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1. France 'yellow vest' protests: 211 arrested, 89,000 police deployed across country

- Who are Les gilets jaunes" (the yellow vests)?
- What are their grievances?
- What has the government conceded?
- Why India must learn lessons from Paris unrest?

GS paper 1 (Issues related to society)

In this video, you can find detailed answers for all the above questions.

The above article has been retrieved from:

N.A. (2018, December , 08). France 'yellow vest' protests: 211 arrested, 89,000 police deployed across country. Indian Express. Retrieved from

<https://indianexpress.com/article/world/france-yellow-vest-protests-211-arrested-89000-police-deployed-across-country-5484510/>

What is the context about?

- For the past three weeks, France has been experiencing one of the most significant social mobilisations in its recent history, which laid bare the country's social ills, anti-elite sentiment, growing inequalities and thirst for social justice.

- ❑ It all started on November 17 when tens of thousands of people took to the streets across the country to protest against rising fuel prices.

Who are Les gilets jaunes" (the yellow vests)?

- ❑ The protesters, dubbed "Les gilets jaunes" (the yellow vests) after the high-visibility jackets they adopted as a symbol of their complaint, blocked roundabouts, burned effigies and clashed with the police.
- ❑ They were angry about the almost 20 percent increase in the price of diesel since the start of the year, as well as the planned fuel tax hike President Emmanuel Macron had recently announced.
- ❑ The movement - born online - cuts across age, job and region, and includes members of the working and middle classes, all affected by the higher cost of living.
- ❑ Its members range from factory workers and the unemployed to the self-employed (particularly artisans) and retired people.

What are their grievances?

- ❑ What they all seemed to have in common at the outset was their reliance on cars to get around, often living in more rural and less populated parts of the country.
- ❑ As the movement grew, their demands evolved and have now morphed into general anger at higher living costs and President Emmanuel Macron's economic policies.

- Some experts describe the bulk of the protesters as people who struggle to make ends meet at the end of the month.

What has the government conceded?

- The government has said it is scrapping the unpopular fuel tax increases in its budget and has frozen electricity and gas prices for 2019.
- The problem is that protests have erupted over other issues.
- Granting concessions in some areas may not placate all the protesters, some of whom are calling for higher wages, lower taxes, better pensions, easier university requirements and even the resignation of the president.
- Some of his critics call him "the president of the rich".

Why India must learn lessons from Paris unrest?

- India isn't wholly immune to a similar phenomenon.
- Sure, the economy has continued to expand over the past decade and incomes continue to increase, but farmers in many parts of the country are in the grip of an agrarian crisis — there have been at least four large protests by farmers in the past six months — and not enough jobs are being created (India needs 10-12 million new ones a year).
- And according to a recent report by Credit Suisse, the Gini coefficient, which measures inequality in a country,

has gone up in India, from 81.3% in 2013 to 85.4% in 2018 (a coefficient of 100% means perfect inequality and 0%, perfect equality).

- Which is probably why India, and every other country, would do well to take note of events in Paris.