

# UPSC



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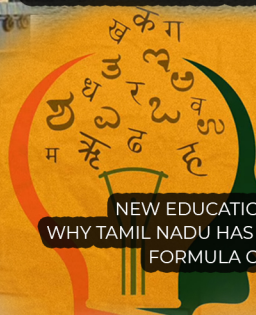


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Topper's Talk



Burning Issues



UPSC Prelims Capsule



Current Affairs



UPSC Mains Answer  
Writing Practice



AIR 93  
CSE 2019

A STUDY IQ Initiative



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NOTES

## Topper's Talk

### Aishwarya Sheoran Interview - UPSC 2019 AIR 93 - From Miss India finalist to UPSC Topper

**Interviewer:** Welcome to study Iq Aishwarya, tell us something about yourself.

**Aishwarya:** I hail from Delhi. I completed her school education from Sanskriti School after which I pursued her graduate degree in Economics Honours from Sri Ram College of Commerce, University of Delhi. My father Ajay Kumar is the Commanding Officer of NCC Telangana Battalion, Karimnagar. My mother Suman Sheoran is a home-maker. I was born in Rajasthan and completed my higher education in Delhi. Now I am living with her family in Mumbai. My brother is in under-23 cricket for the Mumbai cricket team.

**Interviewer:**

**Aishwarya:**

College m hi modelling ka socha tha , debating , enactus college k dauran sab kiya .

2017 passout .

Modelling hobby thi meri , instant sab kuch mil jaata hai.

Mere liye goal clear tha

She ensured she finished all her modelling assignments by May 2018 to devote herself to preparing for the civil services.

It was all about experiencing new things in life. For me, modelling was only a hobby. I got the chance to participate in Miss India pageant during my second year of college. Shri Ram College of Commerce (SRCC) also encouraged us to go out of our comfort zone and try things.

**Interviewer:** How did you start your preparation for the IAS prelims exam?

**Aishwarya:**

Mine was prelims + mains strategy (holistic approach ) Prelims k 1 month pehe only prelims k liye prepare relims

April was all about prelims — learning specific facts, map exercises for geography, and compilations of Vision IAS, however, I was still in touch with my optional subject for at least 30 minutes each day to do an overview of one chapter from each book. The prelims was held on June 2 and I had practiced about 25 test papers available free online by each within 1.30 hours. My plan was a simple-practice test in the morning, revise the answers in the evening and again on Saturday. On Saturdays, I also used to focus on current affairs. No new current affairs were added in April.

**Interviewer:** What was your strategy for clearing the IAS Mains Exam?

**Aishwarya:** limited time tha so , my sources were limited.

Read only once books (ncert)

Limited revising material

Optional k liye notes ...my optional was economics.

Mains answer writing : flowcharts , bullet points , diagram , security issues m india k diagram banana.

**Interviewer:** HOW DID you studied

**Aishwarya:** understand the exam .

Capacity k jinte kariye

10+8+6 hours concentration k sath padhti thi.

I always had a simple technique which I followed during 2018-2019. I started preparing for UPSC civil services exam in the year 2018. My success mantra was 10+8+6 i.e. 10 hours of study, 8 hours of sleep and 6 hours of other activities.

I did not join any coaching centres. Coaching is a personal choice. Self-study always worked for me. However, I signed up for many mock tests online and attempted over 20 tests. I followed a 10+ 8+ 6 routine for the preparation. 10 hours of study, 8 hours of sleep, and six hours for other activities. I believed in a balanced approach.

**Interviewer:** what were your sources(online offline)?

**Aishwarya:** bahut se online sources refer kiya , study iq k world history lectures refer kiya (they were very helpful for me )

I took the print of the online sources.

For current affairs i referred 2 three online sources ,if something is left i referred newspaper.

The Internet proved to be the biggest boon in my preparation. From books, old interviews to current affairs and newspapers, everything is easily available on the Internet. I started my basic preparations from there only. I chose only one book for a topic and revised it repeatedly. Strategy holds the key in UPSC preparation."

**Interviewer:** test series ?

**Aishwarya:** maine jan 2109 se answer writing

Vision ias test series.

Online mocks test very important writing

I joined the Vision IAS test series for GS and found that my papers were getting completed in 4.10 hours. Along with these, I would also practice one or two questions from Insights secure and scribble the rest to check the answers. Despite best efforts, I could not reduce my time beyond 3.40 hours till March



**Interviewer:** how did you prepare for essay and ethics paper?

**Aishwarya:** till prelims i did not touch essay . vikram greewal

Ethics : one book only : notes from there.(my own ), examples

Case studies : everyday one case study .

For essay and ethics, I took out half-an-hour to practice rough outline and brainstorming. This, and a 20-minute audio recording of quotations on various topics in my own voice which I used to play every morning during the workout. This made it fun and easy to tackle. I filtered out all the trivial prelims current affairs and made a handy list of facts on education, health, etc which I could use in answers.

**Interviewer:** how was your interview experience

**Aishwarya:** very unpredictable , economic background se related the.(IR)

'Was asked about khap panchayat during UPSC interview'

Questions on US-India trade deal, education policy, infrastructure were mostly due to my economics background. The chairman noticed my birth state Haryana and threw in a khap panchayat question.

The only peculiar question was about the saree a lady member was wearing which I obviously could not identify but nevertheless praised her as it was indeed a beautiful pink saree. When I came out, relief and smile were the two expressions on my face along with the inner satisfaction of giving it all.

**Interviewer:** mock interview?

**Aishwarya:** yes helpful. Only one.

Feedback :

**Interviewer:** Your last words of wisdom for UPSC aspirants?

**Aishwarya:**

Consistency

Emotionally up and down

Never let anyone you cant do it.

Believe yourself.

"To get success in UPSC, the first thing you need to know is yourself. You should know your own capabilities. One needs to avoid the herd-mentality and come out of the stereotypes. You should have complete focus and dedication towards your studies and if you have all this, then there is nothing you cannot achieve. All the best!", Aishwarya gave a message to all the future UPSC aspirants.

## Notes

## Polity

### Land acquisition by Security Forces in J&K

by Ankit Agrawal



#UPSC #IAS

(Click on the above image to watch the video)

#### Relevance

GS 2 || Polity || Union Territories and Special Areas || Union Territories

#### Title

Security Forces in J&K can now acquire Land without NOC, Will it boost strategic infrastructure work

#### Why in the news?

The Jammu and Kashmir administration has withdrawn a 1971 circular that made it mandatory for the Indian Army, the Border Security Force and the Central Reserve Police Force to obtain a "no objection certificate" to acquire land in the region.

#### Introduction

- The Jammu and Kashmir administration has withdrawn a 1971 circular that made it mandatory for the Indian Army, the Border Security Force and the
- Central Reserve Police Force
- To obtain a **"no objection certificate"** to acquire land in the region.
- Until now, the armed forces had to take No Objection Certificate from the Home Department.
- The order was issued by the Jammu and Kashmir revenue department on July 24.
- "In view of the extension of the **Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 to the UT (union territory)**, the circular which prescribed obtaining of No Objection Certificate from the Home Department for acquisition/ requisition of land in favour of Army, BSF/CRPF and similar organizations is hereby withdrawn,"



#### Now, how will the land Acquisition be cleared?

- Such acquisition will now be covered under- The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act,
- The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 provides for land to be acquired **"for strategic purposes relating to naval, military, air force, and armed forces of the Union"**, including central paramilitary forces or any work vital to national security or defence of India or State police, safety of the people"; and states that "in relation to acquisition of land situated within a Union territory (except Puducherry), the **Central Government is the appropriate authority** for acquisition of land" under the provisions of the Act.

#### Issues with the approval of the Competent Authority

- **Consent:** For government projects, no consent is required while consent of **70 percent of landowners is required for Public-Private Partnership (PPP) projects and 80 percent** for private projects.
- **Social Impact Assessment:** In the case of a land acquisition (irrespective of the ownership of the project), Social Impact Assessment is necessary unless and until there is an urgency. If the project is for irrigation, then Environmental Impact Assessment is required.
- **Irrigated multi-cropped land:** In case the land in question is irrigated multi-cropped, it cannot be acquired beyond a limit specified by the state government.
- **Limitations:** The Central Act of 2013 was brought to give effect to pre-existing fundamental right to livelihood of citizens. It ensures that livelihood will not be taken away unless



- It is in public interest and that is seen by social impact assessment
- The affected citizens are given rehabilitation
- The amendments made without considering the above factors will take away fundamental rights of the citizens.

### Compensation under the 2013 Land Acquisition Act

- In the case of **rural areas**, it is four times the market rate and for an urban area, it is two times.
- **Affected artisans, small traders, fishermen by the land acquisition** are given one-time payment even if they do not own any land.
- Employment to one member of an affected family.
- In case someone is not satisfied with an award under the Act, they can approach the Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (LARR) Authority.

### Construction in strategic areas

- The move comes days after the J&K administration gave its approval to an amendment to The **Control of Building Operations Act, 1988** and the **J&K Development Act, 1970**.
- This for carrying out construction activities in "strategic areas" by armed forces.
- After the move was criticised, the administration clarified that the changes provide for a special dispensation for regulating construction in "strategic areas", required by the Armed Forces for their **"direct operational and training requirements"**.
- There is no decision to either transfer any new land or declare areas outside cantonments or army land as strategic.

### All about Land Acquisition Act: (Rehabilitation, and Resettlement Act, or RFCTLARR Act)

#### Land Acquisition Act 1894

- **Till 2014, the land acquisition in India was governed by the colonial period's Land acquisition act of 1894.** The Land Acquisition Act of 1894 allowed the government to acquire private lands.
- Under the 1894 Act, displaced people were only liable for monetary compensation linked with market value of the land in question, which was still quite minimal considering circle rates are often misleading.

### The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement act, 2013

- The new act provided for land acquisition as well as rehabilitation and resettlement. It replaced the **Land Acquisition Act, 1894**.
- The process for **land acquisition involves a Social Impact Assessment survey**, preliminary notification stating the intent for acquisition, a declaration of acquisition, and compensation to be given by a certain time.
- All acquisitions require rehabilitation and resettlement to be provided to the people affected by the acquisition

### Why was there a need for a new Act?

- The **2013 Central Act was passed** to give effect to the citizens' pre-existing constitutional right to livelihood.
- This ensures that life is not robbed because it is in the public interest and is seen by a social impact assessment (ii) rehabilitation is provided to the affected people. Forced takeovers: Under **the 1894 legislation once the acquiring authority** has formed the intention to acquire a particular plot of land, it can carry out the acquisition regardless of how the person whose land is sought to be acquired is affected.

### Loopholes in the law

- **The Act causes delays.**
  - The entire process of acquisition will take four and a half years to complete and requires several steps.
  - No formal expert group guidelines,
  - Government can continue with the acquisition process even if otherwise indicated by recommendations. It gives the government enormous power to suppress the voice of the people.
- Vague definition of the word **'public intent'** where the Act describes a public function, it covers large areas.
- In addition, defence, infrastructure, manufacturing, tourism, sport and health should cover all purposes.
- A tourist resort in **Karnataka's dense forests, for example**, may qualify as a public resort, regardless of whether it is private or government-owned
- The lack of monitoring of the five-year development plan for people belonging to Scheduled **Castes and Scheduled Tribes gives back rights because of people losing their land**, but it is a major downside that the Act does not specify that a monitoring body will track its implementation.
- Poor implementation of the Act by the states.

**Mains oriented question**

The process for land acquisition involves a Social Impact Assessment survey, preliminary notification stating the intent for acquisition, a declaration of acquisition, and compensation to be given by a certain time. In context of this explain the land acquisition and loopholes in the system.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

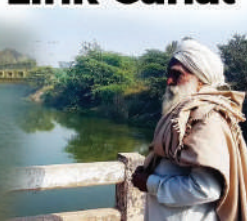
NOTES



# Punjab vs Haryana Sutlej-Yamuna Link Canal

by Ankit Agrawal

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

## Relevance

GS 2 || Polity||Other Constitutional Dimensions || Inter-State Relations

## Title

Sutlej Yamuna Link Canal dispute between Punjab and Haryana - Rajiv Longowal Accord explained

## Why in the news?

Opposing the Sutlej-Yamuna Link (SYL) canal project and staking claim to Yamuna's waters, Punjab Chief Minister warned the Centre

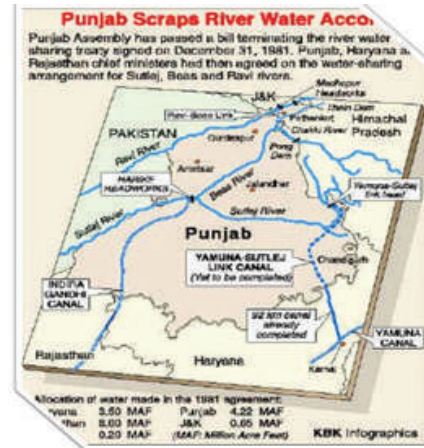
## Background

- Before the reorganization, in 1955, out of 15.85 MAF of Ravi and Beas, the Centre had allocated
- 8 MAF to Rajasthan, 7.20 MAF to undivided Punjab, 0.65MAF to Jammu and Kashmir



## History of Sutlej Yamuna Link Canal

- The state of Haryana was created from Punjab in 1966.
  - This led to the problem of giving Haryana its share of river waters.
  - GOI issued a notification March, 1976 and Haryana was allocated 3.5 MAF of waters.
- The total length of the canal was proposed to be 212 km. of which 122 km. in Punjab & 90 km. in Haryana. Haryana completed the work in June 1980. However, Punjab did not start the work.



- In 1981 agreement was entered among Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan to re-allocate the waters of Ravi and Beas.
- To enable Haryana to use its share of waters, the Union Government started **Sutlej Yamuna Link (SYL) canal Project in 1982**. This project was the product of a 1981 agreement.
- **Rajiv-Longowal accord:**
  - After laying the foundation, the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) launched an agitation against the canal under the leadership of Sant Harchand Singh Longowal.
  - In August 1982, the agitation was converted into a "Dharam Yudh (holy war)". The agitation took a violent turn, plunging the state in chaos.
  - On July 24, 1985, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Longowal signed the Punjab accord in New Delhi.
  - The agreement called for completion of the canal by August 1986. The SS Barnala-led SAD government started the work and 90% of it was completed.
- **The Punjab termination of agreements act, 2004:**
  - Supreme Court in January 2002 and June 2004, ordered the remaining portion of the canal to be completed.
  - In response to SC order, Punjab Assembly passed The Punjab Termination of Agreements Act, 2004, cancelling its water-sharing agreements

## SC scrapping the act

- In March 2016 SC took up the matter. Meanwhile the **Punjab legislature passed another act**, the Punjab Sutlej-Yamuna Link Canal (**Rehabilitation and Re-vesting of Proprietary Rights**) Bill 2016, which seeks to restore the land acquired for the canal, back to the farmers free of cost.
- Even though the Governor did not give assent to the bill. After that SC scrapped the 2004 act and asked to maintain the status quo

### The canal Sutlej-Yamuna link come up again now

- The issue is back on centre stage after the Supreme Court directed the chief ministers of Punjab and Haryana on July 28 to negotiate and settle the SYL canal issue.
- The apex court asked for a meeting at the highest political level to be mediated by the Centre so that states reach a consensus over the completion of SYL canal.
- Union Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat organised the meeting between both the chief ministers.
- The meeting remained inconclusive with Shekhawat expressing the view that the construction of the SYL canal should be completed.
- CM of Punjab refused categorically. Now, another meeting will be held soon to take up the issue.
- **Punjab wants a new tribunal:**
  - The state wants a tribunal seeking a fresh time-bound assessment of the water availability.
  - The BBMB had reported that availability of Ravi-Beas water had come down from the estimated 17.17 MAF in 1981 to 13.38 MAF in 2013. A fresh Tribunal could ascertain all this, Punjab believes.

### All about Inter-State Water Dispute

One of the most contiguous problems in Indian federalism today is the Inter-State River Water disputes. In extreme situations, this can hamper the relationship between the various states. Recent cases concerning the Cauvery Water Dispute and the Satluj Yamuna Link Canal

### Water in the Constitution of India

- Water is a Commodity subject to entry 17 of the State List and is thus allowed by States to pass water legislation.
- Entry 17 of the State List deals with water, i.e. water supply, water supply, irrigation, cooling, drainage, water storage and water supply.
- **Entry 56 of the Union List authorizes** the Union Government to regulate and develop interstate rivers and river valleys to the extent declared expedient in the public interest by the Parliament.
- **Article 262 of the Indian Constitution:** Constituent Assembly expected the occurrence of water conflicts in future. A particular provision of Article 262 is stated in the constitution itself due to the importance of these disputes.

### ➤ In the case of disputes relating to waters, Article 262 provides:

- By statute, any dispute or allegation concerning the use, distribution or regulation of the waters of, or in, any inter-State river or river valley may be referred to the Parliament.
- Nonetheless, Parliament can, by statute, provide that neither the Supreme Court nor any other court exercises jurisdiction over any such dispute or complaint.

### ➤ Parliament has enacted two laws according to Article 262

- **River Board Act, 1956:** The object of this Act was to allow the Union Government to establish Boards for Interstate Rivers and river valleys in consultation with State Governments. The purpose of Boards is to advise on the interstate basin to plan development schemes and to avoid the occurrence of conflicts.

(No river board as provided for in the above Act has been created to date.)

- **Inter-State Water Dispute Act, 1956:** Provisions of the Act, In the event that a specific state or states petition the government of the Union for the establishment of the tribunal, the Central Government will seek to resolve the matter through consultation between the aggrieved states. If it does not work, then it will shape the tribunal.

- **The composition of the River Water Tribunal:** The Tribunal shall be composed of the Chief Justice of India and shall consist of the Supreme Court sitting judge and the other two judges who may come from the Supreme Court or the High Court

### The Present Mechanism to resolve the inter-state river water disputes in India

- It can be seen that – water dispute settlement is limited by the **Inter-State Water Disputes Act, 1956**. Under its rules, a government of a state can approach the Center to refer the dispute to a court whose decision is considered final.
- **Inter-State River Water Conflict Settlement system**
  - The Act was revised in 2002 to incorporate the Sarkaria Commission's key recommendations. The amendments required a one-year period for the establishment of a water dispute tribunal and also a three-year period issuance of a judgment.
- **Active River Water sharing Tribunals in India**
  - **Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal II (2004)** – Karnataka, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra



- **Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal (2018)** – Odisha & Chattisgarh
- **Mahadayi Water Disputes Tribunal (2010)**– Goa, Karnataka, Maharashtra
- **Ravi & Beas Water Tribunal (1986)**– Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan
- **Vansadhara Water Disputes Tribunal (2010)**– Andhra Pradesh & Odisha

### Inter-State River Water Disputes (Amendment) Bill, 2019

- **The Inter-State River Water Disputes (Amendment) Bill, 2019** on the adjudication of disputes concerning inter-State river water and its river valley will pave the way for swift resolution of disputes.
- **Timeline & Dispute Resolution Committee:** In two years' time, a single tribunal would be expected to give a verdict. The law also proposes a dispute resolution committee set up by the Central Government to settle inter-state water disputes in a friendly way within 18 months.
- The Bill can also influence the composition of the members of different tribunals and allows for a professional specialist to be the president of the tribunal. All tribunals are usually staffed by members of the judiciary, appointed by the chief justice
- **Any dispute which cannot be resolved** by arbitration will be referred for adjudication to the Tribunal. The conflict so referred to the tribunal shall be assigned to a tribunal bench for adjudication by the president of the tribunal.
- **Need for a Single Tribunal:**
  - This would replace multiple tribunals for a number of disputes currently in existence.
  - The current nine tribunals shall be subsumed by the single tribunal. It takes 17 to 27 years for a tribunal to settle a dispute as of now.
  - The so-called stand-alone tribunal will have a permanent establishment and permanent office space and infrastructure to avoid the need to establish a separate tribunal for each water dispute, a time-consuming process.

### Way Forward

- There seems to be distrust and short-sightedness behind the competitive politics over the SYL canal.
- Both States have serious water issues such as sinking water tables due to over exploitation, pollution of water resources etc. Hence there is a need to move away from unsustainable and water intensive cropping patterns.

- At the same time Punjab can't unilaterally cancel the agreement and hence must cooperate with Haryana as it was part of Punjab

### Mains oriented question

The legislative processes for resolving the inter-state water conflicts failed to discuss and resolve the problems. Is the failure due to inadequacy of structure or procedure, or both? Discuss.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

### NOTES

0

# National Cadet Corps Expansion

by Rahul Saigaonker

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

## Relevance

GS 2 || Polity || other Constitutional Dimensions || Centre-State Relations

## Title

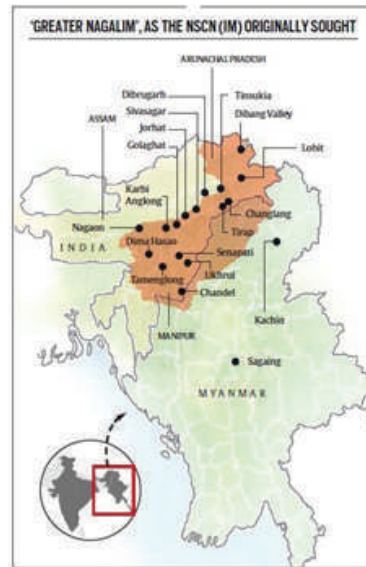
Naga Peace Process explained - Understanding hurdles to Nagaland peace talks

## Why in the news?

Naga Peace Accord is a very important component of internal security

## About the Naga Peace Talks

- The talks aim to resolve conflicts which date back to colonial rule.
- The Nagas are an ethnic group consisting of many tribes living in and around the state of Nagaland.
- The Greater Nagalim, which would include the state of Nagaland, parts of neighboring states and Myanmar, was a key demand of the Naga groups.
- In 1826, the British annexed Assam, establishing the Naga Hills district and expanding its borders.
- After Independence, the declaration of Naga nationalism that started during British rule persisted, and even after Nagaland became a State.
- The unresolved problems along the way led to decades of insurgency that took thousands of lives, including those of civilians.



## Naga claim played out historically

- The earliest sign of **Naga resistance goes back to 1918**, when the Naga Club was founded.
- In 1929 the Simon Commission was ordered by the Club to leave them alone in order to decide for themselves, as in ancient times.
- A Z Phizo established the **National Naga Council (NNC) in 1946**, which declared Naga independence on 14 August 1947;
- In 1951, it reportedly held a referendum in which a vast majority favored an independent Naga state.
- The NNC took up arms and went underground by the early 1950s.

## What was in the framework agreement?

- The Indian Government has not yet released the information in public. The government acknowledged the unique history, culture and role of the Nagas and their feelings and expectations following the agreement.
- **Shillong Agreement (1975):** It was also a reversal of the first peace agreement, the 1975 Shillong Agreement, which was rejected by Naga hardliners. In January 1980, that led to the birth of the NSCN.
- **Ceasefire Agreement (1997):** The NSCN-IM signed a ceasefire agreement with the government aimed at preventing attacks on Indian forces. In return, the Government must suspend all offensive counter-insurgency operations



- **Framework Agreement (2015):** The Center signed a Framework Agreement with the NSCN (I-M) on 3 August 2015 to resolve the Naga problem, but both sides maintained confidentiality over its contents.
- Hope among some **Naga groups diminished a bit when on 17 November 2017** the NNPGs were brought into the peace process. This agreement allegedly made the peace process inclusive but gave rise to suspicion that Delhi was manipulating tribal and strategic tensions within the Nagas.
- A few years later, **disagreements emerged within the outfit over initiating a phase** of dialog with the Indian Government. In April 1988 it split into the NSCN (I-M) and NSCN (Khaplang) which frequently engaged in fratricidal battles.
- **The NSCN recognized and respected the Indian political and governance structure.** In 2019, the NSCN (I-M) released a statement saying Nagaland State is not serving the Naga people's national decision, and will not. The argument was in response to the proposal for a Register of Nagaland Indigenous Peoples (RIIN) in Nagaland state.

### Where currently lies the territorial demand?

- Official sources said the deal was signed in 2018,
  - Does not change state boundaries;
  - Provides for Arunachal and Manipur autonomous Naga territorial councils;
  - A shared cultural body across states for Nagas;
  - Unique institutions for non-state Naga militia creation, integration and rehabilitation
  - The abolition of the Special Powers Clause of the Armed Forces.
- **The NSCN (IM) map of Greater Nagalim covers a sprawl of 1,20,000 square kilometers** across the northeast and Myanmar-the territory of the state of Nagaland itself is just 16,527 square kilometres, a fraction of this view..
- **Despite the confusion created by this among citizens** in neighboring states, the state governments have assured them that they will not breach the territorial integrity of their respective States.
- Appeal for 'integration of all Naga-inhabited areas' had been supported by the Nagaland Assembly as many as five times before the 1964, 1970, 1994, 2003 and 2015 framework agreement.

### What are the other issues?

- **The government and the NSCN (I-M)** have not reached an agreement on issues surrounding the separate Naga flag and the constitution.

- The NSCN (I-M) is unable to budge from this demand and seeks a permanent solution.
- However, they are well aware of the situation of the Government of India with that..
- In the previous statement from the Governor's office, the Government announced that it was ready to "honorably end" the peace talks and entered a final point.
- They pulled the Framework Agreement mischievously, and started to impute imaginary material to it.

### Present Development

#### Fresh hurdles

- **The path to peace in Nagaland has seen fresh obstacles arise.** Following the signing in 2015 of a Framework Agreement (Naga Peace Agreement) between the Nagalim National Socialist Council's Center and Isak-Muivah faction, or the NSCN (I-M), the largest of the militant parties in the peace process since 1997, more than 100 rounds of talks and many twists and turns took place.
- **Proposal by the NSCN (I-M) to withdraw Nagaland Governor R.N. Ravi** as the interlocutor of the Center for the 23-year-old peace process and its alleged modification of the original framework agreement.

### What makes the peace process vacillate?

- **Talks, tiredness and increasing impatience across** the Naga realm gave way to hope when Mr. Ravi was made Governor of Nagaland in July 2019. His appointment was interpreted as a New Delhi message that the solution will soon be found to be a comprehensive settlement.
- In the presence of Prime Minister **Narendra Modi, Mr Ravi had signed the Framework Agreement as interlocutor of the Centre.** But he released a statement in October 2019 blaming the NSCN (I-M) 'procrastinating mentality' for the delay in a widely agreed draft
- The NSCN (I-M) also alleged the Framework Agreement to be "imaginary material," referring to the government's alleged recognition of the 'Naga national flag' and 'Naga Yezhabo (constitution)' as part of the agreement.
- **In June 2020, the NSCN (I-M) insulted Mr. Ravi's letter to Nagaland's chief minister, Neiphiu Rio, in which he referred to them as parallel government "armed gangs."** The NSCN (I-M) replied by calling for the withdrawal of Mr. Ravi from the peace process, but the Naga National Political Groups

(NNPGs), a coalition of seven competing parties, and certain social organizations want him to remain.

### Reason for 'agreement' back in the news

- **The provisions of the framework agreement** were recently published by the NSCN (I-M). The outfit said Mr. Ravi had "craftily extracted the word 'new' from the original" line referring to "shared sovereignty" between India and the homeland of Naga, and provided for a "permanent inclusive new relationship of peaceful coexistence".
- **The NSCN (I-M) argued that 'fresh'** was a politically sensitive word describing the essence of the peaceful coexistence of the two entities (sovereign powers) and strongly suggesting a settlement beyond the framework of the Indian Constitution.
- **The group claimed that it had refrained** from releasing the contents of the Framework Agreement on 'tacit agreement reached between the two sides not to report to the public domain on security grounds'.
- However, it said, Mr. Ravi took undue advantage and began to exploit the framework agreement in order to deceive the Nagas and the Centre. The Governor said the framework agreement was the outfit's "acceptance of the Indian constitution".

### What are the other hurdles?

- In 'Naga Independence Day' speech on August 14, NSCN (I-M) general secretary Thuingaleng Muivah insisted the Nagas "will never merge with India".
- But states adjacent to Nagaland, where the NSCN (I-M) peace headquarters is based, are apprehensive of the question of sovereignty. This is attributable to the concept of Greater Nagalim from the NSCN (I-M), a homeland encompassing all Naga-inhabited areas in Nagaland and beyond. In addition to Myanmar, where there are many of the more than 50 Naga tribes, the Greater Nagalim map includes large swaths of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Manipur.
- **The Assam administration vowed** not to divide "even an inch of land," the All Arunachal Pradesh Students' Union cautioned against any "territorial changes" when it came to a solution. Manipur Chief Minister Nongthombam Biren Singh said he received assurance from the Centre that the NSCN (I-M) peace agreement would not affect Manipur's territorial integrity.
- **Non-Naga groups are suspicious,** however, because the Tangkhul community, which forms the center of the NSCN (I-M), comes from Manipur and

the outfit cannot recognize any agreement excluding areas inhabited by it. Even the NNPGs, whose members are primarily from Nagaland, are a factor; their inputs for a final solution may differ from those of the NSCN (I-M).

### Additional info

#### ► About Nagas

- The Nagas are not a single group, but an ethnic community comprising a variety of tribes living in and around Nagaland.
- Nagas belongs to the family of Indo-Mongoloids.
- Nagas asserted sovereignty on the basis of previous territorial life and discrepancies articulated today in terms of 'uniqueness'.
- There are nineteen major Naga tribes, namely Aos, Angamis, Changs, Chakesang, Kabuis, Kacharis, Khain-Mangas, Konyaks, Kukis, Lothas, Maos, Mikirs, Phoms, Rengmas, Sangtams, Semas, Tankhuls, Yamchumgar and Zeeliang.

### Conclusion

Nagas are culturally heterogeneous groups with distinct communities / tribes who have a diverse set with typical population problems. Their cultural, geographical, and territorial scope must be taken into account in order to achieve the long-lasting solution. Any settlement to be worked out should therefore contribute to social and political stability, economic growth and the protection of the life and property of all tribal and state people.

### Mains Oriented question

Explain the Naga Crisis briefly, also explain the initiative taken by the government to resolve the issue.

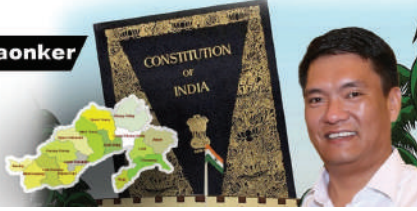


(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

# 6th Schedule & Arunachal Pradesh

by Rahul Saigaonker

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

## Relevance

GS 2 || Polity || Other Constitutional Dimensions || Special Provisions for Some states

## Title

6th Schedule of Indian Constitution - Why Pema Khandu Govt wants to put Arunachal Pradesh under it?

## Why in the news?

Arunachal Pradesh wants to enter Sixth Schedule

## Present context

- Arunachal Pradesh wants the state to be placed under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.
- A resolution to this effect is likely to be tabled in the state assembly soon. (Passed on August 27th)
- Arunachal home minister Bamang Felix said: "After intense discussion with civil society groups and student bodies it was found necessary that for the protection of the religious and social practices and customary law and procedure of the tribes of the state, the Sixth Schedule is necessary."

## Is CAA responsible for this?

- No CAA is not responsible for the move
- **The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) exempts the Sixth Schedule areas** and the Inner Line permit areas.
- Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram and Manipur are under ILP, while there are 10 areas under the Sixth Schedule in Northeast India.
- **Why state demand so?**
  - AP government says, that we have protection under ILP and under Article 371(H) of the Constitution but they do not provide full protection to the state's people.
  - The Statement given: "We may have our land, air and water but we do not have its ownership".

## What's the Sixth Schedule?

- **The Sixth Schedule of the Constitution** provides for the administration of tribal areas in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram to safeguard the rights of the tribal population in these states.
- This special provision is provided under **Article 244(2) and Article 275(1) of the Constitution**.
- It was agreed upon by the **Constituent Assembly in 1949** on the reports of Bordoloi Committee which allowed tribal areas to become developed as per their wishes.
- The tribal areas in the four states (ATM2) have autonomous districts. (ADs do not fall outside the executive authority of the state concerned)
- The governor is empowered to organise and re-organise the autonomous districts & regions within districts.
- **Each autonomous district** has a district council consisting of 30 members, of whom 4 are nominated by the governor and the remaining 26 are elected on the basis of adult franchise.
- **The district and regional councils administer** the areas under their jurisdiction. They can make laws on certain specified matters like land, forests, canal water, shifting cultivation, village administration, and inheritance of property, marriage and divorce, social customs and so on. But all such laws require the assent of the governor.
  - They can constitute courts for trial of suits and cases between the tribes. The jurisdiction of the high court over these suits and cases is specified by the governor.
  - They can also make regulations for the control of money lending and trading by non-tribals.
- The acts of Parliament or the state legislature do not apply to autonomous districts & regions or apply with specified modifications and exceptions specified by Governor.

### MEGHALAYA

• Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council

• Jaintia Hills Autonomous District Council

• Garo Hills Autonomous District Council

### MIZORAM

• Chakma Autonomous District Council

• Lai Autonomous District Council

• Mara Autonomous District Council

### TRIPURA

• Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council

### ASSAM

• Dima Hasao Autonomous Council

• Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council

• Bodoland Territorial Council

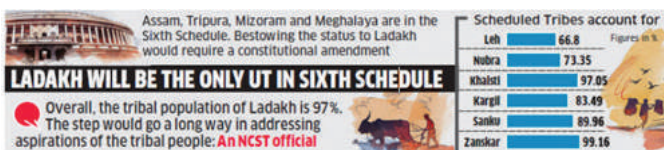


## Drawbacks associated with the Sixth Schedule

- It has created **multiple power centres**, rather than a genuine autonomy process in the region.
- District councils and state legislatures are frequently in conflict of interests. In Meghalaya, for example, the entire state continues to be under the sixth schedule despite the formation of the state, causing frequent conflict with the state government.
- Demand for special provisions for other groups.
- **Development shortages:** As far as financial autonomy is concerned, there is a huge gap between the budget approved and the funds received from the state government which has a direct impact on the development of these tribal communities.
  - 125th Constitutional Amendment Bill was introduced in Parliament in February 2019 to change the rules of the Finance Commission (Article 280) and of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.
  - It aims to increase the financial and executive powers of the 10 Sixth Schedule Autonomous Councils in the northeastern region.

## Past context:

- 119th meeting of the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes was held in 2019 to deliberate the issue of inclusion of UT of Ladakh under Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India.
- The Commission after careful consideration recommended that the Union Territory of Ladakh be brought under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.



## Future repercussions

### Pros

- It is good to include new regions in Sixth Schedule-
  - Inclusion of a region in the sixth schedule will help in democratic devolution of powers.
  - It will also enhance the transfer of funds for speedy development of the region.

### Cons

- It is not good to include new regions in Sixth Schedule-
  - Multiple power centres.
  - Conflict of interests between the District Councils and the State Legislatures.

- Ripple effect leading to more demands
- Are ADCs really developed? (In February 2019, 125th Constitutional Amendment Bill was introduced in the Parliament)

## Additional info

- The **Bordoloi Committee** formed by the Constituent Assembly, the 6th Schedule was formulated to provide limited autonomy to the tribal regions of North-East.
  - The report of the Committee indicated that there was a need for an administration system that would enable the creation of tribal areas.
  - The study also called for the defence of these tribal areas from people's exploitation in the plains and the preservation of their distinct social customs.
- **Article 371 A:** The Acts of Parliament relating to the following matters would not apply to Nagaland unless decided by the State Legislative Assembly:
  - Nagas religious or social rituals.
  - Customary law and practise in Naga.
  - Civil and criminal justice administration involving decisions under Naga customary law.
  - Possession of land and its properties

## Mains oriented question

"It was found necessary that for the protection of the religious and social practices and customary law and procedure of the tribes of the state, the Sixth Schedule is necessary." Explain the statement in context of Arunachal Pradesh demand on 6th Schedule for state.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

## Powers of State Governor in India



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

### Relevance

GS 2|| Polity|| State Government|| Governor

### Title

Powers of State Governor in India, Can the Governor direct the procedure of the House?

### Why in news?

- Rajasthan Governor Kalraj Mishra has not convened the State assembly even after advice by CoM multiple times.
- He demanded the purpose of calling a session now.
- He also said that 21 days' notice is essential for calling a session.
- Put conditions like video recording the session & maintenance of social distancing.
- Congress MLAs supporting the CM Gehlot held a dharna at the Governor's residence, and also led a public protest.

### Irony Alert

- In **1997, Kalyan Singh and his deputy Kalraj Mishra** faced a similar situation but Mishra was at receiving end at that time.

### Can the Governor direct the agenda or procedure of the house?

- Article 174-Authorizes the Governor to summon, dissolve and prorogue the state legislative assembly.
- However, the Governor can exercise the above power only as per Article 163(1) Which says that the Governor shall act on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers headed by the Chief Minister except, in so far as he is by or under this constitution required to exercise his functions or any of them at his discretion.

- Legal questions on the powers of the Governor arise mainly due to **Article 163(2)**.

- **Article 163(2)**- If any question arises whether any matter is or is not a matter as respects which the Governor is by or under this Constitution required to act in his discretion, the decision of the Governor in his discretion shall be final, and the validity of anything done by the Governor shall not be called in question on the ground that he ought or ought not to have acted in his discretion.

### When can Governor use discretion?

- Convene a session if more than 6 months have lapsed from last session CoM has lost majority.
- Hung verdict Tribal Welfare (in some states).

### What has the Supreme court said?

- Nabam Rebia v Dy Speaker AP assembly & others 20-16 Case SC said "the functions, duties, and powers of the Governor under the Constitution are 'cabined, cribbed, confined'."
- Governor "cannot have an overriding authority, over the representatives of the people, who constitute the state legislature".

### Concerns due to abuse of power by Governor

- The union government can control the affairs of the states with the Governor who is appointed by them and reports directly to the President.

### Discretionary powers

- **Abusing the discretionary powers** while selecting the parties to form the government will break the democratic set up as the government is formed by parties who did not have the majority support of people.
- Either way, to stay true to the spirit of the Constitution, the Governor should desist from conferring discretionary powers to his office where there are none
- The people will lose faith in the office of the Governor who in most cases acts like an agent of the union government and not as an independent office.

## Important judgements of the Supreme Court on the controversial role of the Governor

- **SR Bommai vs Union of India case, 1994**-This case was about the powers of the Governor to dismiss state government under article 356. The Supreme Court ruled that the floor test should be the only way to determine the majority of the government and not the subjective opinion of the Governor.
- **Rameshwar Prasad case, 2006** - this case was on the validity of the President's rule and the dissolution of the Bihar assembly in 2005. The Supreme Court ruled that the Governor cannot take decisions on the basis of his subjective assessments.
- **The Rajamannar Committee (1971)** recommended the **deletion of Articles 356 and 357** from the constitution of India. The necessary provisions for safeguards against arbitrary action of the ruling party at the Centre under **Article 356** should be incorporated in the constitution.
- **Nabam rebia case, 2016** - the Supreme Court ruled that the Governor is just an executive and nominee and not an elected representative, and his powers flow from the aid and advice of the cabinet ministers. Use of discretionary powers for summoning or dissolving assembly sessions without the advice of the cabinet is unconstitutional.
- **Karnataka assembly case, 2018** - The Supreme Court ruled that the discretionary powers of the Governor cannot be arbitrary or fanciful.

## Way forward

- It is equally important that the governor must act judiciously, impartially, and efficiently while exercising his discretion and personal judgment for the smooth functioning of a democratic government.
- An agreed 'Code of Conduct' should be approved by the state governments to lay down certain 'norms and principles' which should guide the exercise of the governor's 'discretion' and his powers which he is entitled to use and exercise on his judgment.
- The 'procedure for appointment of governors should be laid down' and conditions of appointment must also be laid down and must assure a fixed tenure for the governor so that the governor is not under the constant threat of removal by the central government.
- It is necessary to invest the office of the Governor with the requisite independence of action and to rid them of the bane of 'instructions' from the Central Government.

- The role of governor is indispensable for the successful working of the constitutional democracy. He must refrain from aligning himself to any political ideology. The virtue of impartiality must be withheld to ensure a free and fair election in a democracy.

## Mains model question

- Governor is the constitutional head of the state as well as the representative of the Centre. Examine how the constitutional discretion provided to the Governor for performing this role has led to the conflicts between the states and the centres. Also, discuss how the Sarkaria and Punchhi commission recommendations can help resolve this conflict.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

## Notes



## Governance & Social Justice

### Punjab Toxic Liquor Tragedy

by Anirudh



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

#### Relevance

GS 3 || Governance & Social Justice || Vulnerable Sections || Drug Addicts

#### Title

Punjab Toxic Liquor Tragedy 2020, What is Hooch? Why Hooch deaths are frequent in India

#### Why in the news?

- The Punjab hooch tragedy - in which 86 people lost their lives, death count sharply increased in the day as 48 more people died after drinking toxic liquor.

#### What happened recently?

- Twenty-five people have been arrested so far while Captain Singh warned of strict action against anyone found involved in the case.
- Seven excise and six police officials (two deputy superintendents of police and four station house officers) have been suspended.
- Sixty-three of the deaths were reported from **Tarn Taran district, 12 in Amritsar and 11 in Gurdaspur's Batala, officials said.**
- The tragedy has been unfolding since Wednesday (29 July) evening in the three Punjab districts

#### What is hooch and how does it kill?

- The **main culprit in poisoning from hooch is the presence of large quantities** of methanol.
- Traces of methanol are found in legally made and licenced alcoholic drinks like beer while country made liquor, when not brewed with care, can contain large quantities of methanol.

- **Methanol is essentially a toxic industrial-** standard alcohol, which is added to increase the potency of liquor. Currently, methanol is easily available in the market, and has many industrial applications including the manufacture of varnishes among other products.
- **"Problems arise when higher concentrations** are formed during incorrectly managed distillation processes, but more particularly when methanol is deliberately added to fortify informally-produced spirits and illicit alcoholic drinks".
- When large amounts of **methanol enter the body with copious amounts of spurious liquor**, formic acid accumulates in body tissues leading to acidosis.
- As the victims of methanol poisoning from hooch in India are generally from economically and socially backward communities, they are less equipped to seek specialized care

#### Toxic Liquor Tragedy in India

##### Past Incidents:

- **Assam hooch tragedy:** Over 80 tea plantation workers dead after consuming spurious liquor in Golaghat, Jorhat districts- Year 2019
- Illicit liquor outlets in the **U.P., Uttarakhand region.-:** Majority of the deaths were in Saharanpur district of U.P. Year 2019

#### Reasons for Repeated Incidents

- Bad governance to identify illegal liquor production and movement;
- Police-administration-bootleggers **connection of corruption.**
- The challenge of coordinating the catch of inter-state gangs with different State agencies.
- **Policies skewed:**
  - Lack of affordable liquor to poor citizens due to income-maximizing liquor policy, i.e. high taxes and excise prices.
  - The prohibition of smuggling in many nations.
  - Because of its low cost processing and no taxes, the price of illegal liquor is very low
- **Demand-supply gap:** Collectors have recently been warned by the Odisha Government against dubious liquor sales.
- Patients and relatives are reluctant to disclose the actual facts about liquor consumption due to its corollary like fear of police action.

- Delay in the initial stage of the provision of antidote (ethyl alcohol) leads to more casualties.
- Avoiding education and lacking the evil effects of illicit liquor.
- Present laws for prohibition are very liberal, lenient and the quantum of punishment is very minor in most of the states.

### Issues that need fixing

- Policies that do not contain illicit alcohol produce long-term health effects, as people tend to eat brews that have higher alcohol concentrations, or toxic substances such as methanol.
- Several States prioritize the reorganization of excise administration and police, paving the way for episodic death and misery.
- According to recent statistics from India's **National Crime Records Bureau, 1,522 people died in 2015 as a result of drinking spurious liquor** — almost all of them men.
- Mortality from illicit liquor is popular in India, **where illegal alcohol is frequently consumed** for reasons like deprivation and geographical isolation.

### Impacts of Sale and Consumption of Illicit Liquor:

- **Health tragedies:** In extreme cases, blindness and death.
- **The vicious cycle of poverty:** the sole breadwinner is lost to families of the lowest socio-economic strata.
- **Sale of liquor through unauthorized** outlets disturbs peace and order in the general public.
- Loss of state government revenue.

### Constitution Provisions against toxic Liquor

- **Article 47:** State shall endeavor to ban the consumption of intoxicating beverages and drugs other than for medicinal purposes.
- **Article 21** (Right to life and liberty): Consumption of liquor leads to degradation of human dignity.
- **Article 38:** Function of the Republic is to secure socio economic justice.
- **Legal status:** Alcohol prohibition is a state subject with each state having full control over alcohol laws, State excise rates, and alcohol production and sale organization.

### Way forward

- The clarity required in rules and regulations: State government should frame new specific rules, especially for manufacturing, transportation, importation

of methyl alcohol rules and classify it as poison.

- Raising literacy standards in slum areas and rehabilitating addicts / offenders.
- The awareness should be spread among people through entertainment mediums.
- **Recommendations by Hooch tragedy commission of Gujarat:** These recommendations must be implemented to address the grim situation on the ground:
  - Break corrupt nexus: it is necessary to take steps to break the nexus between police and bootleggers.
  - Strengthening the investigative ability of law enforcement agencies: a fast and efficient process should be put in place for prosecuting these crimes.
- **Health system capacities should be upgraded to:**
  - Proper antidote supply (Ethyl alcohol, sodium bicarbonate and fomepizole) and hemodialysis should be assured.
  - Hospital diagnostic instruments should be maintained and physicians qualified.
- Central government must constitute commission: although this matter falls within the jurisdiction of states, the central government must set up a commission to examine the issue and issue suggestive model guidelines to states to address it.

### Mains oriented question

Illicit hooch has killed more than 700 people in 18 incidents reported across India since 2001. Examine critically the causes of these deaths, the repetition of these incidents and the measures needed to stop them. Do you think a full ban on sale and alcohol use can be a solution? Illustrate



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

## Tamil Nadu rejects 3 language formula in NEP 2020

by Rahul Saigaonker

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

### Relevance

GS 3 || Governance & Social Justice || Human Development || Education

### Title

New Education Policy 2020 - Why Tamil Nadu has rejected 3 language formula of NEP 2020?

### Why in the news?

Tamil Nadu rejects 3-language formula; to continue with 2-language practice

### What happened recently?

- Tamil Nadu has rejected 3-language formula in NEP 2020 and says it will stick to existing policy of two languages.
- TN CM E. K. Palaniswami said the three-language formula in the NEP is 'painful and saddening'.

#### NEP 2020

MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCES IS NOW MINISTRY OF EDUCATION	
<b>FOR SCHOOLS</b> <b>From 10+2 to 5+3+3+4:</b> Current 10+2 structure in which policy covered schooling from Class 1 to 10 (age 6-16) and then Class 11-12 (age 16-18) gives way to 5 years of foundational education, 3 of preparatory, 3 of middle & 4 years of secondary schooling. <b>Multi-Stream:</b> Flexibility to choose subjects across streams; all subjects to be offered at two levels of proficiency. <b>Diluted Board:</b> Board exams to test only core competencies; could become modular (object and subjective) and will be offered twice a year. <b>Multilingual:</b> 3-language policy to continue with preference for local language medium of instruction till class 5. <b>Bag-Less Days:</b> School students to have 10 bag-less days in a year during which they are exposed to a vocation of choice (i.e. informal internship).	<b>FOR COLLEGES</b> <b>SAT-Like College Test:</b> National Testing Agency to conduct common college entrance exam twice a year. <b>4-Year Bachelor:</b> 4-year multi-disciplinary bachelor's programme to be preferred; mid-term dropouts to be given credit with option to complete degree after a break. <b>No Affiliation:</b> Over next 15 years colleges will be given graded autonomy to give degrees, affiliation with universities to end, so would deemed university status. <b>Fee Cap:</b> Proposal to cap fee charged by private institutions of higher learning. <b>Going Global:</b> Top-rated global universities to be facilitated to come to India, top Indian institutions to be encouraged to go global.

### New Education Policy 2020

- DMK described NEP & three language formulas as "anti-democratic".
- PMK said the new NEP had many good aspects but also has many aspects which are dangerous too, especially proposal of adopting a three language policy is not acceptable.
- Makkal Needhi Maiam founder Kamal Haasan welcomed NEPs proposal that 6% of GDP would be spent on education but rejects three language formula.

### Three-language formula

- Since 1937, Tamil Nadu has consistently opposed the decision to make Hindi Compulsory in schools. The founder of Dravidar Kazhagam, Periyar E.V. Ramasamy opposed the decision of then Madras chief minister C. Rajagopalachari to make Hindi mandatory.
- In 1950, the Constituent assembly adopted the Munshi-Ayyangar formula. English was to continue as the official language of India along with Hindi for a period of fifteen years but the limit was elastic and the power of extension was given to the Parliament.
- 1965: Lal Bahadur Shastri's Hindi policy led to furore in south India.
- Indira Gandhi government ultimately amended The Official Languages Act in 1967 by which provided for indefinite usage of English and Hindi as the official languages of the country.
- The three-language formula was first incorporated in the National Education Policy 1968 by Indira Gandhi govt.
  - **Hindi-speaking states:** English, Hindi and a modern Indian language.
  - **Non-Hindi speaking states:** English, Hindi and one Indian language.
- The formula was implemented across the country in 1968, barring Tamil Nadu that adopted a two-language policy.
- However, in other states also the implementation was not uniform.
  - In many of the Hindi-speaking states, Sanskrit became the third language instead of any modern Indian language (preferably south Indian language), whereas the non-Hindi speaking states such as Tamil Nadu operate through a two-language formula.

### Constitution on language

- Article 29 protects the interests of minorities. Any section of the citizens who have a "distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same."
- Article 347 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.
- Article 350A facilities for instruction in mother-tongue at the primary stage.



- **Article 343** Official language shall be Hindi in Devnagri script, and numerals should follow the international form of Indian numerals. English also to be used as an official language for 15 years from the commencement of the Constitution.
- **Article 351** gives power to the union government to issue a directive for development of the Hindi language

### Reason for opposing

- Several linguistic activists and educationists observed that the move would eventually end up in students being forced to learn Hindi because of scarcity of teachers in other languages
- Aazhi Senthil Nathan, convener of CLEAR (Campaign for Language Equality and Rights) said indicators of social, economic and educational development of the State are testimony that the State's two-language policy was a successful model. "Three-language policy is neither politically needed nor it is educationally effective,
- Statement given school children need to learn many things and all their mental power need not be spent on learning languages. The Centre has allotted `50 crore for development of Hindi, while no such funds are given to other languages. Apparently, there will be no faculties for teaching other languages, except Hindi

### State based language is successful

- **Historical Aspect:** First the Dhar commission and then the JVP commission opposed the linguistic reorganization of states amid clamor for the same. In 1953, the Commission for the reorganization of Fazl Ali or States authorized this, in theory, though giving primacy to administrative convenience.
  - History is the evidence that dividing the state on linguistic basis has favoured India in maintaining the unity and integrity of India. It put an **end to fissiparous tendencies** that would've balkanized the country on the basis of language.
- It fulfilled the aspirations of people to have autonomous political units for governance.
- Led to development of vernacular languages and imparting of education in them, thus facilitating literacy.
- **Development and adoption of vernacular language** also enabled political participation by the common man and enabled the common man to voice issues of concern in a familiar language.

- Enabled the preservation of local customs, culture, and festivals. Over time, the people of India have come to cherish the myriad customs of different states.
- It did not lead to complaints regarding discrimination in the matter of distribution of resources on the basis of language, nor did it affect the federal structure of the country.

### Negative impact of state favoring its own language

- Demand or favoring one's own language also led to several unintended consequences such as regionalism, linguistic chauvinism and foundation of the "Sons of the soil" doctrine.
- There are several issues that are a threat to India's integrity – ethnic clashes in the North East, demand for new states on the basis of backwardness such as Marathwada and Saurashtra, south Indian demand for separate state on basis of cultural, linguistic and ethnicity basis, militancy in Jammu and Kashmir etc.
- North-Eastern has always been discriminated in other part of the nation where are North Indian language are more aspect of backwardness in the view of other part of the county

### Conclusion

- Indian being a secular country with diversity, but we have always seen unity in diversity and due to this special tagline attached to India, India has got a special place, respect and admired place globally. Yet we see many a time class between community, classes and caste on basis of ethnicity, linguistic or racism that not only weaken the social fabric and bring difference. State still stands so united because of the will of togetherness among the masses and political leaders from history till today, every state with specific language has removed one important factor that would've jeopardized India's integrity and thus strengthened the cause of Indian unity. Thus, differences should not be created at any level by individual or political leaders for personal benefits should be kept in mind to maintain the social fabric of the state.

### Mains oriented question

Linguistic unification, and recognizing own language has always been the demand that has voiced from years from the region of Southern Indian, in context of that write why "new language policy" is opposed in the

political power holder of the state, also write pros and cons of favoring state language?



