



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

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KK/AJ

RIGHT TO REPAIR

SOURCE: [The HINDU](#), [MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS](#)

Why in news?

- The Apple Company announced its support for the **Right-to-Repair** Bill allowing consumers to **repair their own devices**.
- This legislation aims to achieve a balance between "**consumer choice and trustworthy repairs**," while preserving **manufacturers' intellectual property, privacy, and data security**.

What is the Right to Repair?

- The right-to-repair attempts to ensure that consumers can **maintain and repair their own devices**.
- Without the right to repair, the manufacturer of those gadgets would be able to **restrict the user to using only their services**.
- With Right to Repair, consumers have **access to original equipment manufacturers' (OEMs)** or third-party repairs for mobile phones, appliances, and other electronic items.

Why is this right desirable?

- **Cost savings:** By **choosing economical repairs over pricey replacements**, consumers can save money in the long run.
- **Data security and privacy concerns:** **Data transfer** or the **removal of storage** components may be necessary during device repairs. Consumers can have more control over their data by determining what data is exchanged or erased during the repair process.
- **Support domestic economy:** Local economies can prosper due to job creation and creation of demand in supporting sectors like supply, logistics and marketing.
- **Design and Patent Protection:** Manufacturers may continue to use **non-proprietary parts** for repairs while maintaining their **design patents** and **other intellectual property rights** relating to their products.
- **Education and Skill Development:** The right to repair **promotes technical knowledge and skill development** by encouraging people to learn about the things they own. As the demand for repair services increases there is an incentive for **vocational training** and **engineering courses** for skill development.
- **Reduction of Electronic Waste:** Reducing the need for frequent replacements by extending the useful lives of products lessens the environmental impact of discarding electronic equipment (hazardous e-waste).

Right to Repair in India

- **Nidhi Kare Committee:** A committee has been established by the **Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food, and Public Distribution** to provide a **thorough framework for the "Right to Repair."**
 - **The key sectors** for the framework's initial focus are **farming equipment, mobile and tablet devices, consumer durables, vehicles, and automotive accessories**.

- **Right to Repair Portal:** The Ministry of Consumer Affairs (MCA) has established a Right to Repair portal so that people may get their devices fixed without voiding the warranty on them.
 - The portal **compiles** all of the available **public data** about goods, services, warranties, terms & conditions, etc.

What are the challenges in implementing Right to Repair in India?

- **Regulatory Framework:** It can be difficult to create and put into place a thorough regulatory framework that strikes a **balance between the interests of consumers, repair services, and producers**. Legal, technical, and policy considerations would be involved.
- **Intellectual property concerns:** Manufacturers may claim that making repair options available could result in the **theft of intellectual property**, such as confidential **software code** and **proprietary designs**.
- **Supply Chain Complexity:** The supply chain for electronics and other goods in India is both **complicated and diversified**. Manufacturers, suppliers, and repair companies might need to coordinate in order to implement the right to repair.
- **Skill Gap:** It may be necessary to implement **training and development initiatives** to create a network of knowledgeable repair specialists capable of working with a variety of goods and technology.

Right to Repair in other countries

- **UK:** A law was passed in the UK requiring all producers of electronic appliances to give their customers replacement parts so they can fix their appliances themselves or take them to a nearby repair shop.
- **Australia:** Repair cafes, which are essentially free gathering places where volunteer repairmen congregate to exchange their talents, exist in Australia.
- **European Union:** The European Union approved regulations requiring manufacturers to provide product parts to qualified repairmen for a minimum of ten years.
- **France:** France introduced the **reparability index**, which intends to create a circular economy.

Way forward

- **Consumer awareness programs:** Launch **national efforts** to raise **customer awareness** of their right to repair, the **advantages of repairing** rather than replacing, and the availability of repair services.
- **Training and Certification programs:** Establish training and certification programs for repair technicians to make sure they have the skills and knowledge required to carry out repairs efficiently and safely.
- **E-waste management rules:** **Integrate e-waste management policies with the right to repair** policy to make sure that items are made to **be easily disassembled and recycled**.
- **Focus on research and development:** Invest in R&D to explore cutting-edge techniques and technologies that improve the ability to repair and prolong the life of products.
- **Enforcement and penalties:** Increased enforcement measures and harsher fines should be used to producers that disregard laws governing the right to repair.

