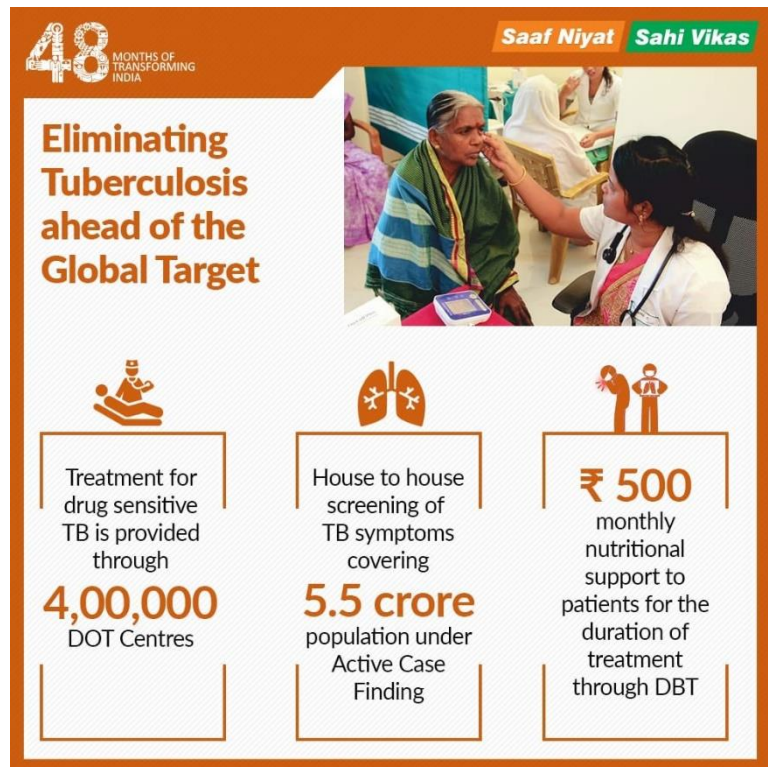




## Current Affairs of the Day

### India to be TB-free by 2025: Mansukh

1. A 19% increase was witnessed in 2021 from the previous year in TB patients' notifications. The number of incident TB patients (new and relapse) notified during 2021 was 19,33,381 against the 16,28,161 in 2020, noted India TB Report 2022.
2. On World Tuberculosis Day on 24 March, the govt reaffirmed Its commitment to making India tuberculosis-free by 2025 and said this will be achieved by ensuring access to quality healthcare and advanced treatment.



3. The report said despite the decline in TB notifications observed around the months corresponding to the two major COVID-19 waves, the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP) reclaimed these numbers.
4. It said 18 States have committed to ending TB by 2025 by implementing State-specific strategic plans and have devised a district-specific strategic plan, which shall serve as a guiding tool for the programme managers.

### The National TB Prevalence Survey Report

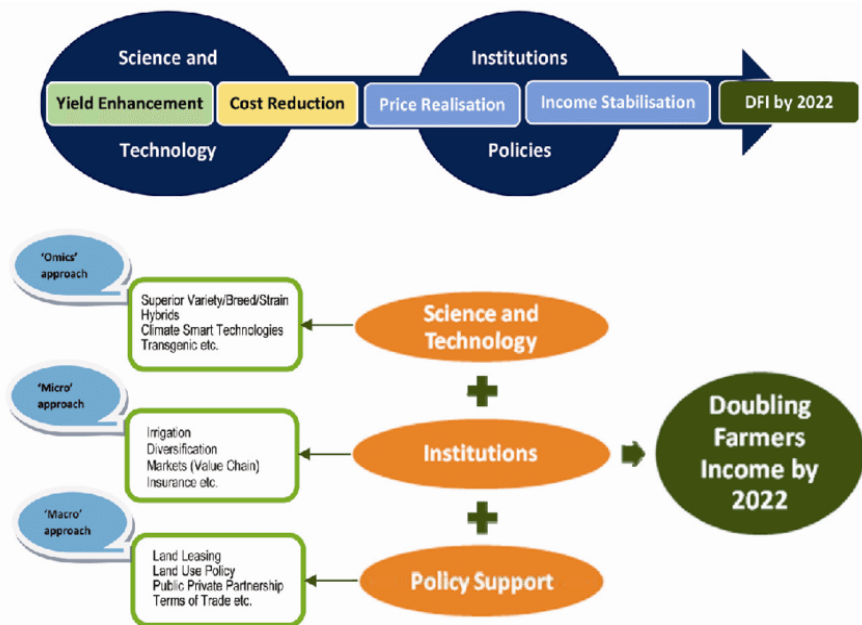
1. The government also released the National TB Prevalence Survey Report which was conducted from 2019 to 2021 to know the actual disease burden of TB.