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

NOTES

# Nagaland Civil Servants vs IAS officers

by Ankit Agrawal

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

## Relevance

GS 2 || Governance & Social Justice|| Administration | Bureaucracy

## Title

IAS Officers vs. Nagaland Civil Servants - What is Suitcase Bureaucracy?

## Why in the news?

The Nagaland Civil Service Association has hit out at the Indian Administrative Service for representing a "Suitcase Bureaucracy", alleging that officers posted in the state leave on any pretext they find

## Present Context

- A press release from the NCSA President, W Honje Konyak said that the encadrement of all DC posts in the State to the IAS "may be true on paper but it is not true in practice." This, it stated, is not because the State Government broke any rules but because historical circumstances necessitated it.
- This comes weeks after the Central government had pulled up the Nagaland government for illegally appointing non-IAS officers as district collectors

### ► Appointment of non-IAS officers as DC

- The Centre's Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) had shot off a letter to the Nagaland chief secretary,
- Pulling up the state administration for posting non-IAS officers as collectors in six of its 11 districts, even though there is no shortage of IAS officers.
- The appointments, the DoPT had said, contravenes the All India Service rules.

### ► IAS officer's response on the issue:

- Officers from all states go for deputations, and transfers keep happening.

- That's the nature of the All India Services. It doesn't make anyone a 'suitcase bureaucrat' "This is a serious issue of a state civil service association making up reasons to justify an illegal practice

### ► Is this a new practice?

- The NCSA said, the trend of Nagaland state service officers being appointed as DCs is not new, because the situation in the state is relatively peaceful,
- IAS officers now want to stay and take up the posts.
- It may even be seen as a positive development, an indicator that the situation is relatively peaceful in the state compared to earlier years; orders can be passed and followed without threat to life.

### ► NCSA justified its point

- To corroborate this point, the NCSA has said that at any given point,
- There ought to be 63 directly recruited IAS officers serving in the state — since the Nagaland cadre strength is 94, out of which one-third are officers promoted from the state civil service to the IAS.
- However, at present, there are no more than 32 IAS officers serving in the state.
- "They return to Nagaland for their cooling-off period (mandated to be one year) and leave as quickly as they can after.
- If the earlier reason was security, now it is that their children cannot access quality education or that they cannot be with their families

## Federalism in India and All India Service

Federalism is a system of government in which powers have been divided between the centre and its constituent parts such as states or provinces. It is an institutional mechanism to accommodate two sets of politics, one at the centre or national level and second at the regional or provincial level

## Indian Federal System – Two Types of Federations

- In a federation system, there are two seats of power that are autonomous in their own spheres. A federal system is different from a unitary system in that sovereignty is constitutionally split between two territorial levels so that each level can act independently of each other in some areas.

### ► There are two kinds of federations:

- **Holding Together Federation** – in this type, powers are shared between various constituent parts to accommodate the diversity in the whole entity. Here, powers are generally tilted towards

the central authority. Example: India, Spain, Belgium.

- ▶ **Coming Together Federation** – in this type, independent states come together to form a larger unit. Here, states enjoy more autonomy as compared to the holding together kind of federation. Example: USA, Australia, Switzerland.

### Federal Features of the Indian Union

- ▶ Governments at two levels – centre and states
- ▶ Division of powers between the centre and states – there are three lists given in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution which gives the subjects each level has jurisdiction in:
  - Union List
  - State List
  - Concurrent List

### Is All India Service against Federalism?

- ▶ **All India Services** – Through the All India Services such as the IAS, IPS, IRS, etc. the centre interferes in the executive powers of the states. These services also offer uniformity in administration throughout the nation.
- ▶ **The executive is a part of the legislature** – in India, the executive in both the centre and the states is a part of the legislature. This goes against the principle of division of powers between the different organs of the government.

### Power Sharing Centre and state

- ▶ This was a total negation of Sardar Patel's ideal of an impartial Civil Service, immunised from undue political influence and, therefore, in a position to give advice without fear and favour and to administer without bias. Over the years, the position has worsened
- ▶ **Historical aspect of Civil service:** The Indian Constitution has a unique structure embodied in Article 312 which permits Parliament to make laws for the creation of what are known as All India Services. The same Article states that the Indian Administrative Service and the Indian Police Service which predate the Constitution would be deemed to be created under Article 312.
- ▶ **The officers** are assigned to a State Cadre and normally serve under the State Government, but they are liable to transfer either for service under the Union Government or, under certain circumstances, on deputation to other State Governments, public sector undertakings and as the rules stand today, to

international bodies or even to private undertakings.

- ▶ **Elements of federalism** were there even under the 1919 Government of India Act and were strengthened under the 1935 Government of India Act and the Provinces did enjoy a fairly high degree of autonomy because a country as large as India cannot be administratively managed from one power centre alone.
- ▶ **All India Services**, who were protected and immunised from arbitrary action by the political class, then not only would we have a nonpartisan administration where officers work without fear or favour but a united India would also be ensured through these Civil Services whose ultimate rule making control is vested in the Central Government. Hopefully this would eliminate political whimsicality from the administration.
- ▶ **State government no control over Bureaucracy:** The elected government in Delhi cannot even control the postings, promotion and transfer of bureaucrats of the Delhi government. This symbolizes the lack of coordination in the governance machinery

### Some problem with Administration at state and central level

- ▶ **Money for bribes** can only be made by misusing the instrumentality of State power and obviously an impartial and fearless Civil Service would be an obstruction in obtaining such money.
- ▶ **The politicians:** The Civil Service had to be tamed and the politicians proceeded to do this with vim and vigour, using the instrument of posting and transfer as a major weapon.
- ▶ In 1975, when **Indira Gandhi declared** a state of Emergency and concentrated all power in herself, a new slogan of a committed Civil Service was added to our administrative lexicon. A committed Civil Service meant that civil servants would no longer necessarily be servants of the law and would be prepared to carry out the will of the political masters, even if it meant that the administration became partisan.
- ▶ At this stage, **intimidation of civil servants** was added to the armoury of the politicians and not only were honest, impartial civil servants sidelined, many of them were subjected to humiliation through suspension and worse. So long as the Central Government continued to be under a single party, some element of protection was available to the civil servants, especially the All India Services.



### Suggestions

- **More autonomy:** The Centre government can take the middle path by offering more autonomy to the state in matters of police, land, public order and services but not according to statehood. This would improve governance without affecting India's national interest
- **Collaborative Federalism:** Inbuilt overlapping jurisdictions in the constitution have to be managed by the Union and government for harmonious governance of the state
- **Dispute Resolution Mechanism:** A more credible dispute resolution system than referring to the president needs to be evolved. An institutionalized dispute resolution mechanism needs to be put in place
- **Urban Local Good Governance:** The principle of subsidiarity shall be followed so that ULB manages the city's affairs merged with the parastatal.

### Conclusion

It is often seen the clashes between the centre and state over the power distribution it not only create chaos in the politics but also the government loses the trust of people

### Mains oriented question

In India, the executive in both the centre and the states is a part of the legislature. This goes against the principle of division of powers between the different organs of the government. Comment.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

NOTES

# Is UPSC exam unfair for Hindi language aspirants?

by Anirudh

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

## Relevance

GS 2 || Governance & Social Justice|| Administration | Bureaucracy

## Title

Is UPSC exam unfair for Hindi language students? Less than 5% Civil Servants gave UPSC exam in Hindi

## Why in the news?

Unfair competition for Hindi/regional medium aspirants in civil services

## Languages as Medium

- Civil servants are recruited by a nationwide Civil Services Examination (CSE).
- This Examination is conducted by the Union Public Service Commission. Candidates can choose either English or any one of the **Indian languages mentioned in the 8th schedule** of the Constitution of India as their medium of exam for Civil Services Examination.

## Regional and linguistic Representation

- The option of taking the exam in different languages was provided to enable regional and **linguistic representation in civil services**.
- But when it comes down to actually enabling it, non-English speaking candidates find themselves at a massive disadvantage.

## 2019 Foundation Course Data

- **326 civil servants took the Foundation Course** at the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA) in 2019.
- Out of this 326, just eight cleared their civil services examination by writing the exam in Hindi.
  - LBSNAA is a research and training institute on public policy and public administration. its main purpose is to train officers of Indian Administrative

Service, Indian Forest Service and also for Group-A Central Services such as Indian Foreign Service.

## Dip in Hindi Medium Students

- In 2018, of the 370 officer trainees 8 wrote the civil service exam in Hindi, and 357 in English.
- In 2016, of the 377 officer trainees, 13 wrote the exam in Hindi, and 350 in English.
- In 2015, of the 350 trainees, 15 wrote the exam in Hindi and 329 in English

## Other Mediums

- The remaining number of **trainees each year had taken the exam in regional languages** such as Marathi, Gujarati, Punjabi, among others.
- For example, in the 2019 batch, eight officer trainees had taken their exam in Marathi, three in Tamil, and two in Gujarati and one in Telugu.

## False Picture Shown by Government

- Last year, the government told Parliament that of the 812 candidates selected by the UPSC in 2019, 485 had chosen Hindi as their mother tongue.
- This data is not about the medium in which candidates wrote their mains examination
- It is about one compulsory regional language paper in Civil Services Mains Examination
- **CSAT:** In 2011, UPSC introduced the Civil Services Aptitude Test (CSAT) to evaluate candidates' comprehension, communication and decisionmaking skills to the civil services exam. This exam tested candidates on their English-speaking skills, among other things.

## Indian Forest Services

- In the **Indian Forest Service aspirants appear** for a different mains examination.
- Problem is even more pronounced in this examination.
- There is no option of **taking the exam in a language other than English**, and separate marks for English are added to a candidates' final marks

## No use of English in forest

- Indian Forest Service officers work in the remotest of areas and interact with tribes, etc.
- Why do they need to know English?
  - The truth is, that in our minds, we have not moved very far from the colonial conception of the Imperial Civil Service.

## Affects

- **Unfair Competition-** Due to this bias, large part of the Indian bureaucracy continues to come from very privileged background.
  - It is extremely tough For a kid from a Hindi medium school in a Village to compete with a kid from an English medium school in Delhi
- **Divide between Bureaucracy and Common Man-** The bureaucracy in India "thinks in English".
  - It results into disconnect between the bureaucracy and the common man.

## Causes

- **Study Material-** Most of the preparation material available in the market for civil services is in English. There are hardly any books, mock exams, etc. in regional languages. It is at this level itself where the disadvantage starts.
- **Members of UPSC-** The problem is also that the UPSC, the body meant to recruit future officers, is manned by the retired IAS officers.
  - One cannot change the elitist structure of a system whose entry doors are guarded by insiders.
  - UPSC have rarely had educationists be at the helm in the UPSC, so they keep looking for their own kind of people

## Recent Changes

- If you compare the bureaucracy of today to the bureaucracy of the 60s and 70s, you will see it is a lot more representative.
- Government changed the CSAT pattern, to make it "qualifying" in nature in 2015.
- This means while it is necessary to pass this exam with a minimum 33 percent, the score in this test is not added to the final UPSC marks.

## Additional info

- **Some committee associated with civil service:**
  - Nigavekar Committee
  - Kothari Commission

## Conclusion

Language has been the old issue in civil services, some asked the regional language some opposed in both the set of examination but Centre should keep in mind the aspirations of student of rural area where as it is also important to balance the education with the present competition and demand of time.

## Mains oriented question

The option of taking the exam in different languages was provided to enable regional and linguistic representation in civil services. How far it shows that aspiration of rural areas students has given equal option and aspirations has served by Centre yet opposed by many? Explain in detail



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

## NOTES

## What is TRIFOOD Project?

by Rahul Saigaonker



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

### Relevance

GS 2 || Governance & Social Justice || Vulnerable Sections || Tribal & PTGs

### Title

Ministry of Tribal Affairs launches TRIFOOD project - How it will enhance income of tribals?

### Why in the news?

Shri Arjun Munda Virtually Launches Trifood Project of Trifed in Raigad, Maharashtra and Jagdalpur, Chhattisgarh. Two Minor Forest Produce Tertiary Processing Units to be set up Under the Project. Trifood Will Enhance Tribal Income and Employment through Backward and Forward Linkages –Shri Arjun Munda

### What happened recently?

- Union Tribal Affairs Minister Shri Arjun Munda e-launched the tertiary processing centres of “Trifood Project” of TRIFED, Ministry of Tribal Affairs.
- The TRIFOOD Scheme is being implemented in the backdrop of Van Dhan Yojana to promote value addition to Minor Forest Produce (MFP).

### Background

- **Van Dhan Yojana**
  - It was launched in 2018 seeking to improve tribal incomes through value addition of tribal products.
  - The scheme is implemented through TRIFED under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.
  - At State level, the State Nodal Agency for MFPS and the District collectors are envisaged to play a pivotal role in scheme implementation at grass-roots level.
- As per the scheme, TRIFED will facilitate establishment of MFP-led multi-purpose Van Dhan Vikas Kendras, a cluster of 10 SHGs comprising 30 tribal MFP gatherers each, in the tribal areas.

### About the TRIFOOD Project

- Implemented by: TRIFED, Ministry of Tribal Affairs in association with Ministry of Food Processing (MoFPI).

### Objective of the Scheme

- **TRIFOOD aims to enhance the income of tribals through better utilization** of and value addition to the Minor Forest Produce (MFP) collected by the tribal forest gatherers.
  - As a start, two MFP processing units will be set up in Raigad, Maharashtra and Jagdalpur, Chhattisgarh.
- The unit in Raigad, Maharashtra will be used for value addition to mahua, amla, custard apple and jamun and will produce mahua drink, amla juice, candy, jamun juice and custard apple pulp.
- Multi-commodity processing centre in Jagdalpur, Chhattisgarh will be used for the processing of commodities like mahua, amla, honey, cashew, tamarind, ginger, garlic and other fruits and vegetables.
- The units are envisaged to be professionally operated by reputed food processors who will operate the facilities for a designated period of time under the overall administrative control of TRIFED.
- About 25% of total raw materials is expected to be sourced locally from the identified Vandhan SHGs/Vandhan Kendras consistently for a period of 5 years.

### Benefits of the Scheme

- It will revive the flagging economic condition of the tribal food gatherers.
- It is estimated that 2.5 lakh tribal gatherers will benefit from this. (1.5 lakhs in Jagdalpur, Chhattisgarh & 1 lakh in Raigad, Maharashtra)
- It will promote local employment opportunities and tribal entrepreneurship.
- Bio-diversity is maintained while promoting the development of the tribals.
- Also builds backward and forward linkages

### Minor Forest Produce (MFP)

- These are all non-timber forest produce of plant origin and include bamboo, brushwood, stumps, canes, Tusser, cocoon, honey, waxes, Lac, tendu/ken-du leaves, medicinal plants and herbs, roots, tuber and the like.



- **Significance of MFP:** 100 million forest dwellers in India are dependent upon MFPs for food, shelter, medicines and cash income.
- The Van Dhan Scheme is an initiative of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and TRIFED. It was launched on 14th April, 2018 and seeks to improve tribal incomes through value addition of tribal products.

#### Implementation of the Van Dhan Scheme

- Under Van Dhan, 10 Self Help Groups of 30 Tribal gatherers are constituted.
- It is proposed to set up almost 6000 Van Dan Vikas Kendras comprising 300 tribal gatherers each in the Country providing employment to almost 45 Lakh tribals.
- At State level, the State Nodal Agency for MFPs and the District collectors are envisaged to play a pivotal role in scheme implementation at grass-roots level.
- At unit level, aggregation of produce would be done by SHGs having about 30 members each forming Van Dhan Vikas 'Samuh'.
- Processing of Produce: The stock after primary processing shall be supplied by the SHGs to the State Implementing Agencies or direct tie up for supply to corporate secondary processors.
- Big Corporates shall be involved under PPP model.

#### Issues associated with Minor Forest Produce

- **Major issue associated with MFP** is who has more right over the forest commodities, clash between the tribe and forest authorities is often seen in news
- Lack of trust between the tribal community and authority make it difficult for authority to procure the forest commodities for further process
- **Conflicts between Indian Forest Act (IFA) and Forest Rights Act (FRA):** There are two separate acts, viz. Indian Forest Act (IFA) and Forest Rights Act (FRA) conflicting over Minor Forest Produce concept. IFA was introduced in 1927 and section 68 of this Act deals with the compounding forces of offences. Since the concept of "Minor Forest Produce" on these two actions is unclear, this particular section has led to forest officers harassing the tribals
- **The current issue is the need to align the definitions of MFP in the IFA** with the definition given in the FRA. Lack of synchronisation results in ground-level denial of access to the MFP. In addition, ownership of the Gram Sabha needs to be ensured, particularly with regard to high-value MFPs such as bamboo and tendu. Sensitization of officials at the Forest Department also becomes essential in this regard.

#### About TRIFED

- The **Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED)** was set up in 1987 under the administrative control of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.
- TRIFED has its Head Office located in New Delhi and has a network of 13 Regional Offices located at various places in the country.
- **What is the Objective of TRIFED?**
  - The ultimate objective of TRIFED is socio-economic development of tribal people in the country by way of marketing development of the tribal products such as metal craft, tribal textiles, pottery, tribal paintings and pottery on which the tribals depend heavily for a major portion of their income.
- **What does TRIFED do?**
  - Minor Forest Produce (MFP) development
  - Retail Marketing and Development

#### Mains oriented question

An initiative taken by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, TRIFED has tied up Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds to promote tribal livelihoods. Is it enough to enhance the livelihood of the most overlooked section of the society? Comment.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

## Swachh Survekshan 2020

by Ankit Agrawal

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

### Relevance

GS 3 || Governance & Social Justice || Human Development || Drinking water & Sanitation

### Title

Swachh Survekshan 2020 full analysis - List of India's cleanest and dirtiest cities

### Why in the news?

The results of the fifth edition of the nationwide annual cleanliness survey, 'Swachh Survekshan 2020,' are out and Madhya Pradesh's Indore has yet again made it as India's cleanest city.

### About Swachh Survekshan

- **Swachh Survekshan** was launched by PM Modi in 2016.
- Mysuru was chosen as the cleanest city in India in that edition of the survey.
- Swachh Survekshan is meant to monitor the performance of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, which was launched on October 2, 2014, the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.
- The extensive sanitation survey is commissioned by the Ministry of Urban Development and carried out annually by **Quality Council of India**.
- The survey was introduced by the government with the objective of generating large-scale participation in Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.
- It was also aimed at inculcating a spirit of healthy competition among cities towards becoming India's cleanest cities.

### Swachh Survekshan 2020

✓	World's largest cleanliness survey
✓	4242 Cities covered
✓	28 days Timebound Nationwide Survey duration
✓	5 Lakhs+ ULB Document Evidences captured
✓	24 Lakhs+ Geotagged Photos captured from field
✓	1.9 Crores Citizen Feedback Collected

### Results of the Survey

- Indore in Madhya Pradesh was named as India's cleanest city for the 4th consecutive year.
- While Gujarat's Surat bagged the second spot, Maharashtra's Navi Mumbai ranked third.
- **The dirtiest:** While Bihar's capital **Patna** was named the dirtiest city in the survey. **East Delhi** and Chennai came in second- and third-from bottom, respectively
- **Best state:** The 'best performing states' category was divided into two parts:-
  - States with more than 100 urban local bodies (ULBs) & those with less than 100 ULBs.
  - Chhattisgarh was ranked first in the former category, While Jharkhand topped the latter.
- In the 'cleanest Ganga town' category — that was introduced last year — Varanasi was ranked first

### Why cleanliness is necessary?

- **Diagnosis of disease**
  - **Studies have been conducted** indicating that hygiene and well-being are related to the reduction of stomach and intestinal diseases (especially diarrhea), psychological problems and allergic conditions. Nearly 90 per cent of child deaths due to diarrhea have a strong connection with contaminated water, lack of sanitation or insufficient well-being, according to a UNICEF study (2011).
  - **There is ample evidence** worldwide that improved sanitation, safety and nutrition help effectively manage mosquito-borne diseases, worm infections, and nutrient deficiencies.
  - **Alongside the effect** on communicable diseases, better sanitation decreases births of babies with low birth weight, miscarriages and deformity-born children. Research have shown that better health results in improved grooming and wellbeing.
- **Nutritional Security:**
  - **Dwarfness decreased** by 13 percentage points and underweight children by 5 percentage points between 2006 and 2014 as a result of increased access to sanitation facilities in the northeastern state of Manipur, according to the India Health Report 2015 on nutritional welfare in India.
- **Sustainable Development Goals**
  - In the Sustainable Development Goals, cleanliness has also been given prominence.
- **Socio Economic Benefits**

- According to an independent study carried out by UNICEF in India in August 2017, it has been shown that if the open defecation pattern ends, each family in India will earn an annual profit of approximately Rs 50,000. This would also increase the manual scavenging activities.
- Sophisticated sanitation facilities have a significant effect not only on health but also on social and economic development. It is particularly true of developing countries.

### Development of Urban cleanliness (Swachh Bharat Mission)

- On 2 October 2019, on the occasion of its 150th birthday Mahatma Gandhi, Urban India was proclaimed Open Defecation Free (ODF), a fitting homage to Mahatma Gandhi. This historic target, to be accomplished in a short period of just 5 years, was commendable, particularly given that to date no government program had concentrated on urban sanitation issues..
- **The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs carries out various Government of India missions**, such as Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban), AMRUT, Smart City Mission, NERUDP etc. All these programs tackle the urban sanitation problem. In the last 5 years, the government's urban sanitation initiatives have achieved remarkable success (Figure-I), with over 99 per cent of the country's cities and 35 states / UTs being ODFs.
- **During the five-year programme**, not only were the goals of the ODF mission achieved, but also the dignity and safety of millions of civilians, particularly women, dramatically reduced mosquito-borne diseases and, consequently, improved health standards. It has led urban India to embark on the road to global sanitation

### Other policies and schemes on urban cleanliness

- **Some of the policies and schemes are as follows:**
  - Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY),
  - Integrated Housing Slum Development Program (IHSDP)
  - National Urban Housing and Housing Policy, 2007
  - Urban Sanitation Policy, 2008
  - Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM):
  - Basic services for the urban poor
  - Integrated Low Cost Sanitation (ILCS) Program

### More improvement needed in some area

### ➤ Better diagnosis of water waste

- Likewise, if the aim of improving health is to **be accomplished by cleanliness**, then more changes are required in issues such as sewage and sewage from toilets and drainage, storage, transportation and disposal of waste water from homes and facilities..
- This is particularly important for small towns that lack adequate sewage drainage systems and **60 per cent of the country's households rely on sanitation systems** such as septic tanks. In such a way, overall cleanliness is successful in these cities, despite being free from open defecation. Beneficial outcomes and fitness targets are hard to achieve.

### ➤ Need of Behavioral change

- Today, Urban India is at a turning point. Although the sanitation situation in cities and towns has undoubtedly improved, more remains to be done, so that all cities will become truly smart and livable. For example, where there are enough toilets installed but people still go out, practical changes are required.

### ➤ Need for stability

- **Urban sanitation successes** still seem to be short-lived and fragile unless attempts are taken to sustain them for long periods of time. Together with this, people's standards have also grown due to greater attention to cleanliness. Today people are seeking facilities of high quality.
- Thus the level of cleanliness and the results accomplished so far and more need to be further improved.

### Steps for sustainable development

- Sustainable sanitation (making all cities open defecation-free with appropriate sewage and sewage disposal systems) and wastewater treatment systems (as provided for in the Jal shakti Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs Protocol) should all be designed and implemented under sanitation.
- In addition, there will also be a need to improve **the ecological environment** so that the available effects can be maintained. So we will have to reflect on the following areas in the coming months and years.

### Challenges for cleanliness campaigns in India

- **The implementation was far from optimal**, both in terms of coverage rates and usage levels. Of the 63% rise in toilet coverage, only 38% of households had usable toilet facilities..
- **The Rural Sanitation Program** of the Government, implemented by NGOs and community-based organizations, was unable to minimize faecal exposure.
- As a result, this sanitation system has had **little effect on reducing cases** of diarrhoea and malnutrition. Many programs also fail to bring about behavioral improvements within the rural community. The bulk of the money goes to the construction of latrines and very little to knowledge, education and communication.
- **Water and Cleanliness** are considered separate. Therefore a need for housing, water and sanitation integration was identified in the 12th Plan
- Just 1.3 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) remains unchanged in the allocation of central government budgetary allocations to the health sector out of the overall budget.
- **India has managed to link just over a third of its urban households**, most of them in metropolitan cities, to the sewerage systems.

### Policy Reforms

- We need to think beyond the current trend and come up with creative and intelligent steps, such as result-based opportunities, digitally monetize project governance, other international and national institutions to tackle both solid and liquid waste management issues.
- In addition to all of this, an enabling climate would have to be developed by smooth policy coordination and reforms, innovative project delivery technology, comprehensive and real-life third-party monitoring systems, capacity building for municipal staff and private sector participation.

### Conclusion

Today, not only is cleanliness a healthy practice, it has become a symbol of socio-economic success and a political issue. Improvements in urban sanitation affect our lives and the environment positively. Better cleanliness would take us towards the aim of a new India that is safe, competent and motivated.

### Mains oriented question

Today, not only is cleanliness a healthy practice, it has become a symbol of socio-economic success and a political issue. Comment.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

### NOTES



# Draft Health Data Management Policy

by Ankit Agrawal

#UPSC #IAS



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## Relevance

GS 2 || Governance & Social Justice || Human Development || Health

## Title

National Health Authority releases draft Health Data Management Policy, Know all about it

## Why in the news?

Government releases Draft Health Data Management Policy

## Background

- The ambitious NDHM programme was announced by Prime Minister earlier this month during his Independence Day speech.
- The National Health Authority (NHA) has released the Draft Health Data Management Policy of the National Digital Health Mission (NDHM) in the public domain.
- The draft has been released on the website of the NDHM and will be available for public comments and feedback
- NHA is the apex agency of the Government of India responsible for the design, roll-out, implementation and management of Ayushman Bharat and the National Digital Health Mission (NDHM) across the country.

## Main objectives of the Draft Policy

- To provide **adequate guidance and to set out a framework** for the secure processing of personal and sensitive personal data of individuals who are a part of the national digital health ecosystem.
- **Indu Bhushan**, the Chief Executive Officer of NHA said, "The Draft Health Data Management Policy is the maiden step in realizing NDHM's guiding principle of 'Security and Privacy by Design' for the protection of individuals' data privacy."

## Important points about the draft policy

- As per the draft proposal, **everyone enrolled** for the mission will get a Health ID free of cost and will have complete control over his or her data.
- Any **personal data** can be collected only on consent from individuals and they will be allowed to revoke their consent to restrict any sharing of personal data
- **Who can view these data?**
  - The data will only be accessible to medical professionals or institutions that also have IDs under the NDHM, Provided the person gives consent for his or her data to be viewed
- **Where the data will be stored?**
  - Data collected across the National Digital Health Ecosystem (NDHE) will be stored in at the central level, the state or Union Territory level and at the health facility level, by adopting the principle of minimality at each point.
- **No centralised repository:**
  - The federated design of the NDHE ensures personal data of the data principals will be held at the point of care or at the closest possible location where it was created, with no centralized repository

## Personal and sensitive data

- The draft policy aims to **"set out a framework for the secure processing of personal and sensitive personal data of individuals"** who form the digital health ecosystem.
- It also outlines a definition for "sensitive personal information" that can be collected from citizens under the project.
- According to the policy, **"sensitive personal information"** means "such personal data, which may reveal or be related to, but shall not be limited to
- Financial information such as bank account or credit card or debit card or other payment instrument details; physical, physiological and mental health data; sex life; sexual orientation; medical records and history; biometric data; and genetic data"
- Other information that can be sought under the category are-
  - "transgender status, intersex status; caste or tribe; and religious or political belief or affiliation",
  - As well as data relating to various health conditions and treatments, such as medical and health records.

- **First**, “the NDHM is a voluntary scheme — HealthID is entirely voluntary for citizens,” he states. Citizens can choose to generate their Health Account or ID using their Aadhaar card or digitally authenticable mobile number. The use of Aadhaar, therefore, is not mandatory.
- **Second**, providing access to and sharing of personal health records is a prerogative of the HealthID holder. The information can be shared for a period ranging from one hour to unlimited duration.
- **Third**, NDHM has been built within a universe of fundamental rights and pieces of legislation such as the Aadhaar Act and the IT Act 2008 as well as the Personal Data Protection Bill 2019
- **Fourth**, the government is building specialised systems and offline modules that will be designed to reach out to the ‘unconnected’, marginalised, digitally illiterate, remote, hilly, and tribal populations
- **Finally**, the design of NDHM has been built on the principle of partnership with all key stakeholders — Doctors, health service providers, technology solution providers and above all citizens.

### Way ahead

- With the advent of Big Data and an increase in online data processing, questions are raised globally about the security of various forms of confidential personal information of individuals.
- While India has realised the right to privacy, laws for the protection of various types of datasets used by the government, such as Aadhar, DNA profiling, Aarogya Setu, etc., have yet to be drafted. The Draft Health Data Management Policy is a proactive initiative for protecting citizens' health data before its repository is created.

### Additional Info

- National Digital Health Mission (NDHM):
  - It was announced by Prime Minister on the occasion of 74th Independence Day.
  - The National Health Authority (NHA) has been mandated to design and roll out NDHM in the country.
  - NHA is also responsible for the implementation of Ayushman Bharat

### Mains oriented question

The National Health Authority (NHA) has released the Draft Health Data Management Policy of the National Digital Health Mission (NDHM) in the public domain. Does it breach the privacy of individual? Briefly explain.



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### NOTES

## Sudeeksha Bhati death case

### Road accident or murder by eve teasers?

by Siddhant

#UPSC #IAS



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#### Relevance

GS 2||Governance & Social Justice||Vulnerable Sections  
||Women

#### Title

US scholar Sudeeksha Bhati Death Case, Is it a road accident or a murder by eve-teasers?

#### Why in news?

- A 19-year-old girl from Greater Noida's Dadri district studying in Babson College in Massachusetts was killed in a road accident while she was on her way to Bulandshahr on a two-wheeler.
- Her family members claimed she was on a scooter when two men on a motorcycle started following and harassing the girl.

#### Details of the report

- According to initial reports released by her family, Sudeeksha was travelling on the scooter from Dadri with her uncle when two men on a motorcycle started following them and harassing the girl.
- As per reports, Satyendra Bhati, the uncle said, "The men were passing comments on Sudeeksha and were trying to overtake her vehicle performing stunts to impress her. Suddenly, their bullet hit Sudeeksha's scooter and it lost balance. Sudeeksha died on the spot.
- Sudeeksha, who was studying in the US on a scholarship of Rs 3.80 crore, was a promising student as she topped in her 12th exams from Bulandshahr district.

#### Women Safety

- Gender violence in India is an old issue, but consciousness among the people about the violence against women (VAW) has heightened, especially post Nirbhaya case of December 2012. Indian cities and villages are not regarded as safe places for women.
- The National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) data shows that the rate of crime against women stood at 52.2%.
- It should be understood that gender violence is not just a legal crime but a violation of human rights directed against the female human population.

#### Steps taken by the Government

- The state understands that the empowerment of women cannot be done unless a safer and violence-free environment is to be provided to them.
- Therefore, several measures have been taken by the government-- The women helpline number is being universalized by implementing it through all states/UTs. The helpline can be used in multiple ways like **landlines, mobile, fax, SMS, emails, web portals, social networking**, etc. The Department of Telecommunication (DoT) has notified the panic button and GPS in mobile phone handset rule, 2016. From 1 January 2018, no smartphone handset manufacturing company shall sell the new smart mobile phone handset in India without the facility **of identifying the location through satellite-based GPS**.
- Every Gram Panchayat across the country would have one Mahila Police Volunteer (MPV) who would act as a link between rural women and the police. MPVs are being created with the view to balance curative and preventive aspects against women-specific violence.

#### Disha law

- The Andhra Pradesh state government is preparing to implement **the Disha Bill once it gets the nod of the President. As per the law, the state has to equip itself with facilities like forensic laboratories, special courts, and public prosecutors.**

#### Pam Rajput Committee

- The High-Level Committee released the Preliminary Report on Status of Women in India on 3 February 2014. The Committee headed by Pam Rajput was appointed by the Union Ministry of Women and Child

Development in February 2012 to understand the status of women since 1989.

- The report revealed that Violence against Women, Declining Sex Ratio and Economic Disempowerment of Women are three key burning issues that will require immediate attention and action by the government.

### Measures suggested by Pam Rajput Committee

- Formulate a comprehensive National Policy and Action Plan to end violence against women.
- Recommended 50 percent reservation for women in all decision-making bodies and an overhaul of the criminal justice system to ensure justice for women.
- A separate panel should be appointed to study the condition of Muslim women by the Government.
- It also recommended increasing the rank of **"Ministry of Women & Child Development"** to Cabinet rank. This will show how much the government is serious about women's issues. Currently, the Ministry of Women and Child Development is not a cabinet rank ministry i.e. its minister is not considered as a Cabinet Minister.
- Resources allocated to the concerned ministry should be increased. Also, it has been found that much of the share of resources allocated to this ministry is taken by Child Development programs undertaken by this ministry.
- Reinforce the criminal justice system.
- Increase gender sensitivity in the government machinery.
- Effectively implement Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act and anti-dowry laws

### Landmark judgments that changed the course for women in India

- Vishaka Vs State of Rajasthan-Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition And Redressal) Act, 2013 defines sexual harassment
  - It includes "any one or more" of the following "unwelcome acts or behaviour" committed directly or by implication.
  - Physical contact and advances, sexually coloured remarks, showing pornography, A demand or request for sexual favours, Any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of sexual nature.
  - This Act lays down the procedures for a complaint and inquiry and the action to be taken.

- It mandates that every employer constitute an **Internal Complaints Committee (ICC)** at each office or branch **with 10 or more employees.**
- It lays down the procedures and defines various aspects of sexual harassment.
- A woman can be of any age, whether employed or not, who "alleges to have been subjected to any act of sexual harassment", that means the rights of all the women working or visiting any workplace, in any capacity, are protected under the Act.

### Way Forward

- **SDG 5 is about gender equality** and Sustainable Development Goals are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all.
- They address global challenges, including those related to poverty, inequality, climate, environmental degradation, prosperity, and peace, and justice.
- The Goals interconnect and to leave no one behind, the **target is to achieve them by 2030.**
- **Sexual harassment** and the **#MeToo movement** resonated at the opening plenary session of the **fifth Global Symposium on Health Systems Research** with speakers highlighting how this is just the **"tip of the iceberg"** and there is a long road ahead in **achieving sustainable development** goals with leaders sometimes being sexual harassers.

### Mains model question

- Violence against women is one among other social challenges posed by the conditions created by the pandemic. Discuss



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)



## Is it safe to conduct EXAMS during Covid-19?

by Anirudh

#UPSC #IAS



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### Relevance

GS -2|| Governance & Social Justice|| Human Development||Education

### Title

Exams during Coronavirus - Is it safe to conduct exams during COVID 19 pandemic?

### Why in news?

- Congress leader Rahul Gandhi recently criticised the University Grants Commission for planning to conduct final term examinations in colleges and educational institutions in September calling it "unfair" during the time of the pandemic.

### Details

- The **temperatures** of the examinees are being checked and their **hands are being sanitised** before being allowed to enter the centre.
- The examinees are **allowed to travel** with their **admit cards** during the **weekend lockdown** in the state.
- In **Prayagraj**, the district administration allowed hotels, restaurants, sweet shops, **fruit shops, and general stores to remain open** on Sunday given the **B.Ed entrance exams**.
- In Moradabad, documents of students are also being sanitised in view of the COVID-19 pandemic. 20,000 students trooped to the district on Sunday to appear for the B.Ed entrance examination at 42 centres set up by the Agra University.
- Many did not have masks. Social distancing was hardly observed.

### Challenges Which Can Be Faced During Online Examinations

- Students who live in remote areas or areas where connections are bad can face great difficulty in completing their exams on time or even appearing in it.
- This can affect their grades and performance. Students will have an upper hand in online examinations as they can easily take the help of the internet or the books. The main motive of assessing the knowledge of students will be lost in this process.
- Online examination process security is one of the critical challenges. Proper authentication, authorization process should be followed to ensure that the right candidate is appearing for the exam in a secure environment without any malpractices.
- Timely examinations can be bad. If in any circumstance, a school or college is conducting online examinations then they should give enough time to the students for the completion. Time should be set according to the level of questions. All the obstacles that can be faced by any students during online exams should also be considered before deciding the time. This way it will help the students a lot. Several government universities and schools have a lack of infrastructure and 'practical problems' so it would be very difficult for them to conduct online examinations.

### Challenges Which Can Be Faced During Real Examinations

- It will be hard for students to maintain social distance at all times.
- Several students as well as parents will be uncertain about them as they will be feared of getting coronavirus.
- Students who would be suffering from general cold and cough will suffer as they won't be allowed inside the examination centers. This can take a toll on their careers.
- Lack of public transport can also be a challenge for the authorities as well as students in reaching the examination center on time.
- Most of the college students are in favor that they should be promoted based on their internal assessment and previous semester performance. Let's wait and see how these challenges can be overcome. Or universities will promote students without examination.

### Possible alternatives or solutions for interrupted education during COVID-19

- With the help of power supply, digital skills of teachers and students, internet connectivity it is necessary

to explore digital learning, high and low technology solutions, etc.

- Students those are coming from low-income groups or the presence of disability, etc. distance learning programs can be included.  
To provide support for digitalisation to teachers and students.
- The necessity to explore digital learning platforms. Measures should be taken to mitigate the effects of the pandemic on job offers, internship programs, and research projects.
- EDtech reform at the national level that is an integration of technology in the present Indian education system.
- We can't ignore that at this time of crisis effective educational practice is needed for the capacity- building of young minds. Central Government and State need to take some measures to ensure the overall progress in the country.

### Way forward

- The immediate solution of coronavirus is necessary or if like these days pass then closure of schools and colleges does not even have short term impact in India but can even cause far-reaching economic and societal consequences.  
To avoid the outcome of the pandemic, progress on three fronts is required: Information, Solidarity, and Action.
- Education must be at the heart of international solidarity efforts, from debt management and stimulus packages to global humanitarian appeals and official development assistance.  
India as a lower-middle-income country needs to use education as an equalizer for its widespread socioeconomic inequalities. Focus on increasing the education budget in the New Education Policy budget and decreasing the digital divide are welcome steps to achieve this goal.

### Mains model question

- Combating coronavirus requires getting basics right, creating awareness, investing in public health infrastructure. Discuss
- Discuss in detail the impact of Covid-19 on the world's education system.



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### Notes

## Jamia Milia Islamia ranked no. 1 in Central Universities

by Siddhant

#UPSC #IAS

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### Relevance

GS 2|| Governance & Social Justice|| Human Development|| Education

### Title

Jamia Milia Islamia secures 1st rank in Central University rankings, How universities are evaluated?

### Why in news?

- Delhi's Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) has ranked first in the list of Central Universities released by the Ministry of Education, beating JNU and Aligarh University among a list of 40 other central varsities.

### Rankings

- A detailed look at the grading and scoring of Central Universities reveals that Jamia has secured the highest score of 90 percent, followed by the Rajiv Gandhi University of Arunachal Pradesh at 83 percent, Jawaharlal Nehru University at **82 percent** and **Aligarh Muslim University at 78 percent.**

### Top in the list

- "All the universities were required to sign a tripartite MoU with MHRD (ministry of education) and UGC for continuous evaluation. Jamia was the first university in 2017 to sign this MoU and present itself for performance evaluation."

### Parameters for evaluation

- The evaluation of the universities was also based on other parameters including annual student intake in UG, PG, M.Phil, and Ph.D. programmes and the students' diversity which included the ratio of fem-

ale students, students from other states, and other countries. The universities were also evaluated based on the number of students placed through campus selections and the number of students who have qualified in the National Eligibility Test and Graduate Aptitude Test in Engineering.

- The rank or score was based on parameters like a number of students admitted annually in UG, PG, Ph.D., and MPhil as well the range of diversity among students, measured in terms of percentage of female students as well as the percentage of students from other states and countries.
- Additionally, aspects like faculty quality, student-teacher ratio, teacher vacancy, and other factors were also included in the list of parameters used to determine the score.

### Details

- According to **The Times of India**, Vice-Chancellor Najma Akhtar said that the feat was even more significant as the varsity had gone through a 'challenging time' in the recent past.
- "High-quality teaching, relevant and focused research and improved perception of the university," were some of the factors credited by VP Akhtar.

### Higher Education system in India

- In terms of graduates, India's higher education program is the third-largest in the world, next to China and the USA.
- After independence, India's higher education sector has seen a massive rise in the number of university/university-level institutions & colleges.
- Just three Indian Universities-IIT-Bombay, IIT-Delhi and IISc (Bangalore)-were included in the top 200 institutes in the prestigious Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings 2020.
- Enrollment in higher education remains grossly inadequate against a target GER of 30 by 2020.
- Enrollment is also skewed as females, backward castes and minorities show lesser presence in higher education institutions. These disparities are further widened as a commercial motive has taken over the higher education sector. There has been a mushrooming of private higher educational institutions premised on profit motive bereft of social inclusion and equity concerns.

### Need for higher education

- It creates an efficient, proficient, skilled workforce in all the sectors
- It decides the country's standing at the international level because of the level of technology and research and development.
  - For example - **Japan, Taiwan**, Israel grew rapidly because of the focus on technological development.
- Industrial development is dependent on the level of higher education.
- It helps in reaping the benefits of a demographic dividend.

### Higher education in India since independence

- At the time of independence, two models of higher education was suggested.
  - **BHABHA model** - nation will have its separate university system where only teaching activities will be carried out. For cutting edge research purposes, the nation will have separate institutions.
  - **SAHA model** - University will be centre of excellence and carry out cutting edge research. There will be no separate institutions for this.
  - SAHA model was inspired by Western countries like the USA and UK.
- At the time of independence, India had adopted BHABHA model. That's why a chain of specialised institutions under CSIR were opened up.

### Problems in Indian Higher Education

- **Teaching quality**
  - National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) in its assessment report pointed out that 68% of institutions in India are of middle or poor quality. Recruitment of undergraduates as teachers, ad-hoc appointments, and low pay scale, inadequate teacher training are all factors that have caused a deterioration in the quality of education. As a result, nearly three-fourth the number of graduates remain unemployable.
  - Lack of Autonomy to the institution which reduces the quality of education.
- **Financing**
  - The country spent less than **3% of its total GDP on education** in 2018-19 or about **5.6 lakh crore**.
  - **"India ranks 62nd in total public expenditure on education** per student and measures of the quality of education (pupil-teacher ratio) in primary and in secondary education,"

- India -0.85
- China -3.2
- South Korea -6
- Once a professor, always a professor --- no incentive to work hard in research.
- Industry-Academic linkages have not reaped the potential as expected which can breach the gap of funding.
- In 1964, the Kothari Commission had recommended a 6 % allocation of 6 % of GDP, but India never spent 6% of GDP on education since Independence.
- In New Education Policy India aims to spend 6% of GDP on education.
- **Gross enrolment ratio** -for higher education is very low compare to other countries
  - India 26%
  - China 52%
  - UK 88%
- **Uncertainty in policymaking**
  - Recently New education policy was launched. Before that, the policy was launched in 1986.
  - More IITs are being opened to provide quality education but political interference in location, delay in constructing the campus, etc. creates many problems for the future of the institution.
- **Outdated Curriculum**
  - An outdated, irrelevant curriculum that is dominantly theoretical and has a low scope for creativity.
  - There is a wide gap between industry requirements and universities' curriculum that is the main reason for the low employability of graduates in India.
  - Rote learning methods are still prevalent even in higher education. Practical learning is absent.
  - The arts and commerce fields are neglected at the cost of science.
  - India doesn't have a single university in the top 100 institutions of the world.
  - USA 62 universities among the top 100.
  - China 10 universities among the top 100 list.
- **Accreditation**
  - As per the data provided by the NAAC, as of June 2010, not even 25% of the total higher education institutions in the country were accredited. And among those accredited, only 30% of the universities and 45% of the colleges were found to be of quality to be ranked at 'A' level.
- **Regulatory issues**
  - Management of Indian education faces challenges of over-centralization, bureaucratic structures, and lack of accountability, transparency, and professionalism. As a result of the increase in several affiliated colleges and students, the burden of administration



tive functions of universities has significantly increased and the core focus on academics and research is diluted.

- UGC has become defunct institution (Hari Gautam committee, NITI AAYOG)

#### ► Infrastructure

- Poor infrastructure is another challenge to higher education in India. Due to the budget deficit, corruption, and lobbying by the vested interest group (Education Mafias), public sector universities in India lack the necessary infrastructure. Even the Private sector is not up to the mark as per the global standard.
- India has 731 universities and around 43000 colleges in 2016.
- On average since 2002, 6 colleges per day were opened. The quality of the institution was compromised for the sake of quantity.
- The process of institutionalisation has stopped since the 60s and 70s. No big institutions are coming into being for a long time
- The controversy of pseudoscience in Indian science Congress dents the image of India at the global level. Indian Origin Nobel Laureate V. Ramakrishnan left the congress in between in 2016.
- IPR Policy, 2016 doesn't address all the issues related to patents, copyrights, etc.
- **Inability to retain talent -the problem of brain drain**

### How to improve higher education

#### ► Focus on primary education

- adopt Tagore concept of learning by doing encourage mindboggling questions by students
- Teacher training should be given mission mode focus.
- promote education-related startups like an open door, magic crate, curiositi, byju.
- Switch to SAHA model of research and development.
- Fellowship of research scholar should be increased to keep them motivated and retain talent. PM research fellowship is a good initiative but have many lacunae because of limited eligibility criteria. Basic science projects like LIGO, INO should be focussed upon.
- **Crackdown on predatory journals and plagiarism.**
  - Example – IIT Dhanbad case of retracting of research papers.
- Higher education commission is a good initiative to replace

- The focus should be on the quality of colleges rather than opening it up in a random manner.
- **HEFA (Higher Education Finance Authority)** is a good initiative to make research institutions self-reliance and competitive
- Institute of eminence scheme to create world-class institutions.
- **NPTEL, SWAYAM, MOOC,** etc to make available quality education to each and everyone in the country. NIRF ranking is a good initiative but it is a static model and have to be a dynamic model.
- A single regulator for the entire higher education system (AICTE is managing technical education.
- National Medical Commission regulates medical education. University system is overlooked by UGC) Institutes have to devise their way to make themselves financially independent. Ex—IIM Ahmadabad own earning from projects and consultancy services around 200 core rupees
- Foreign universities collaborations should be promoted

### Govt initiative in this regard

- **HEFA** - It will create a separate fund that will provide the fund to institutions for research activities. It will promote competition and accountabilities of institutions.
- **VAJRA**-(Visiting Advanced Joint Research)- It will promote collaboration of Indian origin scientists with Indian research scientists.
- **GIAN** ( global initiative for academic network) - Scientists from all over the world will Indian institutions and share their experiences.
- **Uchhatar Avishkar Yojana** - Promote research activities at universities level  
The NPTEL-Online portal where high-quality video lectures are made available free of cost.
- **NAAC**-Agency for accreditation of institutions  
PMRF ( Prime Minister's Research Fellowship) Provide high fellowship to research scholars to reduce brain drain.
- **SHODGANGA** - All the research papers are made available at one place for the ease of research scholars. IMPRINT, SPARK, etc are other institutions from the Government side to promote research in India

### Way forward

- **Accreditation Framework:** Agencies will compulsorily and consistently accredit all higher education

institutions, empanelled by a consistent, high-quality process.

- **Performance-linked funding and incentives:** All central universities will build strategic plans in the next 10 years for joining the top 500 rankings of global universities. Funding for these institutions should be related to performance and outcomes through the MHRD and the newly formed funding agency for higher education
- **Remote and online education:** Extend the reach of Massive Open Online Course (MOOCs) and Open and Distance Learning (ODL) and provide access across regional borders and quality education.

### Mains model question

- Discuss the challenges related to higher education in India. Also, suggest the corrective measures that need to be taken in this regard.



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### Notes

## New Zealand postponed its general election

by Siddhant

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### Relevance

GS 2|| Governance & Social Justice|| Human Development|| Health

### Title

New Zealand General Election 2020 delayed due to COVID 19 pandemic

### Why in news?

- Days after a new wave of coronavirus infections hit New Zealand, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern announced that the country's general election, originally scheduled for September 19 this year, would be postponed by four weeks to October 17.
- On the new date, New Zealanders will also vote on two referendums – one on personal cannabis consumption and the other on euthanasia.

### Details

- Ardern, who could have extended voting day until November 21, that she would be postponing it by four weeks, and would not be considering any further extensions.
- The decision, taken after consultations with all parties in the country's parliament, is expected to cause logistical issues, such as ensuring that election workers would be available on the new date.

### All is not well?

- New Zealand, a country of 50 lakh people, has been praised for its effective handling of the coronavirus pandemic, recording a total of 22 deaths and around 1,600 overall infections. After fresh cases were reported in Auckland, the ci-

ty was placed under lockdown for two weeks on August 12. The 58 new infections are believed to be in a cluster, but authorities are yet to determine their origin.

- Auckland, home to a third of New Zealand's population, is an important battleground for Ardern's Labour Party, which has been running a coalition government since 2017.
- Ardern, who is New Zealand's third female Prime Minister, enjoyed a surge of popularity in late March for her handling of the pandemic, but could now face greater scrutiny as cases have returned. **Opinion polls continue to predict a second term in office for Ardern.**
- After the Ardern government imposed the Auckland lockdown and halted political campaigning, opposition parties sought a delay of the national vote.

### Elections around the Globe -From 21 February 2020 Until 25 August 2020

- At least 70 countries and territories across the globe have decided to postpone national and subnational elections due to COVID-19, out of which at least 33 countries and territories have decided to postpone national elections and referendums;
- At least 55 countries and territories have decided to hold national or subnational elections despite concerns related to COVID-19 of which at least 37 have held national elections or referendums.
- At least, 20 countries and territories have held elections that were initially postponed due to concerns related to COVID-19 of which at least 12 have held national elections or referendums.

### Postponement of census IN India

- Covid-19 led condition is causing the postponing of Census operations and undertaking of key official primary surveys.
- The resultant data vacuum could hamper efficient policy-making at a time when it is most needed.

### Petition for postponement of NEET and JEE exam

- The economy of the country has been on a downward trend as the COVID-19 pandemic has brought everything to a standstill amid which, the youth of the country, especially the students have taken social media by storm. Students from across the country are voicing their concerns over the conduct of exams

amid the coronavirus outbreak. With this, the Supreme Court is already hearing or has heard various petitions concerning postponing/canceling or conducting the exams.

- The petitioners contended that there is an alarming spurt of COVID-19 cases in India and given which they seeking directions for the NTA to conduct the JEE (Main) April-2020 and NEET UG-2020 only after normalcy is restored in our country, post COVID-19 crisis.
- The parents of the affected students are facing the utmost financial distress.
- The petitioners had also alleged that the examination conducting body has ignored the plight of lakhs of students belonging to Bihar, Assam and North Eastern States, Which are presently witnessing incessant flood and thus conducting online or off-line examinations in such places, is not possible. Students have cited the risks to themselves and their family members and have said traveling and meeting other students would leave larger room for the COVID-19 to expand.

#### NTA view

- Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing The National Testing Agency(NTA), Assured the court that all necessary precautions will be taken given the Covid-19 pandemic.

#### SC decision

- The Supreme Court on Monday refused the plea for deferment of medical and engineering entrance exams.
- The apex court bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra ordered for the dismissal of the petition and said "Career of students cannot be put under jeopardy for long."
- Justice Mishra said "Life cannot be stopped. We have to move ahead with all safeguards and all. Education should be opened up.
- COVID may continue for a year more. Are you going to wait for another year? Do you know what is the loss to the country and peril to the students." On the assurance given by NTA, the court observed that the exams must go on with all protections in place.

#### National testing agency

- It is an Indian government agency that was established in November 2017 to conduct entrance examinations for higher educational institutions.
- NTA is responsible for conducting-The Joint Entrance Examination -Main (JEE Main), National Eligibility cum Entrance Test-Undergraduate (NEET-UG), National Eligibility Test (NET), Common Management Admission Test (CMAT) and Graduate Pharmacy Aptitude Test (GPAT).