BRICS GETS SIX NEW MEMBERS

SOURCE: [The Indian Express](#)

Why in news?

- The five-member BRICS invited six more countries to join the alliance.
- Iran, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Argentina, Egypt, and Ethiopia have been invited to the BRICS summit now taking place in Johannesburg, South Africa.
- They will officially join in January 2024.
- They are planning to launch BRICS Currency.

Why is BRICS EXPANSION necessary?

- **Economic strength:** The five participants in the coalition's economy are not as strong as they were when the platform was originally introduced in 2009.
 - Even though the BRICS countries account for over **30% of the global economy** and about **43% of the world's population**, they still have obvious economic disadvantages.
- **East west rivalry:** Their rivalries have been more consolidated as a result of the Russia-Ukraine War and the escalating China-USA war.
- **New world order:** The goal of the "new world order" is to firmly establish their position, particularly in respect to the **European Union and the United States**.
- **Investment:** According to a **UN report**, the **growth rate of exports within the BRICS** and the amount of **foreign direct investment into BRICS** countries are both higher than the average for the world.
- **BRICS Plus:** It is a **vehicle for collaboration** that was introduced at the **2017 Xiamen summit** to **expand BRICS** beyond its current membership of five.
- **BRICS NDB:** The **United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Bangladesh, and Egypt** are already a part of the BRICS NDB, and many other countries are eager to join as well.
- **Decreased dependence on the US dollar:** The BRICS nations are making an effort to rely less on the US dollar.
 - They might have more control over their own economies as a result, which would make them **less susceptible to US economic policy**.

Importance of BRICS for India

- **Advocating UN reforms:** India and other BRICS nations advocate **comprehensive UN reform**, including the **Security Council**, in order to make it more democratic, representational, and effective.
- **Trade and investment growth:** India could conduct trade more easily with other BRICS nations if there was a common currency.
 - This might result in more **investment and commerce between India and the other BRICS nations**, which would strengthen India's economy goal of achieving a **\$ 5 trillion growth**.
- **Solving border disputes:** As the first face-to-face encounter since the armed a deadlock **between India and China** at the **Line of Actual Control**, the summit is significant for India.
 - Both countries have agreed to further up efforts for the **withdrawal of troops and de-escalation of tensions** along the LAC following **bilateral conversations** between the Prime Ministers of India and the President of China.
- **Addressing Climate Change:** The BRICS nations make a sizable contribution to the net world emissions of GHGs.
 - Members of BRICS have **committed to addressing climate change's** issues while guaranteeing a fair, affordable, and long-lasting **transition to a low-carbon and low-emission economy**.
- **Space exploration:** The Indian PM suggested creating a **BRICS space exploration consortium** to boost collaboration in the area of **space technology and research**.

BRICS CURRENCY

- ❖ The use of local currencies in international commerce and financial transactions between BRICS and its trade partners is emphasized in "**The Cape of Good Hope,**" the **joint declaration of BRICS**.
- ❖ The BRICS have considered actively trading among themselves in their own currency. However, a single currency will not only facilitate trade between the BRICS nations but also reduce the expensive exchange rates while trading, according to the Observer Research Foundation.
- ❖ **The RBI has authorized rupee transactions with 18 other nations.**
 - **Deal on Rupee Dirham:** It intends to connect the communications and payment systems of the two countries as well as to expand the use of the rupee in the Gulf.
 - **Rupee Rouble arrangement :** India and Russia previously worked out a Rupee Rouble arrangement, but it was abandoned because currency conversion costs were too high.

