



The Hindu Important News Articles & Editorial For UPSC CSE  
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Page 10 : GS 2 : International relations

USCIRF (United States Commission on International Religious Freedom) is a US government agency that monitors and reports on religious freedom violations worldwide. It is a bipartisan commission that provides information to Congress and the Executive Branch on religious freedom issues.

- ➔ USCIRF has been criticized for its lack of independence and its close ties to the US State Department.
- ➔ It has also been accused of being biased against certain countries and religions.













Page 10 : GS 3 : Indian Economy – Changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth

Text describing the Indian textile and apparel industry's growth target of \$350 billion by 2030 and its contribution to GDP.

Text describing the industry's performance in FY2021-22, noting a 3.5% growth and a 40% drop in exports.

Why is the textile industry struggling to perform better?

What caused the slump in the Indian textile sector in the last two financial years?

M. Soundariya Preetha

The story so far:

Union Minister for Textiles Giriraj Singh recently said that the Indian textile and apparel sector is aiming for a total business of \$350 billion annually by 2030, which is to generate 3.5 crore jobs. However, the industry went through a tumultuous phase during the last two financial years, casting a shadow on the possibility for 10% CAGR.

What is the status now?

The size of the Indian textile and apparel industry was estimated to be \$153 billion in 2021, with almost \$110 billion contributed by domestic business. In FY22, India was the third largest textile exporter globally, enjoying a 5.4% share. India is also said to have the second largest manufacturing capacity, with a robust capability across the value chain. The sector's contribution to GDP is close to 2.3% (FY21) and 10.6% of total

manufacturing Gross Value Added (GVA) in FY23. About 105 million people are employed by the textile and garment units, directly and indirectly. For an industry that has 80% of its capacity spread across MSMEs and is sensitive to international developments as it is strongly linked to global markets, FY2021-2022 saw tremendous growth with \$43.4 billion exports.

However, slowdown in demand that started in 2022-2023 only worsened in FY24 with a slump in exports and domestic demand. This impacted manufacturing clusters severely. For instance, Tamil Nadu, which has the largest spinning capacity in the country, saw the closure of nearly 500 textile mills in the last two years. In Tiruppur, which is a knitwear production destination, many units saw a 40% drop in business in FY23.

Why did exports slump?

Geopolitical developments and a slump in demand in buying countries hit the exporting units. This was exacerbated by

high raw material prices of both, cotton and Man Made Fibres (MMF), and the growing import of fabrics and garments.

The imposition of a 10% import duty on cotton has made Indian cotton more expensive compared to international prices. In the case of MMF, introduction of quality control orders has disturbed raw material availability and price stability. The industry is repeatedly demanding removal of the import duty on cotton at least during the off-season months of April to October. "This is an industry in which the stakeholders compete in the international market with countries that heavily support their domestic production capabilities. So, India needs schemes that run for at least five years and boost investments. Raw material should be available for the domestic industry at internationally competitive prices," says a spokesperson of a leading industry association.

What are the other challenges?

Apart from policy issues, the industry is

also staring at disruptions in its traditional business systems. Direct retailing to customers through e-commerce is a trend that is catching on among garment and home textile manufacturers, with more startups entering this space. A report by Wazir Advisors notes that "(Foreign) brands are fast-tracking the adoption of ESG sustainability across the supply chain." They are defining their sustainability targets and want to source from vendors who will meet these targets. Further, there is a rise in comfort wear, loungewear, and athleisure as the emphasis on comfortable clothing has increased among consumers. "Even in the domestic market, much has changed in the way business is done. Customers in rural and semi-urban areas prefer to shop in multi-brand outlets or hyper markets. They do not want to step into outlets of less known brands," said Palanisamy, a basic garment producer in Tiruppur.

What next?

The industry is looking at a \$100 billion investment across various segments of the value chain by 2030 to augment production capacities and meet the \$350 billion target. Labour constitutes roughly 10% of the production cost in the textile sector. The average daily wage of a trained textile worker is reported to be ₹550 a day. Unskilled workers earn about ₹450 a day. The industry has no option but to look at technology and skilling of its workforce to improve productivity and reduce wastages, say industry sources.

THE GIST

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Text describing the industry's performance in FY2021, noting a 153 billion contribution to GDP and a 110 billion contribution to exports.