#### Mains model question

- How COVID-19 has affected the elections of around the Globe? Discuss



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#### Notes



## Bombay HC: Media made Tablighi Jamaat scapegoat

by Anirudh

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### Relevance

GS 2||Governance & Social Justice||Other Aspects of Governance||Good Governance

### Title

Tablighi Jamaat Case - Bombay High Court quashes FIR against foreign attendees of jamaat

### Why in news?

- The Bombay High Court on Friday quashed the FIRs filed against a total of **29 foreign nationals** who were booked under various provisions of **IPC, Epidemic Diseases Act, Maharashtra Police Act, Disaster Management Act and Foreigner's Act** for allegedly violating their Tourist Visa conditions by attending the Tablighi Jamaat congregation at Nizamuddin in Delhi.
- A Division Bench of Justice TV Nalawade and Justice MG Sewlikar of the Aurangabad bench heard the three separate petitions filed by petitioners who belong to countries like **Ivory Coast, Ghana, Tanzania, Djibouti, Benin, and Indonesia**.

### Arguments given by petitioners

- They came to India on a valid visa issued by the Government of India.
- They were screened and tested for Covid-19 virus and only when they were found negative for the virus, they were allowed to leave the airport.
- They were not involved in illegal activity, even at Markaz, they had observed norms of physical distancing.
- Under the conditions of the visa, there was no prohibition to visit religious places like Masjids, petitioners argued.

### Tablighi Jamaat-Impact of media narratives

- The case's reportage shows how media coverage and public appeal reinforce each other. This plays a role in the spread of fake news.
- The Tablighi Jamaat incident provided an opportunity to some to generate fake content on social media connecting Muslims with Covid-19. Some news media platforms played an insidious role by covering this content. Media Cloud analysis of news stories around Tablighi Jamaat revealed the kind of words used to create these narratives.
- A fast-paced media ecosystem that privileges the velocity of news and viewer engagement is likely to be exploited for the production of misinformation and hate speech.
- This is especially aggravated by the atmosphere of fear and uncertainty during a pandemic. The age of virality that we live in demands a much higher responsibility by news agencies, viewers, and readers.

### Media trial

- Media- fourth pillar of democracy is the very fabric and mirror of society. It has the power to influence and revolutionize the masses. From the ink of its pen to the sound of its mic, Media can build and malign an image of a person simultaneously. It can change governments! A free media is a prerequisite to democracy.
- Though India has the constitutional right to freedom of speech and expression along with the freedom of the press under clause **19(1) (a)**, the limitations to its absolute freedom are stated in its very next clause.
- **Media Trial**- adjudication by media in cases before or after the verdict of the court has become a trend in the present scenario to increase the circulation and TRP of newspapers and news channels.
- The media has forgotten the fundamental gap between an accused and a criminal. Today, it influences the masses by making an innocent a culprit thereby changing the perceptions. Indeed, Various Judges of Court have criticized the trial by media as it leads to psychological variation while giving any degree.
- There is No doubt that media trial has exposed many criminals of high profile cases like **Jessica Lal Murder and Nitish Katara case** but it is illegal due to the restrictions mentioned to the freedom of speech and expression in the Indian Constitution.

- Media has helped the dejected common man in getting justice. But, at the same time, the pre-decision given by the media in **Aarushi Murder case (2008) and Sushant Singh Rajput case (2020)** was/is respectively not praiseworthy.
- Several times the media has overlooked the 'contempt of court' that punishes the one who interferes and arbitrates in the matters of court. If it wasn't, justice had been delayed & denied to the innocent commoners like **Priyadarshani Mattoo rape and murder case (1996)**.

### Media and Democracy

- Democracy is the rule of the people, a system that has three strong pillars. But as Indian society today has become somewhat unstable on its **3 legs- the executive, the legislature, and the judiciary**, the guarantee of **Article 19 (1)(a)** has given rise to a fourth pillar known as media or press.
- It plays the vital role of a conscious keeper, a watchdog of the functionaries of society and attempts to attend to the wrongs in our system, by bringing them to the knowledge of all, hoping for correction.
- It is indisputable that in many dimensions the unprecedented media revolution has resulted in great gains for the general public.
- Even the judicial wing of the state has benefited from the ethical and fearless journalism and taken suo-moto cognizance of the matters in various cases after relying on their reports and news highlighting grave violations of human rights.
- The existence of a free, independent, and powerful media is the cornerstone of a democracy, especially of a highly mixed society like India.
- Media is not only a medium to express one's feelings, opinions and views, but it is also responsible and instrumental for building opinions and views on various topics of regional, national, and international agenda.
- The pivotal role of the media is its ability to mobilize the thinking process of millions.

### Way forward

- Media is indeed a change, a callous reality but the adverse effect of media trial on the reputation of a person in the society needs to be addressed.
- Media should maintain its code of laws and ethics, social responsibility, and credibility by not interfering in the matters of court so early. Instead, should

do the research, keep a check on high profile cases, find the evidence, and keep it to them until and unless they find the truth suppressing. Trial by Media is a requisite in this 21st century where violence, crime & corruption are at its peak and where human life is not priceless anymore.

- The speed and reach of media has meant that subversive rumours and fake news get aired with impunity. This has resulted in serious law and order problems
- Any future legislation to curb fake news should take the whole picture into account and not blame the media and go for **knee-jerk reactions**; in this age of new media, anyone can create and circulate news for undisclosed benefits.
- **Controlling fake news is a tricky issue-** not controlling trolls could lead to national and international instability while doing too much to control it could harm democracy.

### Mains model question

- The media does play a vital role in our democracy, and if we cannot depend on journalistic ethics, the nation's in trouble. Comment.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

## Economy

## India's 1st Honey testing lab

by Ankit Agrawal

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

## Relevance

GS 3 || Economy || Agriculture || Animal Husbandry

## Title

India's FIRST Honey Testing Laboratory in Gujarat, Aims to boost honey farmers' income

## Why in the news?

Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Shri NarendraSingh Tomar inaugurated 'Two Days Online Training Programme on Scientific Honey bee production' conducted by NDDB

## Background

- ▶ 'World Class State of Art Honey Testing Laboratory' established by National Dairy Development board (NDDB) in Anand (Gujarat) with support of National Bee Board (NBB) was inaugurated.
- ▶ An institution of national importance set up by an act of Parliament of India.
- ▶ NDDB's subsidiaries include IDMC Limited Anand, Mother Dairy, Delhi, NDDB Dairy Services, Delhi and Indian Immunologicals Limited, Hyderabad.
- ▶ To finance and support producer-owned and controlled organisations.

## Beekeeping activity in the country

- ▶ In view of the tremendous scope for increasing productivity due to cross pollination and increase in income through Apiculture, it was proposed to revive Beekeeping activity in the country, exponentially by pooling the resources of the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation with other organizations, including private sector.
- ▶ Accordingly, the **National Bee Board (NBB) was reconstituted in June, 2006.**

- ▶ The main objective of the National Bee Board (NBB) is overall development of Beekeeping by promoting Scientific Beekeeping in India to increase the productivity of crops through pollination and increase the Honey production for increasing the income of the Beekeepers/ Farmers.

## Benefits

- ▶ The development comes after the National Bee Board's decade long wait for a government testing facility for honey.
- ▶ Till recently, the exporters were required to ship their samples to Germany for testing.
- ▶ The testing lab will unlock potential for apiarists to not just get domestic business but also take advantage of exports to the US and Europe.
- ▶ **"Standard quality testing and certifications are the primary requirements and preconditions for exporting honey to the markets such as the US and Europe.**
- ▶ The new lab will test honey as per the norms specified by the food safety regulator FSSAI.
- ▶ The quality honey will boost exports and ensure better rates for farmers," said Tomar, adding that this move will contribute to India's efforts to double farmers' income by 2025.

## About the testing lab

- ▶ The lab — set up with 7.7-crore funding from the government.
- ▶ It has been accredited by the **National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL) and Export Inspection Council.**
- ▶ It has also got approval from FSSAI as a national reference lab.



Abbreviation	NABL
Predecessor	NCTCF I <sup>1</sup>
Merged into	Quality Council of India
Formation	1988: 32 years ago
Founders	Department of Science and Technology (India)
Type	Autonomous
Purpose	Accreditation services
Professional title	NABL
Headquarters	Gurgaon
Location	India
Region served	Pan India, International
Services	Accreditation Services
Key people	Mr. N Venkateswaran (CEO)
Main organ	Governing Body
Affiliations	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) Ministry of Commerce and Industry (India) Government of India

### Condition apiculture in India

- According to the database of the Food and Agricultural Organization, in 2017-18, Indian ranked eighth in the world in terms of the production of honey while China was fourth.
- India has a capacity of about **200 million colonies of bees as against 3.4 million** colonies of bees today.
- Increasing the number of bee colonies would not only increase bee-related production but will also improve overall agricultural and horticultural productivity output productivity.

### Beekeeping Development Committee

- **Bibek Debroy, head of the beekeeping growth committee within the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister**, made recommendations to improve the beekeeping sector's contribution to achieving the 2022 goal of doubling farmers' incomes.
- The committee was set up to identify ways of advancing beekeeping in India that can help in improving:
  - Agricultural productivity.
  - Enhancing employment generation.
  - Augmenting nutritional security.
  - Sustaining biodiversity.
- **The goal of BDC was to identify ways to advance beekeeping** in India that can help boost agricultural productivity, enhance job development, increase nutritional security and preserve biodiversity.

### Steps taken by the government

- The **government has allocated 500 crore for bee-keeping infrastructure development** under the Atma **Nirbhar Bharat package**.
- NDDDB Chairman Dilip Rath stated that a proposal has been sent to the Union Agriculture **Ministry to provide Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR)** testing to identify 'Country of Origin'.
- The Government has launched '**Honey Mission**' as part of '**Sweet Revolution**'.
- India is among the world's top five honey producers.
- Compared to 2005-06 honey production has risen by **242% and exports shot by 265%**

### Significance of Beekeeping

- As per Food and **Agricultural Organization database, in 2017-18**, India ranked eighth in the world in terms of honey production (64.9 thousand tonnes) while China stood first with a production level of 551 thousand tonnes.
- Further, beekeeping can be an important contributor in achieving the 2022 target of doubling farmer incomes.

### What more can be done to improve the beekeeping sector?

- **Expand the scope:** Beekeeping can not be limited to honey and wax alone, items such as pollen, propolis, royal jelly and bee venom are also marketable and can be of great benefit to Indian farmers.
- **Increase in area:** India has a capacity of about 200 million bee colonies compared to 3.4 million bee colonies today, based on the region under cultivation in India and beef forage crops. Increasing the number of bee colonies will not only increase bee-related production but will also improve overall productivity in agriculture and horticulture

### Uses of honey in multipurpose

- Perhaps the most common form of **honey adulteration is the addition of cheap sugar syrups, such as corn syrup to honey** to increase the volume of product available for sale.
- The **resultant mixture is labelled and priced as pure honey**, and so consumers unknowingly receive an inferior product.
- The inverted sugars that are naturally present in honey, typically glucose and fructose, are sweeter, more soluble and less likely to support microbial growth than the sugars
- Historically, honey was **tested for adulteration by analyzing** the ratio of the two major isotopes of carbon; Carbon-12 and Carbon-13.
- However, unscrupulous honey producers have now identified other cheap sugar syrups with a similar Carbon-12:**Carbon-13 ratio** to the flowering plants from which bees collect nectar

### Conclusion

In contrast, Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) analyses a multitude of components. This makes it incredibly difficult to reproduce the characteristic NMR profile of genuine honey by unscrupulous means.



**Mains oriented question**

The testing lab introduced by the ministry agriculture of testing of honey quality and production will unlock potential for apiarists to not just get domestic business but also take advantage of exports to the US and Europe. In context of this, explain the significance of beekeeping in India. What more can be done to improve the sector?



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

NOTES

# 81% drop in Overseas Borrowings of India Inc

#UPSC #IAS

by Ankit Agrawal

(Click on the above image to watch the video)

## Relevance

GS 3 || Economy || External Sector || Balance of Payment

## Title

What is External Commercial Borrowing? Reasons for 81% drop in Overseas Borrowings of India Inc

## Why in the news?

India Inc's borrowing from foreign markets slipped over 81 per cent to \$1.02 billion in June this year, data from Reserve Bank of India (RBI)

## External commercial borrowings (ECB)

- It is an instrument used in India to facilitate Indian companies to raise money outside the country in foreign currency.
- The **government of India permits Indian corporates to raise money via ECB** for expansion of existing capacity as well as for fresh investments.
- It can be in the form of bank loans, bonds, etc. ECB can be availed by either automatic route or by approval route.
- Under **automatic route, if a company passes all the prescribed norms**, it can raise money without any prior approval.
- For specific pre-specified sectors, the borrowers have to take explicit permission of the government/The Reserve bank of India (RBI) before borrowing through ECB.

## Advantages of ECB

- The cost of funds is usually cheaper from external sources
- Improve the profitability of the companies.
- Availability of larger markets.
- The domestic economy also enjoys benefits.

## Disadvantages of ECB

- Funds at a cheaper rate may **bring in a lax attitude** on the company's side resulting in excessive borrowing.
- Exchange rate risk to the company.
- High debt on the nation.

## Overseas borrowings of India Inc

- Overseas borrowings of India Inc plunged to an **11-quarter low to \$3.51 billion** during the first quarter of the current fiscal.
- The **overseas borrowings of Indian corporates** for the same quarter **last year stood at \$12.04 billion**, while borrowings during **Q4 FY20 touched a peak of \$18.97 billion**.
- On a year-on-year basis,
  - ECBs for import of capital goods fell to \$198 million (\$705 million) in Q1FY21.
  - Borrowings for 'modernisation' purpose fell sharply to \$146 million (\$1,269 million).
  - ECBs towards infrastructure development also fell to \$76 million (\$500 million) during this period
- "With the lockdown that took place, everything has come to a halt.
- Companies don't have any investment plans since there are a lot of uncertainties about the future.
- That's the main reason why overall borrowings have come down,"

## Why was the ECB preferred by companies?

- Amid heightened **risk aversion in the domestic debt market**, coupled with a low interest rate regime abroad,
- External commercial borrowings (ECBs) have been one of the preferred **routes of fund raising** for Indian companies in the last few years.
- Besides, a **slew of rationalisation measures** taken by the RBI allowing more sectors to tap overseas markets also fuelled this growth.
- Consequently, India Inc's ECBs touched a historic high of \$51.71 billion in FY20.

## But still why not domestic borrowing?

- Despite RBI slashing the reverse repo rate to disincentive banks from parking their excess funds with them,
- Banks preferred to park their excess funds with the central bank at a low interest rate rather than risk lending it.
- According to the RBI's latest July report, banks parked nearly 8-lakh crore under reverse repo on a daily average basis in the month of May, against an average of 2.4-lakh crore during the March quarter.

### Additional info

#### ► Masala Bond

- Bonds are instruments of debt - usually used by corporates to raise money from investors. Masala bond is a term used to refer to a financial instrument through which Indian entities can raise money from overseas markets in the rupee, not foreign currency.
- According to RBI, the minimum maturity period for Masala Bonds raised up to Rupee equivalent of USD 50 million in a financial year should be 3 years.

#### ► Advantage and Disadvantages of Masala bond

- Offshore bonds have their **own collection of benefits and drawbacks** for both the borrower and the investor and the economy.
- Offshore market competition will lead to changes in domestic bond markets, such as **improving domestic market infrastructure**, enhancing investor security, and eliminating tax anomalies that hinder domestic market growth etc. The threats of financial transparency and abrupt changes in capital flows and the danger of offshore markets drawing liquidity away
- Bonds may only be issued in a country and subscribed to by a resident of that country who is a **member of FATF and who is a member of the International Securities Commission** to control the securities market.
- Although citizens of these countries can subscribe to the bonds, multilateral and regional financial institutions may also subscribe where India is a member country.

### Mains Oriented question

Despite RBI slashing the reverse repo rate to disincentive banks from parking their excess funds with them, Banks preferred to park their excess funds with the central bank at a low interest rate rather than risk lending it, why so? Explain.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

NOTES

# Status of Digital Payments in India

by Ankit Agrawal

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

## Relevance

GS 3 || Economy || Banking & Financial Sector|| Financial Inclusion

## Title

Status of Digital Payments in India report by NPCI, What are Fintech Companies?

## Why in the news?

As the COVID-19 has become a global pandemic, people stay at home and choose digital transactions to prevent contact with the virus either through banknotes or coins.

## Background

- Covid-19 is nothing short of a watershed moment for the fintech industry in India.
- The **fear of contracting the virus** has forced people to take to contactless payment methods, which has led to digital transactions soaring.

## What are fintech companies?

- Financial technology (FinTech) describes the evolving intersection of financial services and technology.
- **So Financial technology (Fintech)** is used to describe new tech that seeks to improve and automate the delivery and use of financial services.
- Payment apps have been seeing an increase in the number of new users and merchants on their platforms.
- Unified Payments Interface (UPI), Immediate Payment Service (IMPS), Bharat Interface for Money (BHIM) transactions have also been shooting through the roof over the past three months.

## How much is the growth in digital transactions?

- Payment apps have been seeing an increase in the number of new users and merchants on their platforms.

- **Unified Payments Interface (UPI), Immediate Payment Service (IMPS), Bharat Interface for Money (BHIM)** transactions have also been shooting through the roof over the past three months.
- According to data from the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), The amount transacted through UPI was 2,90,537.86 crore in July 2020, the highest ever,
- The volume of transactions was 149.73 crore the most since the interface was introduced.

## What does it indicate?

- These figures indicate that Indian consumers are slowly starting to become more comfortable using digital payments. Investments into the fintech sector soared last year.
- With this increased acceptance and preference for contactless payment methods over the past three months,
- One would assume that fintech funding would also touch new heights.
- **Dip In Funding**
  - Contrary to expectations, the funding that went into the fintech start-up space in Q2 2020 was the lowest in the past nine quarters —Only \$184 million was invested in the April-June quarter this year
- **Reason for decline**
  - The NBFC sector is witnessing several liquidity constraints, overall credit disbursements some of which that are facilitated by fintech companies have also been impacted.
  - Payment fintech is a crowded segment; the industry operates on thin margins and is always under pressure.
  - Like most sectors, VCs chose to wait and see how companies including (in the) fintech (space) weather the COVID storm.

## Challenges in the Digital Payments

- The biggest challenge is the lack of digital education in the rural area, lack of access to digital payment, foremost is 100% electrification is done but not 100% lightning is still available in the rural areas.
- Digital payment also faces digital fraudulent e.g. digital payment frauds that bug them the most, 52% said they felt fake apps and websites are the biggest risks, while 43% expressed concerns about compromised password and payment credentials.



- **The Payment and Settlement Act, 2007** described Digital Payments as any "electronic funds transfer" that is any transfer of funds initiated by a individual by way of instruction, authorization or order to debit or credit an account held with that bank through electronic means and includes point-of - sale transfers; automated teller machine transactions, direct deposits or with transfers; withdrawal of funds, transfers initiated by telephone, internet and, card payment.
- **Cyber protection poses** one of the **most important issues facing digital payment ecosystem** stakeholders. RBI has also released **some guidelines for digital payments as protection** and risk reduction measures.
- **The Reserve Bank of India ( RBI)** has also released guidelines on protection and risk reduction measures for digital payments with this in mind.
- Although it is critical for consumers to have a safety net in the form of a prompt redress mechanism, operators of payment systems and participants must perform routine security and fraud audits. The RBI needs to be informed that the audit has been completed successfully.

### Opportunities ahead

- Digitalization brings more job opportunities as there is more employ needed to handle the server
- More transparency brings less corruption, Rural areas are also getting access slowly and gradually.
- India's Digital Payment ecosystem is undergoing a transformation with the entry of global tech giants such as Google's payments app that serve as aggregators for retail transactions.
- Although the number of PoS (Point of Sale) terminals has doubled since demonetization, the merchant acquisition infrastructure (a system for providing the necessary infrastructure and facilitating payment for products and services purchased by means of a card) remains weak in India, as banks have not been able to push adoption. It poses massive opportunities for digital players in this market.

### What more needs to be done?

- The central government must deadline digitising all its payments.
- The RBI must implement the 100-plus action items (outlines in RBI's Vision 2021 document) and the recommendations of **Nandan Nilekani Committee for Deepening Digital Payments**.

- RBI should make use of RuPay and UPI to tap the remittances market – which presently stands at 70billion USD and is largely in informal domain
- RBI must replicate the core design of UPI — fierce but sustainable private and public competition — in bank credit to increase our present **50% Credit-to-GDP ratio to atleast 100%(OECD level)**

### Conclusion

India has made major strides in digital payments and serves as an example to the world with expanded penetration through 'Jan Dhan Yojana,' 'Direct Benefit Transfer' and the momentum gained by BHIM UPI. The regulator will ensure that these systems are tested by experts so that other countries can follow the best features of these systems. The experience shows that for India to be modern it doesn't have to be Western or Chinese. Despite all the security concerns, instruments such as debit/credit cards are becoming extremely popular in India with millennials emerging as the primary growth drivers. If our policy-makers had copied Alipay or US banks, we would not have seen this boom in digital payments replicating similar models of education, healthcare and government services would help to achieve the socio-economic objectives set out in our Constitution

### Mains oriented question

Cyber protection poses one of the most important issues facing digital payment ecosystem stakeholders. Explain.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

## India's Fiscal Deficit reaches 83% in first 3 months of FY20

by Ankit Agrawal

#UPSC #IAS

(Click on the above image to watch the video)

### Relevance

GS 3 || Economy || Public Finance || FRBM

### Title

India's Fiscal Deficit reaches 83% in first 3 months of FY20, Impact on economy explained

### Why in the news?

Fiscal deficit touches 83% of full-year target

### Background

- The Centre's fiscal deficit for the first three months of fiscal 2020-21 was ₹ 6.62 lakh crore, which is 83% of the budgeted target for the year
- Given the government's additional borrowing plans, both to meet stimulus spending and bridge the revenue shortfall as a result of the pandemic, the fiscal deficit may end up as high as 8% of GDP, far exceeding the budget's goal of 3.5%.

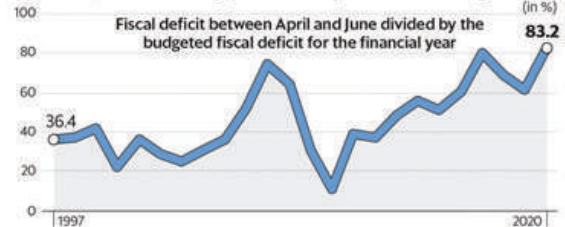
### What is the fiscal deficit?

- The difference between total revenue and total expenditure of the government is called a fiscal deficit.
- **Fiscal deficit at 5% of GDP:** If the gap between the Centre's expenditure and total income is ₹ 10 lakh crore, and the country's GDP is ₹ 200 lakh crore, the fiscal deficit is 5% of the GDP.
- **How is the fiscal deficit met?**
  - The government meets the fiscal deficit by borrowing money.
  - Thus, total borrowing = Fiscal deficit in that year
- India's fiscal deficit target estimated in the Union budget 2020-21 was ₹ 7.96 lakh crore, or 3.5% of the gross domestic product.
- India's **fiscal deficit reached ₹ 6.62 lakh crore, or 83.2%** of the budgeted estimate in the quarter ended June.

- The gap between the revenue and expenditure during the same period in 2019-20 stood at 61.4% of the budgeted target, according to data on the website of the Controller General of Accounts.

### Record high

The government's income in Q1FY21 stood at ₹1.54 trillion, while its expenses surged to ₹8.16 trillion. In comparison to the budgeted annual fiscal deficit of ₹7.97 trillion, the deficit during Q1FY21 is already at 83.2% of the budgeted level.



### What are the impacts of fiscal deficits?

- Fiscal deficit out of control might undermine the country's sovereign credit rating.
- This is expected to **adversely impact both Government** and Indian business interests.
- This would complicate raising funds abroad and attracting investment to India.
- This would crowd out private investment and eventually contribute to a return on economic inflation

### The reason of high fiscal deficit

- In the aftermath of the pandemic, the government's earnings, primarily tax revenues, have collapsed
- The net tax revenue, or what remains with the central government after sharing its earnings with the state governments, from April to June stood at 1.35 trillion,
- A drop of **46.4%** in comparison to the same period last year.
- After taking into account the other earnings of the government, the total earnings of the government from April to **June stood at 1.54 trillion.**
- This is just 6.8% of what the government hopes to earn during the year

### Issues with rising fiscal deficit

- Increased government spending would **raise demand and create more liquidity** in the economy which could lead to higher inflation.
- Government will likely raise more taxes in the future in order to repay its debt.
- The higher fiscal deficit also leaves little scope for interest rate cuts which would have an effect on the **take-off of private investment.**
- Borrowing costs may remain high for consumers and industry/companies which might stall economic growth

### Government total expenditure

- A large portion of the government expenditure in the form of salaries, pensions, and interest payments on existing government debt, is fixed.
- The government expenditure from April to June stood at 8.16 trillion, or around 26.8% of the money that it expects to spend during the year.

### Why did the revenue decline?

- **The slowdown in economic activity**, as a result of the covid induced lockdown led to tax revenue collapsing.
- The central goods and services tax is down **52.9% to 55,047 crore**.
- This implies a huge contraction in household consumption.
- **Corporate revenues** fell, leading to a slowdown in payment of corporate income tax by 23.3% to 54,212 crore.

### About personal income tax

- Personal income tax collected by the government has fallen by 35.9% to 62,123 crore.
- A contraction in consumption has led to personal incomes falling.
- Ultimately, one man's spending is another man's income.
- Also, corporates are trying to deal with a contraction in revenues by firing employees, cutting their salaries or putting them on furlough.

### Way forward

- The disinvestment of the government's stakes in public sector enterprises is one approach that could be adopted.
- Between April and June, next to nothing has been earned from divestment, against the budgeted 2.1 trillion
- The government needs to hurry because the stock market has recovered from its March low and has rallied again.
- There is no way of knowing which way the markets will turn in the months to come

### Additional info

#### Fiscal responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM)

- It was enacted by Parliament in 2003.
- The objectives of the act are:

- To ensure fiscal discipline in government finances
- Inter-generational equity in fiscal management
- Long-term macro-economic stability.
- Transparency in the fiscal operation of the Government.

#### ➤ Provisions of the FRBM Act:

- Revenue deficit as a percentage of GDP
- Fiscal deficit as a percentage of GDP.
- Tax revenue as a percentage of GDP.
- Total outstanding liabilities as a percentage of GDP
- The FRBM Act seeks to achieve long-term macroeconomic stability while creating budget surpluses, prudential debt management, reducing borrowing to minimize deficits and debt, improving transparency, removing fiscal impediments and establishing a medium-term structure for budget implementation.

### N.K Singh Committee

- The FRBM Review Committee headed by former Revenue Secretary, NK Singh was appointed by the government to review the implementation of FRBM.
- **Recommendations of the NK Singh Committee:**
  - Public debt to GDP ratio should be considered as a medium-term anchor for fiscal policy in India
  - Revenue deficit target
  - Formation of the Fiscal Council to advise the government.
  - Fiscal deficit as the operating target
  - **Escape Clause to accommodate counter cyclical issues:** The flexibility to adjust with cyclical fluctuations (boom/recession) is incorporated under the "escape clause" (in the case of recession) where temporary and moderate deviations can be made from the baseline fiscal path.
  - Buoyancy: What the government has to do with fiscal deficit targets when higher economic growth occurs?
  - Congruence of Fiscal and Monetary Policy
  - Fiscal consolidation responsibility for states

### Mains oriented question

High fiscal deficit is another challenge for the government. Explain in context the present economic condition of India, what steps can be taken to balance the Fiscal deficit with proper budget management?



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

NOTES



## Faceless Assessment and Appeal, Taxpayer Charter

#UPSC #IAS

by Ankit Agrawal



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

### Relevance

GS 3 || Economy || Public Finance || Taxation

### Title

PM Modi launches Faceless Assessment and Appeal, Taxpayer Charter - Tax reforms in India

### Why in the news?

Honouring the taxpayers, the Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the programme

### Background

- Prime Minister launched 'Transparent Taxation-Honoring the Honest' platform
- The platform includes three major reforms- faceless assessment, faceless appeal and taxpayers' charter

### What is Transparent Taxation "Honoring the Honest"?

- Transparent taxation means greater transparency in the functioning of the tax reforms and compliance measures centre. PM said the **efforts are aimed at ensuring a smooth, painless and faceless taxation system.**
- Open taxation would make the tax process more public-centered and welcoming to citizens.
- The new open tax system aims to reduce the taxpayer's enforcement burden, to implement a fair tax system, to remove the physical interaction between the taxpayer and the system and to provide some clarity.

### Need of Transparent Taxation system

- The Prime Minister claimed that there was a time when there used to be a lot of talk about reforms and that sometimes decisions were taken out of force or coercion and called reforms. The desired results could not be obtained because of that

- The latest facilities introduced are part of the **Government's commitment to provide full governance with minimum levels of government. The country's honest taxpayers play a significant part in nation-building.** If an honest taxpayer's life is simple then the country improves as well.

### Three aspects of honoring the honest

- **Faceless Assessment:** Under the new framework all tax investigation matters will be taken over by faceless staff. A machine can pick the faceless team at random, so it can be in any part of the world, not necessarily in the state where the matter comes up. That will help to avoid unnecessary tax disputes.
  - Exceptions to the Faceless Assessment: The exceptions to the Faceless Assessment includes, serious frauds, major tax evasion, sensitive and search matters. The system also excludes international taxation and Black Money Act & Benami Property.
- **Faceless Appeal:** Tax appeals were made faceless, too. In this way, the tax payer can make tax appeals without engaging directly with the tax collector.
- **Taxpayers' Charter:** The Prime Minister underlined that the charter of the tax payer is a major step in the development journey of the country. The tax department will now have to trust the taxpayers and will not be able to look distrustfully at any tax payer. In the case of any conflict the tax payer would have the right to appeal.

### Background Keys of past Tax Reforms

- **Initiative:** The CBDT has taken many steps to put quality and accountability into the operation of the Department of Income Tax (IT) in the past. Some of the measures involve making official correspondence more transparent through the Document Identification Number (DIN), as any department contact will bear a computer-generated, specific document identification number.
- **The IT Department:** The prefilling of income tax returns has also been carried out to make enforcement more convenient for individual taxpayers. It also simplified the compliance standards for start-ups. The IT Department has released the "Vivad se Vishwas Act, 2020" Direct Tax, in which declarations must be filed for resolution of disputes. It would assist in the settlement of ongoing tax disputes.
- **Digital transactions:** Besides this, to minimize taxpayer claims and lawsuits, monetary requirements for filing departmental appeals in various

appeals courts have been set. Recently the IT Department has taken steps to facilitate digital transactions and electronic payment methods.

- **Ease compliances for taxpayers:** Under the COVID-19 pandemic, the department also made efforts to ease taxpayer enforcement by expanding statutory timeliness for filing returns and by quickly issuing refunds to increase liquidity in taxpayers' pockets.

### Taxpayer should not be denied an opportunity to be heard

- **Reforms implementation:** The **structural reforms implemented** as were codified in law pursuant to Finance Act 2018, are in the right direction. These measures will help in confidence building between the taxpayer and the tax department.
- However, **the Government** must be careful that in the want to cut discretion, a taxpayer should not be denied an opportunity to be heard or be able to present facts that could impact the decision of the assessing officer or the appellate authorities.
- **The general experience** with faceless assessment thus far has been satisfactory, also because on critical matters you could seek personal hearing to articulate facts and technical arguments before the authorities. Tax scrutiny must be allocated basis expertise and not "randomly"; this will aid reduction in unnecessary tax litigation owing to lack of knowledge of industry specific nuance

### Taxpayer friendly initiatives taken by government:

- **Launch of e-Assessment Scheme:** This scheme is a 'paradigm shift' in the assessment procedure which completely eliminates human interaction during tax assessment
- **Facility to verify authenticity of tax notices:** To safeguard taxpayers from phishing emails and fake tax notices, the CBDT has made it mandatory for the tax authorities to quote Document Identification Number (DIN) in all the correspondence issued by them
- **Allotment of e-PAN using Aadhaar card:** This facility was provided only to the applicants holding a valid Aadhaar number.
- **PAN-Aadhaar interchangeability:** Taxpayers can now quote Aadhaar number in lieu of PAN in more than 100 forms
- **Robust e-filing platform:** The income tax department witnessed a substantial jump in the e-filing of ITRs with a record breaking filing of almost 5 million returns in a single day

### Conclusion

The intention behind faceless appeals is certainly noble but the implementation would be the key to ensure all steps are taken to achieve the desired objective of reducing harassment. Also, the taxpayer should still have the comfort that he is being fully heard on his point and the authority is yet approachable, especially in sophisticated cases, which otherwise involve several hearings and representations to convince the authorities

### Mains oriented question

The intention behind faceless appeals is certainly noble but the implementation would be the key to ensure all steps are taken to achieve the desired objective of reducing harassment. Comment.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

# Rise in Fake Currencies

## RBI stops printing Rs 2000 notes

by Ankit Agrawal

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

### Relevance

GS 3 || Economy || Banking & Financial Sector || Money

### Title

Fake Indian Currency - RBI stops printing Rs 2000 notes, RBI's report on Rs 2000 note circulation

### Why in the news?

RBI said that fake notes detected in the denomination of Rs 2,000 declined by 22.1% to 17,020 pieces in FY20 compared to 21,847 pieces in the previous year.

### Detection of fake notes

- There was a sharp rise in the detection of fake notes of Rs 200 and Rs 500 denominations in 2019-20, despite the security features in them.
- In 2019-20, as many as 30,054 fake notes of new Rs 500 series were discovered in the banking system, as against 21,865 in 2018-19 — an increase of 37%. There was a 151% rise in the detection of fake Rs 200 notes. 31,969 fake Rs 200 notes in 2019-20, as against 12,728 in 2018-19.
- Increase of 144.6%, 28.7% in counterfeit notes detected in the denominations of Rs 10, Rs 50, respectively
- This data only reflects detection of fake notes by banks and RBI, and not those counterfeit notes seized by the police and other enforcement agencies.

### Fake currency still a problem

- **After the demonetisation** decision, the government had introduced notes of Rs 2,000 and new series of Rs 500 notes, as well as Rs 200 notes. One of the reasons cited for the government's momentous decision was ostensibly to check fake notes.
- However, data from the new report showed that counterfeiting of currency notes remains a problem for India.

### Fake Currency

- **The majority of falsified Indian currency** notes are printed in Pakistan and then entered either directly or through a network of other countries such as Bangladesh or Nepal. Recently the district of **Malda near Kolkata in West Bengal has emerged as a hub for the distribution of Fake currency**. There are many explanations why Malda emerged as a fake centre for the currency. Among these are:
  - **The Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs** claimed that, according to data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), there is a declining trend in Fake Indian Currency Notes (FICN) seized in 2017, 2018 and 2019.
  - According to the **Indian Statistical Institute, the Kolkata report conducted on behalf of the National Investigation Agency (NIA)** shows that Rs 400 crores of fake currency circulate in the Indian economy. This is just 0.028% of Rs 14.180 billion worth of Rs 500 and Rs 1000 notes demonised.

### Effects of Fake currency

- Fake currency circulation contributes to inflation, as it raises the amount of money in circulation that can lead to high demand for goods and services.
- The banks' policy of non-reimbursement happens when banks reject bogus notes and do not refund the losses.
- It leads to **devaluation of the currency**. This leads to a loss of public confidence, black marketing of goods and illegal stockpiling of products.
- Most notably, the **printing and distribution of FICN** offers dual benefits to terrorist organisations targeting India, and the distribution of FICN undermines India's economy while the revenues generated from this are used to finance clandestine activities targeting India.

### Challenges associated with fake currency

- The **most important challenge** is to share India with its neighbour in the form of a long and porous border that allows for easy entry of fake currency.
- In border areas, no or little progress, as in the case of Malda, forces young people to engage in such activities.
- Recently the **accuracy of fake currency is cropping up as the biggest challenge** as it is nearly impossible to detect the fake note without any expertise.

### Recent developments and way ahead

- The **Government has formed a special Fake Notes Coordination (FCORD)** group in the Ministry of Home Affairs to share FICN information with state security agencies and the Centre.
- The National Investigation Agency also establishes a Terror Funding & Fake Currency Cell (TFFC) to investigate terror financing and counterfeit monetary cases.
- Under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act of 1967, effective from 1 February 2013, damage to India's monetary stability has been declared an act of terror by the production, smuggling or circulation of high-quality fake Indian paper currency, coin or any other material.
- Government has also taken steps to demonetize to counter fake currency.

### MoU with Bangladesh

- A MoU with Bangladesh to prevent the counter-smuggling and circulation of fake currency notes.
- Recent decision to install laser wall and sensors at India Bangladesh border will help to check the problem of porous border.
- A part from these, more MOUs with neighbour to check printing and strict actions on people indulge in their country, a strong political will in concerned state that allows stringent action against such mafia and last but not the least development is the key that automatically prohibits the people to be part of such illegal activity.

### Additional info

#### FICN Coordination Group (FCORD):

- It is constituted by Ministry of Home Affairs in collaboration with Ministry of Finance, Reserve Bank of India, Security and Intelligence Agencies of the Centre and States.
- Its objective is to share intelligence/information among the security agencies of the state/centre to counter the problem of circulation of fake currency cases.

### Terror Funding and Fake Currency Cell (TFFC)

- It is constituted under National Investigation Agency (NIA)
- Its aim is to investigate terror funding and fake currency cases.

- National Crime Records Bureau: On the recommendations of the National Police Commission, 1977, the Ministry of Home Affairs constituted a Task Force in 1985 to work out the modalities for setting up of the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB).
  - The NCRB was constituted in 1986 after accepting the recommendations of the task force.
  - The publications of NCRB include, 'Crime in India', 'Accidental Deaths & Suicides in India', 'Prison Statistics India' and 'Finger Print in India'.
  - NCRB organized CCTNS Hackathon & Cyber Challenge 2020 in collaboration with Cyber Peace Foundation.

### Mains oriented question

Fake currency distribution is long issue India is struggling with and it is root cause of many other issues, what are those issues or challenge associated with fake currency and step taken to tackle the issue?



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)



# Agriculture Infrastructure Fund

by Rahul Saigaonker

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

## Relevance

GS 3 || Economy || Agricultural || Agricultural Credit

## Title

What is ? 3 major issues and solutions explained

## Why in the news?

PM Modi has launched the Rs 1 lakh crore Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF) to be used over the next four years.

## Need for Export Preparedness Index

This fund will be used to build post-harvest storage and processing facilities, largely anchored at the Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), but can also be availed by individual entrepreneurs.

## About the Scheme

- A medium- and long-term debt financing facility will be given for investment in viable projects such as post-harvest management Facilities and community farming assets through interest subsidies and financial support.
- It will be managed and controlled through an online Information Management System (MIS) platform. A monitoring committee at national, state and district level will be formed to ensure real-time monitoring and effective feedback.
- **Key Features of the Scheme-** Under the scheme, the banking and financial institutions will extend the financing as loans to primary agricultural credit societies (PACS), cooperative marketing societies, FPOs, SHGs, producers, joint liability groups (JLGs), cooperative multipurpose societies, etc.
  - The goal is to extend Rs 1 lakh crore funding for 10 years to improve agricultural marketing while reinforcing 10,000 farmers' organizations (FPOs), self-help groups (SHGs).

- Credit guarantee coverage will be available to eligible borrowers from this financing facility under the Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE) scheme for a maximum of seven years loan of up to two crore rupees with interest subsidy of 3 % per annum.

- **Significance-** The project will encourage formal credit for farming and agricultural processing activities which are expected to generate numerous employment opportunities in rural areas.
- **Eligibility:** Under this scheme, the Rs. One Lakh Crore will be lent to Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS), Marketing Cooperative Societies, Farmers' Organizations (FPOs), SHGs, Fishermen, Joint Liability Groups (JLG), Multipurpose Cooperative Societies, Startups etc.
- **Interest subvention:** All loans under this funding facility will have interest subsidy of 3 percent per annum up to a Rs. 2 crore cap. This subsidy will be valid for a period of seven years.
- **Credit guarantee:** Credit guarantee coverage under the Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE) scheme for a loan up to Rs. 2 Crore would be available to qualifying borrowers from this financing facility.
  - The government will pay the premium for this coverage.
  - In the case of FPOs, the loan guarantee may be used from the facility developed under the FPO promotion scheme of the Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare (DACFW).
- **Management of the fund:** It will be managed and controlled through an online Information Management System (MIS) platform.
  - To ensure real-time monitoring and meaningful input, National, State and District Monitoring Committees will be formed.

## Implementation

- Rs. 1 for loans up to Rs. 2 Crore, banks and financial institutions shall provide Lakh Crore with interest subsidy of 3 % per annum and credit guarantee cover under the CGTMSE scheme. It is to be valid between 2020 and 2029.
- Loans shall be disbursed in four years from the sanction of Rs . 10,000 crore in the current year and Rs. 30,000 crore each in the next three financial years, and the moratorium on repayment may vary from at least 6 months to 2 years.
- The fund will be managed and tracked through an online Information Management System (MIS) platform. It will allow all interested organizations to demand a loan under the Fund.

Monitoring committees at national, state and district level are set up to ensure real-time monitoring and meaningful input.

### Intended Benefits

- Support for growers, primary agricultural cooperatives (PACs), farmers' producers' organizations (FPOs), agribusinesses, etc. in building community farming assets and post-harvest farming infrastructure;
- It will allow farmers to get better crop prices, as they can store and sell at higher prices, reduce waste and increase processing.

### Issues with agriculture fund:

- **First Issue: Very few FPOs**
  - FPOs in India, presently number around 5000 which needs to at least double.
  - Majority of these FPOs are in the nascent stage of the operations with low membership of farmers
  - Many FPOs only exist on paper.
- **Second Issue: Credit to FPOs et al**
  - FPOs require not only technical handholding support but also adequate capital and infrastructure facilities including market linkages for sustaining their business operations.
  - Unless NABARD ensures that FPOs get their working capital at interest rates of 4 to 7 per cent, the mere creation of storage facilities will not be enough to benefit farmers.
  - As of now, most FPOs get working capital from microfinance institutions at rates ranging from 18-22 per cent per annum.
- **Third Issue: Missing Agri Futures market**
  - A vibrant futures market is a standard way of hedging risks in a market economy.
  - **Several countries — be it China or the US — have agri-futures markets that are multiple times the size of those in India.**

### Solution

- India needs to not only spatially integrate its agri-markets (one nation, one market) but also integrate them temporally. Futures markets have to converge with e NAM development.
- Banks giving loans to FPOs and traders should become part of the commodity futures market as "re-insurers".

### Scheme to enhance Agriculture in India

- **Green Revolution:** yields through improved agricultural practices and timely availability of quality inputs, especially high yield seeds, chemical fertilizers and water.
- **Augmenting Non-Crop related Agriculture Income: KUSUM scheme.**
- **Stabilizing Output Prices:** Through minimum support prices (MSP) and public procurement.
- **Providing Direct Income Transfers to Farmers:** Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN)
- **Subsidizing Input Costs:** Providing water, power and fertilizer subsidies to decrease production costs.

### Additional info

- The **Ashok Dalwai Committee Report** on doubling farmers' income, estimated that the doubling farmers' income will require an agricultural growth rate of 10-11% per annum, until 2022-23

### Mains oriented question

What is the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund? What are the issues associated with its implementation?



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

# 1st Vyapar Mala Express know all about it

by Ankit Agrawal

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

## Relevance

GS 3 || Economy || Infrastructure || Transportation

## Title

India's first ever Vyapar Mala Express from Delhi reaches Tripura, How it will boost MSMEs trade

## Why in the news?

First-ever Vyapar Mala Express train started its journey

## About Vyapar Mala Express

- The Indian Railways ran an Express Service for transportation of less than train load cargo through the first "Vyapar Mala Express".
- This is a special type of cargo service where traders can book part of the goods carrying rake as per their requirement or supply order.
- The first "Vyapar Mala Express" which left from Kishanganj station (in Delhi) of Northern Railway on August to Jirania station in Tripura Reached its destination in the morning of August. The train covered a distance of 2,360 kms in 68 hours only
- In the very first such initiative, 34 wagons with wheat were loaded from the Goniana station of Punjab.
- Then 10 wagons with rice and 2 wagons with pulses were loaded from Delhi Kishanganj station by local traders.

## Benefits of Vyapar Mala Express

- This facility by the Railways is a golden opportunity for small and medium business houses or traders to transport their produces or products to any part of the country by railway speedily within a short time.
- It has provided ample scope to traders to transport perishable items also through this type of faster and environment-friendly mode
- The common people will also be benefitted due to the reduced cost and time of transportation.
- Railways has earned more than 94 lakh rupees from this Vyapar Mala Express train.

The train has been equipped with frozen containers and apart from fruits and vegetables, It is expected to build a seamless national cold supply chain of milk, meat and fish

- It was flagged off from Tadipatri Railway Station in Anantapur district in AP, carrying a load of 980 metric tonnes of locally grown bananas, to the Jawaharlal Nehru Port in Mumbai, from where the consignment will be exported to Iran.

## Understanding all about freight trains

**Freight train:** Freight trains whose runs are not exactly time-sensitive, are usually held up to make way for passenger trains

## Freight Corridor

- The 1856 km long Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor (EDFC) stretches from Dankuni to Ludhiana (Punjab), in West Bengal.
- This includes **Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal**. Numerous freight corridors include the railway. It has two components: first component offers additional rail transport capacity, increased quality of service and higher freight capacity.
- **The second aspect is institutional development** to assist DFCCIL and the Ministry of Railways (MOR) in improving their capacity to make best use of heavy freight transport systems.
- **Western Dedicated Freight Corridor:** The 1,504-kilometer western freight corridor starts at Dadri in Uttar Pradesh and stretches through Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra to the country's largest container port — Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust, near Mumbai.
- **The Public Sector Undertaking (PSU)** undertakes the preparation, growth and mobilization of financial capital and the design, maintenance and operation of Dedicated Freight Corridors.
- In 2006 the DFCCIL was registered as a corporation under the 1956 Companies Act. This is both enabler and beneficiary of other main Indian government initiatives such as Make in India, Startup India, Standup India, Sagarmala, Bharatmala, UDAN-RCS, Digital India, BharatNet, and the Industrial Corridor.



### What is the need of Dedicated Freight corridors?

- **Rise in demand:** Taking into account increased transport demands, excessively congested routes and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with road transport, these freight corridors should help to reduce costs and enable faster transport.
- **Increased burden:** These roads hold the most traffic and are heavily congested, spanning a total of 10,122 kilometres. According to the 2017 Make-in - India survey, the route carries 52 per cent of passenger traffic and 58 per cent of freight traffic. These routes are also highly saturated, with the use of line capacity reaching up to 150%.
- **Revenue generation:** They will open up new investment avenues, as this will result in the construction of industrial corridors and logistics parks along these routes.

### Benefits of the DFCs

- The **freight corridor would allow trains to carry higher freight**, in a more efficient way.
- Such lines are also designed to **achieve speeds** of up to 100 km / h, up from the current maximum freight speed of 20 km / h.
- Freight corridor **allows for long haul operations with trailing loads** to increase from 5,000 tons to 15,000 tons and container capacity to 400 tons per train.
- The DFCs would **require for shorter transit times** from freight source to destination, in some cases reducing the time by as much as 50 per cent.
- DFCs made **possible by higher freight volumes without significant infrastructure** improvements, increased axle loads, reduced turn-around times, reduced unit transport costs, rationalized tariffs resulting in improved market share and improved operating margins.

### What are the operational challenges?

- With the **focus on power generation from renewable energy sources**, the future of demand for coal now seems unclear.
- In addition, the **operation of heavier trains on both DFCs**, as planned, would also require the reinforcement of tracks from the DFC to the consumer locations.
- It would **greatly expand the scope** of the programs. The revenue for a DFC would come from a fee for each train called a "track access charge" which IR would pay to the DFC.
- Accordingly, **the revenue received by IR from trains running** on DFCCIL would be reduced to the sum of the "entry fee" charged by IR to the DFC, and at least initially IR would lose some profits.

### Necessity of such plans

- **To meet increasing demand for passengers:** Indian Railways operate about 13,000 passenger trains daily and an additional requirement of 3,000-4,000 trains is expected.
- In the next five years, following the **operationalization of the two new freight corridors** and the transfer of a lion's share of freight trains to the corridors, a great deal of capacity will be released on traditional rail lines to allow more commuter trains to run to meet demand.
- It will create the environment for enhanced service quality and user experience for the passengers
- **Private train operators** will bring with them the technical and managerial expertise leading to optimum resource utilization.
- **The measure is also expected to improve private sector investment.** It will also ease the strain on government finances and help to minimize the loss of Indian Railways (because of low fares and high overhead costs)

### Additional info

Bibek Debroy Committee: The Bibek Debroy Committee is a high level committee for "Mobilization of Resources for Major Railway Projects and Restructuring of Railway Ministry and Railway Board" created by NDA Government after coming into power in 2014

### Mains oriented question



Government needs to build an enabling environment like policies, banking, provision of infrastructure, regulation, business-friendliness to harness the full potential of private railway players. Explain



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

### Notes

## Madhya Pradesh to reserve government jobs for locals

by Ankit Agrawal

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

### Relevance

GS 3 || Economy || Structure of the Indian Economy|| Employment Programs & Entrepreneurship

### Title

Government jobs in Madhya Pradesh only for Locals - Why this decision is against our Constitution?

### Why in the news?

Madhya Pradesh to Reserve all government jobs for

### Present Context

- The state government Madhya Pradesh of has taken a crucial decision
- Government employment in the state would only be open for people from the state
- The resources of Madhya Pradesh will only be for the residents of the state
- The government was preparing a single citizenship database so that people of the state do not have to register for each scheme separately.

### Attempt was made earlier

- CM of Madhya Pradesh had earlier attempted to **reserve employment in industries for locals but did not make any headway**
- Importantly, just after being sworn in as CM in December 2018, Kamal Nath had announced making amendments in the state's industrial policy to ensure that 70% of jobs are reserved for local youths.
- That **decision had triggered widespread protests** by various parties, including the BJP and JD(U) in Bihar and the Samajwadi Party in Uttar Pradesh.

### Constitution provisions dealing with reservation in employment:

- **While domicile-based reservations have** been implemented in education, courts have been reluctant to expand this to employment.

- Although Chief Minister has not outlined details of the proposal, reservation solely based on place of birth would raise constitutional questions
- **Article 16** of the Constitution, which guarantees equal treatment under law in matters of public employment, prohibits the state from discriminating on grounds of place of birth or residence.
- **Article 16(2)** states that "no citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, descent, place of birth, residence or any of them, be ineligible for, or discriminated against in respect or, any employment or office under the State
- **Article 16(3)** of the Constitution provides an exception by saying that Parliament may make a law "prescribing" a requirement of residence for jobs in a particular state.
- This power vests solely in the Parliament, not state legislatures.
- **The constitution prohibit reservation based on domicile:**
  - When the Constitution came into force, India turned itself into one nation from a geographical unit of individual principalities and the idea of the universality of Indian citizenship took root.
  - As India has common citizenship, which gives citizens the liberty to move around freely in any part of the country, the requirement of a place of birth or residence cannot be qualifications for granting public employment in any state.

### SC rulings on reservation in jobs for locals

- **The Supreme Court** has ruled against reservation based on place of birth or residence.
- In 1984, ruling in *Dr Pradeep Jain v Union of India*, the issue of legislation for "sons of the soil" was discussed. The court expressed an opinion that such policies would be unconstitutional.
- In a subsequent ruling in **Sunanda Reddy v State of Andhra Pradesh (1995)**,
- The Supreme Court **affirmed the observation in Pradeep Jain** to strike down a state government policy that gave 5% extra weightage to candidates who had studied with Telugu as the medium of instruction
- **understanding the case of Andhra Pradesh:**
  - Andhra 1st state to offer 75% reservation to locals in pvt jobs
  - Background- Growing demand (Survey- 2/3rd respondents favour state priority, Sentiment more profound in Southern & Eastern states), Various political parties & states supported demand (Eg- MH, KR, GJ etc), MP- 70% reservation for locals in pvt jobs

- Reasons behind demand for local jobs- Agrarian distress, Dearth of jobs, Displacement of landowners, Lack participation of all sections in workforce (Azim Premji University)
- Report- discrimination is 1 reason for under representation of Dalits & Muslims in corporate sector), Perception that central devolution is insufficient (Eg- Southern state feel FC accord higher weightage to poverty & pop)
- **In 2002**, the Supreme Court invalidated appointment of government teachers in Rajasthan in which the state selection board gave preference to “applicants belonging to the district or the rural areas of the district concerned”.
- **In 2019**, the Allahabad High Court struck down a recruitment notification by the UP Subordinate Service Selection Commission which prescribed preference for women who are “original residents” of the UP alone
- **Some states have laws that reserve jobs for locals:**
  - The act aimed at abolishing all existing residence requirements in the states and enacting exceptions only in the case of the special instances of Andhra Pradesh, Manipur, Tripura and Himachal Pradesh.
  - Constitutionally, some states also have special protections under Article 371.
  - **Andhra Pradesh under Section 371(d) has powers to have “direct recruitment of local cadre”** in specified areas.
  - Some states have gone around the mandate of Article 16(2) by using language.
  - States that conduct official business in their regional languages prescribe knowledge of the language as a criterion.
  - This ensures that **local citizens are preferred for jobs**. For example, states including Maharashtra, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu require a language test.
- **Reservations not granted on other grounds such as caste:**
  - Equality enshrined in the Constitution is not mathematical equality and does not mean all citizens will be treated alike without any distinction.
  - To this effect, the Constitution underlines two distinct aspects which together form the essence of equality law: Non-discrimination among equals, and Affirmative action to equalize the unequal

### Securing jobs for locals in the private sector

- Such a law will be difficult to implement even if allowed. Private employers do not go on an annual recruitment drive to fill vacancies identified in advance but hire as and when required.
- The state can recommend a preference to locals but ensuring that it is followed would be difficult.
- **In 2017, Karnataka mulled similar legislation** but it was dropped after the state’s Advocate General raised questions on its legality.
- **In 2019, the state government** once again issued a notification asking private employers to “prefer” Kannadigas for blue-collar jobs.