Challenges associated with BRICS

- **Geopolitical differences:** The member nations' **geopolitical interests and inclinations** differ from one another. **Russia's activities in Ukraine** have strained its relations with Western countries, whereas **India** has long had **border conflicts and tensions with China**.
- **Diverse economies:** Economic systems in the BRICS nations are quite diverse, ranging from **China's dominant industrial sector** to **Brazil's agrarian and resource-based economy**. It may be challenging to come to consensus on economic priorities and policies as a result of this diversity.
- **Institutional capacity:** Compared to **established international organizations** like the **G20** or the **UN**, BRICS lack the infrastructure and institutional strength. This may reduce its ability to solve global concerns.
- **Competing Global Agendas:** Each member state may have **distinct global agendas and aspirations** that don't necessarily line up with the interests of the BRICS. It might be challenging to strike a balance between individual national interests and common goals.
- BRICS aspirants **Argentina and Egypt**, to name just two, are also members of the infamous **"Coffee Club" (United for Consensus)** —opposed to India's membership in the UNSC.

WAY AHEAD

- The primary focus for BRICS should lie in prioritizing economic and social harmonization among its member nations. **The emphasis should be on constructing strong institutions, fostering trust, sharing expertise, boosting trade and development, and advancing developmental financial systems.** It is crucial for BRICS to uphold its fundamental goals.
- By steadfastly concentrating on its primary objectives and diligently working towards them, **BRICS can reinforce collaboration, enrich mutual comprehension, and nurture sustainable progress among its member countries and beyond.**
- **Any expansion should be gradual**, hinging on the potential contributions of new nations to mutual synergies, reinforcement, and the enduring efficacy of the coalition, while avoiding the exacerbation of ideological or other disparities.
- **India needs to devise innovative approaches to counter Chinese strategies** while also inviting nations into BRICS that will ensure an even distribution of influence within the group.
- Moreover, the expansion of BRICS must adhere to a rule-based framework, ensuring that the forum precludes the emergence of **"economic hegemony" or an "anti-West agenda."**
- The inclusion of additional countries in BRICS should only occur through unanimous agreement, and any intentions to expand BRICS should be preceded by a well-defined set of principles and membership criteria.

BRICS

BRICS	The worlds top five emerging economies—Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa—are together referred to as BRICS.
ORIGIN	Formalized at the first BRIC Foreign Ministers' Conference in 2006. In December 2010, South Africa was invited to join BRIC; the headquarters of BRICS are in Shanghai.
IMPORTANCE	Five of the major emerging nations in the world are represented by the BRICS, accounting for 16% of global commerce, 24% of global GDP, and 41% of the world's population.
CHAIRMANSHIP	According to the acronym B-R-I-C-S, the chairmanship of the forum is rotated annually among the members. The BRICS will be chaired by South Africa in 2023. Every nation has one vote.
INITIATIVES	New Development Bank (by the Fortaleza (Brazil) declaration in 2014); Contingent Reserve Arrangement; BRICS Payment System (as an alternative to the SWIFT payment system); Customs Agreements; Launched of BRICS Remote Sensing Satellite

9 YEARS OF JAN DHAN YOJANA

SOURCE: [PIB](#)

Why in news?

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi thanked Jan Dhan Yojana recipients on the program's nine-year anniversary.
- Over 50 crore bank accounts and deposits totaling more than 2 lakh crore have been created as a result of the PM Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), marking its extraordinary nine-year journey.
- The success of the program is due to its dedication to financial inclusion, which opens doors for impoverished groups to use government programs and access banking services.

Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana

- It is also known as **National Mission for Financial Inclusion** launched by the government in 2014.
- It ensures that **financial services** such as **banking, savings, and deposit accounts, remittance, credit, insurance, and pension** are accessible and affordable.

Objectives of the scheme

- Ensure affordable access to financial products and services.
- Use of technology to increase reach and reduce costs.

Basic tenets of the scheme:

Banking the unbanked	Opening a basic savings bank deposit (BSBD) account with little to no paperwork, simple KYC, e-KYC, no balance or fees.
Securing the unsecured	Issuing indigenous debit cards with free accident insurance coverage of Rs. 2 lakh that can be used for cash withdrawals and payments at merchant locations.
Funding the unfunded	Other financial products include micro-credit, micro-pension, overdraft, and micro-insurance.