2. The reports said there has been an increase in the mortality rate due to all forms of TB between 2019 and 2020 by 11%.
3. The survey report said the prevalence of microbiologically confirmed pulmonary tuberculosis (PTB) among 15 years and above in India was 316/lakh population with the highest PTB prevalence of 534/lakh in Delhi and the lowest PTB prevalence of 115/lakh in Kerala.

### Farm income fell in four States: panel

1. The Centre vowed to double farmers' income between 2015 and 2022, but by the midway point, farm families in Jharkhand actually saw their average monthly income drop by about 30%.



2. In its report on the demand for grants for agriculture submitted to the Lok Sabha, a parliamentary standing committee asked why the Centre remained a “mute spectator” while farmers’ income declined in four States between 2015-16 and 2018-19.
3. Over the same period, nationwide farm income rose 27%, which is still well short of the trajectory needed to achieve the goal of doubling income this year.
4. The committee recommended that the Department of Agriculture and Farmer Welfare “should formulate a special team to figure out the reasons for falling farmers’ income in those States and take some course corrective measures so that the doubling of farmers income is not lost sight of.”



## The Doubling Farmers' Income (DFI) committee:

1. The Doubling Farmers' Income (DFI) Committee had calculated the 2015-16 baseline by extrapolating the survey data of the National Statistical Organisation from 2012-13, calculating the national average monthly income of a farm family in that year was ₹8,059.
2. By the time the next NSO survey was conducted in 2018-19, monthly income had risen 27% to ₹10,218.
3. In Jharkhand, however, a farm family's average income fell from ₹7,068 to ₹4,895 over the same period. In Madhya Pradesh, it fell from ₹9,740 to ₹8,339, in Nagaland, from ₹11,428 to ₹9,877, and for Odisha, it dipped marginally from ₹5,274 to ₹5,112.

## Declining budgets for farmers:

1. The panel also noted that while the department's budgetary allocation may have risen in absolute terms, it has consistently declined in percentage terms during the second term of the Narendra Modi-led government.
2. In the 2019-20 Budget, announced just before Lok Sabha polls, the department received 4.7% of total allocations. That proportion has dropped every year since, and in 2022-23, the department's Budget accounted for only 3.1% of the total.

## 'Humanitarian truce' in Tigray for aid: Ethiopia

1. Ethiopia's government declared "an indefinite humanitarian truce effective immediately", saying it hoped to help hasten emergency aid into





the Tigray region, where hundreds of thousands face starvation.

2. Since the war broke out in northern Ethiopia in November 2020, thousands have died, and many more have been forced to flee their homes as the conflict has expanded from Tigray to neighbouring regions of Amhara and Afar.

## Fuel retailers lost \$2.25 bn in revenue on price freeze: Moody's

1. Fuel retailers IOC, BPCL and HPCL together lost about \$2.25 billion in revenue for keeping petrol and diesel prices on hold during elections in five states, including Uttar Pradesh.
2. State fuel retailers did not revise petrol and diesel rates for a record 137 days despite prices of crude oil rising to \$120 per barrel compared with about \$82 in early November when the hiatus began.
3. Higher crude oil prices will also result in raised working capital needs, spurring incremental borrowings for refiners. Poorer earnings combined with higher borrowings will weaken the credit metrics of these companies, the agency said.

## Technology can make policing better — and also more dangerous

Marginalised communities risk coming under undue surveillance and suspicion.

### Technology in investigation and maintaining law and order: Predictive policing

1. The second phase of the Inter-operable Criminal Justice System (ICJS) is set to be completed by 2026 with increased use of artificial intelligence, fingerprint systems and other tools of predictive policing.





2. One crore fingerprints had already been uploaded and if these were available to all police stations as part of the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network System (CCTNS), there would no longer be any need to pursue criminals.

### Concerns around Predictive policing

1. The enthusiasm for generating and cross-referencing data to make policing more efficient ignores privacy concerns and structural faults of policing.
2. The Supreme Court in K.S Puttaswamy declared a fundamental right to informational privacy as paramount and noted that any measure that sought to collect information or surveil must be legal, necessary, and proportionate.
3. State surveillance for policing needs to be re-evaluated in this light, given that policing replicates existing casteist notions of who criminals are, and how they are to be controlled.
4. The existing systems of ICJS and CCTNS empower the state to cross-reference data between different pillars of the criminal justice system in the name of creating efficient police infrastructure.
5. Beyond this, integrating “fingerprint-based criminal record data fetching system” to the list of predictive policing practices will give birth to mass surveillance, particularly of certain oppressed caste communities, based on little evidence.