### Conclusion

State reserving jobs for locals is somewhere a big opportunity for the local of the state and migration from one state to the other will also decrease, the local will get more options of jobs in their own home town, cities and villages but it will also discourage the other state aspirants who were preparing and searching for job option from long time in state like Madhya Pradesh, the gates are close for outsiders for government jobs in MP. Balance between the Outsider and Insiders of the state should be maintained to maintain the Idea of India.

### Mains oriented question

India has single citizenship, and it gives citizens the liberty to move around freely in any part of the country. Thus restricting the outsider by fixing all government jobs for locals is contradicting the constitution of India. Explain.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

## Trilateral supply chain plan of India Japan Australia

by Anirudh

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

### Relevance

GS 3 || Economy || External Sector || Foreign Trade

### Title

Supply Chain Resilience Initiative - India Japan Australia joint supply chain initiative

### Why in the news?

India-Japan-Australia supply chain in the works to counter china

### Present Context

- India, Australia, and Japan have started the discussions for the launch of a trilateral Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI) in order to reduce the dependency on China. The initiative which was first proposed by Japan might be executed.
- The officials have been working on the dates to hold the first meeting of the commerce and trade ministers of the three countries. Earlier, Japan through its Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry had approached India and had pressed on the urgency of taking the initiative forward.
- In the light of China's aggressive moves in the Line of Actual Control in Ladakh, the Indian government has decided to consider the proposal quite seriously. As per the sources, Tokyo was in favour of launching SCRI by November 2020.

### SCRI is in the works

- India, Japan and Australia have begun discussions on launching a trilateral Supply Chain Resilience Initiative
- (SCRI) to reduce dependency on China, necessitated by Beijing's aggressive political and military behaviour.
- Japan eager to launch:
  - The initiative, first proposed by Japan, is now taking shape.

- Japan through its Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry approached India recently and pressed on the urgency to take the initiative forward,
- according to people in the know.
- Tokyo was in favour of launching SCRI by November

### ➤ India has shown interest:

- The government is moving on the proposal quite seriously, especially in the light of China's aggressive moves on the Line of Actual Control in Ladakh.
- India isn't worried anymore, usually, New Delhi would consider any such proposal cautiously as it would be seen as an alliance against China.
- The subject was also one of the key themes of PM Independence Day speech on Saturday, where he said that businesses have started viewing India as a possible "hub for supply chains" and that now India must also "make for the world"

### About Supply Chain Resilience Initiative

- Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI) is a direct response to the individual economies and companies who are concerned about the Chinese political behavior and the disruption which may lead to supply chains.
- The purpose of creating the supply chain will be to improve its resilience across the Indo-Pacific, which through such an effort will be able to develop a sound economic profile to its security logic.

### Objectives of Supply Chain Resilience

- **The two-fold objective** of the Japanese proposal is to attract foreign direct investment to turn the Indo-Pacific into an "economic powerhouse" and to build a mutually complementary relationship among partner countries.
- **Include ASEAN in the Future:** The idea, was to also throw open the initiative to the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) after India-Japan-Australia understanding on the matter.
- **Build on the Bilateral Networks:** To begin with, the aim is to work out a plan to build on the existing bilateral supply chain networks. India and Japan, for instance, have an Indo-Japan Industrial Competitiveness partnership, which deals with locating Japanese companies in India.
- **Assuage Concerns of Companies:** SCRI is a direct response to individual companies and economies concerned about Chinese political behaviour and the disruption that could lead to supply chains



- **Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe**, following the Covid-19 outbreak, has already instituted a \$2-billion fund to help Japanese companies shift back from China.
- **Australia and the US**, amid growing security and transparency concerns, have already entered into an ambitious agreement to create what's being called a 'China free' supply chain for rare earth materials.

### Supply chain management in India

Supply chain management (SCM) is the management of the flow of goods. It includes the movement and storage of raw materials, inventory and finished goods from point of origin to point of consumption.

### Issues with the Supply chain management in India

- **Fragmented supply chain:** The long and fragmented supply chain results in the escalation of wastage and price. This is because of the large share of unorganized supply chain participants and the complexities of operating commercial viability.
- **Inadequate cold storage and warehousing facilities:** Warehousing is a crucial element in the overall supply chain where unorganized players dominate much of it. 20 per cent of warehousing is currently regulated with 70 per cent of the government-controlled managed industry.
- **Logistics issues:** India's logistics industry still faces quality and connectivity challenges:
  - Indian national highways make up just 2% of the overall road network but carry 40% of all freight.
  - Growing port capacity may result in a lack of connectivity to such ports resulting in cost increases and delays in the goods being transferred.
  - Last-mile rail link connectivity deficit
- **Underdeveloped processed food market:** The Indian food processing market is still evolving, and is still in its infancy.
- **Slowdown in production growth:** With around 67% of the land holdings being marginal, with an average size of 0.4 hectares, more than half of the marginal farmers are likely to have no surplus income to spare beyond subsistence, hampering improvements in productivity at the farm level
- **Fragmented market:** Small traders and Kirana Shops also dominate the Indian retail market. This poses a serious challenge in constructing consumer base.
- **Large informalisation:** Over 50 per cent of food processing industries are concentrated in the informal sector and are small-scale industries. Thus they cannot achieve economies of scale and take advantage

of the benefits of the formal financial sector.

- **Other issues:** Certain concerns such as lack of applied research, taxation problems, access to credit, outdated technology, etc. remain in the sector besides the above-mentioned areas of concern.

### What should be done for improvement in supply chain management?

- Supply chains with low demand but high supply uncertainty should follow a cost-cutting risk hedging strategy.
- **The supply chain** must focus on being responsive and flexible to meet the changing needs of efficient supply chain customers.
- **Low demand and uncertainty** as regards supply require an efficient supply chain strategy to optimize profitability. Profitability can be achieved through the coordination of costs and information. By eliminating non-value - added activities, low costs are realized, leading to economies of scale and optimization of techniques and production.
- **Logistics bottlenecks** should be removed especially by focusing on road and port development.
- A single point of contact should be established for each Trading Partner. This ensures that during its flow between the trading partners the information is neither lost nor deteriorates.
- It is important to ensure **continuous exchange of the information**. The need to maintain the knowledge flow continuously is paramount.
- Supply chains should adopt a **risk-hedging and responsive** supply chain mix. Supply chains must try to cope with uncertainty over demand and the supply chain to respond to unpredictable demand

### Steps taken to address supply chain issue

- **PM Kisan SAMPADA Yojana** is a 6000 crore umbrella scheme combining existing and current Food Processing and Industry ministry schemes.
- Some important schemes under SAMPADA yojana:
  - **The new Contract Farming Act** further helps in improving the backward and forward integration of the supply chain
  - **Scheme for Creation of Backward and Forward Linkages** – Producing perishable horticulture and non-horticulture by plugging supply chain gaps in terms of raw material quality and consumer linkages. Agro-processing technology based on cluster approach
  - **Electronic Negotiable Warehouse Receipt (e-NWR)** System to facilitate an easy pledge financing by banks and other financial institu

utions. Inclusion of food processing and agro-warehousing under priority sector lending by RBI

- **The Logistics challenge** regarding the supply chain, the current PM-Gram Sadak yojana, BHARATMALA and SAGARMALA schemes are leveraged. In this sector, 0.100 percent FDI is being undertaken to promote Agri-Export Zones, one-time capital grants, etc .
- **Mega food parks** – consist of supply chain infrastructure including collection centres, primary processing centres, central processing centres, and food processing units.
- **Cold chain** – creation of infrastructure facility along the entire supply chain ( pre-cooling, weighing, sorting, grading, waxing facilities, mobile cooler vans etc.,)
- **The National Agricultural market** (eNam) which creates a pan India market facilitates removal of intermediaries, thereby streamlining the entire supply chain

### Conclusion

Supply chain management holds the key to improving the country's manufacturing industry, and SCM is revolutionizing with the advent of modern, disruptive technology. We need to train ourselves to use such innovations – artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, machine learning, and 3-D printing. We have no choice but to digitize, but there is no need to think too much about new technologies. We must make the best use of them, especially block-chain technology

### Mains oriented question

Supply chain management holds the key to improving the country's manufacturing industry, and SCM is revolutionizing with the advent of modern, disruptive technology. Explain.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

### Notes

## Export Preparedness Index 2020 Gujarat no.1 in India

by Ankit Agrawal

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

### Relevance

GS 3 || Economy || External Sector || Foreign Trade

### Title

NITI Aayog's Export Preparedness Index 2020 explained - Gujarat tops EPI 2020

### Why in the news?

Recently, the NITI Aayog in partnership with the Institute of Competitiveness released the Export Preparedness Index (EPI) report 2020.

### Need for Export Preparedness Index

#### ► Regional variations-

- For a country as vast and geographically diverse as India, the state of preparation to strengthen exports needs to be understood at the regional level, a policy measure at the national level will not suffice. Each state needs to have its own policy measures.

#### ► Changing Trade scenario-

- The trade structure has gone massive changes due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. With major economies of the world completely shutting down operations, the export of goods and services has been adversely affected.
- India's exports have been badly hit as well, especially since the domestic manufacturing base is heavily dependent on Chinese imports. Over the years, India has sought to decrease this reliance with a greater focus on in-house assembling of products and by boosting the local manufacturing ecosystem.

#### ► Promotion of competitive federalism-

- With the objective to provide an empirical tool to policymakers at the **sub-national level**, the Export Preparedness Index examines the **export ecosystem of Indian states and union territories**. It is the first index that has been developed to study export preparedness and competitiveness at the sub-national level.

### Key features of the Export Preparedness Index (EPI):

- The Export Preparedness Index (EPI) aims to assess the readiness of the states, in terms of their export potential and their performance. The primary goals of the Index are to inculcate competition among all states in India in order to –
  - bring favourable export promotion policies
  - ease regulatory framework to prompt subnational planning
  - promotion of exports
  - create necessary infrastructure for exports
  - Help in identifying strategic recommendations for improving export competitiveness.

### Pillars and sub pillars

Export Preparedness Index includes **four Pillars and eleven Sub-pillars** which will enable precise and fair assessment of all the Indian States and Union Territories. The rationale behind the selection of each of the four pillars are listed as below

#### ► Policy-

- A comprehensive trade policy provides a strategic direction for exports and imports. Primarily, this pillar has been incorporated to evaluate whether a state has introduced enabling policy measures to steer export-led growth.

#### ► Business Ecosystem

- An efficient business ecosystem can help states attract investments and create an enabling infrastructure for individuals to initiate start-ups. This particular pillar sheds light on the core infrastructure facilities, and how states fare in terms of creating such an ecosystem. Availability of such essential facilitating factors enable production units to enhance their production capacities and foster future growth of their existing exporting capacities.

#### ► Export Ecosystem-

- This pillar aims to assess the business environment, which is specific to exports. An enabling export ecosystem can support different firms in all the states and Union Territories to increase productivity and boost competition. This pillar takes into consideration indicators that underline the research and development infrastructure, and the trade support available to the businesses in the states.

#### ► Export Performance-

- This pillar examines the export performance of states and Union Territories to identify focus areas and track improvements. This pillar focuses on two sub-pillars: Growth of Exports and Export Diversification

### Highlights of Export Preparedness Index report

- Gujarat has topped the overall EPI 2020 followed by Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu.
- Among the landlocked states, **Rajasthan** has topped the index, followed by Telangana and Haryana.
- Among the Himalayan states, **Uttarakhand** topped the index, followed by Tripura and Himachal Pradesh.
- Across Union Territories, **Delhi** has performed the best.
- There is a high scoring range amongst Indian states on the EPI where Gujarat has the **highest score of 75.14** and Jammu & Kashmir with the **lowest score of 12.27**.

### Status of India's export

- India's merchandise exports have witnessed growth from USD 275.9 billion in 2016-17 to USD 331.0 billion in 2019-20. However, the Covid-19 crisis gave a major blow to the current fiscal. Consequently, India's exports shrank by 60% in April 2020.

### Challenges before export sector in India

- **Intra- and inter-regional disparities in export infrastructure**
  - As of present, **70 per cent of India's export** has been dominated by five states – **Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Telangana**. This clearly shows the regional disparity in India regarding export sector.
- **Inconsistent Trade Policies**
  - The Indian trade policies are not on the same pace with the international trade policies or requirements. The international traders see India as a very complex market that has many barriers to trade. There are many reasons behind this complexity like **paying high taxes, construction permits, cross-border trading, enforced contracts**.
- **Import Tariffs**
  - An increased import tariff dissuades many exporters to make trade in India. Increased import tariff leads to an appreciation in the real exchange rate of the country. Additionally, high import tariff encourages traders to lean towards illegal means of import/export.
- **Lack Of Proper Infrastructure**
  - Another factor that leads to low export in India is the lack of proper infrastructure facilities. There is inadequate space, both at the seaports and airports for keeping and storing various goods.

### ➤ Red Tapism

- It is known that the export procedure of India is not only lengthier but complex too when compared to other countries. Various documents are required for export trade which makes the process more time as well as money consuming.

### ➤ Global competition

- The new world order is one in which production systems are more consolidated, and supply chains significantly reduced in size to increase efficiency. Therefore, India will face intense competition in exports from other regions that compete on cost-advantages, such as Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, and the Philippines.

### Securing jobs for locals in the private sector

Realising this, the Indian government sought to improve exports through trade policies and reforms—such as the Goods and Services Tax—and by incentive creation—through the Merchandise Exports Scheme, Service Exports from India Scheme and Trade Infrastructure for Export Scheme.

### ➤ Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS)

- It was introduced in 2015. The objective of MEIS is to offset infrastructural inefficiencies and associated costs involved in exporting goods/ products which are produced/ manufactured in India. The scheme incentives exporters in terms of Duty Credit Scrips at the rate 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 per cent of Free On Board (FOB) value of exports realised. These scrips are transferable and can be used to pay certain Central Duties/ taxes including customs duties.

### ➤ Services Exports from India Scheme (SEIS)

- Under this scheme, rewards on Net foreign exchange earnings, to service providers of notified services who are providing service from India to the rest of the World, in the form of Duty Credit scrips are available. The scrips, just like MEIS are transferable and can be used to pay certain Central Duties/ taxes including customs duties. The service exporters are eligible for SEIS at the rate of 5 per cent and 7 per cent of the Net Foreign Exchange Earnings (NFEE) for exports made in a Financial Year.

### ➤ Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) Scheme

- This Scheme allows exporters to import capital goods (except certain specified items under the Scheme) for pre-production, production and post-production at zero customs duty. In return, the exporters are required to fulfil the export obligation to the tune of six times the import duties, taxes and cess saved amount on capital



goods, to be fulfilled in six years from date of issue of the Authorisation.

► **Advance authorisation Scheme**

- Advance Authorization (AA) is issued to allow duty free import of inputs, which are physically incorporated in export products (making normal allowance for wastage). In addition, fuel, oil, catalyst which are consumed/ utilised in the process of production of export products are also be allowed.

► **Duty Free Import Authorization (DFIA)**

- Duty Free Import Authorization (DFIA) is issued on post export basis for products for which Standard Input Output Norms (SION) have been notified. One of the objectives of the scheme is to facilitate transfer of the authorisation or the inputs imported as per SION, once export is completed. Provisions of DFIA Scheme are similar to Advance Authorisation Scheme.

► **Interest Equalization Scheme (IES)**

- The scheme came into effect from 01.04.2015 for a period of 5 years. This scheme is being implemented by the DGFT through Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for pre and post Shipment Rupee Export Credit. Under the Scheme, interest equalisation @ 3 per cent per annum has been made available to eligible exporters. The interest equalisation rate has been increased from 3 per cent to 5 per cent for exports made by MSME sector under the ongoing Interest Equalisation Scheme (IES) on Pre and post Shipment Rupee Export Credit.

### Way forward

The best practices of the states should be regularly documented and disseminated to promote peer-to-peer learning under **cooperative federalism**. For instance, depending on the unique challenges identified in the state scorecards, each state can choose to emulate some of the best practices.

For example, conducting targeted **capacity-building workshops like Tamil Nadu** did or creating a targeted retail platform like **West Bengal's Biswa Bangla**, which had over US\$4.5 million in revenues over 2019.

### Way forward

"Export is called as engine of growth for a country." In this context, discuss the loopholes in existing infrastructure and government policies regarding Indian export sector.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

### NOTES

# Boycott Chinese auto imports in India

by Anirudh



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

## Relevance

GS 3 || Economy || External Sector || Foreign Trade

## Title

Boycott Chinese auto imports in India - Automotive Mission Plan 2016-26 explained

## Why in the news?

175 FDI proposals from China put on hold

## Foreign Direct Investment:

### What is FDI? (Foreign Direct Investment)

- A foreign direct investment (FDI) is an investment made by a firm or individual in one country into business interests located in another country.
- Generally, FDI takes place when an investor establishes foreign business operations or acquires foreign business assets in a foreign company.
- However, FDIs are distinguished from portfolio investments in which an investor merely purchases equities of foreign-based companies.

## FDI is permitted under two routes

### ➤ In India, FDI is permitted under two routes:

- The first, via the automatic mode where the companies do not need an approval from the state
- and

The second, through the government route, for which companies need clearance from the Centre.

- Officials said the earlier FDI policy via the government route was limited to Pakistan and Bangladesh only.

### ➤ Revised FDI Policy

- Recently, India's department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade revised its FDI policy in order to curb the possibility of predatory foreign investment exploiting financial distress of Covid-19 hit Indian companies

### ➤ Before Amendment

- The present policy states that a non-resident entity can invest in India, subject to the FDI Policy except in those sectors/activities which are prohibited.

- **Additional Provision:** A citizen of Bangladesh and Pakistan or an entity registered in both countries can only invest under the government route. Additionally, for Pakistan sectors/activities such as defense, space and atomic energy are prohibited for investment in addition to the sectors/activities already prohibited.

### ➤ After Amendment

- The amended policy states that an entity of a country, which shares a land border with India or where the beneficial owner of investment into India is situated in or is a citizen of any such country, can invest only under the Government route.
- Additionally, the amendment also states that the transfer of ownership of an existing or future FDI in an entity in India, directly or indirectly, resulting in the beneficial ownership falling within the restrictions imposed by the above rule will also require government approval

## Impact of such a move

- The move is expected to have a significant impact on investment by Chinese players like Alibaba, Tencent and Xiaomi in companies such as Paytm, Ola, Bigbasket, Byju's, Dream11, MakeMyTrip and Swiggy for follow up funding.
- It is also expected to reduce the inflow of investments in new companies as well as the merger and acquisition scenario in the country. China is most active in India in the start-up space.
- Gateway House in its research study on Chinese Investments in India has identified over 75 companies, with Chinese investors concentrated in e-commerce, fintech, media, social media, aggregation services and logistics. A majority more than half of India's 30 Indian unicorns (start-ups with a valuation of over \$1 billion) have a Chinese investor.
- A number of countries ranging from the US, UK and Australia have imposed curbs on the operation of Huawei, the Chinese telecom vendor, whose founder was allegedly involved with the PLA's engineering corp.
- All FDI (foreign direct investment) proposals from Chinese entities have been put on hold as they await security clearance from the Ministry of Home Affairs.

## Indian automotive industry

## Indian automotive industry

- **100% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is approved under the automatic route** for the automotive industry, subject to all relevant regulations and legislation. Geographically, India is similar to the main European, ASEAN, Japanese and Korean automotive markets.
- **Steel's cost competitiveness is a big boost for international investors.** India is the world's fourth-biggest steel manufacturer. **The Indian automotive industry is the world's fifth-largest** and is expected to become the world's fourth-largest automotive producer by 2020.
- **Largest worldwide two-wheeler market.** By 2026 India was projected to be the third largest car market by volume. The existence of four major car manufacturing hubs across the country: north Delhi-Gurgaon-Faridabad, west Mumbai-Pune-Nashik-Aurangabad, south Chennai-Bengaluru-Hosur and east Jamshedpur-Kolkata

## Location factor that affect automobile Industry

- **Some locations in rural and industrial backward areas** are given priority under the government's strategy to decentralize the industries. Due to strikes, political delays and trade unions, professional labor and workers and their discipline (Esp. in North India) have discouraged the automotive industries.
- **It appears to be located close to iron and steel production centers** because steel is the main raw material used in this field. Due to the import and export facilities provided by such locations, port sites are often considered to be favorable. Business range, usually to the outskirts of urban centers to minimize travel costs and assembly on-site.
- **Government help such as soft loans, SEZ (Special Economic Zones) property, relaxed labor rules, energy, tax holidays and the establishment of nearby diploma schools.** Geography and culture play a major role, as in Madhya Pradesh and Haryana major car manufacturing centers focus more on Agro-Heavy equipment such as tractors, harvesters, threshers and sorters.
- In **urban areas the focus** is on two wheelers and four wheelers based on people's incomes. Nearby area demographics focused on teens, middle ages, the poor and the wealthy, etc.

## Locational factor of auto industry

- **Toyota-Nagoya region, Japan**

- Because of its proximity to Nagoya, transportation is a metropolitan area deals with auxiliary corporate services and a port for exporting cars to the US and other Asian countries, with the majority of Japanese car companies establishing facilities in the Tokyo-Nagoya zone. (Except Mazda in Hiroshima)

### ► Japanese Shipbuilding industry

- Located in Nagoya, Hiroshima, Tokyo-Yokohama
- Japan relies on imported iron, steel mills have a costal position where heavy marine engineering also has heavy machinery, boilers, generators, cable ropes and electrical installations where all the raw materials and spare parts are required for shipbuilding locally.
- Auxiliary industries already developed as a result of cars. Robots are here to make up for less employee numbers. Excellent harbors and ship launching bays.
- Mild climates to keep freezing water from rivers and estuaries. Large domestic and foreign demand respectively for fishing boats and merchant vessels.

### ► Boston

- Mid-Atlantic coastal region is the main shipbuilding centre.
- The region is readily accessible to tidal waters and large amounts of steel are available.

### ► German Shipbuilding

- Availability of tidal estuaries of the Elbe, Weser, Oder and Lubec Bay Advantage of highly developed iron and steel industries in the country.
- Possession of technical and skilled labour. Patronage of technical institutions of the country.
- Large domestic and foreign demands for her vessel.

### ► India

- Vishakhapatnam itself has a well-connected steel industry and Kolkata with Jharkhand and WB steel industries, a nearby raw material.
- Available flat / level coastal land, rich hinterland with excellent railway connectivity for labor and auxiliary components transportation
- Indigenous demand from ONGC, for offshore platforms, drilling rigs and steel jackets + from Indian Navy and Coast guards.
- **Sanand, Ahmedabad- the Nano Factory:**
- **Situated in the industrial corridor of Delhi-Mumbai (DMIC),** fast transport of spare parts, raw materials and finished vehicles.
- **Mundra port 180 kms:** has vehicle container depots + ro-ro loading and unloading terminals for vehicles
- Similarly, **the port of Kandla:** just 250 km away

## The Automotive Mission Plan (AMP)

► **The Automotive Mission Plan (AMP) 2016-26** is a joint vision of the Indian government and the Indian Automotive Industry setting out the roadmap for the industry's growth. It offers a vision of where cars, automotive components and tractor industries can go in terms of scale, contribution to India's GDP and global technology footprint, competitiveness and capabilities.

- AMP (2006-16) was successful, making India not only a hub for the production of automobiles, but also a hub for design and development.
- **Vision 3/12/65:** The Indian automotive industry aims to be among the world's top 3 engineering, manufacturing and exporting vehicles and automotive parts, rising to more than 12% of India's GDP and creating 65 million additional jobs.

### ► Objectives

- **Employment:** It aims to make the Indian automotive industry a major contributor to the "Power India" program and make it one of the biggest engine-creating jobs in the Indian economy. The industry has many backward and forward links between manufacturing and service sectors that will provide opportunities across the Indian economy's formal and informal sectors.
- **Boost to manufacturing:** AMP (2016-26) aims to propel the Indian automotive industry as the engine of the "Make in India" program; as it is among the manufacturing industry's foremost drivers. The Indian automotive industry is expected to contribute more than 12 percent of the country's GDP and account for over 40 percent of the manufacturing sector. It will improve the country's large, small and medium industries through multitudes.
- **Export:** It also aims to increase the Indian car industry's net exports and to become one of the world's leading automotive export hub.
- **Mobility:** It aims to improve universal mobility to promote secure, effective and comfortable mobility for every individual in the world. It promotes environmental sustainability and affordability, and provides customers with a choice to access multiple mobility options.
- **Electric Vehicles:** It also includes vision on emerging technology such as electric vehicles and related infrastructure with new regulations on fuel efficiency.

## Conclusion

Given the recent downturn in the automotive sector, robust implementation of the aforementioned automotive plan is expected to boost the industry's overall scenario. Initiatives such as Make in India, Capability India and Invest India are the moves in the right direction to distinguish India as a leading player in global manufacturing, in particular the automotive industry. This labor-intensive industry would provide more job opportunities and could play a significant role in the socio-economic development of the country, eventually turning India into a \$5 Trillion economy by 2022

## Mains oriented question

Important manufacturing regions of the world are typically located at middle latitudes. Comment.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)



# US Tech Giants & Antitrust Trials

by Siddhant

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

## Relevance

GS 3|| Economy|| Services|| Startups & Entrepreneurship

## Title

Big Tech Companies Antitrust Hearing explained, Why 4 biggest companies are going under trial

## Why in news?

- Technology companies such as Google, **Facebook**, **Amazon**, and **Apple** have been under the radar of governments in many countries for being big spenders and trying to steamroll the competition.
- In 2018, **The Competition Commission of India (C-CI)** has also imposed Rs.136 crore fine on Google for unfair business practices and infringing antitrust conduct in India.

## Too big to fail

- The US Congress on Wednesday grilled the top bosses of the big four technology companies, Google, Facebook, Amazon, and Apple, and sought to know if they had become too big to fail and if they were stifling the competition from other smaller companies.

## What is the antitrust trial all about?

- Technology companies such as Google, Facebook, Amazon, and Apple have been under the radar of governments in many countries for being big spenders and trying to steamroll competition by either buying them or pushing other vendors to avoid working with their competitors.
- In June last year, the US Congress and an antitrust panel of the House Judiciary Committee began a probe into the nature and working of four biggest names in technology space.

## Antitrust Law

- Antitrust law also referred to as **competition laws** aim to protect trade and commerce from **unfair restraints, monopolies, and price-fixing**.
  - They ensure that fair competition exists in an open-market economy.
- The Competition Act, 2002 is India's antitrust law. It replaced the Monopolistic and Restrictive Trade Practices Act of 1969.

## The Competition Act, 2002

- The Act prohibits
  - anti-competitive agreements.
  - abuse of dominant position by enterprises.
  - regulates combinations (Mergers and Acquisition), which causes or likely to cause an appreciable adverse effect on competition within India.

## What did the top four companies' bosses say?

- The hearing saw Amazon founder Jeff Bezos face the house panel for the first time. In his statement to the Congress, Bezos defended the company as American and said that they did not just hire **"highly educated computer scientists and MBAs (Master of Business Administration) in Seattle and Silicon Valley"** but also trained "hundreds of thousands of people in states across the country" for entry-level jobs.
- On the other hand, **Tim Cook**, when grilled about why had some of the apps with features similar to those of Apple's apps, been booted out of the iOS store, took the privacy and security line and said that the company had worries about the data of small, under-age kids being misused.
- Reuters Photo Google CEO Sundar Pichai committed the house panel that it will not tilt or skew the searches in favour of one candidate or another before the upcoming elections in November.
- **Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg**, whose companies had bought Instagram and WhatsApp in some of the biggest deals in technology space, had been accused of using money power to outright buy competition and then push them aggressively against other competitors in the market.

## What happens now?

- Beginning last year, the panel has talked to various employees working at these organisations, their rivals, and collected as many as **1.3 million** documents from public hearings and such interviews.
- Following the deposition by the top bosses of the big four, the House the panel will take into account the statements made by them and they come out with a report on whether these companies had avoided all liability of following fair trade practices.
- The house panel has also looked into the use of data by these companies and whether they had followed the sensitive data protection norms set in place by various states across the US.

### Competition Commission of India

- From the provisions under the **Competition Act, 2002**, the central government has established the Competition Commission of India in 2003.
- CCI consists of a Chairperson and **6 Members** appointed by the Central Government.
- The Commission must eliminate practices having an adverse effect on competition, promote and sustain competition, protect the interests of consumers, and ensure freedom of trade in the markets of India.
- The Commission also gives an opinion on competition issues on a reference received from a statutory authority established under any law and to undertake competition advocacy, create public awareness, and impart training on competition issues.

### Effectiveness of CCI

- Eliminating practices that have adverse effects on competition, promoting and sustaining competition, protecting consumer interests and ensuring free trade on India's markets.
- To give an opinion on competition issues on a reference provided from a regulatory authority set up under any statute, and to participate in **competition advocacy**, build public awareness and provide training on competition issues.
- The Competition Commission is India's regulator of competition, and an **antitrust watchdog** for smaller organizations that can not defend themselves against big corporations.
- CCI has the power to alert organizations that sell to India if it thinks that competition in India's domestic market may be adversely affected.
- The Competition Act ensures that no company abuses its 'dominant position' in a market by restrict

ing supply, manipulating sales rates, or implementing policies that deny other competing firms market access.

### Mains model question

- The promotion of competition is vital to the Indian economy. Discuss the ways to promote competition in the economy.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

### Notes

# INDIAN RAILWAYS Privatise

by Siddhant

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

## Relevance

GS 3||Economy||Infrastructure ||Transportation

## Title

Indian Railways privatisation explained, Will private participation improve railways' operations

## Why in news?

- To upgrade the country's railway system, the NDA government has laid the roadmap for long-term partnerships with the private sector.
- The government envisages around **Rs 50 lakh crore** of investment in rail projects up to 2030, but as per the Union Budget 2019 only a part of it can be financed through government coffers, and public-private partnerships are needed for faster development.

## Why private players

- Introducing new, modern trains requires heavy investment in rolling stock like coaches and engines, then there is the cost of operations, which includes electricity, manpower, etc.
- As it is, the running of passenger trains is a loss-making business for Indian Railways.
- This move envisages a total investment of around Rs 30,000 crore into the railway system through rolling stock and other expenditure, to be borne by the private players.
- The idea is to give passengers an option of superior train services without the Railways having to spend any money for it.

## How was the move rolled out?

- Last year, an empowered group of secretaries headed by NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant presided over this subject to expedite the process.

- Railway Board's Member (Engineering) and Member (Traffic) were co-opted in the committee as the two subjects are the domains of the two Board Members. The panel also looked into the re-development of railway stations through private participation.
- The government has identified 109 busy routes across India to run 151 private trains for 35 years.

## What kinds of companies are expected to run the trains?

- Any company with a minimum net worth of Rs 1165 crore in the last financial year can apply. This is different for different clusters depending on how much Railways estimates a cluster is worth.
- But the range is between Rs 1,165 crore and Rs 1,600 crore. There is no bar on the number of clusters a company can bid for. Companies can also bid as consortiums.

## What kind of service is expected from private trains?

- The trains have to be technologically superior to what Indian Railways has. They have to run at a maximum speed of 160 kmph.
- They can be either trainset (like the Vande Bharat) or hauled by locomotives.
- They have to satisfy all safety preconditions on the Indian network.
- They have to be certified by bona fide certifying agencies. Each train will have a minimum of 16 coaches and the maximum length of trains permitted on any route. They will undergo trials in India before commercial rollout.
- As for onboard services and tickets, the private operator has a free hand. It can decide the price of its services and what kind of add-on facilities it wants to provide. It has all the freedom to earn from fares as well as non-fare revenue. It will create its client base depending on its business model.

## What will Indian Railways get from the private players?

- In this business model, the private operator is supposed to share revenues with Railways. The qualifying company that agrees to share the maximum percentage of the yearly revenue with Railways will win the bid.
- Besides, Railways will also get a standard haulage charge, akin to track access charge on a per-km basis.

- This charge is levied as the cost of using railway terminals, physical transportation of the train, track maintenance, signaling, and overheads. The cost of the energy used by the trains will be paid in actual.

### What will Indian Railways get from the private players?

- Railways has also set certain key performance indicators for the private player, like punctuality, reliability, and maintenance of trains. In this, punctuality is the biggest parameter, carrying around 95 percent weightage.
- The lapse in maintaining the key performance indicators will invite a penalty, to be built into the haulage charges.

### What will Railways give to the private players?

- In return, Railways will be contractually bound to provide **“non-discriminatory access”** to private trains.
- As part of the deal, it will give land to private players to set up maintenance facilities for the trains, and let them use washing lines to wash, clean and periodically inspect the trains in its facilities. After completion of 35 years, the maintenance facilities will belong to Railways.
- The tickets to these trains will be booked through the current railway reservation system but the money will be kept in an escrow account.

### Are private players new in the railway system?

- Not in the freight business, where Indian Railways has been courting private players for a while now, through joint ventures and Special Purpose Vehicles etc.
- The container cargo business has been opened up for private players to the extent that they can decide their rolling stock and even develop their business models. But the passenger train operations have always been a government monopoly.

### Is this privatisation of Indian Railways?

- Both the Opposition as well as Railway unions have opposed this move, alleging it was the precursor to privatising the railway system.
- Defending the move, Chairman Railway Board VK Yadav has called this a public-private partnership.

### Recommendations of the Bibek Debroy Committee

- **Transition to commercial accounting:** The process of accounting in Indian Railways is very complicated.
  - The financial statements of Indian Railways need to be re-drawn, consistent with principles and norms nationally and internationally accepted.
- **The non-core function of railways must be privatized:** These activities include running hospitals and schools, catering, real estate development, including housing, construction and maintenance of infrastructure, manufacturing locomotives, coaches, wagons, and their parts.
- **Expansion of Indian Railways Manufacturing Company:** According to Debroy, wagons are already produced by the private sector. Coaches and locomotives could follow. Unless they are freed from 59 their constraints, the existing production units will be unable to face this competition.
- **Encouraging private entry:** Private entry into running both freight and passenger trains in competition with Indian railways should be allowed and private participation.
- **Independent regulator:** Shift regulatory responsibility from the government to an independent regulator as the private sector will only come in if there is fair and open access to railway infrastructure.

### Way forward

- **Competitive Pricing:** To make the passenger and freight segments competitive, the Indian Railways pricing model needs to be revisited. Tariffs should be competitive with road haulage costs.
- **Independent Regulator:** setting up an independent regulator to create a level playing field for private players will be critical.
  - Throughout this direction, the process of creating the Rail Development Authority needs to be speeded up, as it is already approved by the government.
- The recommendations of the **Bibek Debroy Committee** need to be followed, such as the expansion of the Indian Railways manufacturing company, the corporatization of core railway functions, etc.

### Mains model question

- “India should have a rail network that is not only efficient, reliable, and safe, but is also cost-effective and accessible”. Critically analyse the statement in



the context of privatisation of railways.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

### Notes

## Trump's "Buy American" medicine order Impact on Indian pharma

by Ankit Agrawal

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

### Relevance

GS 3 || Economy||External Sector ||Foreign Trade

### Title

Trump's executive order on Buy American First pharma, How it will impact Indian pharma sector?

### Why in news?

- Trump signs 'buy American first' pharma executive order, India says could strategically benefit

### What happened recently?

- US President Donald Trump has signed an order aiming to boost domestic production of "essential medicines" and "**critical**" drug inputs.
- Since India is one of the largest overseas suppliers of medicines to the US

### What is the order?

- The US President on Thursday directed each executive department and agency involved in medicine procurement to identify **vulnerabilities in supply chains** for essential drugs.
- The order mandates the creation of a list of essential medical products and directs the fast-tracking of regulatory clearances for domestic producers.
- Federal agencies are to consider a "variety" of actions to increase their procurement of such products and their critical ingredients from domestic sources,
- While also protecting the country's service members, veterans and their families from increases in drug prices.
- They also have to ensure that the measures they implement do not interfere with America's ability to respond to the Covid-19 outbreak.

### What led to bringing the order?

- The US, like most countries, is **dependent on countries like China** and India for critical products like medicines.
- This dependence put the Trump administration in a tight spot during the pandemic, which highlighted the extent of their presence in global supply chains.
- For instance, when China's Hubei province went into lockdown earlier this year, it strained India's supply of certain **critical medicines, including paracetamol, to the world.**
- At that time, India restricted exports of **13 critical key ingredients**, ranging from essential antibiotics to vitamins, as well as the medicines made from these.
- This is because India is **heavily dependent on China** for these ingredients and wanted to safeguard its own domestic supply until Hubei's lockdown was lifted.
- When Trump began touting hydroxychloroquine as a 'miracle' in Covid-19 treatment, India was found to be the largest supplier.
- Trump in April held calls with Prime Minister to release stocks of this drug to the US and, at one point even threatened retaliatory action if restrictions were not lifted
- Like India, the US seems to have realised the need to maintain domestic capacities of essential medicines.

### Importance of US for Indian pharma industry:

- The US is the largest market for India's pharmaceutical products.
- It is said that every third pill sold in America is made in India.
- According to the **Pharmaceutical Export Promotion Council of India (PHARMEXCIL)** India's pharmaceutical exports to the US are ex-factory valued at around \$6 billion.
- Its generic drugs are popular in the US due to their low cost, which makes them more affordable.

### Way ahead

- Trump's order does not specify any one country, though industry executives and government officials here claim it will mainly target China.
- Several experts tracking India's pharmaceuticals industry feel the move could also be postured by Trump before the presidential election in November.

- In the short term, the order is not likely to impact Indian pharmaceutical firms.
- A major reason is that Indian drugs are "largely" not involved in US public procurement processes.
- **The USA mainly involves the US, EU and other members in public procurement processes.**
- Also the order will not apply in cases where procuring domestic essential medicines will bring costs for the agency up over 25%. Nor does it apply in cases where there are no sufficient domestic alternatives.

### Can the step taken be related to rising protectionism in the world or Globalisation on the retreat?? Protectionism:

- **Protectionism in economics is the economic policy** of limiting trade between States (countries) by measures such as tariffs on imported products, restrictive quotas, and a number of other government regulations. Protectionist policies shield the manufacturers, companies and employees in a country from foreign competition in the import-competing market.
- Such policies, according to the advocates, will combat unfair trade practices, allowing for equal competition between domestically manufactured products and goods and services. WTO rules require countries to use **protectionism tactics but in a restricted and precise way.**
- **Some of the most popular protectionist policies include:** Tariffs, Quotas, Exchange controls, Export subsidies, Exchange Rates, Health and safety standards

### Protectionism and Deglobalisation

- we are in the period of **global financial crisis** due to C-ovid-19 lockdown all over, While in the pre-crisis period open markets played a pivotal role in **triggering growth and job creation** on a global scale, the recent global economic downturn has resulted in an enhanced recourse to measures that can be described as "protectionist"
- This has triggered **trade-restrictive measures.** The majority of restrictive measures imposed are anti-dumping acts, with most investigations concentrated in sectors such as metals (especially steel) and chemicals.
- **Indian anti-dumping duties** have also been levied on some steel products to protect domestic players from cheap imports. These are also anti-dumping

measures. In response Japan has taken India to the dispute settlement scheme of the World Trade Organization (WTO). West's declining GDP growth has given way to protectionist sentiments that encourage job-saving domestic development.

- A few months back, President Donald Trump described India as "the tariff king", accusing it of imposing "tremendously high" tariffs on American products.
- When higher tariffs are supplemented by higher current account deficit and fall in rupee, they reinforce a growing trend of protectionism.
- **Will be hardest hit:** A recent OECD report warned that **India, Australia and China would be the biggest losers in terms of per-capita income** growth if the current wave of trade protectionism escalates and slows down global growth.

### Pros and cons:

- The initiatives are reflective of a decline in support for globalization and free trade by the Indian government.
- Protectionist measures are justified on the basis that they will help domestic firms develop into competitors that are competitive.
- Yet the truth is that the domestic economy doesn't benefit from protectionism.
- Instead it allows domestic producers to be inefficient
- This is likely to damage exports, make domestic products more costly and that the advantages that increased competition can bring to consumers.
- And protectionism is likely to only have a detrimental impact on the ability of the industry to compete internationally in the long term

### Conclusion:

- In the time of global crisis where everyone has to be more cautious towards growth of their own nation it is somewhere making the nation look protectionist. We live in a world where economic ties between the countries play a very important role in the economy of the country. globalization not only binds the country worldwide together but brings opportunities for each other. step taken by Trump, however, some are cautious about possible larger consequences. There are other bills being worked on which will mandate CMS (the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services) to buy local. That is a very large segment & will have a huge impact on Indian pharma industry.

### Mains oriented question:

- Trump's buy American medicine order does not specify any one country, though industry executives and government officials here claim it will mainly target China, why is it said so? Explain.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

### Notes



# Gandhian Model of Self-Reliance

by Rahul Saigaonker

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

## Relevance

GS 3 || Economy || Introduction to Economics || Sectors of Economy

## Title

Gandhian Model of Self Reliant India - How Gandhi's ideas are relevant for Atma Nirbhar Bharat?

## Why in news?

- Modi's idea of self-reliant India same as Gandhi's

## Background

- In the Indian context, self-reliance should not mean divorcing international trade.
- **The modern-day agenda** of Aatma Nirbhar Bharat comes with a tag line that reads 'tough times require tough decisions'. And that said, the entire schema of developing a self-reliant nation with a package sum amounting to 10% of the country's GDP, would rest on the five pillars of Economy, Infrastructure, System, Demography and Demand.
- **India will have to seriously engage** with the region and the world, but at the same time strengthen its own domestic industry by streamlining the governance system and go far beyond mere amendments and announcements.
- **Swadeshi** does not and should not be interpreted as isolation. M.K. Gandhi's Swadeshi movement and self-reliance were two sides of the same coin that would find currency in a globalised world.

## Understanding Atmanirbhar Bharat:

- PM Focused on the themes of "Aatma Nirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India)", "Vocal for local" and "Make in India to Make for World amid Covid-19"
- Atmanirbhar Bharat is the vision of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi of making India a self-reliant nation

- The first mention of this came in the form of the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan' or 'Self-Reliant India Mission' during the announcement of the coronavirus pandemic related economic package
- Atmanirbhar means to promote and give preference to indigenous products and ensuring that these products match their importer counterparts in cost and quality.
- **First Approach towards Atma Nirbhar:** MoD's recent announcement to gradually ban imports of 101 defence items looks in harmony with the first approach. MoD wants to achieve self reliance in the defence sector by replacing imported products with domestically manufactured products.
  - **Although imports of these systems will be banned,** imports of their **critical subsystems will go on.** Indian defence industry will make systems based on imported sub systems and parts
  - **Example of First Approach is HAL Tejas:** Our present demand of a light combat aircraft like Tejas is limited. We want only 100 such fighter aircraft currently. But in the process of making an indigenous fighter aircraft we invested a huge amount of resources over the last four decades. And still after so much investment of time and money the light fighter is nowhere near complete indigenisation
  - Almost 70% of the aircraft's systems still need to be imported. Tejas LCA is powered by an imported General Electric 85kN F404-GE IN20 turbofan engine. RADAR used in Tejas is imported from Israel.
  - **Problems with First Approach:** Indigenization of a defence product **doesn't happen in one five-year election cycle.** It could take two or three of the election cycles before we see real results. Technical advancement in any sector requires decades of research and development. In addition to this, it demands huge investment in setting up manufacturing facilities for production of these products.
- **Second Approach:** In the 1980s India opted for the second approach. India permitted its PSUs to have a joint venture with foreign companies to acquire technical knowhow and global managerial skills. Within two decades these joint ventures started mass production of low cost high quality products.
  - **Example of Second Approach is Maruti Suzuki:** At first, Maruti Suzuki was mainly an importer of cars. 10 years later it had produced its millionth vehicle, a low cost and high quality product for Indian consumers. Maruti assembled the vehicle and left the issue of indigenisation to its vendors who regulated it strictly on issues of quality and cost control.
  - **World Class Industrial Managers:** Suzuki began as a minority partner in the PSU. At that time PSU

was led by administrators appointed by the government. Managerial skills and work ethics adopted by Suzuki changed these babus into world class industrial managers

• **Second Approach in Present Scenario:** Secretary, defence production should be eased out of his role as a nominated director in the boards of the various defence PSUs. The government should strategically divest from the DPSUs and allow the private sector much greater room.

Defence-grade products, which are not needed in the kind of numbers that private industry can support, should be imported.

• **Recent Success of Second Approach in Other Sectors:** Within days of Centre's 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' initiative - Two leading brands Samsung and OnePlus have decided to locally manufacture most of their televisions in India the country's largest television brand Samsung will now make in India almost 85-90% of the televisions they sell in the country

► In coming years, success of Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan will depend on the approach opted by the Indian government

### Gandhian View of Self-sufficient Village Economy

► India lives in villages. Naturally the development of the country depends on the development of villages. All the goods and services necessary for the village members should be grown within the village.

► **Self-contained republic:** In a word, every village should be a self-contained republic. If every village distributes its surplus produce to the poor villagers then there will not be the problem of poverty and starvation in the rural areas. Only this can help eradicating poverty and thus people can be happy and self-reliant. Agricultural sector alone cannot solve the problem of rural poverty and unemployment.

► **Growth of the rural industries:** That's why Gandhi gives stress on the growth of the rural industries like khadi, handlooms, sericulture and handicrafts. He opines that large-scale industries make people lazy and help concentration of wealth in the hands of few. On the contrary, rural industries are based on family labour and required less amount of capital.

► **Raw materials** are also collected from local markets and the goods thus produced are sold in the local markets. Therefore there is no problem of production and market. Large scale production creates conflicts between labour and capital. Here capital takes upper hand over labour. Such conflicts may not occur in the case of rural industries.

► **Rural industries** are the symbols of unity and equality. In India large-scale industries have been concentrated in a few big cities like Mumbai, Kolkata, Ahmedabad, Jamshedpur etc. Rural areas are without big industries. Concentration of these industries in few cities has led to a number of problems.

### Relevance of M. K. Gandhi's ideals of self-sufficient village economy

► **Economic Development** of a country depends on the proper utilization of resources (both human and non-human). India, at the time of her independence, had an economy with a low level of economic and technological development, low per capita income, slow pace of development of economic and social institutions and outdated methods of production techniques. Our objective then was to attain and accelerate the economic development of the country.

► **Gandhian approach** has always said about voluntary wants, the need for self-sufficient village communities and the issues relating to better balance between man and nature. Gandhi wanted to have an ideal society of his own imagination and his economic ideas are a part and parcel of his philosophical and sociological ideas. He was interested in the growth of human beings and more significantly the growth of the deprived and underprivileged group of people.

► **Maximization of social welfare:** He was, in fact, the supporter of the maximization of social welfare and he had a belief that the growth of an economy relied on the development of the totality of human personality. According to him, an increase in personal income is an indication of the growth of national income. But the opposite may not be true i.e. the growth of national income may not always benefit every man in society.

### Gandhian Model of Economy

► Poorna Swaraj's Gandhian dream is becoming relevant in that sense.

► According to Poorna Swaraj's Gandhian theory, people in India's villages need economic and social freedom if they are to become completely independent.

► Gandhi believed that the economy should meet human needs, rather than fodder for GDP by humans. Big Gandhian economic concepts that can be implemented in the Indian economy:

► **Enabling Gram Swaraj:** According to Gandhi, the means for economic development must be the advancement of citizens and local communities.

- **Concept of Trusteeship:** Gandhi's notion of trusteeship requires a non-possession. This aims to dispose individuals of their property and profits beyond their requirements so as to recognize the economic wellbeing of the less able
- According to him, wealth is pleasant, but rich people should only be stewards of the wealth of a society and not owners of it.
- **Creation of cooperatives:** the fragmentation of workers' owners must be minimized by developing new models of cooperative capitalist enterprises where workers, not remote capitalists, or the state, own the enterprises.
- **Focus of Sarvodaya:** The government must focus on the well-being of the poorest and weakest member of society

### Some example of Atma Nirbhar Bharat

- **FPO/ Farmer Groups:** Formation of formal farmer groups of Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) will help connect the market in a better way and reach consumers without hassles resulting in increased value realization of their produce. One success story of FPO is Surya Farmers Producers Company Limited (SFPCL) incorporated in the year 2015 with membership of 538 small and marginal farmers'.
- **Devagiri Kisan Agro Products Producer Company Ltd (DKAPPCO),** Paralakhemundi, Odisha: DKAPPCO incorporated on September 11, 2017. DKAPPCO aggregated 100 MT cashews from members and non-members, by provided logistics & other handling support
- **Mahakaushal Progressive Farmers Self Reliant Producer Company Ltd (MPFSRPCL), Seoni, Madhya Pradesh**
- Rahu village in Maharashtra is the only village in the two blocks of Melghat that has also been harvesting bamboo. Almost all villagers and the needy from neighbouring villages participate in the harvest of bamboo, and this activity provides employment to hundreds in the area.
- Hiware Bazar, a village in Maharashtra's drought-prone Ahmednagar district, was sliding into an abyss after degrading its environment. But in less than a decade it turned itself around into one of the most prosperous villages of the country. There was no magic wand, just common sense. It used funds from government schemes, to regenerate its natural resources--forests, watershed and soil--led by a strong village body. It had a role model in the district - Ralegan Siddhi, the village Anna Hazare turned around

### Conclusions

- Gandhi is of the view that full employment of human resources is the basic need of a country. It is true that national income will increase if each and every person (whether skilled or unskilled) is employed fully. This cannot be possible only with the development of large-scale industries because of their labour-saving nature. Agricultural sector too cannot solve the problem of unemployment or underemployment due to its seasonal nature. Therefore mechanization and large scale production cannot provide the solution to the problem of poverty and unemployment. Self-sufficient village economy is an alternative solution and in this context the role of institutions in the rural sector like the village panchayat and rural multipurpose co-operative can play a vital role. We cite here an example of a multipurpose co-operative society located at Sridharpur village of Burdwan district of West Bengal. The society is formed with unlimited liability.

### Mains oriented question

- India will have to seriously engage with the region and the world, but at the same time strengthen its own domestic industry by streamlining the governance system and go far beyond mere amendments and announcements. Comment.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

## NHAI plans to build 23 new expressways in 5 years

by Ankit Agrawal

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

### Relevance

GS 3||Economy||Infrastructure|| Transportation

### Title

NHAI plans to build 23 new expressways in five years, Know all about economic corridors across India

### Why in news?

- The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), the nodal agency to build highways, plans to construct 23 new expressways and economic corridors across the country.

### Details

- As per a status report on highways works prepared by the NHAI, in the next five years total of 7,800 km expressways will be built with the investment of Rs 3.3 lakh crore.
- This network of expressways is spread across the country connecting-
  - **Surat, Solapur, Lucknow, Vizag, Chennai, Bengaluru, Vijayawada, Raipur, Kota, Kharagpur, and Siliguri.**
  - Of the proposed total 23 expressways and economic corridors,
    - 4 will be completed by 2023,
    - 10 will be 2024
    - 9 will be completed by 2025.

### Main aim

- The move is aimed at ensuring the seamless movement of people and cargo, including heavy vehicles.
- Currently, cargo vehicles in India cover about 400 km per day, which is at least 50% less than the global standard.
- There is scope to reduce the cost and time by up to 50%.

### Why this is important?

- The massive development of new expressways is a major departure from the conventional mode of widening the existing highways.

### Funding

- To ensure there is no fund crunch, NHAI will set up Special Purpose vehicles (SPVs) to fund these projects.
- Since the SPV will be fully owned by NHAI, it would be easy to get the loan at a cheaper rate from financial institutions.
- SPV for Delhi-Mumbai expressway has already been given the go-ahead.