Important pillars of the scheme

- **Universal access to Banking services.**
- Basic savings bank accounts with a 10,000 rupee overdraft limit are available to all qualified adults.
- **Financial literacy program: Promoting savings,** using ATMs, preparing for credit, obtaining insurance and pensions, and using simple mobile phones for banking are all part of the financial literacy program.
- The establishment of a **credit guarantee fund** will give banks some **protection against defaults.**
- **Insurance:** For accounts opened between August 15, 2014, and January 31, 2015, accident coverage of up to Rs. 1,00,000 and life coverage of Rs. 30,000 are available.

➤ **Pension plan for unorganized business.**

Achievements of the scheme

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- The fact that DBTs through PM Jan Dhan accounts have made sure **every rupee reaches its designated beneficiary** and **stopped systemic leakage** is a crucial factor.
 - PMJDY served as the cornerstone for people-centric economic programs like Direct benefit transfers, financial support for COVID-19, PM-KISAN, higher pay under MGNREGA, life and health insurance coverage,
- **JAM:** The JAM pipeline, one of the key pillars of the FI ecosystem, was established through the consent-based connection of account holders' bank accounts with their Aadhar and mobile phones.
- This has made it possible for eligible recipients of various government assistance programs to receive prompt DBT.

FEATURE	EXAMPLE
Digital banking	The PMJDY switched to online accounts integrated into banks' core banking systems from the previous approach of opening accounts offline with technology. It made simpler for people to access their accounts and carry out transactions
Achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing banking access to rural and urban populations alike • Crossed 500 million accounts • Over ₹2 lakh crore deposit
Direct Benefit transfer	Direct Benefit Transfers (DBTs) have empowered and given financial security to the most vulnerable segments of society in the COVID-19 period with exceptional speed and seamlessness
Women Empowerment	Increased financial inclusion for women; over 55% of accounts belong to women
Rural & Semi-Urban Focus	Extending banking facilities to underserved regions; 67% of accounts opened in these areas
RuPay Cards	Offering insurance benefits to account holders; About 340 million were issued with ₹2 lakh accident insurance cover
Inclusion	Empowering financially vulnerable sections; Brought marginalized sections into the formal banking system
Financial Benefits	Enabling individuals to save and transfer funds securely; Savings brought into the formal financial system, remittance opportunities, freedom from usurious money lenders
Role in Welfare	Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT) using PMJDY accounts; Used to distribute welfare packages without pilferage, including COVID-19 financial assistance, PM-Kisan, MGNREGA, and insurance covers

Challenges

- **Low financial literacy:** Many of the target beneficiaries have low levels of financial knowledge and awareness. It is challenging for them to comprehend the scheme's advantages, the range of services provided, and how to use the banking facilities efficiently.
- **Inadequate Infrastructure:** There is usually a lack of suitable banking infrastructure in rural areas, where a sizable section of the target population dwells. It may be difficult for beneficiaries to use the services offered by the scheme if there is limited access to banks and ATMs.
- **Challenges with identification:** The program requires legitimate identification documents in order to open bank accounts and access other services.
- **Account Misuse:** In certain cases, people open many accounts to take advantage of the incentives provided by the plan, some money is also diverted.

Way forward

- **Customized financial products:** Financial products that are specifically tailored to the demands of certain beneficiary segments. For instance, providing small company owners with flexible credit alternatives or providing micro-insurance products that address the health and livelihood risks faced by rural farmers.
- **Encourage saving** by providing rewards for keeping a certain amount in Jan Dhan accounts. Encourage recipients to save money for unforeseen expenses or future requirements by paying interest on saves.
- **Encourage digital payments:** Encourage the adoption of digital payment systems and teach beneficiaries about digital transactions to promote them. Provide incentives or discounts for transacting via digital channels.