### Prejudice in law and order:

1. With the introduction of the commissionerate system in Bhopal and Indore, members of Vimukta and Adivasi communities are being summoned by the police to get their records updated with copies of their Aadhaar cards and photographs as part of “Operation clean”.
2. Data related to work, family members, fingerprints etc are being collected through vague notices that make no mention of the law under which they have been invoked or include any cogent reasons for the summoning of an individual.
3. This effectively means that even after being acquitted by the courts, a person continues to be an object of policing. Mere suspicion or FIRs filed against an individual are sufficient to trigger the discretionary powers of the police.

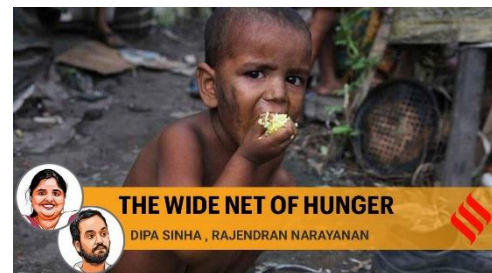


4. Those subject to policing rarely include dominant caste persons with resources, who may have even been convicted of a crime.

This has an all-encompassing impact on the lives and livelihood of these oppressed communities. They are forced to live in informal settlements in urban spaces which are heavily surveilled. With the interlinking of policing data, across different jurisdictions and centralised through the ICJS, this targeting runs the risk of being replicated as a pan-India phenomenon.

## The worsening hunger problem of India's poor

There is a need to acknowledge the problem of food insecurity and take immediate action, including allocating sufficient resources to address the issue.



### Pandemic restrictions and disastrous consequences

1. Two years ago, the imposition of the national lockdown in India had disastrous consequences for the working poor, especially the migrant labour.
2. In October 2020, The Right to Food Campaign and associated organisations had conducted the first Hunger Watch survey (HW-I). The main objective of HW-I was to document the economic distress and hunger caused by the lockdowns and catalyse public action for relief.
3. Covering close to 4,000 people in 11 states, the survey highlighted the extent of widespread hunger and a deterioration in the quality of diets compared to the pre-pandemic period.
4. In 2021, India was hit by a devastating second wave of infections. While no nationwide lockdowns were announced, the speed and severity of the spread meant inevitable disruptions to lives and livelihoods.
5. Most states imposed curfews and restrictions on economic activity. The economy contracted by 6.6 per cent in 2020-21. While the economy is estimated to grow at 8.9 per cent in 2021-22, the low base effect means that per capita incomes have still not recovered to pre-pandemic levels. Unemployment rates continue to be high.



6. Given the prolonged nature of the pandemic and the spike in indebtedness caused by unforeseen medical expenditures through the second wave, it was important to capture the continued economic distress.

### **The Hunger Watch survey (HW-II)**

1. The survey focused on understanding food and income insecurities among the informal sector.
2. Food insecurity was widespread — 79 per cent of the overall sample reported experiencing at least one of the eight conditions of food insecurity from the Food and Agriculture Organisation's Global Food Insecurity Experience Scale (GFIES) in the month preceding the survey.
3. The eight conditions range from worrying about not having enough food, to not being able to eat a diet of sufficient quality or quantity, to running out of food and having to go without eating a whole day. A quarter of the sample reported "severe" food insecurity, that is, they experienced seven or eight of the conditions.
4. The situation was worse in urban areas, where 87 per cent reported any food insecurity, and 28 per cent reported severe food insecurity, compared to rural areas where the numbers were 76 per cent and 24 per cent respectively.
5. Nearly one-third of the respondents said that they or someone in their household had slept without eating in the month preceding the survey and 36 per cent said they had had to skip meals.
6. This is a slight improvement compared to HW-I, where 48 per cent said that they had slept without eating at least once and 46 per cent said they had had to skip meals.

The bulk of the poor relies on cereals for food security. However, in HW-II only one in three households said that their consumption of cereals was sufficient for their needs. Two-thirds of households could not afford cooking gas in the month before the survey. This was higher in rural areas than urban.



## MAINS DAWP

Q1. Time has come to delineate boundaries of *sealed cover jurisprudence* as it has many undesirable consequences. Critically discuss.

Q2. India has failed miserably in achieving the target of doubling farmers' income by 2022. Explain the factors responsible and implications for the future.

Q3. *With Increased use of technology in the investigation and maintaining law and order, marginalised communities risk coming under undue surveillance and suspicion.* Critically discuss.

## MCQs

Q1. Conflict areas *Tigray, Amhara and Afar* - recently seen in the news are from the country of

- Belarus
- Ukraine
- Yemen
- Ethiopia