### Delhi –Mumbai expressway

- Delhi –Mumbai greenfield expressway is being developed with an 8-lane configuration
- With provision to expand to 12-lanes in the future, with a design speed of 120 km/hr.
- A network of 75-way side amenities has also been planned on either side of the expressways at an interval of 50 km. 16-08-2020

### Recovery

- The investment made in the project would be recovered from toll collections, which includes auctioning the tolling right for **15-20 years** to a private entity to get the money upfront.
- This model is known as Toll Operate and Transfer (TOT).
- "If this model becomes successful, it will adopt this for other major highway projects.
- NHAI was created through the promulgation of the National Highways Authority of India Act, 1988.
- In February 1995, NHAI came into operations and was formally made an autonomous body under the Ministry of road transport.
- It is responsible for the development, maintenance, and management of National Highways.

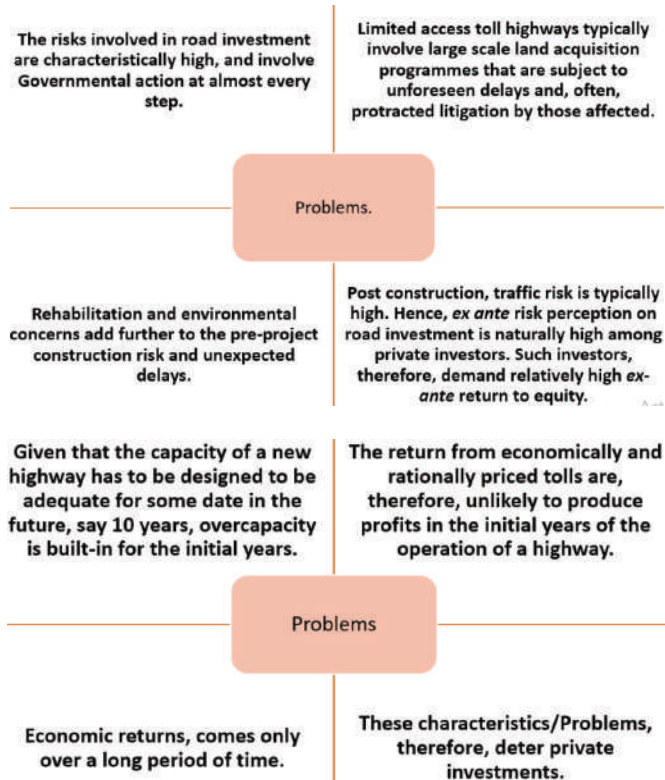
### Road transport of India

- Recently, the **National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)** completed the construction of 3,979 km of national highways in the financial Year 2019-20.



- **This is the highest ever highway construction** achieved in a financial year by NHAI.
- The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has planned an ambitious Bharatmala Pariyojana highway development program which includes the development of some 65,000 km of national highways.
- Implementation of 34,800 km of national highways in 5 years (from 2017 to 2022) was approved under Phase-I of Bharatmala Pariyojana.
- Under Bharatmala Pariyojana Phase-I NHAI has approved the construction of around 27,500 km of national highways.

### Issues with road development in India



### Bharatmala Project

- It's a highway sector umbrella program that focuses on maximizing freight and passenger movement capacity around the country by bridging vital infrastructure gaps through successful interventions.
- Efficient initiatives include building Economic Corridors, Inter Highways, and Feeder Routes, National Highway Capacity Development, Border and International Connectivity Roads, Coastal and Port Connectivity Roads, and Green-field Expressways.

### Why Infrastructure Development is necessary?

- For a massive country such as India, improvement in infrastructure is a necessity.
- **The target of 5 trillion economy.**
- Infrastructure development will generate growth, employment, and pull people out of poverty.
- Infrastructure development will benefit the Government's Ease of Doing Business.
- Developing Renewable Energy sector will help in mitigating climate
- Infrastructure investments can also help improve peace and security by enabling, sustaining, and enhancing societal living conditions.

### Public-Private Partnership Model

- PPP is an arrangement between the government and the private sector for the provision of public assets and/or public services. Public-private partnerships allow large-scale government projects, such as roads, bridges, or hospitals, to be completed with private funding.
- In this type of partnership, investments are undertaken by the private sector entity, for a specified period.
- These partnerships work well when private sector technology and innovation combine with public sector incentives to complete work on time and within budget.
- As PPP involves full retention of responsibility by the government for providing the services, it doesn't amount to privatization.
- There is a well-defined allocation of risk between the private sector and the public entity.

### National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)

- NHAI was set up under the **NHAI Act, 1988**.  
Objective: It has been entrusted with the **National**
- **Highways Development Project**, along with other minor projects **for development, maintenance, and management**.
- **National Highways Development Project (NHDP)** is a project to upgrade, rehabilitate, and widen major **highways** in India to a higher standard. The project was started in 1998.
- **Vision:** To meet the nation's need for the provision

and **maintenance of National Highways network to global standards and to meet user's expectations** in the most time-bound and cost-effective manner and **promote economic well being** and quality of life of the people.

### Way forward

- Infrastructure is a key driver of the overall development of the Indian economy. It is seen that investments in infrastructure equal to **1% of GDP** will result in GDP growth of at least 2% as infrastructure has a “multiplier effect” on economic growth across sectors.
- The recent headway made in developing transport infrastructure will prove to be the biggest enabler for growth. An efficient infrastructure is the biggest enabler for growth.
- India's growth story should no longer be impeded by a lack of infrastructure, and the fruits of this growth should reach everyone in the remotest part of the country.

### Mains model question

- Critically examine the complementary and competitive character of the Indian rail routes and the road network



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

### Notes

## Locust attacks in India How to solve it?

by Rahul Saigaonker

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

### Relevance

GS 3 || Economy || Agriculture || Food Security

### Title

Locust Attacks in India - What are desert locusts? How can we control locust swarms?

### Why in news?

- As India struggles to contain the **Covid-19 pandemic**, it faces a new challenge. Several parts of the country have experienced heavy **infestations of locusts** – an insect that devours crops and foliage, often leaving devastation in its wake.
- It is said to be **the worst attack in 26 years**. The species attacking are **desert locusts**.

### Details

- The year 2020 has been a year of disasters for India. India is already grappling the Covid-19 pandemic but to add to it we have seen several other disasters like **Cyclone Amphan, Vizag Styrene gas leak disaster**, etc.
- One among such issues is the worst desert locust attacks. Swarms of desert locusts entered western India from Pakistan and destroyed crops in many states such as **Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh (UP), Madhya Pradesh**.

### Desert locust

- **Desert locusts (Schistocerca gregaria)**, which belong to the family of grasshoppers, normally live and breed in semi-arid or desert regions. For laying eggs, they require bare ground, which is rarely found in areas with dense vegetation.

### Factors led to their sudden and early growth this year

- These locusts typically breed along the eastern coast of Africa, a region known as the Horn of Africa, in the dry areas around **Ethiopia, Somalia, Eritrea**. Other breeding grounds are the neighboring regions of Asia in **Yemen, Oman, southern Iran**, and in the provinces of **Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in Pakistan**.
- Many of these areas received unusually good rains in March and April which resulted in the creation of large-scale breeding and hopper. These locusts began arriving in Rajasthan about April's 1st fortnight, well ahead of usual July-October.
- **Cyclonic storms Mekunu and Luban** had struck **Oman and Yemen** respectively that year. Heavy rains had transformed uninhabited desert tracts into a large lake where the locust swarms breed.
- Apart from the food search, **their movement has been aided by westerly winds that were**, this time, further strengthened by the low-pressure area created by **Cyclone Amphan in the Bay of Bengal**. **Locusts are known to be passive flyers and generally follow the wind. But they do not take off in very strong windy conditions.**

### Impact of locust Attack

- **Affecting Food Security:** If their breeding is coterminous with that of the Kharif crop, then it could well have a detrimental effect on rice, maize, and sorghum.
- **Affecting Farmers:** This means that locusts not only devour valuable standing crops but can also devastate the livelihoods of farmers and those associated with the agricultural supply chain.
- **Affecting Urban Areas:** Due to the recent harvest of Rabi crops, there were no crops in the field, the desert locusts have been invading green spaces in urban areas
- Though locusts are unlikely to be a major threat in urban centres, still they can disrupt day-to-day life. Moreover, the effects of locust in urban areas may aggravate, as the national lockdown has made the availability and transportation of pesticide and labour difficult

### Popular method

- Currently, the most commonly used control is insecticide. Sprayed from land or aerial vehicles, whole swarms can be targeted in relatively short periods.
- Swarms of locusts are being scared away by the district administration in Panna using police sirens. Farmers in Budhni and Nasrullaganj areas of Madhya Pradesh's Sehore district have been beating utensils in a bid to drive away locusts.

### A Possible solution?

- A new study published in Nature documents a significant breakthrough.
- Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing has identified a specific chemical substance, or pheromone, released by the migratory locust that attracts others.
- The migratory locust is a different species than the desert locust which made headlines, but it is a similarly destructive pest and experts believe that this discovery will be directly relevant to developing new methods to stave off both species.
- The study found that all the locusts examined solitary and gregarious, young and old, male and female, in the lab and the field were attracted to a pheromone known as 4-vinylanisole or 4VA.
- The chemical is released mainly by locusts in a group, and the more locusts they stuck together in a cage, the more each bug released.
- Individual locusts did not emit 4VA on their own but when just four or five solitary locusts came together, they began to produce the pheromone.

### How can 4VA help?

- Measure 4VA emissions to monitor and predict swarms.
- Use 4VA spray to lure the bugs into a concentrated area where they could be killed with pesticides. Spray another molecule X, which can prevent the receptor locusts from finding the pheromone.
- Go for gene editing and create mutant locusts that lack the special receptor for 4VA, breed them and release into the wild.

### Way forward

- **Immediate Measure:** Proactive control of locust attack by aerial spraying of the optimum quantity of insecticides in all potential breeding sites, along with continuous monitoring of the crops during the ensuing Kharif season, is required.

- **Need for Systemic Locust Study:** The Indian Agricultural Research Council (ICAR) has acknowledged that there has been little "**systematic research**" on desert locusts since the 1990s and the current invasion is a wake-up call to revive the program.
- **Regional Cooperation:** There is a need for collective regional efforts, as these locusts usually breed in the dry areas of Eastern Africa (especially Horn of Africa) and the Arabian peninsula and enter finally to India.
- **Strengthening Research Framework for Climate Change:** Due to the emergence of new dimensions of climate change, India must put in more funds to predict the course of the present global environmental changes to understand the sources, consequences, and formulate national responses.

### Mains model question

- India has a desert locust problem this year; discuss the impact of swarms of desert locust on agriculture and its linkages with climate change.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)



## Bank Frauds more than double in FY20

by Ankit Agrawal

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

### Relevance

GS 3||Economy||Banking & Financial Sector||NPA

### Title

Bank Frauds in India - RBI Annual Report says Bank Frauds have double in FY20 to ₹1.85 trillion

### Why in news?

- Frauds reported by banks of **₹100,000 and above** have more than doubled in value to **₹1.85 trillion in FY20**, with the number of such cases **increasing 28%** in the same period, the Reserve Bank of India's annual report showed.

### The fraud took place?

- The date of occurrence of these frauds is spread over several previous years and are accounted for in the financial year when they are reported.
- Banks, on an average, took two years to detect fraud after it had occurred.
- The delay was even greater for large frauds of **100 crores** and above with an average lag of **5 years**.
- A majority of these frauds are in loan portfolios of banks, both in terms of number and value.
- Frauds in loans constituted 98% of the total frauds or at **1.82 trillion**.

### Top 50 frauds

- There was a concentration of large value frauds.
- The top 50 credit-related frauds constituting 76% of the total amount reported as frauds during 2019-20.

### Public sector banks

- Public sector banks accounted for **80% of the 1.85 trillion** reported as frauds in FY20.

- Followed by private sector banks at **18%**.

### What happens when banks declare a certain amount as a fraud?

- Once an account is declared a fraud, Banks need to set aside 100% of the outstanding loans as provisions, Either in one go or over four quarters.

### Why do frauds take place more at PSBs?

- Big loan advance frauds happen as bank officials collude with borrowers and sometimes even with officials of third parties such as advocates and chartered accountants.
- Post loan sanction, the monitoring is weaker than at private banks due to lack of expertise and modern tech resources.
- Officers retire before they can be booked for fraud.
- Weak selection process and lower pay than at private banks are among key reasons.
- PSB staff are not offered appropriate incentives to prevent or detect frauds early.

### What RBI says on these frauds?

- The central bank has been trying to reduce the gap between the occurrence of fraud and its reporting.
- While the frauds framework focuses on prevention, early detection, and prompt reporting,
- The average lag in the detection of frauds remains long.

### The various reason behind these frauds

- **Poor banking governance-** Most frauds show that banks did not observe due diligence, both before and after disbursing loans. Poor level of checks and balances in the banking system is one of the reason.
- **Poor monitoring-** Lack of technology and fraud monitoring agencies to detect frauds makes the problem more complex. There is an absence of an effective mechanism to monitor the credit flow. Flawed risk-mitigation design, which creates an excessive focus on credit or market risks, but focuses less on operational risks also leading to more breaches.
- **Technological backwardness-** Excessive dependence on manual supervision, at both external and internal levels makes it impossible to manually control and supervise the sheer volume of transactions.

- **Immoral behaviour-** The disintegrating moral fibre of Indian businessmen, bankers, and other white-collar professionals, nepotism in internal committees of banks, unnecessary political interventions lead to increased fraud.
- **Political interference-** The political pulls and pressures on investigating agencies, and long-drawn processes of the legal system act less as a deterrent.

### Impact of such frauds

- This unhealthy development of rising fraudulent activities afflicting the banking sector impinges their credibility adversely.
- Frauds add to **Non-performing Assets** and lead to loss of banks and the economy. The Gross NPAs to Gross Advances Ratio has shown a rising trend over the years
- Frauds and fraudulent activities wreak severe financial dilemmas on banks and their clients, as well as cause a significant reduction in the quantum of money accessible for economic development. Frauds have a significant impact on the profitability of the Indian banking sector. The profitability of banks is on a steady decline which needs to be an eye-opener as it poses a threat to the economy.

### Reasons for the delay in frauds detection

- Weak implementation of early warning signals (EWS) by banks.
- Non-detection of EWS during internal audits.
- Non-cooperation of borrowers during forensic audits.
- Inconclusive audit reports.
- Lack of decision making in joint lenders' meetings
- According to RBI, The EWS mechanism is getting revamped alongside the strengthening of the concurrent audit function, With timely and conclusive forensic audits of borrower accounts under scrutiny.

### The need of governance reforms and other measures

- Banking governance need an overhaul with proper checks and balance in places. Indian banks need significant improvements in operation and governance standards to work effectively, by constantly working on the loopholes so that the banking sector can contribute more to the growth of the economy.

- Accountability needs to be established among the bank managers and other administrators.
- While it may not be probable for banks to conduct their operations in a zero fraud milieu, proactive measures, such as the conduct of risk assessment of policies and procedures can aid banks to circumvent their risk of contingent losses resulting from frauds.
- The data analysis technology can be leveraged by banks to detect frauds at the incipient stage itself and reduce their loss causing impact significantly.
- Law enforcement agencies should work in such a way that they don't end up creating an environment of fear, affecting the flow of credit to productive sectors.
- Apart from improving capabilities in the banking system, accountability of third-party service providers such as auditors and lawyers should also be fixed.
- Assessment of working capital limit should be done before the **flow of credit**.
- Awareness should be created about loopholes, consequences of bypassing procedural aspects and benchmarks should be provided for evaluating the genuineness of various essential documents.
- The investigation should be done to find out the trail of diversion of funds and whether any money has been remitted abroad.
- The Banks should pay the required attention to the area of internal control system and the fraud prevention measures to ensure compliance of instructions issued by them from time to time.

### Bank frauds and rise in last decade

- Financial Stability Report of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) shows, that the Indian banking system reported about 6,500 instances of fraud involving over ₹30,000 crore in 2017-18.
- Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) analysed the top 100 banking frauds in different sectors and has also suggested some measures that will help avoid such unethical activities in the future.
- Banking frauds attracted national attention when the Punjab National Bank reported earlier this year that it had been defrauded by companies related to jeweller Nirav Modi and Mehul Choksi.
- In 2014, Vijay Mallya was also declared a wilful defaulter by Union Bank of India, following which other banks such as SBI and PNB followed suit.

### Advisory Board for Banking Frauds -ABBF

- In this regard, it had set up the **advisory board for banking frauds (ABBF)** in consultation with the CVC.
- The ABBF functions as the first level of examination of all large value fraud cases before above Rs.50 crores recommendations or references are made to the investigating agencies by public sector banks.

### Malegam committee

- The decision follows the recommendation by an **R-BI-constituted** expert committee on NPA and frauds headed by YH Malegamin 2018.

### Way forward

- It is evident that the post-liberalization era has showered new colours of growth upon the Indian banking sector but simultaneously it has also posed some serious challenges. One of them being a rise in frauds and NPAs. Thus proper measures should be taken beforehand to stop such frauds in future and prevent a crisis in banks.

### Mains model question

- What are various reasons for the rise in cases of bank frauds in last decade in India? Also discuss the need of bringing reforms in banking governance and impact of such frauds.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

### Notes

## Sugarcane FRP hiked by Rs 10/quintal

by Rahul Saigaonker

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

### Relevance

GS 3|| Economy|| Agriculture|| Agricultural Subsidies

### Title

Cabinet approves increase in sugarcane FRP by Rs 10 per quintal - Difference in MSP & FRP

### Why in news?

- The government has hiked the **Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP)** of sugarcane to **Rs 285 per quintal** for the sugar season 2020-21.

### Details

- The decision to increase the Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) of sugarcane for 2020-21 marketing year (October-September) was taken in the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) held here.
- The FRP for 2020-21 sugar season (October 2020 –September 2021), which will be payable by sugar mills to sugarcane farmers is 285/quintal, is Rs 10 higher than the current rate of Rs 275/quintal.
- It is estimated that the decision will benefit around 1 crore farmers.

### MSP & FRP

- Minimum Support Price MSP/FRP is a form of market intervention by the Government of India to insure agricultural producers against any sharp fall in farm prices.
- The MSP/FRP are announced by the GOI at the beginning of the sowing season for certain crops based on the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP).
- Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CAC-

P) was established in 1965 as the Agricultural Prices Commission. It is an attached office of the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare.

- In formulating the recommendations of MSP, the Commission takes into account many factors
  - Cost of production
  - Changes in input prices
  - Subsidy
  - Trends in market prices
  - Demand and supply
  - Inter-crop price parity
  - Effect on the cost of living
  - International price situation etc

### Fair and Remunerative Price

- The pricing of sugarcane is governed by the statutory provisions of the Sugarcane (Control) Order, 1966 issued under the Essential Commodities Act (ECA), 1955.
- Before the 2009-10 sugar season, the Central Government was fixing the Statutory Minimum Price (SMP) of sugarcane, and farmers were entitled to share profits of a **sugar mill on a 50:50 basis**.

### Fair and Remunerative Price

- Since 2010, on the recommendation of the Rangarajan committee, FRP was introduced. Now the CACP decides FRP giving due statutory factors listed in the Control Order, which are
  - the cost of production of sugarcane
  - the return to the grower from alternative crops
  - the general trend of prices of agricultural commodities
  - the availability of sugar
  - the price of sugar
  - the recovery rate of sugar from sugarcane;
  - the realization made from the sale of by-products
  - Reasonable margins for growers of sugarcane on account of risk.

### The Response

- Swabhimani Shetkari Sanghatana (SSS) has described the decision as **eyewash**.
- Farmers across the country have been demanding a rise of **Rs 300 per tonne**.
- The FRP was last increased three years ago, but the prices of all the inputs have gone up since then.



## Problems of the Sugar Industry

### ► Uncertain Production Output

- Sugarcane has to compete with several other food crops like cotton, oilseeds, rice, etc. This affects the supply of sugarcane to the mills and the production of sugar also varies from year to year causing fluctuations in prices leading to losses in times of excess production due to low prices.

### ► Low Yield of Sugarcane

- India's yield per hectare is extremely low as compared to some of the major sugarcane producing countries of the world. For example, India's yield is only 64.5 tonnes/hectare as compared to 90 tonnes in Java and 121 tonnes in Hawaii.

### ► Short crushing season

- Sugar production is a seasonal industry with a short crushing season varying normally from 4 to 7 months in a year.
- It causes financial loss and seasonal employment for workers and a lack of full utilization of sugar mills.

### ► The low Sugar recovery rate

- The average rate of recovery of sugar from sugarcane in India is less than ten percent which is quite low as compared to other major sugar-producing countries.

### ► High Production cost

- The high cost of sugarcane, inefficient technology, the uneconomic process of production, and heavy excise duty results in a high cost of manufacturing.
- Most of the sugar mills in India are of small size with a capacity of 1,000 to 1,500 tonnes per day thus fail to take advantage of economies of scale.

### ► Government policy and control

- The government has been controlling sugar prices through various policy interventions like export duty, the imposition of a stock limit on sugar mills, changes in meteorology rule, etc., to balance the supply-demand mismatch.
- But these controls have resulted in unremunerative sugar prices, increasing arrears for sugar mills and dues to be paid to sugarcane farmers.

## Government Initiative

- **Rangarajan committee (2012)** was set up to give recommendations on the regulation of the sugar industry. Its major recommendations

- Abolition of the quantitative controls on the export and import of sugar, these should be replaced by appropriate tariffs.
- Committee recommended no more outright bans on sugar exports.
- There should be no restrictions on the sale of by-products and prices should be market-determined. States should also undertake policy reform to allow mills to harness the power generated from bagasse.
- Remove the regulations on the release of non-levy sugar. Removal of these controls will improve the financial health of the sugar mills. This, in turn, will lead to timely payments to farmers and a reduction in cane arrears.
- Based on the report, Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) recommended a hybrid approach of fixing sugarcane prices, which involved fair and remunerative price (FRP).
- The year 2013-14 was a watershed for the sugar industry. The Central Government considered the recommendations of the committee headed by Dr. C. Rangarajan on de-regulation of sugar sector and decided to discontinue the system of levy obligations on mills for sugar produced after September, 2012 and abolished the regulated release mechanism on open market sale of sugar.

## Govt in Quandary?

- On one side they want the farmer's incomes to be doubled by **2022**. They are bringing a slew of measures including the latest **Rs 100 hike in FRP per tonne**.
- FRP rise would adversely affect the **financial health** of the sugar factories especially at times of low sugar prices.
- The FRPs are not market-based and are priced at artificially inflated levels by governments.
- **GOI solution**-Ethanol blending and increasing the price of Ethanol.
- Sugar expert PG Medhe has highlighted that the price of sugar in the retail market continues to be around Rs 30-38 per kg, Sugar factories are suffering losses of nearly Rs 4 per kg.

## International Experience

- If we look at Brazil which is the highest producer of Sugarcane.
- CONSECANA Price Paid for Growers- 70 BR to 100 BR

### Way forward

- The sector needs infusion of capital, but also policy measures and structural changes. Technological upgradation in age old mills especially in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar to improve efficiency in production.
- Major sugar producing States like Maharashtra and Karnataka have migrated to the progressive revenue-sharing formula other states should also introduce revenue-sharing formula to ensure farmers receive a share in the profits.
- When domestic production is likely to be in excess of domestic consumption government should encourage exports through policy changes.
- The production cost of sugar in India is one of the highest in the world. Intense research is required to increase the sugarcane production in the agricultural field and to introduce new technology of production efficiency in the sugar mills.

### Mains model question

- Discuss the issues with sugarcane farming in India and suggest a way forward?



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

### Notes

## V-shaped recovery of Indian Economy

by Siddhant

#UPSC #IAS

CII  
Confederation of Indian Industry



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

### Relevance

GS 3||Economy|| Banking & Financial Sector|| Money Market

### Title

Indian economy showing V-shaped recovery says CII, Shapes of economic recovery explained

### Why in news?

- A HEAT MAP based on state-wise Covid-19 data developed by the Department of Economic Affairs in the Union
- Finance Ministry reveals that Economic indicators including electricity consumption, e-way bill generation, and MNREGA work creation, are looking better in states with higher control over cases and recoveries.

### Electricity consumption

- Electricity consumption for the whole country recovered to 106 billion units in June, a sequential improvement from 103 billion units in May.
- Compared with the previous year, the strongest recoveries were seen in **Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, and Chhattisgarh**, according to the data.

### E-way bill generation

- The value of e-way bills, suggesting an improvement in intra and inter-state movements of goods, also picked up strongly in June over May across states.
- But the rate of year-on-year growth was weaker in states such as Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Delhi, and Haryana, which recorded a higher number of Covid-19 cases.

### MGNREGA work creation

- With reverse migration from urban to rural areas, work created under MGNREGA almost doubled on a year-on-year basis in June to reach 6,403 lakh person-days.
- Maharashtra, the biggest Covid-19 hotspot and destination migration state, however, recorded a fall in MGNREGA employment in June both on a YoY and sequential basis, partly due to intra-state migrant workers returning to their jobs in cities.

### Impact of reverse migration on states

- The top five migrants receiving states are Maharashtra, Delhi, Haryana, West Bengal, and Gujarat.
- The manufacturing firms in Delhi and Haryana are more susceptible to the reverse labour migration than the firms based out of Maharashtra and Gujarat. Two other economic indicators-GST collections and vehicle registrations were more of outliers, showing no direct correlation with states' performance on Covid-19 case recoveries.
- **Delhi, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka** were exceptions though with a strong pickup in vehicle registration in June on a sequential basis, the data showed.

### Solution

- India is facing a structural demand problem, one that predates the COVID-19 shock.
- This challenge has been exacerbated over the past few months as jobs have been lost and incomes have collapsed.

### But where is demand going to come from now?

- One option is to turn to those at the bottom of the pyramid who have a high marginal propensity to consume,
- By devising strategies that enhance productivity growth in the informal economy that allows for productivity increase in the informal sector increases the incomes of low-wage workers.
- Salaried jobs have taken the biggest sustained hit in the current Covid-19 induced lockdown.
- Salaried jobs were estimated at 86.1 million in 2019-20.
- This fell to 68.4 million in April 2020.
- By July 2020, their count had fallen further to 67.2 million. 17.7 million salaried jobs were lost in April 2020. An additional 0.1 million jobs were lost in May. Then, 3.9 million jobs were gained in June.

- But, 5 million jobs were lost in July So, total job losses between April & July were 18.9 million.

### Urban vs rural

- Urban India has more salaried jobs than rural India. Of the 86 million salaried jobs in India in 2019-20, 58 % were in urban India and 42% in rural India. As a result, the impact of the fall in salaried jobs is far greater in urban India than in rural India. 24-08-2020
- In terms of percent change between 2019-20 and July 2020, the fall in salaried jobs is almost uniform across rural and urban regions. The fall was **21.8%** in rural India and **22.2%** in urban India.
- Salaried jobs in urban India are likely to be the better-paying jobs, they offer better terms of engagement and also, are jobs that yield higher productivity compared to salaried jobs in rural India.
- Loss of these urban salaried jobs is therefore likely to have a particularly debilitating impact on the economy.

### About salaried jobs

- Salaried jobs are preferred forms of employment for most people.
- These jobs offer better terms of employment and also better wages.
- Households with salaried jobs are better placed to build savings and plan a sustained improvement in their standard of living.
- Such households are also better placed to borrow and service their borrowing because of the steady nature of their earnings.

### Status of salaried jobs in recent times

- In India, salaried jobs have stagnated in recent times.
- In 2017-18 they grew by 1.6% then in 2018-19 they grew by a meagre 0.1% before contracting by 1.8% in 2019-20.
- As a result, salaried jobs in 2019-20, at 86.1 million were lower than their level of 86.3 million in 2016-17.

### What about non-salaried jobs?

- Non-salaried forms of employment have increased from 317.6 million in 2019-20 to 325.6 million in July 2020.
- This implies a growth of nearly 8 million jobs or an increase of 2.5% in informal employment.
- While informal jobs have returned and even increased after being hit by the lockdown, formal jobs have not.

### Total job losses

- The CMIE estimated 121.5 million jobs were lost due to the COVID-19 lockdown in April.
- This loss narrowed down to 100.3 million in May and then 29.9 million in June.
- In July, 11 million people lost their jobs.

### Most affected?

Small traders, hawkers, and daily wage labourers were the worst hit by the lockdown in April.

- Of the 121.5 million jobs lost in that month, 91.2 million were among these.
- This category of employment accounted for about 32 % of the total employment but, it suffered 75% of the hit in April.
- The balance sheet grew about 30% to Rs 53.3 lakh crore in the fiscal year 2020, from Rs 41 lakh crore the year before.
- Assets = Liabilities + Owners Equity
- The increase on the asset side was due to an increase in domestic and foreign investments by 18.4% and 27.3%, respectively.
- Increase in loans and advances by 245.8% and an increase in gold by 52.9%.

### Asset side

- Foreign currency assets and gold constituted 71.25% of the RBI's total assets while domestic assets constituted the rest.

### Liability side

- On the liability side, the increase was due to an increase in notes issued, other liabilities and provisions, and deposits by 21.5 percent, 30.5 percent, and 53.7 percent, respectively.



### RBI'S Income

- The RBI's income for the year stood at Rs 1.5 lakh crore while expenditure stood at Rs 92,540 crore (inclusive of Rs 73,615 crore towards transfer to a contingency fund).
- The surplus of Rs 57,128 crore was transferred to the central government

### What caused GDP contraction?

- In any economy, the total demand for goods and services—that is the GDP—is generated from the four engines of growth.
- The biggest engine is consumption demand from private individuals like you.
- $GDP = C + I + G + NX$  01-09-2020
- Private Consumption accounted for 56.4% of all GDP.
- 2nd biggest engine is the demand generated by private sector businesses. It accounts for 32%.
- 3rd engine is the demand for goods and services generated by the government. It accounts for 11%.
- The last engine is the net demand for GDP after we subtract imports from India's exports. It is the smallest engine.
- The two biggest engines, which accounted for over 88% of Indian total GDP, Q1 saw a massive contraction.
- Net export while on paper provides a boost to overall GDP, it also points to an economy where economic activity has plummeted.

### Its implication

- With GDP contracting by more than what most observers expected, it is now believed that the full-year GDP could also worsen.
- A fairly conservative estimate would be a contraction of 7% for the full financial year.
- The U.S. economy saw the biggest quarterly plunge in activity ever, though the plummet in the second quarter wasn't as bad as feared.
- Gross domestic product from April to June plunged 32.9% on an annualized basis.
- Economists surveyed by Dow Jones had been looking for a drop of 34.7%.
- Still, it was the worst drop ever, with the closest previously coming in mid-1921.
- The report comes amid a recession that began in February and pulled first-quarter growth down 5%.

- It is a near 10% quarter-over-quarter decline
- Neither the Great Depression nor the Great Recession nor any of the more than three dozen economic slumps over the past two centuries has ever caused such a sharp drain over so short a period of time.
- By comparison, the worst quarter during the financial crisis of 2008 was the 8.4% GDP drop in the fourth quarter of that year.

### What is the reason?

- About half the quarter reflecting almost full shutdown and the other half the slow reopening.
- This has led to a precipitous fall in consumption—the biggest component of American GDP that accounts for almost 70% of the economy.
- Spending on goods and services is estimated to have fallen at a seasonally adjusted annualized rate of 35% in the second quarter.
- This alone lops off 25 percentage points from headline growth
- Investments in buildings, equipment, and intellectual property—big manufacturing sector drivers—Also fell at an annual rate of 49%.

### Measures taken

- This pandemic caused a sharp drop in real personal income as many workers faced lower wages, fewer hours, or job severance.
- Expanding unemployment insurance, economic recovery rebates, and emergency loans enacted as a part of the CARES Act, caused post-transfer real disposable personal income to increase.
- In early estimates from the University of Pennsylvania, the CARES Act reduced the GDP contraction in the second quarter by 7 percentage points.

### Why still worry for us?

- Pessimism can be attributed to the sharp surge in COVID-19 cases, particularly in the southern and southwestern US states, that has pushed the death tally above 150,000 and the growth in daily cases above 60,000—triple what it was in early June.
- After many states lifted their lockdown orders in April and May, COVID-19 cases began a sharp climb in June, with the result that rebounding economic activity sputtered.

## Contrasting trends world's top two economies?

- There are inherent similarities between the two countries.
- Both the US and China are driven by consumption—over two-thirds of US GDP and more than one-half that of China.
- In their relief packages too, both countries focused on boosting consumption by attempting to put money in the hands of consumers.
- The US managing that directly through the 'cheque in the mail' and the Payroll Protection programmes.
- China, through a pre-paid voucher scheme for specific products and a few other policies.
- But China's GDP growth showed a sharply divergent trend, swinging back sharply into the black in the April-June quarter,
- Driven by a bounce-back in manufacturing output and a public spending boost.

## Comparison with India

- In India, like in the US, the case count is surging, even as the government is progressively easing up restrictions.
- Two days after the Union Home Ministry announced further relaxations in the lockdown guidelines, including opening up gyms, India recorded the biggest jump in the daily case count at over 55,000.
- While the share of consumption to GDP, at 57% in India, is closer to that of China,
- But the trend of normalization of consumption is akin to what is being experienced in the US—
- Uncertainties preventing people from upping their spending beyond essentials, the progressive unlock-downs notwithstanding.
- India's recovery could have another problem.
- Unlike in China and the US—where the efforts to put money directly into the hands of the people,
- In India, much of the Rs 20 lakh crore Covid-19 economic package announced on May 12 has been liquidity driven, with little burden on the Central exchequer.

## India boosting employment

- Over 85% of employment in India is in the informal sector. An unplanned national lockdown halted economic activity and wiped out livelihoods, especially of informal workers.

- Left with nothing, we saw reverse migration on an unprecedented scale—some 10 million people abandoned cities to return to their native villages.
- As things are returning to normal, the priority for addressing our most chronic social problems has been reduced.
- We must not waste this crisis.
- There are three problems we must address:
  - Labour regulation,
  - Living conditions for migrant labour in cities,
  - The strength of our rural economy.

## Labour regulation

- Labour regulation must start with a clear recognition of facts:-
- We have stringent labour laws to protect workers, but this covers only the formal sector—under 15% of employment.
- This "labour aristocracy" has almost complete protection, and employers have almost no flexibility.
- The 85 percent of our workforce who are informally employed, meanwhile, has almost no protection, and employers have almost complete flexibility.
- We need to address both ends of the labour spectrum to get the balance right between flexibility and protection for all labour.
- Everyone must have a minimum level of protection, and every employer a minimum level of flexibility.
- This calls for a new social contract to define a well-calibrated social security system.
- This huge project demands good faith and strong leadership by industry, labour, and government.
- It will take years to get it right, but if we don't fix our employment system now when this issue has achieved such prominence, we will always regret the missed opportunity.

## Living conditions in our cities

- For too long, we have been content to drive by slums where some of the people who clean our homes, deliver our goods and repair our equipment live in squalor.
- It probably needs much more liberal land-use regulations—our cities have among the least generous floor-space indices (FSI) in the world.
- New York, Hong Kong, and Tokyo have an FSI five times Mumbai's.
- If five times as many people can live in the same

area, it would drastically reduce rents for quality housing in our cities.

- Again, this is a multi-year project, and it involves state and city governments partnering with private developers.

### Strengthening the rural economy

- Reverse migration is also an opportunity to collaborate in spreading the geography of development.
- We need a three-pronged approach
  - First, the easiest way to grow farmer incomes is by having them grow more value-added crops.
  - Fruits and vegetables have great export potential, and exports must be consistently encouraged and not switched on and off as domestic prices change.
  - Also, the cultivation of palm plantations has the potential for huge import substitution.
  - Second, we need to encourage agro-processing near the source. Fostering entrepreneurship in rural and semi-urban areas would combine nicely with local processing.
  - Third, we need to invest even more massively in rural connectivity.
  - Today along with road connectivity we need digital connectivity.

### Conclusion

- The task is huge, and only collaboration between all levels of government (Union, state, and city) and our dynamic private sector can hope to make substantial progress.
- Let's use our unprecedented health and economic crisis to truly build a new social contract as our commitment to India@75.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

### Notes

## International Relations

### China's Water Grab conspiracy explained

by Anirudh

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

#### Relevance

GS 3 || International Relations || India & its Neighbor || China

#### Title

China's Water Grab conspiracy explained, How China is using river dams as a weapon?

#### Why in the news?

Chinese 'dam conspiracy' to win future world war on water

#### Key Highlight

► Chinese 'dam conspiracy' to win future world war on water

#### What happened recently?

Amid the India-China military standoff in eastern Ladakh, Chinese activities including dam constructions along the Indian border are under the scanner once again.

#### 8 new dams by China on Brahmaputra

- In this region, the Chinese have managed to construct three dams within a distance of 24 km on the Brahmaputra River over a period of 10 years.
- This construction of dams at an unprecedented pace and scale has taken place in Tibet's Sangri Lokha.
- Construction of a similar 'triplet dam' has been observed on the Nyang river near the town of Nyingchi in Tibet's Nyingchi county
- Lokha, also known as Shanan lies in the northeast of Bhutan and south of Lhasa while Nyingchi is further east, both bordering Arunachal Pradesh.



#### Zangmo dam

- A comparative analysis of satellite images of the Zangmo dam shows how its width has increased fourfold from 100 m in 2012 when the construction began to 400 m as seen on August 4, 2020, while the water levels have risen almost 150 m.
- Thus, the reservoir which spans across almost 10 km can hold more than 600 mn cubic metres of water, an indication that a massive amount of water is under Chinese control in Tibet.

#### New dams proposed on Brahmaputra

- China has proposed to build at least eight more dams on the Brahmaputra River in Tibet.
- The proposed dams on the Yarlung Tsangpo river in Tibet are close to the Indian border in Arunachal Pradesh.

#### Main Concerns

##### 1. Export electric energy from Tibet to mainland China:

- This has sparked speculation that the aim of these dams is only to build reservoirs and export electric energy from Tibet to mainland China.
- These dams are to be built within the next 10 years at Bayu, Jiexi, Langta, Dakpa, Nang, Demo, Namcha and Metok towns that do not have more than a hundred households each.
- **Zangmo, Gyatsa, and Dagu:**
  - There are three dams on the main Brahmaputra River built in unusually close proximity to each other. These dams are located within a very short distance of 24 km.
  - With only the single village of Gyatsa and its population of barely 150 households, having three dams is unprecedented.
  - While the Zangmo dam has been commissioned, the Gyatsa dam is complete and awaiting commissioning. The third and largest of the trio, the Dagu dam has been under construction since 2017.



## 2. Divert Brahmaputra's water

- The Chinese could also aim to use these dam reservoirs such as the Dagu dam to divert Brahmaputra's water to dry areas in Xinjiang or Central China.
- Evidence for such diversions is yet to come to light. However, reports have cited locals talking about it in recent years
- Dagu surprisingly has electricity generators underground, in an area below the dam and do not require additional tunnels for water flow.
- This has led to doubts supported by rumours that Brahmaputra's water may be diverted to the dry Xinjiang deserts through underground tunnels using Dagu dam.
- Once all three are complete, the triplet dams will be able to collect almost a billion cubic meters of water in their reservoirs.

## 3. Control the water flowing into India (A potential water bomb):

- The third and perhaps the most worrying explanation for China storing water at eleven dams on the Brahmaputra River could be to control the water flowing into India.
- Experts feel China's dam construction is a key concern and the Chinese dispensation must be more transparent over the issue.

### Use of water supply as a weapon against India?

- **Drought:** Blocking India's water supply even for a few days can lead to rivers drying up across the country.
- **Flooding:** On the other hand, many feel low lying areas in India will be completely inundated if China suddenly releases all this stored up water.
- After Pasighat in Arunachal Pradesh, the Brahmaputra River expands to almost 10 km in width. Its width varies from 8 to 10 km in Assam. Careful monitoring of these dams will provide a 15-day early warning since this is the time it takes for river water to travel from Tibet's Lokha county to Pasighat in Arunachal Pradesh.

### Lack of data sharing

- As per Indo-Sino bilateral agreements, China is expected to share data with India during the monsoon in order for the latter to keep track of water levels and prepare for floods.
- Although New Delhi is paying a hefty sum of Rs 80 lakhs to Beijing for this data each year, the response India gets from the Chinese every time is the same-

water in the Brahmaputra river washed the measuring instruments away.

### Unilateral actions by China

- International obligations dictate that China must seek permission from downstream countries before constructing any dam upstream on the Brahmaputra River.
- **China and Mekong countries:**
  - According to study, China Mekong River dams held back large amounts of water during 2019-20
  - It resulted into drought in downstream countries like Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia last year
  - At the same time, China had higher than average water levels upstream

### Conclusion

There needs to be a closer study on not just the quantity of water flow but also the quality which can be extremely detrimental in the long run. It can have an impact on people's lives in downstream regions. There is very little information and understanding of the region. The entire Himalayas is a black hole of data

### Additional Info

Kubernein Initiative: It is an initiative that tracks water diplomacy and security across the globe.

### Mains oriented question

Explain the China "dam-conspiracy" to win the future war on water.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

## How Turkey is promoting anti India activities in India?

by Rahul Saigaonker

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

### Relevance

GS 2 || International Relations || India & Rest of the World || West Asia

### Title

How Turkey is promoting anti India activities in India?  
Is Turkey enemy of India?

### Why in the news?

Turkey is promoting anti India activities in India

### Turkey-India Bilateral Relation

- There are deep historical connections between India and Turkey. The first exchange of diplomatic **missions between the Ottoman Sultans and the Muslim rulers of the subcontinent** dates back to the years 1481-82. India and Turkey also have a cultural overlap.
  - The **Turkic impact on India** in areas such as language, culture and civilization, art and architecture, and costumes and cuisine was considerable.
  - The Sufi philosophy of Mevlana Jelaluddin Rumi found a natural resonance in the Indian sub-continent with its own traditions of Sufism and the Bhakti movement. There are also over 9000 words common in Hindustani and Turkish Languages.
  - More **recent historical contacts between India and Turkey** were reflected in the medical mission led by renowned Indian freedom fighter, Dr. M.A. Ansari, to Turkey in 1912 during the Balkan Wars.
  - India also extended support in the 1920s to Turkey's War of Independence and the formation of the Turkish republic. **Mahatma Gandhi himself took a stand against the injustices inflicted** on Turkey at the end of World War-I
- Bilateral relations have been strengthened by the exchange of visits of leaders of both countries in recent times.

### India Turkey Relations on global issues

- On global issues, India was non-aligned and Turkey, a member of the Western Cold War alliances.
- On regional issues, Turkey tilted to Pakistan on the Kashmir question, and India moved
- Closer to Nicosia in Turkey's dispute with Cyprus.

### Combating terrorism

- Both the countries are determined to combat terrorism in any form. They stressed on the issue of global terrorism and mutually agreed upon in fighting terrorism and also agreed to strengthen cooperation in an effective manner in dealing with the menace both bilaterally and at multilateral fora.
- Both the countries also agreed to adopt the early conclusion of negotiations on the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT). The CCIT was proposed by India on the global level in 1996 but after two decades its conclusion is yet to be adopted.

### On India's membership of the MTCR

- **Indian premier expressed his gratitude towards** Turkey and thanked Erdogan for Turkey's support for India's membership of the MTCR (Missile Technology Control Regime) and its interest to join the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) as well as Wassenaar Arrangement, an export control regime.
- The Turkish President also **expressed his support for India's bid for membership** of the Nuclear Suppliers Group
- **United Nations reforms**
  - Both the leaders of the country emphasised on the need for comprehensive reform of the United Nations including expansion of its Security Council to make the body more representative, accountable and effective.

### India-Turkey business relations

- Erdogan also showed his keen interest in free trade with India and the two leaders of both the countries resolved to expand trade ties and decided to encourage business efforts to accomplish a level of at least \$10 billion of bilateral trade by 2020.
- On the current status of bilateral trade between the two countries, Erdogan said that the turnover of around \$6 billion in bilateral trade

- India's defence exports to Turkey- India is now also cutting down its defence exports to Turkey which includes equipment like explosives and detonators. The report claimed that export authorisation for sensitive military equipment is being withheld over Erdogan's Kashmir statements and concerns of heightening Turkey-Pakistan Bonhomie.

### India-Turkey MoUs signed

- During the Erdogan's visit both the countries have signed various **agreements and Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs)** on several fields:
  - Cultural Exchange Program for 2017-2020.
  - Cooperation between Foreign Service Institute of India and Diplomacy Academy of Turkey
- An agreement between the Government of The Republic of Turkey and the Government of The Republic of India was signed on productive occupation for family members of the members of the diplomatic mission or consular posts.

### Cultural and other similarities linkages Shared

- Both sides **sought to emphasize the potential for greater economic cooperation.**
- Both the leaders agreed on the ties of the culture of Sufi traditions and the exchanges and influences of the Turkish language on Hindi and vice versa among other linkages which provide a deep connect with the people of both the countries
- Both **country's ruling parties are associated with religious organisations**, having overturned long standing 'secular-nationalist elites'.
- India and Turkey are two of the world's largest multi-ethnic and multi-religious democracies.
- The leaders of both the countries have ideas on reviving national pride and restoring greatness, harnessing militant nationalism, impatience with criticism and civil society, and their personal charismatic appeal.

### Turkey on India-Pakistan relations

- There was no mention of **Kashmir issue during the bilateral talks but Erdogan had expressed his view earlier that India-Pakistan dispute on Jammu and Kashmir could be resolved through "multilateral talks"** involving Turkey's participation.
- According to Erdogan, there should not be allowed more casualties to occur and the relation between India and Pakistan can be improved through multi-lateral dialogues for this to be involved.

- At the same time, India has rejected Turkey's proposal to mediate talks between New Delhi and Islamabad because Turkey has supported Pakistan's position on Kashmir earlier at different forums.

### Doings of Turkey at present

- Turkey opposed to Pakistan being blacklisted by the World Financial Watchdog, the Financial Action Task Force, to curb its alleged terror financing, something India has been lobbying hard
- Turkey shut down its cooperation with Russia
- In recent time a library "Hagia Sophia" in Turkey is converted to Mosque
- Turkey is member country of NATO and OIC
- Turkey in recent time has kept enhancing its relations with Pakistan, China and Malaysia

### Conclusion

In the last few years the bilateral trade between India and Turkey has been declining. This particular visit of Turkish President to India will revamp the old ties between these two countries. Though elaborating their own capacities, the Turkish President has expressed his cooperation in various fields to India seems quite promising for India. India will look forward to maintaining the ties between the two nations and explore the areas where these two nations can gain from each other.

### Mains oriented question

Turkey's position on Kashmir has traditionally reflected its proximity to Pakistan. On several occasion Turkey has been seen going against India in context of this elaborated India-Turkey bilateral relation.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

## India announces \$500m infra package for Maldives

by Anirudh



#UPSC #IAS

(Click on the above image to watch the video)

### Relevance

GS 2 || International Relations || India & its neighbours || Indian Ocean geopolitics

### Title

India Maldives Relations - India announces \$500 million for largest infra project in Maldives

### Why in the news?

With focus on greater connectivity, India on Thursday announced several developmental projects in the Maldives, including a \$ 500 million Greater Malé Connectivity Project (GMCP), billed as the largest ever infrastructure project in the country.

### Present Context

- With focus on greater connectivity, India announced several developmental projects in the Maldives, including a \$ 500 million Greater Malé Connectivity Project (GMCP), billed as the largest ever infrastructure project in the country
- India said in a statement that it will support implementation of GMCP in Maldives, through a financial package consisting of a grant of \$100 million and a new Line of Credit of \$400 million.
- A line of credit (LOC) is a preset borrowing limit that can be used at any time. The borrower can take money out as needed until the limit is reached, and as money is repaid, it can be borrowed again in the case of an open line of credit.
- Ministry of external affair noted that this will be the largest civilian infrastructure project in the Maldives, connecting Malé with three neighbouring islands - Villingili, Gulhifahu (where a port is being built under Indian LoC) and Thilafushi (new industrial zone) – by construction of a bridge and-causeway link spanning 6.7 km.

### India-Maldives Present step taken to enhance relations

- Maldives is the first neighbouring country with which an air bubble is being operationalised. The air bubble symbolises India's support to shore up tourism arrivals and revenues in the Maldives. Health
- Protocols in both countries will be strictly followed. The first flight under the Air Bubble is expected to commence
- India also announced the commencement of a direct cargo ferry service between India and the Maldives and extension of urgent financial assistance worth \$250 million, given the financial challenges faced by the island nation due to the Covid-19 situation.
- The minister announced that India had decided to extend in-principle urgent financial assistance to the Maldives by way of a soft loan arrangement.
- India's total financial commitment in the Maldives covering all loan and grant projects is well over US\$ 2 billion, all of which have been announced

### All about India-Maldives

#### Background:

- Ethnic, linguistic, cultural, religious and commercial ties between India and Maldives; after its independence in 1965, India was among the first to recognize the Maldives, and later set up its mission at Male in 1972.
- The proximity of the Maldives to the west coast of India and its location at the hub of shipping lanes running through the Indian Ocean, and its potential to allow the naval presence of a third nation in the area, impress it with considerable strategic importance for India.
- India has a pre-eminent position in the Maldives, with relations extending to virtually most areas.
- Except for a brief time during the administration of former President Waheed and, to some degree, during the regime of former President Yameen, when a shift in approach to India occurred, all the Maldivian presidents acknowledged the importance of India's strategic position in Maldives and sought to improve bilateral ties with India, while India was seen as a net security provider.

### India Malaysia bilateral relations

- **Humanitarian relief:** At Malé, the Indian side's humanitarian relief efforts were widely appreciated across all sections of the population, and even the Vice President of Maldives thanked the Indian Ambassador for swift action.



- ▶ Both nations are founding members of the **South Asian Regional Cooperation Association (SAARC)**, the South Asian Economic Union and South Asian Free Trade Agreement signatories.
- ▶ **Operation Cactus:** It was an attempt by a group of Maldivians led by Abdullah Luthufi and assisted by armed mercenaries of a Sri Lankan Tamil secessionist organization, the Tamil Eelam People's Liberation Organization (PLOTE), to overthrow the government in Maldives' island republic on 3 November 1988. The coup failed because of the intervention of the Indian Army, whose efforts in the military operations were code-named Operation Cactus.
- ▶ **Drinking-water crisis in Malé:** Maldives urged India for help following the collapse of the island's only water treatment plant, India came to rescue by sending its heavy lift transporters like C-17 Globemaster III, Il-76 carrying bottled water.
- ▶ **Operation Sanjeevani:** At the request of the govt. of Maldives, the IAF aircraft activated Operation Sanjeevani and lifted these medicines from airports in New Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Madurai before flying to the Maldives, operated on commercial basis following demands from pharmaceutical companies and their intermediaries and will carry cargo on inbound as well as outbound flights.
- ▶ **Operation Neer** was initiated by the Indian government in response to the Maldives government's request for help after a major fire broke out at the Male Water and Sewerage Company.
- ▶ The current situation between India and the Maldives:
  - India stands ready to work with the Maldives to strengthen maritime security and help expedite the inclusion of its Indian Ocean neighbor in the Commonwealth again.
  - India invites the country to join the International Solar Alliance.

### Cultural commonality

- ▶ Both countries share extensive cultural ties. Cultural troops are shared periodically between the nations.
- ▶ Three historic mosques (Friday Mosque and Dharmavantha Rasgefaanu Mosque – Male, Fenfushi Mosque – South Ari Atoll) have been successfully restored by NRLCCP, Lucknow, Indian experts.
- ▶ In Maldives, Hindi commercial films, TV series and music are hugely popular.
- ▶ The Cultural Center of India (ICC), founded in Male in July 2011, conducts regular yoga, classical music and dance courses.

### Importance of Maldives for India

- ▶ **Member of SAARC** - Having the Maldives on board is critical for India to maintain its leadership in the region. The Maldives was the only country in the Saarc region that seemed reluctant to follow India's call to boycott the SAARC summit in Pakistan after the Uri attack
- ▶ **Regional Security** – As the pre-eminent South Asian force in the Indian Ocean region and a 'net security provider,' India needs to collaborate with the Maldives in the security and defense sectors.
- ▶ **At the Heart of International Geopolitics** - Since China started sending naval ships to the Indian Ocean about 10 years ago and the importance of Maldives has steadily risen in the name of antipiracy operations right up to the Gulf of Aden
- ▶ **Strategic location** – In the Indian Ocean, the archipelago of Maldives comprising 1,200 coral islands lies next to key shipping lanes that ensure uninterrupted supply of energy to countries such as China, Japan and India.
- ▶ **UNSC Support** - Maldives has extended its support to India's candidacy for permanent membership of an enlarged and revamped United Nations Security Council; The Maldives has also reiterated their support for India's 2020-21 candidacy for a non-permanent seat
- ▶ **Blue economy:** The Maldives play an intrinsic role in advancing the blue economy through sustainable management and marine resource utilization
- ▶ **Diaspora** - The Maldives (second largest expatriate community) has 25,000 Indian nationals residing there. Indian tourists also account for nearly 6 per cent of Maldives tourists receiving per year.