# Daily News Analysis

- ➔ **India's GDP Growth:** India's GDP grew 5.4% in Q1 2022, marking a recovery from a 7.6% decline in Q4 2021. This is the highest quarterly growth since Q3 2020.
- ➔ **Services Sector:** The services sector contributed 2.3% to the overall growth, showing a recovery from a 4.7% decline in Q4 2021.
- ➔ **Manufacturing:** Manufacturing added 10.6% to the growth, recovering from a 12.1% decline in Q4 2021.
- ➔ **Construction:** Construction added 105% to the growth, recovering from a 10.1% decline in Q4 2021.

## Key Highlights

- ➔ **PM's Address:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the nation on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of India's independence, highlighting the country's economic growth and the government's commitment to development.
- ➔ **MMF:** The Ministry of Finance announced that the government will increase the dividend on the Government of India (GOI) bonds to 10% for the first time in 10 years.
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# Daily News Analysis

➔ **International Relations:** The G20 countries have agreed to support the G20 Development Centre (GDC) to help developing countries. The GDC will be a global platform for the G20 countries to discuss and coordinate their efforts to support developing countries. The GDC will be a global platform for the G20 countries to discuss and coordinate their efforts to support developing countries.



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# Global Digital Compact: advancing digital innovation in a sustainable fashion

The GDC is a diplomatic instrument which focuses on the potential of digital technologies, with the specific intention to harness and regulate them for the common good. The GDC rests on the idea that digital technologies are dramatically changing our world

Neethu Rajam  
Krishna Ravi Srinivas

**I**n the recently concluded 'Summit of the Future' organised by the United Nations, member countries adopted the 'Global Digital Compact' (GDC). This ambitious instrument is perhaps the first of its kind in the international arena focusing on the potential of digital technologies, with the specific intention to harness and regulate them for the common good.

**What is the GDC?**  
The GDC is not a binding law but a diplomatic instrument with a set of shared goals for governments, institutions, firms, and other stakeholders to bear in mind. Once there is greater adherence, the terms of the compact may become soft laws in each country.

Earlier, the UN helped pilot and legitimise two other compacts: the 'Global Compact' ("a voluntary initiative based on CEO commitments to implement universal sustainability principles and to take steps to support UN goals") and the 'Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration' (covering all dimensions of international migration in a holistic and comprehensive manner).

The GDC rests on the idea that digital technologies are dramatically changing our world. While they offer potential benefits for societies and for our planet – by enabling Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – they also pose serious challenges and concerns.

**Realising the GDC**  
The GDC is a collaborative project with the objective of ensuring human oversight of technologies in ways that advance sustainable development. Building on the norms of international law, the Universal Declaration of Human rights, and the UN 2030 Agenda, among others, the GDC

proposes global cooperation in the governance of data and digital technologies

To meet the Compact's goals, UN member countries have committed to establish two panels – an 'Independent International Scientific Panel on AI (Artificial Intelligence)' and a panel for 'Global Dialogue on AI Governance'.

These goals include closing the digital divide, including everyone in the digital economy, improving access to data, and advancing responsible and equitable data governance. In the same vein, the Compact's principles are based on inclusive participation, access to data and digital technologies, sustainability, and trustworthy technologies that function within a free and competitive market.

**Digital goods and services**  
To address the digital divide, the GDC proposes "digital public goods" that will include open-source software, open data, and open AI models, plus adherence to privacy and best practices.

This is an acknowledgment of digital public goods' ability to drive social change as elements of a "digital public infrastructure" that delivers services. Such infrastructure involves the development and use of shared digital systems according to specific priorities and needs of stakeholders. To this end, the GDC envisions partnerships, including with private entities.

**What are the GDC's lacunae?**  
First, the extensive European experience with public-private partnerships vis-à-vis digital projects suggests openness within such partnerships is restricted between "as open as is required" and "as closed as is essential". In other words, openness in the context of the digital public infrastructure may be limited by contractual requirements such as non-disclosure, confidentiality, and

protection of intellectual property. Second, the GDC adds little to existing frameworks of internet governance but importantly it calls for digital technology companies to self-regulate to keep their users safe and their users' trust. This is not an optimum solution because self-regulation has already proved to be ineffective in practice.

Third, the GDC recognises interoperable data governance as essential to foster innovation and promote economic growth. But experts have noted that the increasing collection, sharing, and processing of data – particularly for AI – may amplify risks in the absence of effective personal data protection and privacy laws.

