010 to 2015 and is known as the FIFA Ballon d'Or. However, in 2016, this partnership concluded.

Read more: [Indian Football's Vision 2047](#)

Strong Growth Across Core Industries in India

- The **Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI)** in India for **September 2023** indicates robust growth, rising by **8.1% compared to September 2022**.
- The ICI measures combined and individual performance of production of eight core industries viz. Cement, Coal, Crude Oil, Electricity, Fertilizers, Natural Gas, Refinery Products and Steel.
 - The Eight Core Industries comprise 40.27% of the weight of items included in the **Index of Industrial Production (IIP)**.
- Specifically, **coal production surged by 16.1%**, while steel and electricity generation also saw impressive increments of 9.6% and 9.3%, respectively.
 - However, the **production of crude oil witnessed a slight decline by 0.4%**.
- This growth trajectory reflects an overall positive momentum in India's core industries, highlighting a promising economic landscape for the nation.

Read more: [Core Sector Industries](#)

Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat)

Recently, the Indian Prime Minister launched the '**Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat)**' platform aiming to be a **technology-driven facilitator for youth development and youth-led development**.

- **MY Bharat** will benefit the youth in the age group of **15-29 years**, in line with the definition of '**Youth**' in the **National Youth Policy**.
 - In case of programme components specifically meant for the adolescents, the beneficiaries will be in the age group of **10-19 years**.
- It is a '**Phygital Platform**' (**physical + digital**) comprising physical activity along with an opportunity to connect digitally.

- It envisions a framework where the **youth of our country can seamlessly connect with programs, mentors, and their local communities.**
- This engagement is designed to **deepen their understanding of local issues** and empower them to contribute to constructive solutions.

Read more: [Youth in India 2022 Report](#)

India Shines at Para Asian Games 2023

- Indian **para-athletes** mark a monumental achievement in the history of **Para Asian Games held in Hangzhou, China** with an **all-time high medal tally of 111**, including an impressive 29 gold medals.
 - With this India clinches the **5th position in the overall medal tally behind China, Iran, Japan and the Republic of Korea.**
 - Out of the 111 medals secured, **female para-athletes** have contributed significantly, accounting for **40 medals**, constituting 36% of the total medal tally.

Read more: [Paralympic Games](#)

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