### Concerns for India in relation between the two

- ▶ **Unstable Politics-** The ties between India and Maldives had significantly deteriorated under its President Yameen, who was perceived to be close to China.
- ▶ **Low Bilateral Trade** - India-Maldives bilateral trade at around Rs.700 crores is meager.
- ▶ **Islamic radicalization:** The Maldives with Sunni-majority territory 100 per cent. The number of Maldivians attracted towards the Islamic State and madrassas and militant groups based in Pakistan

has been rising in the last decade or so. In per capita terms, the Maldives represented one of the highest number of foreign fighters in Syria.

- **Climate Change** - The Maldives is facing an existential threat. The sea level rise of up to 1 meter predicted in this century due to climate change can obliterate the country.
- **China's Interference:** The Maldives unquestionably emerged as a significant "pearl" in South Asia's "Pearl Chain" of China.
  - China has been fighting in the atoll for a maritime base. The key motive is to ensure the protection of its sea lanes, particularly the unhindered flow of desperately required energy supplies through the Indian Ocean from Africa and West Asia
  - Amendments to the Maldivian constitution in 2015 authorizing foreigners to own property, including more than \$1 billion in investments for projects where 70% of the property has been reclaimed. For these criteria in mind, China would be the clear beneficiary

#### Way forward:

- **Security Front** - India has been the Maldives' net security provider by constantly extending its assistance to ensure the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the atoll state.
- **Cautiously exercising economic leverage** - India's widening trade deficit is one of the Maldives' major economic concerns, and India could diversify bilateral trade, in particular by improving its export basket
- **Strengthening democratic institutions** - Gradually, it is critical that Maldives' democratic institutions work constitutionally, with proper checks and balances. The constitution also needs to be strengthened to remove space for drift back into authoritarianism. India and not China are better placed to help the Maldives in this respect
- **Climate Change collaboration** - India will help the Maldives respond to climate change. India's policy option is to foster a comprehensive and deepened engagement with the Maldives on all levels including climate change.

#### Mains oriented question

India does not want to encourage the Maldives to fall out of its sphere of influence. India should reach out in commercial, socio-cultural and political contexts to all the atoll's governmental and non-governmental actors. Illustrate the argument in relation to the relationship between India and Maldives.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

#### NOTES

## Good News for India

by Anirudh

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

### Relevance

GS 2 || International Relations || India & its Neighbor || China

### Title

China debt trap diplomacy backfires - Myanmar Government cautious about Chinese funds in CMEC

### Why in the news?

Myanmar trading with caution against china-funded economic corridor- good news for India

### Myanmar Cautious against China-Myanmar economic corridor

- In recent months, Myanmar has demonstrated its resistance to China.
- China is trying to deepen its influence on Naypyidaw through the China Myanmar Economic Corridor (CMEC).
- Myanmar's Ministers in the civilian government have equal reservations against the Chinese investment in Myanmar.

### China-Myanmar Economic Corridor

- Proposed CMEC will start from China's Yunnan province From Kuming near the China-Myanmar border.
- The corridor will head towards Mandalay, Myanmar's former royal capital on the banks of the Irrawaddy River.
- From there, it will extend towards the east and west to Yangon New City and the Kyaukphyu Special Economic Zone



### China's Double Interest in CMEC

- Recently China and Myanmar signed two agreements as a part of CMEC.
- One is about construction of Kyaukphyu Deep Sea Port (KDSP).
- Second is about setting up a the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Kyaukphyu

### Kyaukphyu Deep Sea Port (KDSP)

- Chinese are hoping that, Kyaukphyu Deep Sea Port will lower their dependence on the Straits of Malacca.
- Strait of Malacca is China's main trade artery, which links the Indian and the Pacific oceans.
- -Chinese are desperate to reduce their over-reliance on the strait which is militarily dominated by the US.
- The Kyaukphyu Deep Sea Port is also critical for China's energy security.
- The port houses an oil and gas pipeline, supplying energy to Yunnan.
- China is targeting a massive investment of around \$100 billion in Myanmar's economy



### Lesson Drawn from Neighbors

- Myanmar's ministers in civilian government have drawn lessons from experiences of Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Maldives.
- In these countries projects funded by China have pushed them into a debt trap and increased Beijing's influence.

### Myanmar can stand against China

- The Myanmar government led by de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi is showing signs of standing up to China.
- China has proposed 38 projects under CMEC but Myanmar so far has approved only nine.
- Since last year Myanmar has decided that it will only implement the projects that will be mutually beneficial.
- Myanmar continues to suspend the construction of Myitsone Dam.
- The proposed \$3.6-billion dam is one of seven hydro-power projects planned for the upper reaches of the Irrawaddy River
- Work on the project started in 2009. President U Thein Sein suspended it in 2011 amid widespread public concern over the dam's social and environmental impacts.
- The Chinese were humiliated to learn the news of the suspension



### Debt -Trap Diplomacy of China with other countries

#### Debt -Trap Diplomacy:

- Evidence reveals that developing countries owe China much greater debts than was previously thought.
- Several loans alleging the construction of infrastructure projects using Chinese contractors in strategically placed developing countries are a form of debt trap diplomacy.
- China is accused of extending unfair credit with a view to obtaining economic or political concessions where countries are unable to uphold their debts. This raises concerns that China's loans to countries like Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal could be a strategic disadvantage for India.

#### Debt trap with other countries

- **Pakistan:** The BRI's first initiative is allegedly the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Four years ago, Pakistan's then Prime Minister said CPEC would be a "game-changer" for Pakistan and South Asia. But, after four years, the way Pakistan has fallen into debt shows that this is not so. In addition, the growth there has fallen from 5.8 percent in 2017-18 to 3.4 percent in 2018-19, and is now expected to be 2.7 percent. With Pakistan's declining economic situation, no one in that nation now considers CPEC a 'game changer.'
- **Nepal:** Nepal is delaying the signing of a \$56 billion agreement to create a multi-dimensional trans-Himalayan connectivity network under the BRI, which also includes a cross-border railroad. Nepal is apprehensive about signing the trade agreement because of reservations regarding project financing.
- **Sri Lanka:** We must note that the modus operandi is the same as in Sri Lanka, when Colombo had to hand over a 99-year lease to China from the port of Hambantota due to non-payment of Chinese borrowings.
- **Malaysia:** However, some countries do realize the downside of Chinese capital. In 2017, due to their debt crisis, Malaysia canceled a \$20 billion railway link and two Chinese-funded pipeline projects. The newly elected government, coming to power on the back of the former prime minister's corruption scandal, announced an investigation into Chinese project financing in the country, announcing that government debt had reached \$250 billion in equivalent.
- A number of other countries, from **Argentina to Namibia to Laos, Burundi, Chad and Mozambique to Zambia, were stuck in a Chinese debt pit**, forcing them to make agonizing choices to avoid default. Not only this, the **Nairobi inland container depot** is under threat of a Chinese take-over as well. Indeed, if we look at it carefully, China's whole Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is proving to be part of its debt-trapping diplomacy.

#### Indian concerns

- Pakistan has relied heavily on foreign assistance from international monetary agencies for its 70-year existence, but as an economic initiative, CPEC has become worrying as the debts it creates, can crash the financial system of Pakistan, thereby reducing it to a 'vassal state.' That will most certainly create threats to Indian national security.



- At geopolitical, economic, military , and political level, Pakistan and China are currently in primary alliance. India remains her country of focus. The more dependent Pakistan becomes on China, the more difficult it will be for India and Pakistan to have a bilateral agreement without Chinese influence.

### Mains oriented question

China is accused of extending excessive credit with the intention of extracting economic or political concessions when countries cannot honour their debts. This raises fears that China's credit to countries. Explain the Debt trap of China with Myanmar and impact on India.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

NOTES

# China's interest in Teesta Impact on India

by Anirudh

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

## Relevance

GS 2 || International Relations || India & its Neighbor || China

## Title

China Bangladesh Teesta River \$1 billion loan - Rising influence of China in India's neighbourhood

## Why in the news?

Increasing influence of China in India's neighbourhood

## What China's Teesta Project men to India?

- Increasing influence of China in India's neighborhood is concern for India but still India hold good relationship with neighbor
  - India's relation with its neighbours Nepal and Bangladesh have been under stress in recent months.
  - India's Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla paid a two-day visit to the Bangladesh capital Dhaka on August 18-19.
  - This visit came at a time when the Sheikh Hasina government is in talks with Beijing for a \$1bn loan for a project on the river Teesta.

## About River Teesta

- The Teesta River originates at TsoLamo, India, river flows through the states of Sikkim and West Bengal in India.
- In Bangladesh, Teesta flows through Rangpur division before meeting Brahmaputra River at Chilmari.
- Teesta is a perennial, rain-and-snow-fed river characterized by extreme variability in her flows throughout the year.
- Over 90% of her flow occurs in rainy season from June to September while the rest 10% occurs in the remaining eight months.

- As a lower riparian, Bangladesh is completely dependent on India, the upper riparian, for keeping minimum flows in the Teesta River.



## India-Bangladesh Teesta Dispute

- Bangladesh pursued a fair and equitable distribution of Indian Teesta waters, in accordance with the 1996 Ganga Water Treaty.
- The treaty allows for the sharing of surface waters along their common border at the Farakka Barrage;
- The Indian Prime Minister's visit to Dhaka in 2015 generated expectations to take the issue forward but it remains unresolved.
- In India, individual states exercise considerable control over transboundary agreements, hampering the process of policy making.
- West Bengal is a major stakeholder in the Teesta Agreement and has yet to support the agreement

## The negotiations on how to share the water have been going on since 1972

- **1972:** Joint River Commission (JRC) was established by India and Bangladesh in the Indo-Bangla Treaty of Friendship.
- **1983:** Agreement on Ad-Hoc sharing of Teesta water. According to agreement Ad-Hoc sharing is valid until 1985 end.
- **1998:** Bangladesh started "Teesta Barrage" irrigation project (3 cropping seasons per year).
- **2011:** an Interim deal that was supposed to last for 15 years – gave India 42.5% and Bangladesh 37.5% of Teesta water.

## The federal angle of the Teesta River Issue

- Article 253 of the Indian Constitution grants the Union Government the right to enter into any treaty with a riparian state connected to transboundary river water.

- The Center cannot do this unilaterally without taking into account the social, political and ecological effects of the Catchment Agreement.
- In 2011, under the noted hydrologist Kalyan Rudra, the West Bengal government commissioned a study into the Teesta problem.
- This is not appropriate for Bangladesh, where water is needed for the most part during the
- period from December to April, considered to be the slimmest.

### India's Image in Neighbourhood

- It is unlikely that it will affect India but it will definitely reduce the significance of India- Bangladesh Teesta Water Agreement.
- Major display of Chinese engineering in Bangladesh is likely to intensify criticism of India's inability to deal with inter country water disputes.
- Loss of significance of the Teesta water-sharing negotiations will highlight the fact that India failed to deliver what it promised to its neighbour.

### Bangladesh-China Relations

- China is Bangladesh's largest trading partner and the key source of imports with trade that strongly favors China. Trade between the two countries stood at USD 18 billion in 2019.
- China recently announced zero duty on 97 per cent of Bangladesh's imports and the decision was widely welcomed in Bangladesh. The concession comes from the duty-free, quota-free policy in China, for the least developed countries.
- China has pledged financial assistance to Bangladesh worth some USD 30 billion. China is Bangladesh's largest arms supplier, which has been a legacy issue, strengthening the links to the defence.
- After Bangladesh's liberation in 1971, Pakistan Army officers joined the Bangladesh Army and favoured Chinese weapons because they were well versed in them. As a result, Bangladesh forces are equipped with Chinese arms including tanks, missile launchers, fighter aircraft and several weapons systems.

### India-Bangladesh Relations

- Both countries have enjoyed a robust relationship, carefully cultivated since 2008, especially with the Sheikh Hasina Government. Crackdown on anti-India groups by Bangladesh has helped the Indian government preserve peace in the Eastern and Northeastern states.

- In July 2020, the first trial for transshipment of Indian cargo via Bangladesh to northeastern states under a agreement on the use of Chittagong and Mongla ports took place. The proposed nationwide National Register of Citizens (NRC) and the 2019 Citizenship Reform Act (CAA) have, however, strained ties. Bangladesh has voiced concerns about CAA and retained it as unnecessary. Bangladesh expressed its concern at the rise of Border Security Force (BSF) killings at the Indo-Bangladesh border
- The Indian Secretary for Foreign Affairs recently visited Dhaka to explore "security-related issues of mutual interest" while attempting to resolve possible irritants. Under the Indian Lines of Credit, consensus was reached on the timely execution of projects and greater attention to development projects in Bangladesh.
- Bangladesh has requested to reopen travel through Benapole-Petrapole land port which has been halted by the West Bengal government in the wake of the pandemic.

### Disputed Regions

- Disputed region includes Limpiyadhura, Lipulekh, and the Kalapani areas.
- New Delhi's position on the dispute is based on its decades-long possession of the territory.
- Nepal's claim is centered on the Treaty of Sugauli (1815), according to which these areas traditionally belonged to it.



### Conclusion

- India has also given development aid worth \$ 10 billion to China on this issue, making Bangladesh the largest beneficiary of India's total aid of \$30 billion worldwide..

- India and Bangladesh have cooperated in the past five months on pandemic-related moves such as funding in the Covid-19 regional emergency fund to fight. India also provided medical assistance to Bangladesh. India handed Bangladesh 10 locomotives.
- So far India's relations with Bangladesh have been on right track, but the effort continue to follow like complete the negotiations with mutual consensus on the ongoing Teesta River dispute.

### Mains oriented question

Considering the strategic importance of Bangladesh and as a responsible upper riparian state, India needs to take proactive steps for early conclusion of Teesta agreement. Illustrate.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

NOTES



# India to buy 2 AWACS aircraft from Israel, Know AWACS

by Anirudh

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

## Relevance

GS 2 || International Relations || India & Rest of the World || West Asia

## Title

India Israel Defence Deal 2020, India to buy 2 AWACS aircraft from Israel, Know AWACS specifications

## Why in the news?

India is looking to secure a defence deal with Israel as the border dispute with China continues. India is contemplating to purchase emergency military equipment from key allies including Israel, France, Russia and the US. The government is in the final stage of approving the acquisition of **two Phalcon airborne warning and control systems (AWACS)** for the Indian Air Force from Israel at a cost of around USD 1 billion

## Background of India- Israel relationship

- India announced its recognition of Israel on **September 17, 1950**. Soon thereafter, the Jewish Agency established an immigration office in Bombay. This was later converted into a Trade Office and subsequently a Consulate.
- Both countries established **full diplomatic relations in 1992**. Since then, **defence and agriculture** formed the two main pillars of our bilateral engagement. In recent years, relations have seen rapid growth across a broad spectrum of areas and the future vision of the cooperation is of a **strong hi-tech partnership** as befits two knowledge economies.
- Prime Minister Modi undertook an **historic first ever visit** by an Indian PM to Israel from 4-6 July 2017, during which the relationship was upgraded to a strategic level and seven Agreements/MoUs were signed in the fields of R&D innovation, water, agriculture and space. Prime Minister of Israel, H.E. **Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu**, made a visit to India from 14-19 January 2018 during which four G2G agree-

ments on **cyber security, oil & gas cooperation, film co-production and air transport** were signed.

## Defence & Security cooperation

- Defence and security cooperation is the **key pillar** of the relationship between India and Israel. India imports **critical defence technologies** from Israel. There are regular exchanges between the armed forces. There is cooperation on security issues, including a **Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism**. In February 2014, India and Israel signed three important agreements on **Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, Cooperation in Homeland Security, and Protection of Classified Material**.
- India and Israel defence cooperation has a long standing history since the Indo-China war. The strategic communication between the two countries began during the **Sino-India War of 1962** when PM Jawaharlal Nehru wrote his Israeli counterpart David Ben-Gurion for shipments of arms and ammunition. In 1965, Israel supplied **M-58 160-mm mortar** ammunition to India in the war against Pakistan. It was one of the few countries that chose not to condemn India's Pokhran nuclear tests in 1998.
- Israel continued its arms trade with India at a steadily increasing rate even after the sanctions and international isolation that followed the nuclear tests.
- For India, the credibility of Israel as a reliable defence partner was reinforced during the Kargil War of 1999 when it supplied the Indian Air Force (IAF) with the **Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) 'Searcher' and surveillance systems for Jaguar and Mirage squadrons**.
- It also upgraded the MiG-21 combat aircraft for the IAF. The Indian Army also received Laser **Guided Bombs (LGB) and 160-mm mortar ammunition**.
- In the 2000s, the India-Israel arms trade mostly involved surveillance and intelligence-related equipment – notably **Super Dvora-class patrol vessels** and the airborne early warning and control (AEW&C) system EL/M-2075 **Phalcon**. India also purchased **98 Searcher and 50 Heron UAVs**.
- Israel supplied Barak surface-to-air missile system with the Vertical Launching System (VLS) module for the modernisation of the Indian Navy during the period 2003-2006.

### ► Economic and commercial relationship

- India is Israel's **third largest trade partner in Asia** and seventh largest globally. In recent years, the bilateral trade has diversified into several sectors such as pharmaceuticals, agriculture, IT and telecom, and homeland security.
- Indian investments in Israel (April 2000-June 2017) totalled USD 122.4 million (Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion, GoI). Indian companies are marking their presence in Israel through mergers and acquisitions and by opening branch offices. TCS started operations in Israel in 2005; State Bank of India opened a branch in Tel Aviv in 2007.

### ► Agriculture cooperation

- Agriculture cooperation between the two sides is formalised through **3-year Work plans** wherein 3-year Action plans are developed. The two sides signed the fourth phase of the joint action plan (2018-20) in July 2017.

### ► Cooperation in S&T

- India-Israel cooperation in S&T is overseen by the Joint Committee on S&T, established under the S&T Cooperation Agreement signed in 1993. During the visit of PM in July 2017, space agencies-**ISRO & Israel Space Agency- signed three agreements on space cooperation.**

### ► Indian diaspora

- There are approximately 85,000 Jews of Indian-origin in Israel (at least one Indian parent). The main waves of immigration into Israel from India took place in the 1950s and 1960s mostly from Maharashtra (Bene Israelis) and relatively smaller numbers from Kerala (Cochini Jews) and Kolkata (Baghdadi Jews).

### What factors precipitated the shift toward stronger relations between India and Israel?

- Initially, it was Beijing's decision to establish diplomatic relations with Israel, as well as the Soviet collapse, which had driven India to establish official relations with Israel.
- They have been given a boost over the last few years by India's realisation that politics could be separated from economics, governments could continue supporting the Arabs and the Palestinians and still enjoy good technological and economic relations with Israel.
- Also the virtual disintegration of the Arab Middle East, the never-ending conflicts and confrontation, and the emergence of Islamic radicalism and terrorism (that have also affected India), underline Israel as a democratic island of stability and as a source of mutually beneficial cooperation.

- For Israel, India represents a huge economic and military market.

### Challenges before the relationship

- Ideological differences-** At the global level, the differences in outlook of both nations are evident. India seems more in favour of a multi-polar world while Israel prefers a uni-polar one.
- Palestinian issue-** It is difficult to delink Israel and Palestine in India's foreign policy, making it a significant consideration while strategising the diplomatic relationship with Israel and other nations in the Middle East. Israel's politics dominated by its antagonistic attitude towards the Palestinians is also making it difficult for India to enhance the diplomatic relationship.

### Future prospects

- The future of Indo-Israeli relations is promising based on Israel's and India's respective characters.
- Israel is known as a **"start-up nation"** with over 5000 start-ups, the highest amount per capita, and 3rd largest amongst the top start-up hubs in the world.
- India has **exceptional economic potential**, with a huge population of 1.3 billion people and a growing consumer market with a unique demographic distribution.
- India has targeted indigenous innovation and R&D as the main goal of the Indian economy, the same is enhanced by government initiatives, such as – Start-up India and Make in India.
- Both countries complement each other in different domains. This shows that the relationship has bright future in coming days.

### Mains oriented question

"The changing geopolitical situation after Cold War has brought some significant realignment in strategic sphere. India and Israel relations has been seen a reflection of this change."

In the light of this statement, critically analyse the nature of India-Israel relationship and also discuss the future prospect.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

## Should India Attend SCO 2020 Meet with Pakistan and China?

By Prashant Dhawan



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

### Relevance

GS 2||International Relations||International Organizations||SCO

### Title

Should India Attend SCO 2020 Meet with Pakistan and China?

### Why in news?

- Russia has proposed the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Foreign Ministers meet in Moscow on September 10, the meet will also see the participation of Pakistan and China.
- According to diplomatic sources, "On the same day, Russia has also offered to host BRICS Foreign Minister's meet."

### Point to note

- If India decides to take part, this will be the first time that foreign ministers of India, Pakistan, and China will come face to face in the same group ever since the conflict at Line of Actual Control (LAC) broke out between India and China.
- Tensions continue to simmer at the LAC as there is still no complete disengagement at the border, 40000 Indian troops are reportedly deployed in this sector and both India and China are holding rounds of military and diplomatic talks to resolve the situation.

### India's dilemma

- After Galwan valley clash it was unclear if India would attend the RIC (Russia India China) virtual meeting or not. But on Russia's insistence, India attend the meeting

- It was expected that Russia would play the role of peacemaker between India and China but that didn't happen

### China's belligerence

- China has instead amassed a huge number of soldiers near the Indian border after the RIC meeting.
- China has taken a very aggressive posture at the border against India and it has also signed various hydropower project agreements with Pakistan in PoK.

### SCO as an Organization

- **Geographic Extent:** SCO is a significant organization that has a **vast geographic expanse** and is important for Central Asia, South-Asia, and Asia-Pacific region.
- It is a major **Eurasian organization** that represents half of the world's population.
- **Member-states:** The SCO has **eight** members namely **India**, Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, and **four observer states** - Afghanistan, Belarus, Iran, and Mongolia.
- India joined SCO in 2017 at the insistence of Russia, and China balanced India's entry with the entry of Pakistan.
- **Significance:** The organization comprises four **major nuclear powers** operating in the area viz. India, Russia, China, and Pakistan.
- It can counterbalance North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), therefore, it is sometimes considered as an **"alliance of the East"**, i.e., the Eastern complementary of NATO.
- **Mandate:** SCO has an **evolving mandate** which started by being an economic, political, cultural, and regional security organization. But with time, the security (military coordination, cyber coordination, etc.) aspect gained prominence. Its mandate includes:
  - Promoting mutual trust and cooperation in politics, trade, economy, research, technology, and culture amongst the member states.
  - Enhancing ties in areas like education, energy, transport, tourism, environmental protection, and healthcare.
  - Maintaining and ensuring peace, security, and stability in the region.
  - Moving towards the establishment of democratic, fair, and rational international political and economic order.

## Significance for India

- **Historical Significance**- In countries that formed part of the former USSR, India has always been seen as a benign (friendly) territory India has invested in these countries since the past, but due to lack of accessibility, the link between India and those countries has been limited.
- Such countries also have misgivings about Russia and China's rising dominant position. Hence India may play a key role in the area in light of these developments.
- **Diplomatic Ties**-SCO provides a forum for the exchange of ideas with world leaders such as Russia. India is also looking for a constructive relationship with this organisation's member nations.
- **Military**-Joint military exercises by SCO, Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS is a terrorist-focused institutional structure-a common threat affecting nations) are essential to India, among others. On these networks, India can rally down the neighboring countries serving as the terrorist center.
- **Connectivity**- Via this forum, India will look via China (through its Xinjiang province) for another path to Eurasia and Central Asia.
- SCO is a potential platform to advance India's Connect Central Asia policy.
- The SCO member states occupy the huge landmass adjacent to India's extended neighbourhood where India has both economic and security imperatives.

## Way Forward

- SCO provides a very good opportunity to India to **connect with the leadership of Central Asian countries and that a very big take away.**
- India has a good record of **economic growth and handling problem** which is a problem of other countries which lays foundation to huge foreign investment.
- Increase cooperation between **SCO and other multilateral organisations.** Need to increase economic cooperation among SCO member states.
- Strengthen the **fight against terrorism, extremism, drug trafficking and organised crime among others.**
- **Increasing awareness** of our shared cultures can help boost tourism.

## Mains model question

- Analyse how SCO as a regional organisation presents both challenges and opportunities for India. Also, discuss the measures that India must take for strategic balancing with respect to SCO?



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

## Notes



## Pakistan Issues New Political Map

By Prashant  
Dhawan



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

### Relevance

GS 2||International Relations||India & it's Neighbours || Pakistan

### Title

Pakistan Issues New Political Map

### Why in news?

- On the eve of the first anniversary of the abrogation of Article 370, a move that stripped the special status of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan has released a new political map, making sovereign claims on the entire Jammu and Kashmir and the erstwhile princely state of Junagadh in Gujarat. On 5 August 2019, the Government of India revoked the special status, or limited autonomy, granted under Article 370 of the Indian Constitution to Jammu and Kashmir

### Pakistan's statement

- The statement also called for the use of IIOJKand, not IOJK or IOK. It said that the term used to represent Jammu and Kashmir henceforth should be "Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir" as opposed to "Indian Occupied Kashmir". It also added that 'illegal action' should be used in place of illegal annexation.

### Old and new

- He said that the dotted line in the initial map that used to indicate a "disputed territory" has been done away with. He also said that Siachen has also been included in the new map and that it has always belonged to Pakistan.
- Qureshi claimed that the "Kashmiri leadership" has also endorsed the new map.
- "This map sends a message to India, it sends a message to the unarmed youth of Kashmir who martyrs

themselves for the cause, that Pakistan stands with them. This map represents our goal," Qureshi said.

### Press Statement on so-called 'political map' of Pakistan

We have seen a so-called "political map" of Pakistan that has been released by Prime Minister Imran Khan. This is an exercise in political absurdity, laying untenable claims to territories in the Indian State of Gujarat and our Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and of Ladakh. These ridiculous assertions have neither legal validity nor international credibility. In fact, this new effort only confirms reality of Pakistan's obsession with territorial aggrandisement supported by cross-border terrorism.

### Statements from Pakistan

- "Our destination is Srinagar, our goal is to achieve and fulfill the dreams of our ancestors.
- Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi described the map as an "unprecedented step".
- "For the first time in history, the Present government has openly presented its stance before the world.

### Junagadh

- With a Population 3 lakh 20 thousand
- Junagadh was also a princely state under British rule. It was a Hindu majority state ruled by a Muslim ruler, Sir Muhammad MahabatKhan III Khanji, who wanted to join this state with Pakistan.
- Shah Nawaz Bhutto of Pakistan (a member of Bhutto family of Pakistan) was appointed the Dewan of Junagadh in 1947, who advised its merger with Pakistan.
- Sardar Patel demanded that the matter of the state's accession should be decided by its people instead of the ruler.
- Nehru laid out India's position which was that India did not accept Junagadh's accession to Pakistan.



### Point to note

- To force the Nawab of Junagarh to change his decision, India thrust a blockade upon the state.
- India later denied ever having blocked Junagarh's supplies. The blockade compelled the state's ruler to leave for Pakistan, who left the state's administration to Sir Shahnawaz Bhutto.

### Plebiscite

- In the plebiscite, India polled 222,184 votes and Pakistan 130 out of a total population of 720,000 of Junagarh and its feudatories.
- Pakistan brought the case of Junagarh to the United Nations in January 1948. The UN Security Council commanded its commission on Kashmir to examine the conflict over Junagarh.

### Border Disputes of India

#### ➤ Pakistan

- Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan-occupied Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan: Pakistan occupies approximately 78,000 sq. of unlawful and forcible occupation of the Jammu and Kashmir. In addition, Pakistan illegally ceded 5,180 sq under the so-called Sino-Pakistan Border Agreement of 1963.
- **Siachen Glacier-** The Siachen Glacier is situated just east of the Actual Ground Location Line between India and Pakistan, in the **eastern Karakoram** in the Himalayas.
- The entire Siachen Glacier is officially under the control of India since 1984 (Operation Meghdoot), including all the major passes.
- **Sir Creek-** In the Rann of Kutch marshlands, it's a 96 km long strip of water contested between India and Pakistan.
- Pakistan claims the line to follow the estuary's eastern shore while India claims a centerline (different from the definitions of paragraphs 9 and 10 of the 1914 Bombay Government Resolution signed between the then Sindh Government and Rao Maharaj of Kutch).
- **Saltoro Ridge-** The Saltoro Mountains mountain range is a subrange of the Karakoram Heights or Saltoro Ridge. They are located in the heart of the Karakoram, on the southwest side of the Siachen Glacier.

#### ➤ Bangladesh

- There have been several boundary disputes between India and Bangladesh which have been

settled by enforcing the historic "**Land Boundary A- greement**".

- The Land Boundary Agreement between India and Bangladesh of **1974 and its 2011 Protocol** was ratified during the Indian Prime Minister's visit to Bangladesh in **June 2015**.
- The adoption of the Agreement and Protocol has resolved all the land boundary problems between India and Bangladesh that remain.
- An international tribunal's award in 2014 on the maritime territorial dispute between India and Bangladesh and it was completely accepted by Delhi and Dhaka should set the stage for substantive regional maritime cooperation in the Bay of Bengal.

#### ➤ Nepal

- **Kalapani-** Kalapani is a valley that is administered by India as a part of the Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand. It is situated on the Kailash Mansarovar route.
- The latest political map of India reiterated the Indian claims on the region that Nepal says belongs to its westernmost part. India claims the historic region as part of Uttarakhand.
- The Kali River in the Kalapani region demarcates the border between India and Nepal.
- Susta- Susta district is one of the areas in the conflict between India (Uttar Pradesh) and Nepal.
- The Gandak river's change of course is the key reason for disputes within the Susta region.

### Conclusion

- In New Delhi's policy towards its neighbours, especially **China and Pakistan**, India's unsettled boundaries present great problems and efforts should be made to resolve the disputes through dialogue and discussion.
- As for Pakistan, sooner or later the two countries will come to the table to discuss their contentious problems.
- Meanwhile, Pakistan must put an end to any sort of support for terrorism and its Proxy War against India to bring India on the table to address border issues.

### Mains model question

India's unsettled boundaries pose major problems in its policy towards its neighbors, especially China and Pakistan. Critically analyse.

(Scan the QR code to watch the video)



# Afghanistan Peace Agreement

by Rahul Saigoner



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

## Relevance

GS 2||International Relations||India & it's Neighbours||Afghanistan

## Title

Afghanistan Peace Agreement, Is the 3-day ceasefire by Taliban a ray of hope for peace?

## Why in news?

- A ceasefire between the Taliban and the Afghan government appears to be holding for the third day after Eid-al-Adha.

## Previous respites

- The Afghan government has released 317 Taliban prisoners since the beginning of the three-day Muslim festival of Eid-al-Adha.
- In March 2020, the US and Taliban signed an agreement to bring peace in Afghanistan and ensure that intra Afghan Talks proceed.

## Salient Features of the Deal

- **Troops Withdrawal:** The US will draw down to **8,600 troops in 135 days** and the NATO or coalition troop numbers will also be brought down, proportionately, and simultaneously. And all troops will be out within 14 months.
- **Taliban Commitment:** The main counter-terrorism commitment by the Taliban is that the Taliban will not allow any of its members, other individuals, or groups, including al-Qaeda, to use the soil of Afghanistan to threaten the **security of the United States and its allies**.
- **Sanctions Removal:** UN sanctions on Taliban leaders to be removed by three months and US sanctions by August 27. The sanctions will be out before much progress is expected in the intra-Afghan dialogue.

- **Prisoner Release:** The US-Taliban pact says up to 5,000 imprisoned Taliban and up to 1,000 prisoners from "the other side" held by Taliban "will be released" by March 10.

## Progress on the deal

- Close to 4500 Taliban prisoners have been freed from Afghan custody.
- Taliban says it has freed all 1,000 Afghan prisoners it had pledged.
- However, Parallel to this progress on an agreement, Deadly violence has continuously rocked Afghanistan since the deal.
- More than 3,500 Afghan troops have been killed in attacks by Taliban fighters.

## Challenges

- **US –Taliban deal:** No involvement of Afghan govt.
  - The Afghan government has said that it has "no authority" under the country's constitution to release the remaining 400 Taliban prisoners because of their involvement in serious crimes.
  - When the U.S. entered into talks with the insurgent group, a cease-fire was not insisted.
  - And, at the same time, the Taliban continues to participate in war and talks.
  - The Americans had worked hard for a way out of the war.
  - Therefore, they removed the Afghan government from the peace process.
  - The U.S.-Taliban deal stipulates that the U.S. agreed to phase out its forces in exchange for Taliban security guarantees.
  - The onus was on a fragile government in Afghanistan to launch talks even as the Taliban intensified attacks.
- **Taliban to maintain the upper hand**
  - These above factors allowed a resurgent **Taliban to maintain the upper hand** - in war and in talks.
  - Taliban sees itself as the legitimate ruler of Afghanistan.
  - Also, it has **not recognized the Constitution** of the country.
  - This will be the government's key challenge when its representatives and that of the Taliban would be holding talks.

## Issues with Intra- Afghan Dialogue

Finally, President Ghani decided to release 5,000 Taliban prisoners.

- This is followed by the Taliban's ceasefire announcement.
- Both sides have now agreed to kick-start talks after Id.
- They could do it in a peaceful environment if the ceasefire is extended.
- There are underlying issues that continue to plague the peace process.
- The Taliban itself is fragmented or divided internally.
- Sudden withdrawal of the US may set a stage for the next round of civil war.

### India and the Taliban

- India and the Taliban have had a bitter past. New Delhi nurses bitter memories from the **IC-814 hijack in 1999**, when it had to release terrorists including Maulana Masood Azhar who founded **Jaish-e-Mohammed** that went on to carry out terror attacks on Parliament (2001), in Pathankot (2016) and Pulwama (2019).
- The Taliban perceived India as a hostile country, as India had supported the anti-Taliban force Northern Alliance in the 1990s.
- India **never gave diplomatic and official recognition** to the Taliban when it was in power during 1996- 2001.
- Earlier, India was part of the Moscow-led talks with the Taliban in November 2018, which two former Indian diplomats attended as "non-official representatives".
- India is now moving to diplomatically engage with the Taliban. India's presence at the agreement-signing ceremony is the first sign of a possible diplomatic opening.

### Impact on India

- India-Taliban relations have not been positive. Taliban coming to power will harm Indian interests largely.
- Afghanistan could become fertile ground for various anti-India terrorist outfits like LeT or JeM.
- Indian stakes in Iran and Central Asia could be impacted adversely.
- This deal shifts the balance of power in favor of the Taliban, which will have political, security, and strategic consequences for India. India's key stakes in Afghanistan may be jeopardized by the deal.

- India plays a major stake in Afghanistan's stability. India has spent considerable capital in developing Afghanistan.
- India has a major stake in the continuation of the current government in power in Afghanistan which it considers to be a strategic asset to Pakistan.
- As Afghanistan is the **gateway to Central Asia**, the deal might dampen India's interest in Central Asia.

### Way forward

- Achieving lasting peace in Afghanistan will require **patience and compromise among all parties**. And thus talking only with the Taliban is a **short-sighted policy**.
- To resolve conflict within Afghanistan, the battlefield needs to be **isolated** i.e. external support to the terrorist activities needs to be abandoned. Also, the countries need to keep their respective interests aside, to build peace in the region.
- An **independent, sovereign, democratic, pluralistic, and inclusive** Afghanistan is crucial for peace and stability in the region.

### Mains model question

- The US-Taliban agreement is a positive move but it wouldn't be easy to take the road ahead. It will take patience and cooperation among all parties to achieve sustainable peace in Afghanistan. Discussion.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)



## Can Pakistan create a new Islamic Bloc Internationally?

By Prashant Dhawan



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

### Relevance

GS 2||International Relations||India & Rest of the World||West Asia

### Title

Can Pakistan create a new Islamic Bloc Internationally?

### Why in news?

- Pakistan's foreign minister recently warned that if the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) did not convene a meeting of its Council of Foreign Ministers on Jammu and Kashmir, Islamabad would call a separate meeting of Muslim nations.

### Organisation of Islamic Cooperation

- An international organization founded in 1969, consisting of 57 member states, with a collective population of over 1.8 billion as of 2015 with 53 countries being Muslim-majority countries.
- The organisation states that it is "the collective voice of the Muslim world" and works to "safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony"

### Science and Technology

- The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) held its first science and technology summit at the level of head of state and government in Astana, Republic of Kazakhstan, on 10–11 September 2017.

### Pakistan's stance

- Pakistan has been pushing for the foreign ministers' meeting of the 57-member bloc of Muslim countries, which is the second-largest intergovernmental body after the UN since India annexed occupied Kashmir last August

- Shah Mehmood Qureshi was quoted by Dawn as saying, "I am once again respectfully telling OIC that a meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers is our expectation. If you cannot convene it, then I'll be compelled to ask Prime Minister Imran Khan to call a meeting of the Islamic countries that are ready to stand with us on the issue of Kashmir and support the oppressed Kashmiris."
- Responding to a question on the talk show, Qureshi declared Pakistan "could not wait for any further" on the issue of a meeting of Islamic nations. Qureshi had previously claimed a meeting of OIC foreign ministers was needed to send a clear message from the Ummah (community of Muslims) on the Kashmir issue.
- In March 2019, Qureshi boycotted a meeting of OIC foreign ministers after India's then external affairs minister Sushma Swaraj was guest of honour at the organisation's summit in Abu Dhabi.

### OIC meeting in 2019-50th Anniversary

- 46th Session of the Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Organization for Islamic Cooperation (OIC) held in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.
- India was invited to attend the inaugural session of the OIC by the host UAE as the "Guest of Honour." While Pakistan is an OIC founding member. It was absent during the session.
- EAM said at the summit that the battle is against extremism and not conflict with religion at all.
- Without naming Pakistan, EAM said that countries that provided shelter and support for terrorists must be asked to dismantle the terrorist camp network and avoid providing funding and protection to terrorist groups based in their countries.
- EAM also said that over 185 million Muslims live in India and follow their respective beliefs and live in peace with each other and their non-Muslim brethren.

### OIC stand on Kashmir

- The 45th session had a very strong statement on Kashmir which "condemned" India and supported third-party intervention and self-determination. The statement also called the killing of terrorist Burhan Wani as "extra-judicial" and called the elections in Kashmir "farcical".
- In past decades, **India had to spend lots of diplomatic capital to counter OIC's stands at many international organizations.** By attending it, we are validating the same organization.

### India's Image

- The host member, United Arab Emirates (UAE) has strongly defended the decision to invite India as an honorary guest to the meeting of foreign ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), despite strong opposition and threat from Pakistan to boycott the gathering.
- The first-time invitation to India to be a 'Guest of Honour' at the plenary, especially at a time of heightened tensions with Pakistan following the Pulwama terrorist attack, is a **significant diplomatic victory for New Delhi**.  
**Engagement with OIC reflects the recent shift in India's foreign policy to have amicable ties with ap- parent adversaries** — Saudi Arabia and Iran, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, Egypt and Turkey as well as Israel and Palestine.

### Significance of OIC

- The OIC offers a platform for Pakistan and India to play out their respective positions on a number of thorny issues and in the process involve the forum for de-escalation purposes.
- With Pakistan making all efforts to win over Riyadh's and the wider Gulf region's financial and diplomatic support, criticizing the decision to invite New Delhi would not sit well with Islamabad's interests. Both India and the member countries of OIC have shared an interest in blunting the edge of religious extremism and terrorism.
- Equally significant was the increasing economic and energy interdependence of the region with India, which is emerging as the third-largest economy in the world and one of the largest importers of hydrocarbons and labour exporters.
- As geopolitics in the area enter a tumultuous phase, India's capacity as a military partner is also being taken into consideration.

### Way forward

- India has good reason to be pleased that Pakistan is no longer able to veto India's engagement with vital Middle East states. India is a more suitable partner than Pakistan, for the growing powers of political reform and social change in the Middle East.
- Nevertheless, India must carefully balance its policy towards the Islamic world by publicly establishing stronger and better diplomatic relations with an organisation founded with an overtly religion-based organization.

### Mains model question

- Analyze India-Saudi Arabia relations amidst geopolitical flux in West Asia.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

### Notes

## India-China Border Clash

by Anirudh

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

### Relevance

GS 3 || Security || Tackling Security Threats || Intelligence Agencies

### Title

India China Border Clash, 10 mistakes by India in collecting Intelligence Data and acting on it

### Why in news?

- The sudden and **tragic loss of 20 Indian army personnel** in a treacherous ambush by the **People's Liberation Army (PLA) in Ladakh's Galwan Valley** has caused deep public anguish and anger, mollified, only partially, by the swift retribution visited on the assailants by our gallant jawans.

### 10 mistakes by India collecting Intelligence data and acting on it

- In **mid-April**, Indian satellite imagery detected and human intelligence corroborated a **Chinese military exercise** across the LAC involving thousands of **People's Liberation Army (PLA)** troops. In normal circumstances, the Indian Army too would have moved a couple of reserve brigades (**each with 2,500 soldiers**) to the LAC, ostensibly for "training" and "operational alert".
- However, the traditional move of reserve formations to Ladakh had been called off this year **because of Covid-19**.
- No cross-verification by DIA
- Within the Defence Intelligence Agency—a tri-services organisation directly under the CDS —**there was no cross-verification** of satellite imagery obtained from various sources and of signal intercepts. **There were equal failures in intelligence analysis.**
- The Defence Intelligence Agency (D.I.A) is an organisation responsible for providing and coordinating military intelligence for the Indian armed forces. It was created in March 2002 and is administered within the Ministry of Defence.

- Little coordination between Military- Technical Intelligence
- In the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS), which functions under the NSA, **there was little coordination between** military-technical intelligence and that obtained by the four civilian agencies —the **National Technical Research Organisation, the Intelligence Bureau, Research & Analysis Wing** and the **Ministry of Home Affairs** through the Indo-Tibetan border Police.
- Although the NSCS received a steady flow of intelligence from Mid-April onwards, it failed to assess the PLA'S intentions to cross the LAC on multiple fronts. Despite the May 5 Clash
- Even so, the picture should have become clear on May 5, when an outnumbered Indian patrol was roughed up by hundreds of Chinese soldiers at Patrolling Point 14 on the Indian side of the LAC in the Galwan valley. **Yet, the NSA confined his reaction to a Pro-forma protest phone call to Beijing.**
- Over the following days, intelligence warnings poured in about likely Chinese intrusions across the LAC, from NakuLa in Sikkim.
- Yet, the government appeared to have been taken by surprise when Chinese soldiers crossed the settled international boundary at **NakuLa, Sikkim.**
- The CDS and NSA reportedly told the prime minister that the transgressions were isolated incidents that would resolve themselves. This complacency continued through May 12, when two PLA helicopters chased an Indian chopper carrying a commanding general across the Pangong Tso lake.
- The crisis was acknowledged only on May 17/18, when a PLA horde crossed eight km into Indian territory on the north bank of Pangong Tso, and badly beat up and hospitalised 72 Indian soldiers.
- Four days later, on May 22, the army chief, General MM Naravane visited Leh. On May 24, orders were passed for reinforcements to eastern Ladakh. Almost three weeks had elapsed since the first clash at Galwan.
- Diplomatic engagement
- With diplomatic engagement faltering, **senior army commanders** from both sides met on **June 6** to discuss disengagement at Galwan. The Chinese proposed "mutual disengagement" and creating "buffer zones".
- Through these discussions, the CDS and NSA remained passive, apparently still hoping that the Chinese would relent and return. Only during mid-June, when Chinese soldiers ambushed and killed 20 Indian soldiers who had gone to the LAC to verify disengagement, did the situation's seriousness dawn on our security elites.

- Making issues public
- The government could not have publicly acknowledged that 10 of its soldiers were in Chinese captivity.
- At the same time, by quietly securing their release through a deal whose details we don't know, the Indian government showed the astuteness to engage in necessary negotiations.
- Meanwhile, China's decision to not advertise the fact that it had held Indian soldiers for several days shows it too is keen not to aggravate public opinion in India further.

#### Statement By PM

- At an all-party meeting on the China crisis in June, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's words sparked opposition protests.  
"Neither has anyone intruded into our territory nor taken over any post. Our forces are doing what they have to do to protect the country, whether it is deployment, action or counter-action. Our patrolling capacity has increased due to newly built infrastructure, especially along LAC,"

#### Some Points to Note...

- China doesn't use India's terms "de-escalation," "earliest," "expeditiously."
- China, has alluded to India as the aggressor and asserted that it will "continue firmly safeguarding our territorial sovereignty."
- Simply put, China is saying it will defend its new territorial gains.

#### Will this prevent future border flare-ups?

- No. But it will ensure that China knows the costs India can impose without engaging in a military confrontation. Neither side wants a war. India and China need to make sure they don't end up there accidentally.

#### Concerns about the existing intelligence network

- The changing nature of threats emanating from the Cyberspace and social media like ISIS using secure communications networks to further its propaganda and recruit people online which cannot be tackled through the traditional setup.
- Intelligence Agencies with different mandates, often overlapping each others', sometimes leading to duplication of efforts and non-cooperation between agencies. For Ex: The mandates of RAW and IB with respect to organised crimes like smuggling.
- Intelligence collection is ad-hoc in the absence of clear-cut requirements from the consumers of intelligence.

- Poor cadre management and inability to recruit qualified language specialists and technical skills.
- Agencies suffer from a chronic shortage of military expertise.
- Lack of a comprehensive national-level database of suspected individuals. Initiatives like NATGRID are yet to take off due to differences over data sharing between the centre and states.
- The inability of the police forces to prevent communal violence and growing fundamentalism in many instances like the Muzaffarnagar violence, which is mainly due to the failure of the traditional intelligence networks.
- Lack of parliamentary statute failing to enforce accountability in intelligence agencies.
- Lack of political attention and effective guidance has prevented reform and optimal functioning of the intelligence system.

#### National Intelligence Grid-NATGRID

- NATGRID is the integrated intelligence grid connecting databases of core security agencies of the Government of India.
- NATGRID is a part of the radical revamp of the intelligence and security framework of India initiated by the **former Home Minister P. Chidambaram**.
- It was proposed to be established in the aftermath of the **26/11 Mumbai attack in 2008** which had exposed several weaknesses in Indian Intelligence gathering and action networks.
- It will be a medium for at least **10 Central agencies such as the Intelligence Bureau (IB) and the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW)** to access data on a secured platform. The data will be procured by NATGRID from 21 providing organisations such as the telecom, tax records, bank, immigration etc. The National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID) has signed a memorandum of understanding with the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) to access the centralised online database on FIRs and stolen vehicles.

#### Need for NATGRID

- The danger from not having a sophisticated tool like the NATGRID is that it forces the police to rely on harsh and coercive means to extract information in a crude and degrading fashion.
- After every terrorist incident, it goes about rounding up suspects many of who are innocent. If instead, a pattern search and recognition system were in place, these violations of human rights would be much fewer.



- Natgrid would also help the Intelligence Bureau keep a tab on persons with suspicious backgrounds.
- The police would have access to all his data and any movement by this person would also be tracked with the help of this database.

Recently, National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID) has proposed to link social media accounts to central databases.

- Linking social media accounts will help to track on-line terror-related information exchange through individual accounts, online Radicalisation across the country.

### Possible Solutions

- Intelligence agencies need to anticipate threats in advance to prevent and mitigate possible security breaches.
- The states must rise above politics in matters of national security to implement crucial initiatives like NATGRID and NCTC.
- A comprehensive law bringing intelligence agencies under parliamentary scrutiny will help in delineating functions of different agencies and enforce accountability to the legislature rather than the present ad-hocism.
- The Central Government should take active steps to ensure interagency, interstate and centre-state co-operation to plug the information gaps.

### Way forward

- If the Chinese continue refusing to pull back in Depsang and Pangong Tso, as seems likely, and stick to the disengagement positions in **Galwan and Hot Springs**, they would have forcibly created a new L-AC, with India having lost several hundred square km of territory.
- It would not just be a blow to national prestige but also set the tone for a **subservient relationship** with **Beijing**, along with its cat's paw, **Pakistan**.

### Mains model question

- Discuss how the border dispute with China is posing a major test to the India-China bilateral relations. List down the efforts taken by both countries in this regard and their consequences.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

### Notes

## Saudi Arabia has halted the provision of oil on Loan for Pakistan

By Prashant Dhawan



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

### Relevance

GS 2||International Relations||India & Rest of the World||West Asia

### Title

Saudi Arabia has halted the provision of oil on Loan for Pakistan

### Why in news?

- Saudi Arabia has halted the provision of oil on loan for Pakistan after the Imran Khan government threatened to split the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) over Kashmir.

### Saudi Arabia's help in 2018

- The \$3.2 billion Saudi oil facility was part of the \$6.2-billion Saudi Arabian package announced in November 2018 to ease Pakistan's external sector woe.
- Pakistan has already prematurely returned a \$1 billion Saudi loan -four months ahead of its repayment period. Pakistan could also return \$2 billion remaining Saudi cash loan, subject to availability of similar facilities from China.
- The agreement over \$3 billion cash support and \$3.2 billion oil facility per annum had the provision of renewal for two more years. Saudi Arabia has not provided the oil on deferred payments since May this year.
- The United Arab Emirates (UAE) had also announced a \$6.2 billion package for Pakistan in December 2018, including \$3.2 billion oil facility. But later on, the UAE reduced its financial assistance to \$2 billion and also shelved the plan to give a \$3.2 billion oil facility on deferred payments.

### Details

- A Pak oil ministry spokesman said that the response from the Saudi Arabian government was awaited over Pakistan's request to further extend the facility, in line with the provision of the agreement.
- In May last year, Adviser to Prime Minister on Finance Dr. Abdul Hafeez Shaikh had announced through his twitter handle that "from July 1, 2019, KSA is activating the deferred payment for petroleum products facility of \$275 million per month amounting to \$3.2 billion per year for three years".

### Saudi Arabia's issues

- Pakistan has openly challenged the OIC leadership and has threatened to pull out of OIC if the demands of a meeting on Kashmir are not met.
- The Pakistan FM even went on to say that a not BLOC of Muslim nations could be created outside of OIC.

### India-Saudi Arabia Relations

- India imports around 18 percent of its crude oil from Saudi Arabia, making it the **second-largest source of crude oil** for India (1st being Iran). India's bilateral trade with Saudi Arabia was at \$27.48 billion in 2017-18, making **Saudi Arabia it's a fourth-largest trading partner**.
- During his maiden trip to New Delhi in February 2019, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman had said that it would be **investing \$100 billion in India** in areas of energy, refining, petrochemicals, infrastructure, agriculture, minerals, and mining.
- Saudi Arabia has promised to **share more intelligence to boost counterterrorism cooperation with India**, a powerful message considering the ongoing India-Pakistan confrontation.
- India is also showing signs of overcoming its reluctance to forge security partnerships with the Gulf states whose security apparatuses had long been closely associated with Pakistan.
- Fluctuating oil prices along with the competitiveness of alternative energy sources compel Saudi Arabia to push reform measures and diversify its economy on the lines of **"Vision 2030"**. Rather than competing for resources, both nations are willing to collaborate, explore comparative advantage, and co-create value for citizens.
- Regarding India's decision to **abrogate Article 370** in Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan's desperate attempt to internationalise the issue, **Saudi Arabia has taken a positive approach vis-a-vis India** and has cautioned Pakistan against escalating the crisis.

- Good relations with Riyadh and other West Asian capitals are **essential for the welfare of the expatriate Indian community and their emergency evacuation should there be such a need.** West Asia is also an important partner in the domains of counterterrorism and maritime security in the western Indian Ocean.
- Indians in Saudi Arabia are the second-largest providers of remittances to their home country. They are also an important aspect of our soft-power diplomacy in the region.

### Pakistan-Saudi Relations

- **Both Saudi Arabia and the UAE will not go too far with India against Pakistan.** It is not just religion alone. Elite families in both countries share familial and other social connections in Pakistan.
- There have been reports that MBS is interested in Saudi Arabia getting its nuclear deterrent. If that is the case, then Pakistan is the most logical source for technical expertise.
- **Saudi Arabia always played an important role to strengthen the economy of Pakistan.** The Saudi royal said his country would collaborate with Pakistan economically, politically, and in terms of security.
- Pakistan and Saudi Arabia enjoy historic relations and these ties are very strong on the diplomatic level **Saudi Arabia has strategic interests in Pakistan given its proximity to Iran, Riyadh's archrival in the region.** The Saudis are using aid packages and investment promises to buy the economically embattled Pakistani government's loyalty and convince it to turn a blind eye to their destructive actions within Pakistan's borders.
- Not only has Saudi Arabia helped Pakistan avoid major economic crises, but it has also supported Pakistan's defense by providing logistic support and financial assistance.