Fourth, the Compact stresses on achieving SDGs within a paradigm where governments and private entities track, collect, and analyse data to measure progress, while underscoring the importance of governing data in the public interest. For this the Compact proposes to give corporate entities more power in data and internet governance. However, it fails to emphasise the countervailing measures required to stave off monopolistic control.

**The GDC and the UN**  
In many sections the GDC makes wishful statements that bypass the complexity of underlying issues, assuming the comity of nations will be enough to achieve its objectives. But this stance may also reflect the UN's wish to remain a major player in governing technologies, including AI.

For example, in the 21st century data is oil: it is as valuable even as its use is embedded in extractive industries with polluting effects. Consider the ongoing explosive growth of generative AI models and the spheres, volumes, and varieties of data collected to train them. The GDC acknowledges issues in AI governance but has little to offer in terms of concrete

solutions or even strategies. Similarly, the GDC does bat for "data flow with trust" but many countries have refused to accept this idea because it goes against the spirit of digital sovereignty. Some even have specific laws that require data about their citizens to remain within their borders.

Finally, the GDC links various objectives and proposed actions with the relevant SDGs. This is a welcome move because it reflects the view that digitalisation should play a prominent role in realising the SDGs. At the same time, when the SDGs were adopted in 2015, the current AI revolution hadn't started. Given the unimpressive record of nations in realising the SDGs, it is doubtful whether an add-on Compact like the GDC could make a difference.

The UN's member states are striving to find ways to work with and regulate Big Tech while also asserting their digital sovereignty. The global governance of digital technologies thus is too complex to be captured or 'fixed' by a singular entity like the GDC. We need multilateral as well as regional negotiations to go with it to address jurisdictional, regional, and/or local needs. By appealing to existing modes of digital governance as well as by combining SDGs with digitalisation, the GDC is positioning itself as an instrument of brainstorming, rather than as a provider of roadmaps. Still, the GDC can help with capacity building and with South-South and North-South collaborations in the development of digital public goods.

In sum, the GDC may not result in a paradigm shift in the world's governance of digital technologies but it can facilitate significant and tangible outcomes if member states take it seriously.

Neethu Rajam is Associate professor of intellectual property and technology law, National Law University Delhi. Krishna Ravi Srinivas is Adjunct professor of law, NALSAR University of Law Hyderabad.

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# Daily News Analysis

➔ **UN-SDG Progress Report 2023** - The report shows that the world is on track to meet 12 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, but is off track for 10. The report also highlights that the world is on track to meet 12 of the 17 SDGs by 2030, but is off track for 10.

## GDC - Global Development Compact

- ➔ GDC is a new framework for international development cooperation, replacing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- ➔ It focuses on three pillars: **People**, **Planet**, and **Prosperity**.

## UN Secretary-General's Report on the Rule of Law

- ➔ The report highlights the importance of the rule of law for sustainable development and human rights.
- ➔ It calls for a renewed commitment to the rule of law and for the UN to play a leading role in promoting it.

## AI and the SDGs

- ➔ AI has the potential to accelerate progress towards the SDGs, but it also poses significant risks.
- ➔ The report calls for a balanced approach to AI that maximizes its benefits while minimizing its risks.

## AI and the SDGs - Key Challenges

- ➔ **Job Displacement** - AI is likely to displace many jobs, particularly in the manufacturing and service sectors.
- ➔ **Algorithmic Bias** - AI systems can perpetuate and amplify existing biases and inequalities.

## AI and the SDGs - Opportunities

- ➔ **GDC** provides a framework for addressing the challenges and opportunities of AI:

  - **People** - AI can improve education, healthcare, and social services.
  - **Planet** - AI can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and manage natural resources.
  - **Prosperity** - AI can create new jobs and drive economic growth.



# Daily News Analysis

- o **India's National Newspaper Since 1878**
- o **GDC**

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# Daily News Analysis

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# Daily News Analysis

- ▶ **பெரிய செய்தி** - இந்திய அரசு, 2022-23 ஆம் ஆண்டில் 10 சதவீதம் வரை கூடுதல் வரி வசூலிக்கும் திட்டத்தை அறிவித்துள்ளது.
- ▶ **சிறிய செய்தி** - 'சுற்றுச்சூழல்' துறையில், இந்திய அரசு பல்வேறு திட்டங்களை அறிவித்துள்ளது.
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