### Way forward

- For a number of reasons the relationship between India and Saudi Arabia is significant but New Delhi should be careful not to make convergence on Pakistan a litmus test for further development.
- In addition, both countries' positions as power centers in their respective geographic regions mean that they share a range of other shared interests, including countering terrorism, fighting poverty, educational exchanges, and investment.
- It will be unwise for New Delhi, in the sense of this strategic and economic relationship between Saudi

Arabia away from Pakistan.

- India should instead take advantage of any benefit that accrues from India's economic relations with Saudi Arabia and should not pin much hope on Riyadh in the political-strategic sphere.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

### Notes

## Trump V/S Biden

Impact on Russia, China and Iran

By Prashant Dhawan



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

### Relevance

GS 2||International Relations||India & Rest of the world  
||USA

### Title

Trump Vs Biden US 2020 Presidential Election Impact on Russia, China, and Iran

### Why in news?

- **The American intelligence has singled out China, Russia, and Iran, warning about foreign interference in the 2020 US presidential elections.**

### US Elections

- The analysis of the three U.S. adversaries' alleged interference efforts came in a statement from William Evanina, director of the National Counterintelligence and Security Center, who said he released the information to help Americans "play a critical role in safeguarding our election."

### Details

- While many foreign actors have views on who should hold the White House, "We are primarily concerned about the ongoing and potential activity by China, Russia, and Iran," Evanina said.
- He warned that "foreign states will continue to use covert and overt influence measures in their attempts to sway U.S. voters' preferences and perspectives, shift U.S. policies, increase discord in the United States, and undermine the American people's confidence in our democratic process" ahead of the Nov. 3 election.

### Iran against Trump

- The Trump administration has also regularly condemned Iran and attacked it with punishing economic sanctions.
- Iran is likely focusing on online influence operations, including social-media disinformation campaigns and promulgating anti-American content. "Tehran's motivation to conduct such activities is, in part, driven by a perception that President Trump's re-election would result in a continuation of U.S. pressure on Iran to foment regime change," Evanina said.

### Russia and China divided on Trump

- Beijing and Moscow seem to disagree on one important issue—the US presidential elections set to take place in the first week of November. While China's preference seems to be in favour of the presumptive nominee of the Democratic Party, Joe Biden, Russia would rather have US President Donald Trump retain the White House.

### Reasons

- The US counter-intelligence chief, William Evanina, said that China was trying to undermine Donald Trump's re-election campaign and Russia was targeting his Democratic rival and former Vice President, Joe Biden.
- It is no secret that Beijing is outraged by the Trump administration's massive economic, political, and ideological offensive against China in recent months. And Moscow has struggled to overcome the deeply-held conviction among the Democrats that Russian interference was instrumental in Trump's surprising victory in the 2016 elections.

### Russia

- One major reason is that Trump understands the more Russia is isolated the more it will be pushed towards China.

### China

- Evanina's statement said that China wants Trump to lose in part because Beijing sees him as "unpredictable."
- "China has been expanding its influence efforts ahead of November 2020 to shape the policy environment in the United States, pressure political figures it views as opposed to China's interests, and deflect and counter-criticism of China.



## Comparison between democracies of USA and India

- India and the USA are largely acknowledged as the World's largest and oldest democracies respectively. They share many similarities – after all the idea of democracy and some of the key ideas of the Indian constitution are inspired by the US. However, there are many differences as well in respect of few ideals and the way both the nations have gone on to realize them.
- The system of governance adopted in the US is presidential while in India it is parliamentary. This is the single most important visible difference. Both models have some benefits and compromises:
  - In India, the government of the day must have a majority in Lok Sabha which ensures that the executive is tied to the legislature through an umbilical cord that cannot be cut, thus making it more accountable.
  - The US system gives primacy to stability over accountability. There is no concept of mid-term elections in the US. In India, it is the opposite case which might make the executive populist.
  - The system allows the US president to bring subject experts as secretaries of various departments which is not possible in India.
  - The executive in the Indian system is more representative in nature forming a minuscule India while representation can be entirely disregarded by US President.
  - Through the Indian Parliamentary system, there will not be any deadlock on key issues related to the day-to-day running of the country especially finances. However, in the US a deadlock between Executive and Legislature may culminate in the shut-down of the economy.
  - The US presidential system promotes national integration as citizens think at the national level rather than local issues
- US federal system is considered much evolved – It even allows dual citizenship. Indian federalism, on the other hand, is based on the concept of “Indestructible union of destructible states” and has strong unitary characteristics
- There is a clear and rigid separation of power among various organs of government in the US. In India, the separation is blurred and is still evolving
- The concept of Secularism is understood differently in two nations. While in the US it is a strict separation of state and church, in India it is the accommodation of all faiths.
- Despite being a liberal country India attains utmost importance to the upliftment of poor and embrace

- Further, there is a debate on whether the US is truly the oldest democracy. India, immediately after its birth in 1950 embraced democracy by adopting Universal Franchise. The US could become a complete democracy only much later in the early 1960s.

## Impact of US elections on the world economy

- The current state of the U.S. and global economies (August 2016), and policy preferences of the presidential contenders, will have a significant influence on the decisions that will be made during the next administration and what they will mean for markets.
- A new administration's significant change in U.S. budget policies and economic growth incentives would likely have a strong influence on the possibility of interest rate increases by the Federal Reserve and subsequent knock-on effects for major global markets, such as debt, equities, currencies, and commodities. However, there has been a tepid pace of growth with a continued fragility of the U.S. economic recovery. This means that, regardless of who wins the election, the next administration will likely remain hesitant to make abrupt changes in policy. As a result, any corresponding changes in the interest rate stance by the Fed should remain gradual.
- However, investors should be prepared for the possibility of a short- or longer-term shift in the current market sentiment before or after the vote should market suddenly show any unforeseen uncertainties about the candidates' positions.

## Mains model question

- India and the USA are the two large democracies. Examine the basic tenets on which the two political systems are based.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

## Mahinda Rajapaksa victory Impact on India-Sri Lanka relations



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

### Relevance

GS 2||International Relations||India & it's Neighbours || Sri Lanka

### Title

Mahinda Rajapaksa becomes Sri Lanka's new PM, Impact on India Sri Lanka relations explained

### Why in news?

- The Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) has recorded a massive victory with 145 seats, just five seats short of a two-thirds majority, in the parliamentary elections held this week.
- The parliament election results has once again proven that Mahinda Rajapaksa is the most popular majority Sinhala Buddhist leader of independent Sri Lanka.

### The results

- President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and his brother, who is former two-term President Mahinda Rajapaksa, have registered a landslide victory in Sri Lanka's parliamentary election.
- Rajapaksa brothers lead Sri Lanka People's Freedom Alliance (SLPFA), of which their Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) is a majority stakeholder.
- The alliance won at least 145 seats, out of a total of 225 in the unicameral legislature. (2/3 majority -151).

### Forecast of things to come

- Rajapaksa family strengthening its grip on Sri Lanka.
- SLPP no longer needs to enter into compromises with other parties to bring sweeping constitutional changes to increase the powers of the president.
- They might remove the two-term limit on the presidency.

- They may dilute the 19th SL Constitutional Amendment act 2015 which limited presidents' powers and distributed powers to PM, Parliament, and other institutions.
- Continuing centralisation of power may lead to rising authoritarianism.
- Possible tensions with the Tamil minority.
- Gotabaya presidential elections in 2019 and SLPP in 2020 elections enjoyed huge majoritarian support from ethnic Sinhalese.

### Areas of cooperation Diplomatic Cooperation

- Diplomatic relations between India and Sri Lanka are marked by visits of high-level government functionaries.
- A notable diplomatic event in the recent past was our Indian Prime Minister's address to the Sri Lankan parliament in 2015
- India-Sri Lanka Joint Commission was established in 1992. The commission facilitates discussions relating to bilateral affairs of both the countries
- India and Sri Lanka signed a civilian nuclear energy deal in 2015. The agreement aims at cooperation to explore nuclear energy for peaceful purposes

### Fishermen Issue

- The constant and frequent issue of fishermen and recently Indian fishermen were picked up by the Sri Lankan Navy. The fishermen dispute is inevitable between neighbours. Indian Fishermen entering Sri Lankan water is not with any particular intention. What is important is that the two governments and the fishermen associations of both sides must take care of these incidents and can be contained.
- Both countries have **signed an MOU** to equip the fishermen and give them nets and necessary things to help them carry out their trade better and more peacefully.
- Sri Lanka has taken the position that big fishing trawlers should not be used which is scientific and without which we may lose the fish yield.

### Defence

- Colombo and New Delhi have a long history of security cooperation. In recent years, the two sides have steadily increased their military-to-military relationship.
- India and Sri Lanka conduct joint Military ('Mitra Shakti') and Naval exercise (SLINEX).

- India also provides defence training to Sri Lankan forces.
- A trilateral maritime security cooperation agreement was signed by India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives to improve surveillance, anti-piracy operations and reducing maritime pollution in the Indian Ocean Region.

### Cultural and Educational Relations

- The **Cultural Cooperation Agreement** signed by the two Governments on 29 November 1977, forms the basis for periodic Cultural Exchange Programmes between the two countries.
- The **Indian Cultural Centre in Colombo** actively promotes awareness of Indian culture by offering classes in Indian music, dance, Hindi and Yoga. Every year, cultural troupes from both countries exchange visits.
- India and Sri Lanka commemorated the 2600th year of the attainment of enlightenment by Lord Buddha (Sambuddhathva Jayanthi) through joint activities.
- The two Governments also celebrated the 150th Anniversary of Anagarika Dharmapala in 2014.
- The **India-Sri Lanka Foundation**, set up in December 1998 as an intergovernmental initiative, also aims towards enhancement of scientific, technical, educational and cultural cooperation through civil society exchanges and enhancing contact between the younger generations of the two countries.
- Government of India formally launched the **e-Tourist Visa (eTV) scheme** for Sri Lankan tourists on 14 April 2015 to increase the people to people contact.

### Significance of the relations

- The Two leaders of India and Sri Lanka agreed to remain in close touch as both countries address the challenges posed by Covid-19 pandemic and resolved to take bilateral relations to newer heights in the coming days.
- India shares a common cultural and security space with the countries in the South Asian region especially Sri Lanka.
- Sri Lanka's location in the Indian Ocean region as an island State has been of strategic geopolitical relevance to several major powers.
- As a prominent Asian nation with critical national interests in South Asia, India has a special responsibility to ensure peace and stability in its closest neighbourhood.

- India needs the support of Sri Lanka to emerge as a Bluewater navy in the Indian Ocean and also in pursuing the permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).
- China's string of pearls strategy is aimed at encircling India to establish dominance in the Indian Ocean. Post-2015, Sri Lanka still relies heavily on China for Port city project and the continuation of Chinese funded infrastructure projects in Sri Lanka.
- Sri Lanka's location can thus serve both commercial and industrial purposes and be used as a military base.
- Trade between the two has grown rapidly after the entry into force of FTA in 2000.

### Issues and conflicts

- In recent years, China has extended billions of dollars of loans to the Sri Lankan government for new infrastructure projects, which is not good for India's strategic depth in the Indian Ocean Region.
- Sri Lanka also handed over the strategic port of Hambantota, which is expected to play a key role in China's Belt and Road Initiative, to China on a 99-year lease.
- The opposition parties and trade unions in Sri Lanka have already dubbed the port deal as a sellout of their country's national assets to China.
- China has also supplied arms as well as provide huge loans to Sri Lanka for its development.
- China also invested sufficiently in the infrastructure of Sri Lanka, which included building of Colombo international container terminal by China Harbor Corporation.
- However, the relation between Sri Lanka and India are improving. In order to allay Indian concerns that the Hambantota port will not be used for military purposes, the Sri Lankan government has sought to limit China's role to running commercial operations at the port while it retains oversight of security operations.

### Way forward

- India cannot match the deep pockets of the Chinese.
- However, we can counter China with cultural diplomacy and soft power. India needs to focus more on its traditional and cultural ties to improve relations with Sri Lanka.
- Starting of ferry services between India and Sri Lanka can improve people to people linkages.
- Mutual recognition of each other's concerns and

interests can improve the relationship between both countries.

- India needs to leverage our proximity to Sri Lanka and expose the Chinese debt trap to open SL's eyes.

### Mains model question

- Elucidate upon the key areas of cooperation between India and Sri Lanka while commenting on the significance of the relations between the two countries upon the South Asian region at large



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

### Notes



## UAE-Israel to Establish Relations

By Prashant Dhawan



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

### Relevance

GS 2|| International Relations|| India & Rest of the world ||West Asia

### Title

UAE Israel to Establish Relations with Abraham Accord

### Why in news?

- Israel and the United Arab Emirates have announced an agreement that will lead to full normalisation of diplomatic relations between the two states, a move that reshapes the order of West Asia politics from the Palestinian issue to Iran. The agreement will be known as Abraham Accords.

### Israel-United Arab Emirates accord

- It will be known as the "Abraham Accord."
- Abraham was the father of all three great faiths. He is referred to as "Abraham" in the Christian faith, "Ibrahim" in the Muslim faith, and "Avraham" in the Jewish faith.

### Details

- The international recognition of Israel refers to the diplomatic recognition of the State of Israel, which was established by the Israeli Declaration of Independence on 14 May 1948.
- Israel's sovereignty is disputed by some countries. 163 of the 193 UN member states recognize Israel, 31 UN member states do not recognize Israel.
- These include 16 of the 22 members of the Arab League: Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen.

### Overview of the agreement

- **Trilateral agreement:** The agreement was the product of lengthy discussions between Israel, the UAE and the US that accelerated recently.
- Under the accord, **Israel has agreed to suspend annexing areas of the occupied West Bank** as it had been planning to do.
- It also firms up **opposition to regional power Iran**, which the UAE, Israel and the US view as the main threat in the region.

### Clauses of this agreement

- The deal states that UAE would **recognise the state of Israel** and establish formal diplomatic relations with it, while Israel would halt its controversial plan to annex swathes of the Palestinian West Bank.
- In the next few weeks, Israel and the UAE will **finalise bilateral ties** and cover areas of investment, tourism, security, technology, energy, environmental issues, and the establishment of embassies, in addition to other areas of cooperation.
- The joint statement mentioned that Israel and the UAE would also be "forging closer people-to-people relations".
- The statement also said that Israel will focus its efforts now on **expanding ties with other countries in the Arab and Muslim world** and that the US and UAE would be assisting it in achieving that goal.

### Significance of the agreement

- The agreement shows how the Arab countries are gradually **decoupling themselves from the Palestine question**
- The deal buys UAE a lot of goodwill in the US, where its image has been tarnished by its involvement in the Yemen war  
Other gulf states in the region like Bahrain and Oman could follow suit and sign similar agreements with Israel
- If the Arab states do fall in line, it would dramatically bring all Sunni nations in the region in an anti-Iran alliance with Israel
- **In South Asia, it will put Pakistan in a bind**, whether to follow UAE's steps (will be seen as giving up Islamic cause of Palestine) or not to follow UAE (since it is already in a feud with the Saudis over not taking up Kashmir case, Pakistan cannot afford another hostile Islamic Country)

### What do the Palestinians think about this?

- Palestinians have long relied on Arab backing in their struggle for independence.
- This announcement marked both a win and a setback.
  - It is a win as the deal halts Israeli annexation plans
  - It is a setback as Palestinians have repeatedly urged Arab governments not to normalise ties with Israel until a peace agreement establishing an independent Palestinian state is reached.
- Palestine contends that **UAE has moved away from the Arab Peace Initiative:**
- It is a Saudi Arabia initiative endorsed by the Arab League that offered recognition to Israel in exchange for its full withdrawal from the occupied territories (returning to pre-1967 borders)

#### Joint Statement of the United States, the State of Israel, and the United Arab Emirates

President Donald J. Trump, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel, and Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the United Arab Emirates spoke today and agreed to the full normalization of relations between Israel and the United Arab Emirates.

This historic diplomatic breakthrough will advance peace in the Middle East region and is a testament to the bold diplomacy and vision of the three leaders and the courage of the United Arab Emirates and Israel to chart a new path that will unlock the great potential in the region. All three countries face many common challenges and will mutually benefit from today's historic achievement.

Delegations from Israel and the United Arab Emirates will meet in the coming weeks to sign bilateral agreements regarding investment, tourism, direct flights, security, telecommunications, technology, energy, healthcare, culture, the environment, the establishment of reciprocal embassies, and other areas of mutual benefit. Opening direct ties between two of the Middle East's most dynamic societies and advanced economies will transform the region by spurring economic growth, enhancing technological innovation, and forging closer people-to-people relations.

### International Relations

- Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu hailed the deal to normalise ties between the Jewish state and the UAE.
- "Today a new era began in the relations between Israel and the Arab world," he said at a televised press conference.
- The UAE said its deal with Israel was "a bold step" to secure a two-state solution to the long-running Israel-Palestinian conflict.
- "Most countries will see this as a bold step to secure a two-state solution, allowing time for negotiations," the UAE's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Anwar Gargash told a press conference.
- Asked when the two countries will open embassies, he said he did not want to speculate on the time-frame "but it is not a long time".
- The Gaza Strip's Islamist leaders Hamas rejected the agreement, saying it did not serve the Palestinian cause.
- "The agreement with the UAE is a reward for the Israeli occupation and crimes," Hamas spokesman Hazem Qasem

- Iran's Tasnimnews agency, which is affiliated to the country's elite Revolutionary Guards, said the Israel-UAE deal was "shameful".
- Iran's clerical leaders have yet to react to the agreement.
- Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi praised the US-brokered deal between Israel and the UAE.
- "I read with interest and great appreciation the joint statement between the United States, the brotherly United Arab Emirates, and Israel concerning the halt of Israel's annexation of Palestinian land," Sisi said in a tweet, adding that this would help bring "peace" to the Middle East.

### Israel-Turkey relations

- Israeli-Turkish relations are the bilateral ties between the State of Israel and the Republic of Turkey.
- Israel-Turkey relations were formalized in March 1949. Turkey was the first Muslim majority country to recognize the State of Israel.

### Turkey's recognition to Israel

- Turkey was the first Muslim country to recognize Israeli statehood back in 1948. The years that followed brought a slew of economic agreements.
- Turkey exports automobiles, iron, steel, electrical devices, and plastic to Israel. And in return, it imports Israeli fuel and oil.
- Turkish exports to Israel have continued to grow over the last several years. They were at about \$2.5 billion (€2.1 billion) in 2016.
- Total trade between Turkey and Israel 5.6 billion dollars.

### Great news for India

- India's diplomacy in West Asia is expected to get a boost following the historic agreement between Israel and UAE brokered by the USA as Delhi enjoys close ties with both these countries. While India is yet to formally react to the landmark development, Delhi that has championed a two-state solution will be satisfied that the deal will prevent further annexation of Palestinian territory, according to sources familiar with the region.
- India is among the few countries that has been able to maintain equal strong ties with all parties: Arabs and Israelis; Israelis and Iranians; Iranians and the

- Gulf states. Hallmark of Indian policy has been a balanced approach which saw India taking no sides in some of the protracted issues in the region.
- An international organization founded in 1969, consisting of 57 member states

### Turkey's Stand

- Turkey has threatened to suspend its diplomatic relations with the United Arab Emirates and recall its envoy, a day after the Gulf state announced it would become the third Arab country to establish full ties with Israel.
- "The move against Palestine is not a step that can be stomached," President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan told reporters
- He said he had told his foreign minister that "we may also take a step in the direction of suspending diplomatic ties with the Abu Dhabi leadership or pulling back our ambassador".
- Erdoğan has increasingly styled himself as the Palestinians' lone regional champion, despite his country having diplomatic relations with Israel for decades.
- In 2018, Erdoğan calls on Muslim countries to unite and confront Israel.
- Erdoğan is trying to win the support of the larger Muslim population around the world by supporting Palestine and criticising UAE
- Erdogan has already been named the most popular Muslim leader in the world.
- This statement by Erdoğan against UAE is a direct challenge to the gulf countries regarding the leadership of the Muslim world
- In recent times Turkey has tried to cozy up to Iran and Pakistan to form a new bloc outside of OIC's influence

### UAE-Turkey bitter relations

- In August 2017, the UAE accused Turkey of "colonial and competitive behaviour" by **"trying to reduce the sovereignty of the Syrian state"** through its military presence in Syria.
- The UAE has provided support for the Kurdish-dominated Syrian Democratic Forces, which fought against Turkish troops in northern Syria.

### Qatar diplomatic crisis

- The UAE has been critical of Turkey's backing of Qatar during the 2017–18 Qatar diplomatic crisis.

### Pakistan's stance

- Drafted response from the Pakistan Foreign Office that the UAE-Israel deal "is a development with far-reaching implications".  
Pakistan Government has made it clear that it will not accept Israel for a very long time as they connected the Israel–Palestine issue with the Kashmir dispute with India

### How this benefits India

- Israel is a huge exporter of arms and ammunition
- As Pakistan has decided never to establish relations with Israel it paves way for India to form long-term defence relations with Israeli defence companies
- Unlike Russia that recently decided to sell some military-grade helicopters to Pakistan, India will never face such an issue with Israel

### Russia Pakistan 2015 deal

- Pakistan, Russia signs a landmark defence deal in 2015. This deal includes the sale of four **Mi-35 'Hind E'** attack helicopters to Pakistan. Russia is also interested in joining CPEC, which will benefit CPEC and strengthen Pakistan's economy.
- There are speculations about more deals.

### Further Developments

- After UAE's recognition of Israel, speculations are rife about further developments
- Donald Trump expects Saudi Arabia to join UAE-Israel deal
- The Saudi reaction to Trump's idea
  - "Peace must be achieved with the Palestinians"
  - Prince Faisal said - "Once that is achieved all things are possible,"
  - Three countries that could be next to make peace with Israel
  - Bahrain was long thought to be the first country in the Gulf that might normalize relations with Israel.
  - Oman In October 2018, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made a trip to Oman and met with Sultan Qaboos bin Said.

- Morocco is reported to be one of the states on the shortlist of opening relations with Israel in the near term.

### Conclusion

- Recognising a country means accepting their existence and establishing some form of diplomatic relations
- It also opens the opportunity of citizens of the recognised country to visit the recogniser country. Both nations can also initiate trade ties
- The Palestinian leadership, on its part, should understand the emerging reality in West Asia - the Arab-Israel conflict is coming to a close, but the Palestine-Israel conflict is to continue without any respite.

### Mains model question

- Does India support the establishment of a sovereign independent state of Palestine? Discuss.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

### Notes



# Foreign Policy of India



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

## Relevance

GS 2||International Relations||Indian Foreign Policy|| principles of IFP

## Title

Foreign Policy of India post-Covid 19, Why Self Reliant Foreign Policy is need of the hour for India

## Why in news?

- Self-reliance was the theme of India's 74th Independence Day.
- India has historically prided itself as an independent developing country which does not take orders from or succumb to pressure from great powers.

## Details

- It is important to note that, even in the geopolitical circumstances that compelled India to enter into alliance-like cooperation with major powers, it did not become any less autonomous or allied with any great power.
- Whether the world order was bipolar (1947 to 1991), unipolar (1991 to 2008), the need for autonomy in making foreign policy choices has remained constant.
- The economic goal is to reduce dependence on imports for critical commodities, the aim of foreign policy should be to maintain strategic autonomy.

## Flexibility in Strategic Autonomy

- Adherence to strategic autonomy was the main pillar of Foreign Policy for India. It has, however, been often adapted to the changing geopolitical circumstances in history. India has reinterpreted independence in moments of crisis and many instances demonstrated versatility for survival. To give an example:

## ➤ India-China War (1962)

- Initially, India founded the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM) (1961) in search of strategic autonomy. It marked the height of solidarity with the third world.
- However, during the 1962 war between India and China, India had to apply to the U.S. for immediate military assistance to avoid the Chinese from taking over Eastern India as a whole.
- In moments of crisis, India has reinterpreted freedom and shown flexibility for survival. During the 1962 war with China, the high priest of non-alignment, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, had to appeal to the U.S. for emergency military aid to stave off the Chinese from "taking over the whole of Eastern India."

## ➤ India -Pakistan war(1971)

- In the build-up to the 1971 war with Pakistan, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had to enter a Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviet Union to ward off both China and the U.S.
- Today, although there is no prospect of outright war with China in the wake of its incursions across the Line of Actual Control, India is at an inflection point with regard to strategic autonomy.
- Non-alignment 2.0 with China and the U.S., as they slide into a new Cold War, makes little sense when India's security and sovereignty are being challenged primarily by the former rather than the latter.

## ➤ Kargil War (1999)

- India welcomed a direct intervention by the U.S. to force Pakistan to back down.

## Present Day Scenario

- **Danger From China:** Today, though in the aftermath of its incursions across the Line of Actual Control there are fewer prospects for a direct war with China, India is at a turning point in terms of strategic autonomy.
- China's aggressive foreign policy may require India to bandwagon (cooperating with like-minded countries) to bring China into balance.
- **Current Cold War-like situation:** The New Cold War scenario has developed a dangerous climate in which China and the United States are now starting to tackle many areas such as the Trade War and the South China Sea.
- India can promote new multilateralism under the aegis of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam- which relies on restructuring both the economic order and societal behaviour for equitable sustainable development.

### ➤ **Fear of losing strategic autonomy to the U.S.:**

Fears in some quarters that proximity to the U.S. will lead to loss of India's strategic autonomy. However, it seems overblown because independent India has never been subordinated to foreign hegemony.

### **The essence of self-reliance**

- In the threat environment marked by a pushy China, which the U.S. is now beginning to confront frontally, India should aim to have the proverbial cake of American support and also eat the cake i.e., stay as an independent power centre by means of intensified cooperation with middle powers in Asia and around the world.
- For India, which values freedom, placing all its eggs in the U.S. basket to counterbalance China would be an error, as that can constrict India's options in other theatres of national interest such as its ties with Iran and Russia and efforts to speed up indigenous defence modernisation.
- **Diversification is the essence of self-reliance.** A wide basket of strategic partners, including the U.S., with a sharper focus on constraining China, is the only viable diplomatic way forward in the current emerging multipolar world order.
- We are free and self-reliant not through isolation or alliance with one great power, but only in variable combinations with several like-minded partners.
- India is familiar with the phrase 'multi-vector' foreign policy. It is time to maximize its potential.

### **Lessons from other Asian countries**

- Experience and achievements in other countries in Asia attest to this, and also contradict the notion that self-reliance is a hangover from Nehruvian 'socialism'.
- Learning from Japan's post-war success, countries like South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong took huge technological and industrial strides in the 1970s and 80s.
- South Korea, in particular, climbed determinedly up the technology ladder and value chains in electronic goods, consumer durables, automobiles, micro-processors, personal computers, and heavy machinery.
- China is, of course, **unique in scale and in its determination** to become a superpower not just geopolitically but also in **self-reliant S&T and industrial capability**.

- China advanced purposefully from low-end mass manufacturing to a dominant role in global supply chains.
- It has now decided on shifting to advanced manufacturing and has set itself a target of becoming a world leader by 2035 in 5G, supercomputing, Internet of Things, artificial intelligence (AI), autonomous vehicles, biotech/pharma and other technologies of the '**fourth industrial revolution**'.

### **Way forward**

- **The revival of Non-Alignment:** Non-Alignment 2.0 with China and the U.S. is the solution as they slide into a New Cold War, risking India's security and sovereignty.
- **Independent and indigenous security modernization:** India is reliant for its security requirement on many foreign players (such as the U.S., Russia, etc.), which does not pave well for the national interest.
- Hence it is imperative to accelerate the modernisation of indigenous security.
- Furthermore, indigenization of the defence takes on greater significance, especially in the sense of counterbalancing China.
- Diversification in strategic partners: The present-day geopolitical and geostrategic circumstances present a multifaceted challenge to India's foreign policy.
- Therefore, India's cold war narrative of strategic neutrality is being gradually replaced by strategic hedging.
- In a multipolar world, India should not limit its engagements with Russia, the US and China but expand its relationship with other countries of the EU, ASEAN etc.

### **Mains model question**

- India too needs to incentivize its companies to take advantage, both for design and manufacturing. However, a smooth transition will be difficult in the short run. In the long run, there is a silver lining Indian telecom and electronics industry can witness a huge transformation. With China no longer a prominent part of the supply chain, India has a golden opportunity to transform the industry. Discuss

(Scan the QR code to watch the video)



## India-Bangladesh Maritime Connectivity

by Rahul Saigaonker



#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

### Relevance

GS 2|| International Relations|| India & it's Neighbours|| Bangladesh

### Title

India Bangladesh Maritime Connectivity - Goods transshipment trial successfully conducted

### Why in news?

- The India-Bangladesh maritime connectivity has been given a major boost with the successful trial of the transshipment of goods to India's north-eastern States via the Chittagong port.
- In July 2020, MV Shejyoti, a ship with cargo for Bangladeshi businesses and also four containers bound for Indian States of Tripura and Assam, set sail from the **Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Port** at Haldia in West Bengal, India, for Chittagong. The journey was historic since this was the first trial of the transshipment facility to India's landlocked north-eastern region via the Chittagong port.

### Background

- **1972:** India-Bangladesh already have an Inland Water Trade and Transit treaty and a protocol that was first signed in 1972.
- As per the Protocol, inland vessels of one country can transit through the specified routes of the other country.
- Time and again to this protocol, new routes and new ports of call are being added.
- **In 2010,** India and Bangladesh signed a transit agreement to use Chattogram & Mongla.
- **In 2015,** Under the Coastal shipping agreement, MoU for the above was formalised.
- **In 2018,** a bilateral agreement was signed to allow the use of Chittagong and Mongla ports for the purpose, the current transshipment is an outcome of this.

- **In 2019,** standard operating procedures were finalised during PM Sheikh Hasina's visit to India. The SOP allows transshipment of goods from Chittagong and Mongla on four road, rail, and water routes to
  - Agartala (Tripura) via Akhaura
  - Dawki (Meghalaya) via Tamabil
  - Sutarkandi (Assam) via Sheila
  - Srimantpur (Tripura) via Bibirbazar
- In May 2020, the two countries have signed an addendum to the protocol, adding 2 new routes and 5 new ports of calls on each side.
- Currently, the Inland water protocol has a total of 10 routes and 11 ports of calls on each side.

### The Benefits - Bangladesh

- Experts feel that this facility will contribute to enhancing business services and revenue generation in Bangladesh.
- It is expected to help Bangladesh in job-creation and investment in the logistical sector since Bangladeshi vessels and trucks will be utilised to move the Indian cargo.
- Indian cargo also has to pay requisite taxes to use the facility in Bangladesh.
- The facility is considered to be the first step in fulfilling the present Awami League government's desire to transform Bangladesh into a connectivity hub.

### The Benefits - India

- Bangladesh is likely to get the monetary benefit but India is going to get much more...!!
- Access to Chittagong and Mongla ports has been a phenomenal step. It is going to enhance the connectivity to NER which has been India's Achilles heel.
- It will also help India to achieve its goals of Act East policy.

### The Mutual Benefits

- The beginning of this transshipment facility is a telling example of Cooperative attitude between nations
- Two nations' vision to strengthen the bilateral connectivity and develop a mutually-beneficial partnership
- In this complex sub-regional geopolitics, India and Bangladesh provide a unique model of good-neighbourly relationship.

## Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal Initiative

It is an initiative to kick-start a smaller 'Eastern' sub-regional grouping with the potential to act as a link between South and Southeast Asia. Reasons for India's willingness are threefold

- To strengthen trade relations with the Eastern (Bangladesh) and North Eastern (Bhutan and Nepal) neighboring countries.
- To improve the sub-regional connectivity in order to realise regional connectivity goals with South-east Asia.
- To develop the North Eastern Region of India through cross-border cooperation.

## Bangladesh - India's

- India's trade with Bangladesh in **2017-18 was \$9 billion**, of which, nearly **70%** was transacted across the land customs stations.
- The **24x7 operationalisation** of the integrated check-post last year has given a further impetus to trade, though teething troubles remain.
- India exports cotton, vehicles, and cereals to Bangladesh and imports textiles and apparel from there.
- India and Bangladesh must manage their geopolitical realities through friendship and collaboration.
- They should appreciate and balance regional political realities for the interest of the people and should not trade off long-term interests for short-term gains.
- Pluralism has been the strength of the Indian sub-continent so that should be kept in mind to be able to celebrate South Asia's diversities in religion, ethnicity, and language.

## Transport Infrastructure

- To galvanize trade through the north-eastern region, a mix of infrastructure investments and trade facilitation measures are warranted.
- A blueprint of transnational multi-modal connectivity projects has already been prepared and several of these projects are already being executed. Kaladan Multimodal highway and the **"North Eastern Railway Link"** project for connecting Aizawl and Imphal are some of the significant ones.
- Work for construction of broad gauge connectivity from **Agartala to Akhaura** near Chittagong has recently been awarded.

- A north-eastern economic corridor is proposed under the Bharatmala project for enhanced intra-regional connectivity.
- Further, Multi-modal freight movement is also proposed through seven waterway terminals on the Brahmaputra.

## Supporting Infrastructure

- Developing a robust supply chain and logistics infrastructure is vital for ensuring a smooth and functional transportation network.
- Centre has already notified logistics as an infrastructure investment and logistics hubs across the north-eastern region are likely to be developed soon.
- India could also emulate the Chinese model of establishing production centres near the border to penetrate cross-border markets.
- "Land Port Authority of India" has declared its intent to take over all land customs stations and upgrade them to integrated check-posts.
- These initiatives need to be supported with IT infrastructure, quality testing labs, quarantine facilities for agricultural trade, banking, and forex services.

## Way forward

- India and Bangladesh share a great relationship, areas of concern remain which need to be looked into holistically and ratified as soon as possible so that **"best of the best"** of ties between the two neighbours can be sustained forever.
- The India-Bangladesh connectivity is not only aimed at improving the movement of goods and people bilaterally but also has a vision for deepening sub-regional cooperation, primarily Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Nepal (BBIN) quadrilateral cooperation.
- The recently added port at Jogikhopa is expected to facilitate inland water connectivity to Bhutan.
- In this complex sub-regional geopolitics, India and Bangladesh provide a unique model of good-neighbourly relationship, anchored in the vision of peaceful co-existence and sharing a prosperous neighbourhood by growing together hand-in-hand.

## Mains model question

Highlight the areas of concern in India-Bangladesh relationship and suggest measures to improve them.





(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

### Notes

## India Nepal to build 2nd Petroleum Pipeline

By Prashant Dhawan



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

### Relevance

GS 2||International Relations||India & its Neighbours||Nepal

### Title

India Nepal to build 2nd Petroleum Pipeline

### Why in news?

- K.P Oli seems to have prevailed in his political struggle within his political party.
- A statement released by Prachanda last week has indicated that Oli will remain as prime minister for the full five-year term. As a solution to the intra-party rift, Oli's role in party affairs will be curtailed

### Current dynamics

- The current political solution will provide some stability between India and Nepal relations for the time being.
- The atmosphere of mistrust between India and Nepal over border issues has not impacted energy sector cooperation between the two countries.
- The two sides are now exploring whether state-owned Indian Oil Corporation could look at another product pipeline running into the northern and eastern parts of the country.

### Existing pipeline

- The existing Motihari-Amlekhgunj petroleum products pipeline has become the lifeline for Nepal for meeting its energy needs.



### Details

- Before the opening of the pipeline, petroleum products were being transported from India to Nepal by tankers/trucks at 13 pick-up points (7 for products and 6 for LPG). The Raxaul-Birgunj was the most important trade point between the two countries but the pipeline has reduced the movement of tanker trucks from these points to consumption centres in Nepal.

### The outcome of the Meeting

- The discussion on extending the network of petroleum pipeline and setting up new pipelines was discussed during the meeting of a joint working group early this month. The meeting organised through video conferencing was attended by top government officials from the Indian side including representatives from IndianOil, GAIL, and HPCL.
- The Nepalese side was represented by the Ministries of Finance and Foreign Affairs of Nepal and Nepal Oil Corporation (NOC).
- A team of officials would soon visit Nepal to explore the possible routes for a new product pipeline. This would be followed by establishing feasibility studies before investment decisions are worked out. There is potential for expanding the pipeline network that would bring a lot of savings for the Himalayan country.

## Importance

- India must create goodwill in the minds of the Nepali masses to ensure strong ties between the two countries.
- Several reports suggest that China has been paying NGOs in Nepal to write negatively about India-Nepal relations.

## India- Nepal Relations

- **India Nepal relations have been on a constant downward spiral since the Chinese ambassador to Nepal helped saved the Oli Government.**
- Since Chinese antiprevention in **Nepal politics**, Nepal has openly said Hong Kong belongs to China and has even supported the recent law China introduced in HK.
- Nepali PM constantly kept saying that most Corona-virus cases are coming from India and even went on to say that the Indian virus is more dangerous than the Chinese virus.
- **Constant verbal attacks on Indian Chief Ministers and the Indian army chief from Nepal.**
- Although we cannot say for certain that the recent border incident where an Indian was killed is the action of the bad relations brewing between India and Nepal. It could very well be a local issue.

## Nepal China border

- The border between China and Nepal is 1,414 kilometres (879 mi) in length
- **Five Fingers of Tibet**
  - The Five Fingers of Tibet is a Chinese strategy attributed to Mao Zedong which considers Tibet to be China's right-hand palm, with five fingers on its periphery-**Ladakh, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, and Arunachal Pradesh.**

## Nepal -India (UP) border dispute

- **Susta territory** is an area under territorial dispute currently in **Tribeni Susta, Lumbini Zone, Nepal, and near Nichlaul, Uttar Pradesh, India.** The area under dispute totals over **14,000 hectares (140 km<sup>2</sup>)** that Nepal claims.

## Another aspect-The uncertain Nepal politics

- Former PM and Communist Party president Prachanda has said that on every front, KP Oli has been unsuccessful and he should resign from the post of Prime Minister of Nepal.
- However, KP Oli has refused to resign from the post despite the raging internal conflict in the party. After his refusal, Prachanda even threatened to divide the ruling Communist Party.

## Power-sharing issue- Pushpa Kamal and Dahal and K.P Oli Why is it bad for India?

- To stay in power, K.P Oli will require support from the Chinese Communist Party. We have earlier seen how the Chinese envoy helped save K.P Oli's government a few months ago.
- So if another political crisis emerges it will only increase K.P Oli's dependence on China.
- India needs to tread very carefully as its larger national interests could be badly affected if China encroaches more land in Nepal.

## Nepal's support for China

- During all this Nepal suddenly stated that it supports China in the ongoing Hong Kong issue. Nepal believes in non-interference in the internal affairs of any country and supports China's efforts to maintain law and order in Hong Kong.
- **Nepal blamed India that it created an artificial river.**
- Nepal's House of Representatives on Saturday unanimously passed a Constitutional amendment revising the map on its coat of arms to include three areas of **Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiyadhura.**

## Developments

- **2014**
  - Nepal and India have agreed to set up a boundary working group at the surveyors-general level to settle some boundary issues, including Susta and Kalapani, and maintain and renovate border pillars.
- **2019**
  - Matters of bilateral Boundary issues were discussed in a meeting with Foreign Secretary of India Mr Vijay Gokhale with Ambassador Mr. Nilamber Acharya.
  - **EAM S Jaishankar was on a two days visit to Kathmandu.**

### ► 2020

- After the abolition of article 370, India released a new map.
- Nepal objected to the new map but still did not do anything drastic.
- The Nepal government has formed a nine-member team of experts to collect historical facts and evidence related to the country's claim to Kalapani, Lipulekh, and Limpiyadhura.
- The team is tasked with finding the original or attested copies of documents related to the Nepal-India border, including the evidence regarding the northwest boundary of the country.

### The lipu lekh pass road

- The LipuLekh pass road was a huge development for India. It not just was a boost for pilgrims but would also help military activities near India -China border

### A question ?

- Why didn't Nepal release new map right after India released a new map?
- Why did Nepal need the lipu lekh road event to suddenly strain relations with India by producing a new map?



### Reason

- Because by then the Chinese involvement in Nepal's politics had deepened a lot.
- Nepal's PM Oli was about to lose his power within the party, but the Chinese envoy jumped in a micro-managed the entire Communist party of Nepal

### India's reaction to Nepal

- "This artificial enlargement of claims is not based on historical facts or evidence and is not tenable. It is also violative of our current understanding to hold talks on outstanding boundary issues,"

### Plans to make the issue international

- Will India ever give up control over the territory claimed by Nepal?
  - Unlikely and certainly not under any compulsion. Nepali nationalists may like to believe that passing a constitutional amendment, roping in the support of China, or internationalising the issue at the United Nations will force India to back down.
  - But it is doubtful that any realist in Kathmandu, especially Prime Minister Oli, is under the illusion that Delhi will cave into any such demands or coercion.

### Area of confrontation

- Increasing Chinese influence in Nepal. It has joined the BRI. As Nepal has geographical feasibility with India but due to high investment by China, it is shifting its tilt. Even China is building railway till Kathmandu.
- China has offered TIANJIN port to Nepal which is geographically and distance wise not feasible.
- Constitution provision of Nepal are opposed by India. Citizenship Issue and also representation of Tharu, Madhesi, Janjati etc. in Tarai region is cause of concern because of they have cultural relations with UP and Bihar
- Nepal has accused India of Economic Blockade.
- Kalapani boundary dispute with Nepal.
- During Nepal earthquake in 2015, Indian media was criticized by Nepalese People.
- Demonetization has also affected the Nepalese economy.
- Nepal accused India of its big brotherly attitude. Nepal is denying Gorkhas to join Indian Army.

### Solution

- Nepal has suggested 2+1 dialogue bringing China as main player in the region.



- Geography is in India's favor. China can never replace India in Nepal but it should not be taken as granted for own long term direct confrontation with China.
- Nepal also wants China's entry in SAARC.

### Way forward

- Boundary disputes are common ground for countries that have an ancient history and shared borders, and the India-Nepal border issues one such dispute.
- Thus, the two neighbouring countries should not let the war of maps deteriorate their historical ties
- Supporting Mongolia is a step India must take to China's increasing influence in Nepal.

### Mains model question

- "Boundary disputes have remained the Achilles heel in India's Neighbourhood policy". Discuss the statement in the context of the recent diplomatic tussle between India and Nepal.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

### Notes

## Science & Technology

### What are Solar Canals? Benefits & Challenges explained

by Rahul Saigaonker

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

#### Relevance

GS 3 || Science & Technology || Energy || Renewable Energy

#### Title

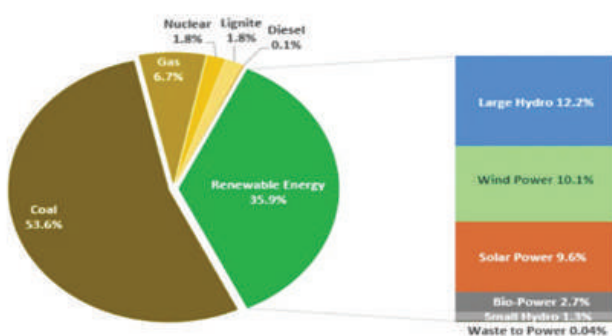
What are Solar Canals? Challenges in solar power generation, India's energy mix explained

#### Why in the news?

Solar canals making use of India's space smartly.

#### Present scenario

- India has relied heavily on **coal-fired power plants which have generated 72%** of the country's electricity in 2018-19.



#### India's solar potential

- India's combination of abundant sunshine (about 300 sunny days in a year) and a large energy-hungry population makes it an ideal location for solar.
- According to the World Energy Outlook Report, India has a huge solar potential of around 750 GW.
- In light of this the GOI has already started many initiatives to ramp up solar energy capacity.
  - Indian Solar Mission
  - International Solar alliance etc

- India's solar capacity has reached **36.6GW** at the end of the first quarter of 2020, with the aim of growing to 100GW by 2022.

#### Challenges

- The solar story of India is largely based upon imported goods.
- India's provision on the need for domestic material faces legal challenge at WTO.
- To achieve the 100 GW target, India needs to invest around \$50 billion in the next three years.
- Technology & domestic manufacturing.
- Finding the right place
  - Solar farms need to cover large areas of land.
  - Land is expensive in India and often has multiple owners with too many formalities.
  - High population density also puts pressure on the land.
- Indian domestic companies are not technologically and economically powerful enough to compete with Chinese firms.
- China's large manufacturing base is offering domestic manufacturers a stern challenge.

#### Solar canal potential

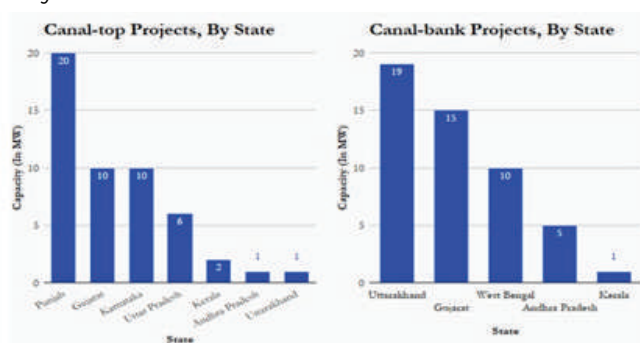
- In states like Gujarat, Rajasthan and Maharashtra canals are mainly used for irrigation. For instance, just the state of Gujarat has more than 80,000km of canals.
- Even if 30% of these canals are made, 180 GW of power could be produced, saving 90,000 acres of land.
- Solar canal establishment authority has immense potential to create new jobs; **1 GW of Solar manufacturing facility generates approximately 4000 direct and indirect jobs.** In addition solar deployment, operation and maintenance creates additional recurring jobs in the sector.
- Storage developments are underway which have the potential to revolutionize this sector globally, before then reliance on fossils can be decreased by growing the share of renewables gradually.
- By 2035, India is projected to account for 8 percent of global solar energy. With the estimated future power of 363 Gigawatts (GW), India can be a global leader in enhancing the benefits of the energy sector.

### Benefits of Solar canals

- Solar power plants can be built much faster than large coal or gas power stations.
- Reduces the evaporation losses from the canals.
- Solar Energy is **available throughout** the day which is the peak load demand time.
- Solar energy **conversion equipment has a longer life and needs lesser maintenance** and hence provides higher energy infrastructure security.
- Low running costs & grid tie-up capital returns (Net Metering).
- Water below solar panels helps the panels to remain cool, which increases their efficiency by at least 2.5-5%.
- Reduces emission and helps in INDCs.

### Drawbacks with Solar canals

- Canal-top plants are more expensive to construct than normal solar plants.
- Supports have to be galvanised with a protective zinc layer.
- Dimensions of canals are different (Every project new plans).
- Meandering canals.
- Cleaning and maintenance: Is one of the toughest tasks.
- Environmental effect: there are effect of environment like heavy rainfall, thunderstorm and lightning
- Indian solar waste is expected to be about 1.8 million by 2050 and must also be tackled.



### Government initiatives and step taken

- New and renewable energy ministry is the nodal agency for dealing with the clean energy problems facing India. The **National Solar Mission is a major initiative** of India's government and state governments to encourage ecologically sustainable growth while addressing India's challenge of energy protection.

- **Sustainable rooftop implementation of India's (SRISTI)** solar transfiguration scheme to support solar rooftop projects in India; Suryamitra workplace training software.
- Green purchasing duty for major energy users. State Renewable Energy and Green Energy Corridor project.
- **The Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA)** is a financial entity which is not a bank administrative control of this Ministry for providing term loans for renewable energy and energy efficiency projects.
- **The National Solar Energy Institute** is founded as an autonomous entity under the apex of R&D. Creation of solar parks and ultra-large solar power projects and enhancement of grid network connectivity. Development of channel banks and solar canal tanks.

### Some International initiatives and step taken

- **India's pledge to raise its GDP emission intensity by 33 to 35 percent** by 2030 from 2005 level as part of the INDC in the **Paris climate agreement**.
- **Approximately 40% cumulative electricity installed capacity from non-fossil fuel-based energy** resources by 2030, through technology transfer and low-cost foreign financing, including from the Green Climate Fund.
- Establishment of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) of more than 122 countries initiated by India, most of which are sunshine countries, which lie either wholly or partially between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn to promote solar energy.
- To mobilize more than US\$ 1000 billion of investment needed by 2030 for massive deployment of solar energy and pave the way for the future technologies adapted to the needs

### Way ahead

- **Promotion of R&D** in the renewable energy sector, especially in storage technology;
- **Proper mechanisms** for tackling China's dumping of solar equipment should be given.
- India needs a **Solar Waste Management** and Manufacturing Standards Policy.
- The financing of solar projects requires strong financial measures, and creative steps such as green bonds, institutional loans and renewable energy funds may play a crucial role.

- **System for avoiding undue delays** in policy making and implementation

### Mains oriented question

India faces problems in fulfilling its energy demand, solar energy can play an important role in providing energy security. In context of the statement write what are the challenges that are associated with solar canals or solar power energy projects?



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

NOTES



## Chennai-Andaman & Nicobar Submarine Optical fibre Cable Link

By Prashant Dhawan



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

### Relevance

GS 3|| Science & Technology || Information and Communication Technology || Internet

### Title

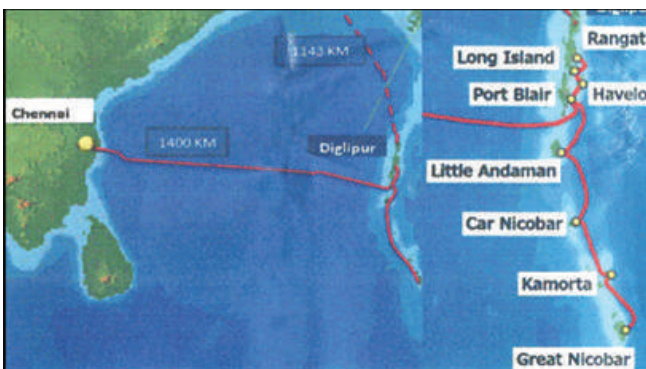
Chennai Andaman & Nicobar Submarine Optical fiber Cable Link

### Why in the news?

PM Modi launches 2,300-km undersea optical fibre cable for Andamans

### Key Highlight

- Approximately **2,300 km of submarine optical fiber cable (OFC)** has been laid to provide improved connectivity in the UT at a cost of about Rs 1,224 crore.
- The project provides for improved connectivity between Chennai and Port Blair and seven other islands — Swaraj Deep (Havelock), Long Island, Rangat, Hutbay (Little Andaman), Kamorta, Car Nicobar, and Campbell Bay (Great Nicobar).
- The project is funded by the government through the Universal Service Obligation Fund under the ministry of communications.



### Submarine Communication Cable

- The **first submarine communications cables laid out starting in the 1850s** carried telegraphic traffic, creating the first instant telecommunications

connections between continents, such as the **first transatlantic telegraph cable** that became operational on August 16, 1858.

- A submarine communications cable is a cable laid between land-based stations on the seabed for transmitting telecommunications signals through stretches of ocean and shore.
- Such cables use fiber optics to hold digital data, including telephone, internet and private data traffic.
- These are built by the use of **specially adapted ships carrying the submarine cable** on board and laying it slowly on the seabed

### What is optical fiber?

- Using light pulses traveling along with a **long fiber** that is typically made of plastic or glass, it is used to transmit data.
- The fibre-optical cable uses absolute **internal light reflection**. The fibers are designed to allow light propagation along with the optical fibre, depending on the power requirement and the transmission wavelength.

### Benefits of the projects

#### Connectivity, Education & Business-

- It will bring better connectivity in the **region and facilitate the delivery of e-governance services** such as telemedicine and tele-education.
- Business process Outsourcing providers also benefit from greater connectivity, as do other small and large businesses.
- Small companies will benefit from e-commerce incentives, while educational institutions will use improved e-learning and information sharing bandwidth capacity

### Governance

- Better connectivity in the area, **as part of the Digital India initiative**, will promote the delivery of e-governance services such as telemedicine and tele-training.
- The area will play an important part in the self-reliant India project of his government

### Economic benefits

- Small businesses, company consulting providers and other medium-sized and large companies can also benefit from **greater e-commerce connectivity and opportunities**;

- It can be leveraged to endorse Startup India initiative by the government.
- The cost of the Internet will also come down and will give tourism and local economies a boost.

### Strategic Importance of project

- The islands are home to India's only tri-service command, the Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC), which is of strategic significance, especially in the sense of the region's Chinese aggression.
- The islands are vital to the defense of India, owing to their strategic position in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). Better infrastructure and connectivity will help India improve its island military and naval power.

### Enhancing International relation with the project:

- The cable system with an incremental 1,050 km long submarine will carry access to Thailand's nearest port.
- Experts believe this move will open up a host of opportunities for India in the ASEAN region, where China supplies a majority of the optical submarine fibre.
- If **1,925 km of incremental submarine cable** will connect three ASEAN countries such as **Myanmar, Thailand and Indonesia**, India can benefit in political terms.

### Some vital importance of the project

- In 2017, the **Island Development Agency was established** under the aegis of the Ministry of Home Affairs to look into the islands' holistic growth. India's Home Minister is its President and CEO of NITI Aayog (currently Amitabh Kant) serving as its Convener.
- Many projects are underway, including enhancing Port Blair airport power, new Diglipur airports, Car Nicobar and Campbell Bay airports, and **Swaraj Dweep, Shaheed Dweep and Long Island passenger terminals**.
- The islands will be established as a "port-led growth" hub, as they are situated at a competitive distance from many other ports.

### Challenge associated with project

- Local tribes should support the project, many times projects are opposed by the local people as they think it could disturb their life and living style.
- A standard transoceanic, multi-terabit submarine cable network costs several hundred million dollars to install

### Mains oriented question

Write a note about the Submarine Cable System on Chennai-Andaman and Nicobar Island, what are the benefits associated with it?



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

### NOTES

# Digital Quality of Life Index 2020

by Ankit Agrawal

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

## Relevance

GS 3 || Science & Technology || Information and Communication Technology || Internet

## Title

Digital Quality of Life Index 2020 - At rank 57 India among the lowest in terms of Internet quality

## Why in the news?

The index, prepared by Surfshark, a virtual private network (VPN) provider based in the British Virgin Islands

## Background

- An online privacy software provider, SurfShark Ltd. has published a "Digital Quality of Life Index 2020".
- It is a **global study on the standard of digital health in 85 countries** thus covering 81 percent of the global population.
- The recently launched index ranks the countries by looking at their scores in five fundamental pillars that describes the digital quality of life.
- **India has been ranked 57th in Digital Quality of Life Index 2020** with overall score of 0.5. Denmark overtook the index and Sweden followed

## About the Digital Quality of Life Index 2020

- Online privacy software provider, SurfShark Ltd, has rolled out the Digital Quality of Life Index 2020.
- **The index lists 85 world nations**, representing 81 percent of the world's population. It assessed the 85 nations on five criteria designed to describe the digital quality of life.
- Hence, the index sheds light on insight into the overall digital quality of life based on five main pillars.
- These **five core pillars are underpinned by 12 metrics** that are interrelated and work together to give a measure of overall digital quality of life.

## The five pillars to determine the ranking



- **Internet affordability:** It shows how long people have to work to be able to afford the internet connection.
- **Internet quality:** It indicates the speed as well as the reliability of the internet access in a country.
- **Electronic infrastructure:** It defines the degree of the current electronic infrastructure growth and inclusiveness.
- **Electronic government:** It shows how advanced and digitized government services are in the country.
- **Electronic security:** It shows how much security and protection people can feel in a country.
- **GDP and DQL:** While GDP per capita has a clear correlation with the DQL, there are countries with a better digital quality of life and a lower per capita GDP than anticipated.

## Reasons for poor digital life in India

- **Internet Penetration** is high in India, Internet affordability is easy and cheap in India but this backfire in internet quality as crowd hindrance on the network disturbs its server to provide good quality of internet. There is no amount of speed is provided as it said on the 4g platform
- **Electronic infrastructure** is yet need greater effort to develop in India especially in rural area, rural areas still don't have access to proper quality of basic internet
- **Electronic government** is working for proper development of internet and digitization but yet there is a huge part of India that are lacking with basic internet, from bringing good internet supplies in metro cities government should also focus on the rural area make all **panchayat and gram panchayat work on internet to bring more transparency and rural area more digital friendly**. Government should more focus on the digital literacy, Digital

apps at low cost that is accessible to all, moreover internet and digitization to make its reaches in masses it should be language friendly i.e available in local languages

- **Electronic security** is one of the major concerns for the authority as very often we hear news about cyber crime like, Debit card scam, fake profile and followers. Most of the government official data is secured on the internet, without proper security it will always be a threat to the internal security of India at large. Most of the equipment of 4g and 3g are imported from China is also one of the security concern

### Performance of other countries

- **Denmark and Sweden top three Scandinavian countries topped the table**, with Canada rounding the top three.
- **Israel offered the cheapest internet** – determined by how long it takes to be able to afford the cheapest available mobile phone and broadband. Of the total nations, 75 percent have to compete to afford the internet more than the global average.
- **Singapore, the United Kingdom and the United States performed best on the e-government metric**- achieved by testing the state of government's online presence and readiness to use artificial intelligence technology and helping to 'minimize bureaucracy, eliminate corruption and increase public sector accountability'.
- **The UK, France and Lithuania provide the highest degree of security** — encryption and personal data protection status. Great Internet Experience- Singapore, the Netherlands and Sweden. The most advanced e-infrastructure is in the UAE, Sweden and Denmark.

### India's performance

- Of 85 countries, **India ranked 9th** on the Internet and 15th on e-government. India is in rank 57th overall.
- **Internet expense**- India scored highest on this metric, leading countries including the United Kingdom, the United States and China.
- E-government indicator- India secured 15th position on this, ahead of the Netherlands, China and Belgium.
- Security- India performed poorly here, standing at 57th position.
- Internet quality- With a rank of 78, it fell behind countries such as Bangladesh, Nepal, Nigeria and the Philippines.

- On electronic infrastructure-focusing on active internet users and information and communications technology adoption rate - India ranked 79th, behind neighbors Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal. Overall score of 0.5. India's rank in the five core pillars is as follows:

- **Pillar 1:** India ranked 09th for Internet affordability
- **Pillar 2:** India ranked 78th for Internet quality.
- **Pillar 3:** India ranked 79th for Electronic infrastructure.
- **Pillar 4:** India ranked 15th for Electronic government.
- **Pillar 5:** India ranked 57th for Electronic security.

### Some key takeaways of the report

- **Report shows that 7 out of 10 countries** with the highest digital quality of life are in Europe.
- **It indicates that there is high disparity** in internet access as people in 75 percent of the researched countries have to struggle more than the global average to afford the internet.
- **It shows that 95% of Scandinavians** use the internet, making it the most active Internet user base, while 35% use the internet in South Asia making it the least active region in the world.
- **The reliability of the internet** was seriously affected by COVID-19 as 49 out of 85 countries reported declines in mobile and 44 in broadband speed due to WFH.
- **Countries of the European Union** have highest priority in the security of personal data of individuals. Consequently, they are the leaders in enforcing proactive information security policies and in ensuring the privacy of personal data.
- **It shows that Internet speed** is higher in countries with high levels of ICT adoption and Internet use.

### Government Initiatives Related to Internet and digital India

- **Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan:** To make citizens digitally literate.
- **Bharat Net programme:** To provide an optical fibre network in all gram panchayats.
- **Digital India Programme:** It is an umbrella program to prepare India for a knowledge-based transformation.
- **Digilockers:** It enables Indian citizens to store certain official documents on the cloud.
- **BHIM App:** To enable digital payments.
- **e-Kranti:** National e-Governance Plan 2.0 which is an essential pillar of the Digital India initiative.

**Mains oriented question**

Today human wellbeing is strongly influenced by on Internet wellbeing, in the era of digital competency everywhere India is still lacking behind is world ranking, and this is contradictory with India mission of digitizing India in coming years. Comment.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

**Notes**



## DNA Bill can be misused for caste-based profiling

by Ankit Agrawal

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

### Relevance

GS 3 || Science & Technology || Biotechnology || Human Genome & DNA

### Title

What is DNA? DNA Technology Regulation Bill 2019 can it be misused for caste based profiling?

### Why in the news?

The draft report of the **parliamentary standing committee on science and technology** has stated that DNA sampling and profiling of citizens accused of crime or reported missing and storing their unique genetic information for administrative purposes has some alarming provisions that could be misused for caste or community-based profiling.

### About The DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill, 2019

- It was introduced in Lok Sabha the Bill provides for the regulation of use of DNA technology for establishing the identity of certain persons. The main provisions are as follows-
  - **DNA Regulatory Board**- the Bill provides for the establishment of a DNA Regulatory Board, which will supervise the DNA Data Banks and DNA laboratories.
  - **Use of DNA Data**- Under the Bill, DNA testing is allowed only in respect of matters listed in the schedule to the Bill. These include offences under such as paternity suits.
  - **Collection of DNA**- While preparing a DNA bodily substances of persons may be collected by the investigating authorities. Authorities are required to obtain consent for collection in certain situations. For arrested persons, authorities are required to obtain written consent if the offence carries a punishment of up to seven years.
  - **DNA laboratories**- Any laboratory undertaking DNA testing is required to obtain accreditation from the Board. The Board may revoke the

accreditation for reasons including, failure to: (i) undertake DNA the accreditation.

- **DNA Data Bank**- the Bill provides for the establishment of a National DNA Data Bank and Regional DNA Data Banks, for every state, or two or more banks.

### Some key concerns raised by the report

- **Privacy:** The report has red-flagged disregard to an individual's privacy and other safeguards. The Bill proposes to store DNA profiles of suspects, undertrials, victims and their relatives for future investigations.
- **Misuse of Sensitive Information:** The DNA profiles can reveal extremely sensitive information of an individual such as family ancestry (pedigree), skin colour, behaviour, illness, health status and susceptibility to diseases.
- **Perfunctory consent:** The Bill refers to consent in several provisions, but in each of those, a magistrate can easily override consent, thereby in effect, making consent perfunctory. There is also no guidance in the Bill on the grounds and reasons of when the magistrate can override consent, which could become a fatal flaw.
- **Absence of Robust Data Protections:** The committee has also called the Bill "premature" and questioned the security of a huge number of DNA profiles that will be placed with the National DNA Data bank and its regional centres.
- The Bill permits retention of DNA found at a crime scene in **perpetuity**, even if conviction of the offender has been overturned.

### Benefits

- Despite these concerns, the bill have several benefits, especially in case of criminal identification. There are many cases in India where DNA profiling was proved to be a boon. In criminal matters, DNA profiling has not only helped in cracking cold cases and linking crimes with criminals but also aids in **identification of victims** in many cases.
- These cases are as follows –
  - **Priyadarshini Mattoo cas:** The tampering of evidence along with the shoddy investigation was the biggest hurdle faced by the prosecution in the trial. The clincher was that the DNA test proved rape but again that was being tampered during the investigation which creates a benefit of doubt situation for the accused.
  - **N.D. Tiwari case (Paternity suit ):** The paternity suit filed by 32-year-old Rohit Shekhar in which

the Delhi High Court declared that he is the biological son of veteran Congress leader N D Tiwari. This case is an example that shows the usefulness of DNA profiling technique to solve these kind of cases.

### Performance of other countries

- **Denmark and Sweden top three Scandinavian countries topped the table**, with Canada rounding the top three.
- **Israel offered the cheapest internet** – determined by how long it takes to be able to afford the cheapest available mobile phone and broadband. Of the total nations, 75 percent have to compete to afford the internet more than the global average.
- Singapore, the United Kingdom and the United States performed best on the e-government metric**– achieved by testing the state of government's online presence and readiness to use artificial intelligence technology and helping to 'minimize bureaucracy, eliminate corruption and increase public sector accountability'.

**The UK, France and Lithuania provide the highest degree of security** — encryption and personal data protection status. Great Internet Experience- Singapore, the Netherlands and Sweden. The most advanced e-infrastructure is in the UAE, Sweden and Denmark.

### Way forward

There is urgent need for implementation of the bill as its applications would be to enable identification of missing children. As per the **National Crime Records Bureau**, annually 1,00,000 children go missing. The Bill will also help in identifying unidentified deceased, including disaster victims and apprehend repeat offenders for **heinous crimes such as rape and murder**. DNA testing is currently being done on an extremely limited scale in India.

The government also needs to do a cost-benefit analysis as creating large databases is often not a cost-effective way to solve more crimes, and limited resources must be targeted effectively.

### Mains oriented question

The draft report of the parliamentary standing committee on science and technology has raised various concerns over the misuse of DNA profiling that is going to be introduced by DNA Technology Regulation Bill 2019.

In the context discuss the need for DNA profiling in India and also suggest measures to prevent the misuse of it.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

NOTES

## Discoms seeks hike in power tariff

by Siddhant

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

### Relevance

GS 3||Science & Technology||Energy||Energy Policy

### Title

Discoms in Delhi seeks hike in power tariff - Will electricity become dearer in Delhi?

### Why in news?

- The discoms have been demanding a power tariff hike over the last five years, which has been turned down every time. This, the discoms claim, have led to mounting regulatory assets.

### DERC

- The Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission (DERC), which regulates the city's power sector, is expected to announce the annual tariff order by the end of August, which may determine the electricity bills from September.
- The tariff order is usually announced at the start of a financial year. Delhi has not witnessed a substantial power tariff hike since 2015 when the Aam Aadmi Party took over the reins of the capital.
- **Appointment**
  - DERC is technically an independent, quasi-judicial body governed by the **Electricity Regulatory Commission Act, 1998 and the Delhi Electricity Reform Act, 2000.**
  - However, appointments of the chairman and members to its board has always been a politically contentious issue, leading to a **tussle between the elected government and the Lt Governor, and also litigation.**

### Role of the DERC?

- The DERC's role is not limited to just deciding power tariffs. It also determines the price at which distribution companies (discoms) utilize resources of transmission companies, which in turn purchase power from generation companies at rates that are monitored by the DERC.
- The commission also sets and monitors standards to be followed by companies and seeks to protect the rights of consumers, who can approach it with grievances for hearings.

### How many discoms are there in Delhi?

- Delhi has three major discoms. The Reliance ADA-Grun BSES discoms – BSES Rajdhani and BSES Yamuna are the largest suppliers, catering to over 43 lakh consumers.
- Then comes the Tata Power Delhi Distribution Limited (TPDDL), which is a joint venture between Tata Power and the Delhi government serving around 18 lakh consumers in the north and north-west Delhi. The entire distribution network in Delhi was privatised by the Sheila Dikshit-led Congress government in 2002.

### Impact of Covid-19

- The pandemic and the lockdown have had an unprecedented **"adverse impact"** on the cash flow of the companies, all three discoms have told the DERC.
- They have cited the closure of industries, commercial units, and a dip in the payment capacity of consumers due to job losses among other factors. In their revised petitions, BSES and Tata Power said the companies will collectively face a revenue gap of Rs 6,124 crore in 2020-21 if power tariffs are not hiked.
- They put the total revenue requirement at Rs 21,528 crore, excluding the past dues, to meet the operational expenses for 2020-21.
- To cite one example, Tata Power earns 55 percent of its Rs 700 crore monthly earnings from commercial and industrial consumers. It shrunk to 15 percent of the total revenue earnings of Rs 430 crore in April.

### What are discoms saying on the Delhi government's subsidy scheme?

- In August last year, the Kejriwal government made

electricity supply free for households consuming between 0-200 units while those consuming between 201-400 units get a 50 percent rebate.

- Between 2015 and July 2019, 50 percent of rebates were given to those consuming between 0-400 units. It spent around Rs 6196 crore as power subsidy in the course of the five years.
- The subsidies are transferred to the discoms every month, which in turn issue discounted bills to consumers.
- However, BSES has petitioned the DERC, requesting that the rebates be transferred to the consumers' accounts directly like in the case of LPG rebates under the Centre.
- It also wants such benefits to be withheld for consumers having dues or accused of stealing power.
- Tata Power has complained that the Delhi government doesn't pay the subsidy amounts on time, leading to losses of around Rs 21 crore so far.

### Systemic Issues Faced by Power Sector in India

#### ➤ Power Generation Issues

- **Power generation derived from fossil fuel:** Thermal power based on fossil fuel such as coal, natural gas, and diesel constitutes **80 percent** of the country's production.
- Also, most of India's plants are old and inefficient.

#### ➤ Higher fuel costs

- Coal production from state-run Coal India (near-monopoly), has stagnated due to delayed environmental clearances, land acquisition difficulties, and low investment in advanced technologies.
- Many power companies need to search for coal mines overseas and produce more costly imports (despite plentiful supplies of coal).

#### ➤ Transmission and Distribution Issues

- Tariffs haven't risen enough for years to cover costs for subsidies in the agriculture sector. Also, high **aggregate technical and commercial (AT&C)** losses, has forced electricity distributors (discoms) into losses as high as 40% in some states, while the country-wide average is 27%.
- Discoms can not consistently pay power generators simply because they have a cash flow crisis, which stems from the low tariffs imposed by the regulatory commissions.
- These low tariffs result in a large difference between the average cost of supply per unit (ACS) and average realized revenue (ARR)

- There are fewer new investments in the electricity sector (particularly from the private sector) due to the poor financial health of the discoms.
- High industrial/commercial tariffs and the cross-subsidy system have affected industrial and commercial sector profitability.

### Smart grids

- Smart grids represent the cutting edge of energy-efficient technologies, applied in energy production, distribution, and householder use. Smart grids are modernised electricity grids that interact with information technology and communications infrastructure to provide greater transparency on energy use to consumers, and to improve the quality of energy supply. Smart grids more easily integrate renewable and distributed energy sources into the grid, like solar, wind, and co-generation plants.
- Smart Grids are the backbone of a Smart City by enabling the integration of small distributed energy resources in the urban network, increasing the customer's awareness, providing real-time optimization of energy flows at the urban level, enabling interdependence, and facilitating a multi-services approach linking the electricity carrier and other infrastructure.

### Microgrids

- The increasing demand for energy in our country needs innovative and low-cost technologies coupled which have a focus on environmental sustainability. Microgrids may be the solution India needs now.
- Microgrids which are grids which are connected to the main grid but with independent control capability has the following advantages:
  - It makes the use of renewable energy cheaper compared to the existing methods. Solar energy has the disadvantage of not providing power when the sunlight does not exist. (for eg., during night times).
  - This compels the government to now even set-up thermal plants to generate energy when solar cells won't work. But this will beat the very purpose of environmental sustainability. Microgrids, which use a mixed set of sources such as wind power, solar power, and generators can help overcome these problems. This cheaper price will help meet industry and rural area needs
- Microgrids have stabilizing effect on our main grid by making certain pockets of areas energy independent. If such installations are made in urban areas where the demand is usually high grid failure which were seen in 2012 will not appear again.

- As main grid is a large interconnected system, when a disaster occurs, there is a possibility that this may travel to other areas as well. As microgrids have independent control capability, they can prevent such emergencies from affecting extremely important areas such as industries, hospitals, and institutions.
- Due to lower transmission costs, the energy price is cheaper increasing the competitiveness of our industry.
- Therefore, microgrids should be incorporated in our public policy to reap the benefits it provides.

### Way forward

- With a generation of 1,497 Terawatt-hour (TWh), India is the third-largest producer and the third-largest consumer of electricity in the world after the US and China.
- The government needs to actively encourage cross-border electricity trade to use current / upcoming assets from generation.
- There is a need to ensure the successful implementation of cross-subsidy rationalisation. The power grid SAARC represents a step in the right direction.
- To meet the power demand, 100 percent metering-net metering, smart meters, and metering of the energy supplied to agriculture must be implemented.
- Introduce performance-based incentives into the tariff structure is also needed.

### Mains model Question

- Discuss the challenges in achieving the Indian government's vision of Power for all by 2022.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

### Notes



## Skyroot Aerospace to Launch Rocket with ISRO's Help in 2021

By Prashant Dhawan



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

### Relevance

GS 3||Science & Technology||Space||Space Missions

### Title

Skyroot Aerospace to Launch Rocket with ISRO's Help in 2021 Raman Engine test

### Why in news?

- Indian Skyroot Aerospace is a city-based startup that has successfully test-fired its upper stage rocket engine named 'Raman'. It can place multiple satellites into orbit.
- With the assistance and guidance of ISRO, Skyroot is into building India's first privately built space launch vehicles.

### Details

- Skyroot Aerospace is an Indian startup that has become the first in the country to test-fire a home-grown upper-stage rocket engine.
- The company is looking forward to a maiden launch by December 2021 if all goes well with the assistance and guidance of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

### Private space Industry in India - IN-SPACe

- It will act as a single-point interface between Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), and everyone who wants to participate in space-related activities, or use India's space resources.
- It will also hand-hold, promote, and guide the private industries in space activities through encouraging policies and a friendly regulatory environment.

- **Indian National Space Promotion Board:** It would be set up to strengthen the Department of Space and for the promotion of the private space entrepreneurs or non-government space entrepreneurs,
- **Role of ISRO:** The overall idea is to let ISRO concentrate on essential activities like research and development, planetary exploration, and strategic use of space while freeing itself from ancillary or routine work which could easily be done by private industry.
- **Demand-Driven Model:** By the support of New Space India Limited (NSIL), It would endeavor to reorient space activities from a '**supply-driven**' model to a '**demand-driven**' one, thereby ensuring **optimum utilisation** of the nation's space assets.
- The main objective of NSIL is to scale up industry participation in Indian space programmes in comparison to IN-SPACe which gives emphasis on the participation of the private sector.
- An autonomous body IN-SPACe(Indian National **Sp**-**pace** Promotion and Authorisation Centre) would be established under the Department of Space (DoS) for permitting and regulating activities of the private space sector.
- This nodal entity would have its independent directorates for technical, legal, safety and security, monitoring as well as activities promotion for assessing the private industry requirements and further coordinating the activities.

### India's private sector participation in the space industry

- Currently, there does exist private industry involvement in India's space sector.
- A large part of the manufacturing and fabrication of rockets and satellites now happens in the private sector.
- There is increasing participation of research institutions as well.
- However, the Indian industry had a barely 3% share in a rapidly growing global space economy.
- Currently, the value of the global space industry is estimated to be \$360 billion.
- Only 2% of this market goes for rocket and satellite launch services, which require fairly large infrastructure and heavy investment.
- A huge 95% are related to satellite-based services and ground-based systems.
- Indian industry, however, is unable to compete.

### Opportunity in IN-SPACe

- Currently, all launches from India happen on ISRO rockets, the different versions of PSLV and GSLV.
- Several Indian companies were waiting to make use of the opportunities as IN-SPACe provides.
- A few companies were also in the process of developing their launch vehicles.
- ISRO is now willing to extend its support to them.
- ISRO would provide all its facilities to private players whose projects had been approved by IN-SPACe.
- Private companies, if they wanted, could even build their launchpad within the Sriharikota launch station.
- ISRO would provide the necessary land for that.

### Private space companies in the U.S and China

- Leading players include OneSpace, LandSpace, LinkSpace, and iSpace, which last year became the first Chinese private space company to successfully launch a rocket into orbit. Last summer, Link Space's third reusable test rocket reached 1,000 feet and landed successfully in western China.
- In U.S companies like Space X and Blue Origin are set to rule in the coming decades.
- History was made on May 31 2020 when a SpaceX spacecraft carried two NASA astronauts to the International Space Station. With this milestone, private participation in space exploration, thus far the exclusive domain of governments, is set to soar.

### Why is the Indian space industry lagging?

- Till now, the Indian space industry's role has been mainly that of suppliers of components and sub-systems.
- Indian industries do not have the resources or technology to undertake independent space projects or provide space-based services.
- Additionally, the demand for space-based applications and services is growing even within India.
- The need for satellite data, imageries, and space technology is now cut across sectors.
- It ranges from weather to agriculture to transport to urban development and more.
- But, ISRO is unable to cater to this.
- ISRO would have to be expanded 10 times the current level to meet all the demand that is arising.

### India left behind

- Sadly India was left behind in the race to build strong private sector companies in the field of space
- But all that is about to change
- The announcement of **IN-SPACe**, the current government has opened the space sector for private participation in a big way.

### Skyroot Aerospace

- **It is India's company that will launch rockets into Space by December 2021 with the help, assistance, and guidance of ISRO. It has named its first launch rocket Vikram-I.**
- The first Indian startup is Skyroot Aerospace through which successful testing of the country's first private rocket engine '**Raman**' has been completed.
- India's aerospace company Skyroot will launch rockets into space by December 2021 with the help of ISRO.
- Skyroot has named its first launch rocket Vikram-I. Skyroot Aerospace is the first Indian startup, through which successful testing of the country's first private rocket engine 'Raman' has been completed. Skyroot builds technologies for responsive, reliable, and economic access to space. It envisages a future where spaceflight is as regular, reliable, and affordable as air flight.
- About the recent engine test, rocket variant in this engine meant for and about the fuel this engine will use.
- Skyroot Aerospace planned 3 rockets namely Vikram I, II, and III. The name Vikram is a tribute to the founder of ISRO Vikram Sarabhai. The current engine is meant to be the final stage of the four-stage rocket Vikram I.
- **Vikram I** is to be powered by **3 stages of solid-fueled** engines and the final stage that is currently tested was liquid-fueled one. The engine has been named as Raman and is a tribute to Nobel Laureate Sir C.V Raman. The Raman engine is powered by UDMH and NTO liquid fuels and a cluster of 4 engines that would generate 3.4kN thrust.
- The Hyderabad-based space launch startup Skyroot Aerospace became the first Indian private company to successfully test-fire a homegrown rocket engine

### What does ISRO gain by this?

- **Commercial**
  - There is a need for greater dissemination of space technologies, and better utilisation of space resources.

- Moreover, there is an increased requirement of space-based services.
- ISRO seems unable to satisfy this need on its own and thus private participation would fill the gap.
- Notably, private players will not take away the revenues that ISRO gets through commercial launches.
- The space-based economy is expected to “explode” in the next few years, even in India.
- So, there would be more than enough for all.
- Also, ISRO can earn some money by making its facilities and data available to private players.

#### ► Strategic

- Right now, too much of ISRO’s resources are consumed by routine activities.
- This delays its more strategic objectives.
- There is no reason why ISRO alone should be launching weather or communication satellites.
- The world over, an increasing number of private players are taking over this activity for commercial benefits.
- ISRO, like NASA, is essentially a scientific organisation whose main objective is an exploration of space and carrying out scientific missions.
- So, with private participation, ISRO can concentrate more on science, R&D, interplanetary exploration, and strategic launches.

### Homegrown rocket engine

- On 12 August, the 101st birth anniversary of Vikram Sarabhai, Hyderabad-based space-launch startup Skyroot Aerospace became the first Indian private company to successfully test-fire a homegrown rocket engine.

### Raman

- The engine, named Ramanafter Nobel laureate C V Raman, is meant for the upper-stage of the series of launch platforms the company is currently working on. The upper-stage of the rocket delivers thrust for the last part of the rocket’s journey before the payload is deployed in the designated orbit.
- It is the first entirely 3-D printed rocket engine in the country, and Skyroot says it is capable of producing a thrust of around 3.4kN.

### Target 2021

- If all goes well, the company is looking forward to a maiden launch by December 2021, with the support and guidance of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

### Way Forward

- The space sector will play a significant catalytic role in advancing technology and growing our industrial base.
- The development of IN-SPACe would also work towards greater participation of the private sector, academic institutions, and research organizations in the space sector in India.
- India ranks among a handful of countries with advanced space capabilities. The sector will receive new energy and dynamism with these changes, to help the country leapfrog to the next stages of space activities.

### Mains model question

- “Space start-ups are the new sunrise industry”. Comment



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

## One Sun, One World, One Grid

By Prashant Dhawan



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

### Relevance

GS 3|| Science & Technology|| Energy|| Energy Policy

### Title

India's Grand Plan One Sun One World One Grid

### Why in news?

- The Government of India has recently invited bids to carry out the 'One Sun One Earth One Grid' (OS-OWOG) scheme.
- The plan focuses on a mechanism for promoting global cooperation, creating a seamless sharing of a global ecosystem of interconnected renewable energy resources (primarily solar energy).

### Details of the initiative

- OSOWOG initiative was proposed by India to set up a framework for facilitating global cooperation which aims at building a global ecosystem of interconnected renewable energy resources that can be easily shared.
- Parent Body-The Union Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE).
- Objective- To build a global consensus about sharing solar resources among more than 140 countries of West Asia and South-East Asia.
  - The vision is 'The Sun Never Sets' and is a constant at some geographical location, globally, at any given point of time.
  - This grid shall be interconnected with the African power pools also at the later stage.
- It has been taken up under the technical assistance program of the World Bank.
- "One Sun, One World, One Grid" (OSOWOG) or a trans-national electricity grid supplying solar power across the globe.

- With India at the fulcrum, the solar spectrum can easily be divided into two broad zones viz. far East which would include countries like Myanmar, Vietnam, Thailand, Lao, Cambodia, and far West which would cover the Middle East and the Africa Region.

### Potential and benefits of the initiative

- India would generate **40%** of power from non-fossil fuels by 2030 and has called for connecting solar energy supply across borders giving the mantra of 'One World One Sun One Grid'.
- The proposed integration would lead to reduced project costs, higher efficiencies, and increased asset utilization for all the participating entities.
- This plan will require only incremental investment because it will not require a parallel grid infrastructure due to working with existing grids.
- It will help all the participating entities in attracting investments in renewable energy sources as well as utilizing skills, technology, and finances.
- Resulting economic benefits would positively impact poverty alleviation and support in mitigating water, sanitation, food, and other socio-economic challenges.
- It will allow national renewable energy management centers in India to grow as regional and global management centers.

### Three phases

- **1st Phase:** The plan is divided into three phases: the first phase will connect the Indian grid with the **Middle East, South Asia, and South-East Asian grids** to share solar and other renewable energy resources.
  - Fostering cross-border energy trade is an important part of India's Neighbourhood-first policy.
  - India has been supplying power to Bangladesh and Nepal and has been championing a South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) electricity grid minus Pakistan to meet electricity demand in the region.
- **Second Phase:** The second phase will connect the first phase nations with the African pool of renewable sources.
- **Third phase:** The third phase will be the concluding step of global interconnection

### Significance



- The proposed merger would result in lower project costs, higher efficiencies, and improved usage of assets for all of the involved organizations.
- This proposal would require only gradual investment, as operating with existing networks would not require a new grid network.
- It will help all the participating entities in attracting investments in renewable energy sources as well as utilizing skills, technology, and finances.
- It will enable the growth of India's national renewable energy management centers as regional and global management centres.
- This move, during the Covid-19 pandemic, provides an opportunity for India to be seen as taking the lead in emerging global strategies.

### Australia-ASEAN power link

- The Australia-ASEAN Power Link, which is part-owned by two Australian billionaires and was endorsed last month by the Australian government, may be the most ambitious renewable energy project underway anywhere. And it could mark a new chapter in the history of energy-the intercontinental movement of green power.
- Scheduled to start operating in 2027 at a cost of about \$16 billion, the project would combine the world's largest solar farm, the largest battery, and the longest submarine electricity cable. It would produce three gigawatts of power, the equivalent of 9 million rooftop solar panels.

### Climate diplomacy and India

- India is a big economy, a market, it has the second largest population and can play an important part in these positive spillover effects.
- India needs to move climate change to the top of its foreign policy agenda. India will gain profits from its climate behavior in this way.
- India's climate diplomatic stance has grown from highlighting environmental colonialism in the 1990s through the 'common but differentiated obligations' (CBDR) concept to pressing for the creation of an organization such as the International Solar Alliance in 2015.
- India's climate diplomacy needs to build a development model that addresses all of its needs, including climate change, focuses on adaptation, and promotes constructive Western participation on issues such as finance and technology.

- The economic gain of a country from environmental technological cooperation can ensure its sustainable engagement with another country, which, in turn, can have a spillover effect on global engagement.

### Way forward

- The change is the key to future renewable energy systems globally since regional and international interconnected green grids will allow renewable energy sharing and balancing across international borders.
- It allows opportunities to rapidly learn from global innovations and share renewable energy resources to reduce the global carbon footprint and separate pandemic societies.
- An interconnected grid would help all the participating entities in attracting investments in renewable energy sources as well as utilizing skills, technology, and finances.
- Resulting economic benefits would positively impact poverty alleviation and support in mitigating water, sanitation, food, and other socio-economic challenges.

### Mains model question

- Explain the significance of climate diplomacy for India.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)



## Geography

### The ravines of Chambal will be converted into arable land

by Dr Mahipal Rathore



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

#### Relevance

GS 1 || Geography || Indian Economic Geography || Agriculture

#### Title

India to convert 3 lakh hectares of rugged Chambal region into arable land

#### Why in the news?

More than 3 lakh hectares of rugged land, if converted, can aid the integrated development of the Bihad area in Gwalior—Chambal region

#### What happened recently?

- The Centre has decided to convert a large area of ravines in Gwalior-Chambal belt of Madhya Pradesh into arable land.
- A preliminary report for the same will be prepared in a month.
- The project will be taken up in collaboration with the World Bank.
- "More than 3 lakh hectares of rugged land is not cultivable and if this area is improved, then this will help in the integrated development of the Bihad area in Gwalior—Chambal region,"
- Project will not only help in improving agricultural development and environment but will also create employment opportunities and lead to substantive development of the region



#### The Chambal ravines

- The Chambal ravines are known for infertile terrain, water scarcity and frequent droughts. Farming was almost impossible
- Ravines are a type of fluvial erosional feature and are formed as a result of constant vertical erosion by streams and rivers flowing over semi-arid and arid regions.
- Badland topography is a major feature of the Chambal valley is characterized by an undulating floodplain, gullies and ravines.
- Badlands develop in arid to semiarid areas where the bedrock is poorly cemented and rainfall is generally heavy and intermittent.
- The dry, granular surface material and light vegetation are swept from the slopes during showers, leaving the gullies bare.



#### What needs to be done?

- The area has to be first levelled – flatten the ravines using machinery.
- The soil, which is prone to erosion, has to be strengthened – bunding.

#### Earlier plan

- In 2015, the Madhya Pradesh government envisaged the conversion of the entire ravine area of 68,833 hectares falling in the three districts of Morena, Sheopur and Bhind into farm land.
- For this, it had sought Rs 900 crore from the Central government.
- The total cost of the proposed project was estimated at Rs 1,100 crore, with the state government and the beneficiaries (farmers to whom the reclaimed land will be allotted) sharing the remaining burden.

### Benefits of making beehad arable

- More than 3 lakh hectares of rugged land is not cultivable in Chambal region
- If this area is improved, then this will help in the integrated development of the Bihad area in Gwalior-Chambal region
- Improving agricultural development and the environment will also create employment opportunities. Lead to substantive development of the region (Along with Chambal Expressway)

### An uphill task

- Schemes since the 1970s to tame the ravines have failed.
- Aerial seeding in the 1980s failed transfer of land to farmers- contentious.
- Levelling should not be attempted in those areas where slopes are steep or else it would disturb the ecological balance.
- Environment impact - The Chambal river system is home to several kinds of fish, alligators and crocodiles

### Chambal the area faced nature threats

#### Facts about Chambal bihad

- The Chambal region in central India is one of the most densely populated regions in the country. It has a very complex socio-economic structure, where more than 80 per cent of the population is primarily dependent on agriculture.
- The region's major lifeline is the Chambal River, where nearly 4,800 sq km land has been affected by severely dissected ravines. There are no major industries in the region and alternative livelihood options are also very limited. Therefore, the dependency on land is very high.

### Disturbing ecosystem for any socio-economic practice:

- Bihads (ravines) are part of an **integrated ecosystem**. Flattening not only destroys the ecology, but also loosens the topsoil, making it prone to erosion and susceptible to further gullying.
- It takes a year to level a land and to start cultivation. When there is erratic rainfall, the situation worsens, as the **heavy and continuous rain initiates headward erosion**— erosion at the origin of a stream channel.

- Severe erosion and **gully encroachments are more prominent** in leveled lands. Even the untouched ravine lands are engulfed by the gully headward erosion in a very short period of time.

### Mains oriented question

- Badlands are erosional landforms of highly dissected morphology that are created on soft bedrock in a variety of climate conditions.
- They develop in arid to semiarid areas where the bedrock is poorly cemented and rainfall is generally heavy and intermittent.
- The dry, granular surface material and light vegetation are swept from the slopes during showers, leaving the gullies bare
- In **Madhya Pradesh, badlands are seen along Chambal, Sindh and their tributaries** critically affecting districts like Shivpur. Morena. Bhind, Gwalior, Ujjain and Mandso.
- In Rajasthan, the problem of gully erosion is most acute along the **Chambal and its tributaries like Banas, Kalisindh, Parbati, Mej and Morel. Districts like Kota, Bundi, Sawai.** Madhopur, Tonk, Jhaleswar. Jaipur and Bharatpur districts are most affected.
- Bihar also has significant areas under ravenous lands in Hazaribagh, Ranchi. Singhbhum district of Chotanagpur plateau.
- In West Bengal, **gully eroded and shallow ravinous badlands occur** in the fringe areas of Chotanagpur plateau and adjoining Rarh upland. The Chotanagpur plateau consists of four erosion surfaces and interconnecting scarps that have been marked by three intermittent uplifts from early Tertiary to Pleistocene.

### The harsh climate support crime-Chambal dicoty

- The stretch between **Gwalior and Agra** involved driving through the area of Chambal ravines: better known for its dacoits and lawlessness. In the early Sixties, taking this journey by oneself, even during day, was not without some risk
- Till a decade and a half ago, guns would be the way of life and 'farmaans' (edict) of baghis (rebels)
- The **caste oppression done by feudal thakurs like the Rajputs and Gujjars against** lower castes like Nishads and Kurmis forced many into banditry. Historically dacoits like Phoolan Devi and Man Singh gained huge followings among the people for being robin-hood figures challenging the hegemony of the landlords

### Step taken by government to stop dacoity

- The **Thuggee and Dacoity Suppression Acts, 1836–48** in British India under East India Company rule were a series of legal acts that outlawed thuggee—a practice in North and Central India involving robbery and ritualized murder and mutilation on highways—and dacoity, a form of banditry prevalent in the same region, and prescribed punishment for the same.
- An Act for the better prevention of the crime of Dacoity. Passed 18 November 1843 dacoity is punishable with imprisonment for life or rigorous imprisonment up to 10 years and five months (**section 395**).
- The Code also criminalises preparation to commit dacoity (section 399) and assembly for the purpose of committing dacoity (section 402).
- Importantly, **section 400** of the **Code criminalized the act of belonging to a 'gang of persons associated with the purpose of habitually committing dacoities**.
- The punishment is quite severe and may even extend to life imprisonment. Similarly, section 401 criminalises the act of belonging to a gang of thieves

### Additional info

- **Some Recent World bank Assisted projects**
  - World Bank has approved loan of Rs 3,700 crore under '**Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States Program (STARS)**' project to improve the quality and governance of school education across six states (Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, and Rajasthan)
  - The Government of India and West Bengal Government have inked two loan agreements with Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and World Bank (WB) for the "West Bengal Major Irrigation and Flood Management Project".

### Mains oriented question

The Chambal region in central India is one of the most densely populated regions in the country. It has a very complex socio-economic structure, where more than 80 per cent of the population is primarily dependent on agriculture yet the government hasn't taken enough stance to develop the region which faced so many challenges from criminal acts to natural calamities. Discuss



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

### NOTES

# What is causing heavy showers in Mumbai?

by Ankit Agrawal

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

## Relevance

GS 1 || Geography || Indian Physical Geography || Monsoon

## Title

Heavy Rainfall in Mumbai, Know geographical factors responsible for heavy rains in Mumbai

## Why in the news?

The India **Meteorological Department (IMD)** has said that the reason for heavy rainfall in Mumbai and nearby areas is the strengthening of the Southwest monsoon.

## Present Scenario

- In a revival of the southwest monsoon over the west coast, continuous rain has been lashing Mumbai and parts of Konkan
- Recording over 1,400 mm, Mumbai experienced one of its heaviest showers of July. But now, more rain is expected over the maximum city all through this week.

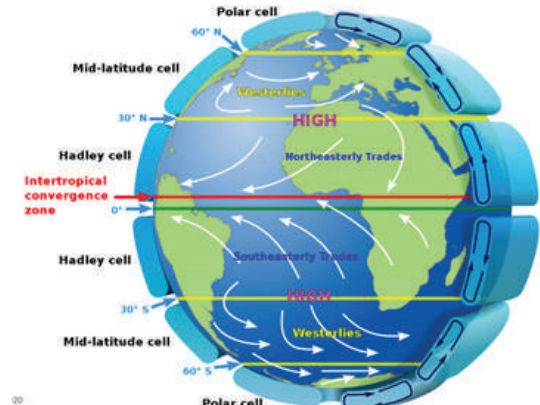


- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has placed five districts, including Mumbai, on a red alert as intense rain is expected during the next few hours, and continuous rain



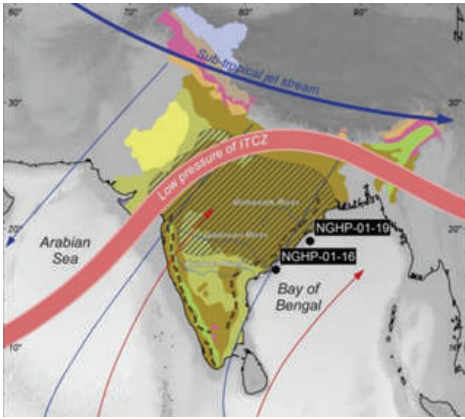
## What is causing such heavy rain?

- Multiple and simultaneous **favourable weather systems are presently active**, which have revived the southwest monsoon.



- According to the IMD bulletin, a cyclonic circulation lies over **south Gujarat and neighbourhood at middle and upper troposphere levels**.
- As a consequence, southwesterly monsoon flow has strengthened over the Arabian sea with southwest-erly winds **speed reaching 50-60 kmph along and off Konkan Coast** at surface and lower tropospheric levels
- The explanation for the **city's incessant rains can be attributed to the city's unique position**. The city's location puts it in the straight line with the low-pressure systems that form over the Bay of Bengal. Such **low-pressure systems** then travel west through the Odisha and Madhya Pradesh states toward Mumbai





- In addition, the **monsoon trough, which now lies at its normal position**, is expected to shift southwards which will further intensify rainfall activity in the coming days.

### Rain in Mumbai

- Year after year the rains and strong outpours put the Indian city of Mumbai to a standstill.
- Not only do these rains **cause a loss of time and economic growth**, but because of their frequency they are also responsible for the deaths and devastation.
- In every monsoon season Mumbai suffers from a strong bout of rains. These rains throw all of city life off gear and **trigger heavy losses to life, properties, and economy**.
- While the problem of waterlogging and unsuitable drainage is due to the lack of sufficient drains and their maintenance, the city also suffers because of the nature that contributes to the heavy rains in the area.

### Reason for heavy rainfall?

- **Effect of Climate Change:**
- The Indian Meteorological department has found that while India is witnessing fewer days with rains, the intensity of those rains is increasing exponentially every year.
- **Effect of Urbanization:**
- The rapidly increasing urbanization has worsened the situation of the rainfall in the area. Excessive construction and concretization have destroyed the natural percolation ability of the soil and when it rains, this leads to surface runoffs and flooding

### Effects of rain in Mumbai

- **Loss of properties: A large number of people are stranded** on the streets during the rains, thousands lose their houses and properties.

- **Loss of economy:** Large no of businesses are disturbed, banks are closed down. Stock markets being closed down for almost two days affect the economy of the nation. Mumbai being the financial capital of India contributes **huge losses to the country's financial development, during the period of flooding.**
- **Health issues:** Outbreaks of epidemics like Leptospirosis ( a disease caused when organs like skin, eyes, mouth or nose comes in contact with the flood water that has been affected by animal urines).
- **Land Dipping in drain: The submergence of the land, results in a destruction of** buildings and roads which, in turns, is strictly connected with the rebuilding cost. As quite frequently the damaged buildings are sites for business running, the revenue loss in production and industry may contribute to severe economic deterioration.
- **Agriculture faces loss: Repetitive rain may discourage foreign investments from** the private sector and therefore weaken the economy. Furthermore, water that covers agricultural lands leads to the damage of crops or even loss of livestock, and the resulting food shortage is responsible for increased food prices.
- Moreover, **inundated areas are inaccessible, unattractive and lack both the utilities and services, and therefore a temporary decline in tourism might occur.**
- A direct contact with contaminated water may trigger water-borne diseases that can make people fall ill. The cost required for reconstruction of the damaged structures is huge.

### Suggestion

- **Start by reducing vulnerability:** one can begin by shifting development away from areas that are or will soon be subject to frequent flooding. Immediately after a flood event is a good time to make this shift with property buyouts, but before the next flood is even better. North Carolina, the area thoughtfully planned and implemented
- **Rebuild naturally-protective features:** Rising seas and more extreme weather mean increased chances that storms will exceed structural designs. one need to get far more serious about additional flood risk-reduction tactics by applying more naturally-protective features.
- **Lessen the impact of water when floods inevitably occur:** Updating building codes provides a gradual, low-cost and cost-effective means to increase



protection for people and decrease damages. Communities that adopt, implement and enforce building codes that are informed by the natural hazards they face will experience fewer and less costly damages from extreme weather.

- **Take a hint from flood insurance:** Cost is one of many reasons people choose not to carry flood insurance, but high costs should be taken as a signal that residents need to reduce their risk. One should think of flood insurance as a civic duty, because when storms do come, insurance enables individuals and communities to bounce back from disasters faster.

### Conclusion

Mumbai heavy rain and its negative impact is not new thing but ages problem but no government took enough steps to be prepared enough to short out the issue that comes up with heavy rain like water logging all over the state, slum area get dipped in water, economic decline of the state and loss of connectivity through BMC keep on planning on to tackling the issue but fail, government and municipal corporation should come together to deal with the issue, due to geographical reason the state faces the water flooding issue but state government and MBC should go for all sort of new technologies to curtail with the effect of heavy rain.

### Mains oriented question

What is the geographical reason for the heavy rainfall in the economic capital of the nation? What are the adverse effects of heavy rainfall in the state?



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

NOTES

## Drinking Water Supply in India

by Siddhant

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

### Relevance

GS 1|| Geography|| Indian Economic Geography|| Water Resources

### Title

Drinking Water Supply in India - Water issues in India and their possible solutions

### Why in news?

- The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has prepared a draft standard for the supply system of piped drinking water and has invited comments from water utilities, including the Delhi Jal Board (DJB), on it.
- Labelled '**Drinking water supply quality management system** requirements for piped drinking water supply service', the draft has been prepared by the BIS' Public Drinking Water Supply Services Sectional Committee.

### BIS

- The standard holds importance as it is expected to make the process of piped water supply more uniform, especially in rural and underdeveloped areas of the country where the system runs on various government orders and circulars.
- At present the standard is not expected to be made mandatory. After the draft is notified, states or water utilities planning to implement the standard can approach BIS for a license.

### Draft

- The draft outlines the requirements for a water supplier or a water utility on how they should establish,

operate, maintain, and improve their piped drinking water supply service.

- The process begins with the identification of a water source, which can either be groundwater or surface water sources such as rivers, streams, or reservoirs.

### What is the water supply process?

- The draft standard also contains guidelines for top management of the water utility, in terms of accountability and customer focus, establishing a quality policy for their service, monitoring the quality of water released to people, and conducting a water audit.
- The supply system as outlined in the draft should begin with the identification of a raw water source. Water should then be pumped into the treatment plant and treated to achieve acceptable drinking standards.
- After the water is released from the plant, there should be reservoirs in the distribution system for storage of this water, and disinfection facilities to get rid of contamination at any stage of distribution.
- "Pumping stations or boosters, if necessary, should be provided to maintain adequate pressure throughout the distribution system. Valves and meters and other appurtenances shall be installed throughout the distribution system as control devices and for water audits. Emphasis should be given to operating the systems on automation mode.
- The draft also mentions that water should be sampled at the treatment plant every four hours against quality parameters.
- In the distribution system, the sampling should be done every eight hours at the water reservoirs. Random sampling should also be done at household levels.

### What's there in the draft in addition to the water supply process?

- There are guidelines on water audit, which is a calculation of the amount of water put into distribution against the amount that is consumed. The draft states that a water audit should be conducted on a quarterly basis.
- "Effort should be made by the water agency to bring down the water loss up to 15% of the total water supplied in the system," the document reads. The water utilities are also required to conduct surveys among

consumers and obtain feedback on their service as per the draft.

### India's Drinking Water Crisis

- With a diverse population that is three times the size of the United States but one-third the physical size, India has the second-largest population in the world. Although India has made improvements over the past decades to both the availability and quality of municipal drinking water systems, its large population has stressed that the quality part is still below the standards.
- The rapid growth of the population in India's urban areas is making the problem of availability worse. And also, India's water crisis is often attributed to lack of government planning, increased corporate privatization, and contamination due to industrial and human wastes.
- A NITI-Aayog report released last year predicts **Day Zero for 21 Indian cities** by next year.
- The available data points that, India is still a water surplus and receives enough annual rainfall to meet the need of over one billion-plus people. According to the Central Water Commission, India needs a maximum of 3,000 billion cubic metres of water a year while it receives 4,000 billion cubic metres of rain.

### Reasons for this crisis

- **Monsoon Dependence**
  - There is a huge dependence on monsoon rains to replenish most of India's important water sources such as underground aquifers, lakes, rivers, and reservoirs.
  - But monsoon is vulnerable to factors such as climate change, El-Nino, etc.
- **Uneven distribution of water and Rainfall pattern**
  - Certain regions have surplus amounts of water for their need while others face perennial droughts for most of the year.
  - For instance, Drought is a recurrent phenomenon in Andhra Pradesh where no district is entirely free of droughts. Rajasthan is one of the most droughts.
- **Increasing demand**
  - Population growth, industrialization, rapid urbanisation, rising needs of irrigation, and an increase in domestic water usage have accelerated the water demand. Since urbanization increases in India at a rapid pace - water demand will increase rapidly

as city dwellers consume more water than rural people.

#### ➤ Urbanisation & Water scarcity

- Currently, about 285 million or 33% of India's total population resides in urban areas. By 2050 this figure will reach 50%. Rapid urbanisation is adding to the water scarcity issue in the country.

#### ➤ Overexploitation

- In developing countries like India, groundwater fulfills nearly 80% of irrigation requirement = resulted in a fast depletion of groundwater sources. Free power and inefficient utilisation of water by farmers has added to the issue of groundwater depletion.

#### ➤ Shift to cash-crops

- Water is being diverted from food crops to cash crops that consume an enormous quantity of water.

#### ➤ Inefficient cultivation practices

- In India, around 70% of the population is still dependent on agriculture for its livelihood. Since the adoption of the Green Revolution in the 1960s, nearly 50% of the food production comes from irrigated land.

### Impacts of the water crisis

#### ➤ Economic growth

- A Niti Aayog report predicted that water demand will be twice the present supply by 2030 and India could lose up to 6% of its GDP during that time.

#### ➤ Power supply

- Water shortages are hurting India's capacity to generate electricity because 40% of thermal power plants are located in areas where water scarcity is high.

#### ➤ Drinking water scarcity

- Not only farmers are affected by the water crisis, urban dwellers in cities and towns across India are also facing a never seen before drinking water scarcity.

#### Conflicts over water

- In India, there are conflicts between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu over the sharing of Cauvery waters, between Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh over the sharing of Narmada waters, between Andhra Pradesh and Telangana over the sharing of Krishna waters, etc.

### Measures taken by the government

- Across the country, states are taking the lead: In Rajasthan, there is a scheme named '**Mukhya Mantri Jal Swavlamban Abhiyan**'.

- One of its objectives is to facilitate effective implementation of water conservation and water harvesting related activities in rural areas.
- Maharashtra has launched a project called '**Jalyukt-Shivar**', which seeks to make 5000 villages free of water scarcity every year.
- The Telangana government has launched a mission called Mission Kakatiya, the objective of which is to increase the agriculture-based income for the small and marginal farmer
  - Accelerating the development of minor irrigation infrastructure
  - Strengthening community-based irrigation management and
  - Adopting a comprehensive programme for the restoration of tanks.
- **Jal Shakti Abhiyan**
  - The campaign is centered on 5 aspects
  - Water conservation and rainwater harvesting
  - Renovation of traditional and other water bodies /tanks
  - Reuse of water and recharging of structures like bore well Watershed development
  - Intensive afforestation.
- **Significance**
  - With this initiative, the government seeks to provide drinking water to all households on a priority and in a sustainable way. It is also expected to bring a positive mindset in people for water conservation. The campaign will assist people to work for rainwater harvesting, maintenance, and upkeep of ponds and village tanks and conservation of water.
- **Jal Shakti Mantralaya**
  - The government has created a new Ministry named 'Jal Shakti' after merging the Ministry of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation with the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation. 'Jal Shakti' ministry will deal with the issues as follows
  - Providing clean drinking water, International and inter-states water disputes, the Namami Gange project aimed at cleaning Ganga and its tributaries, and sub-tributaries.

### Solutions to the water crisis in India

- **Good water management practices**
  - India receives adequate annual rainfall throughout the south-west monsoon. However, most regions of the country are still water-deficient mainly because of inefficient water management practices.

Rainwater harvesting should be encouraged encouraged on a large scale, especially, in cities where the surface runoff of rainwater is very high. Roof-top rainwater harvesting can also be utilised to recharge groundwater by digging percolation pits around the house and filling it with gravel. Indian cities need to learn from Cape Town of the South.

#### ➤ Interlinking of rivers

- The interlinking of rivers is a topic that has been discussed and debated for several years as a possible
- permanent solution to the water crisis in the country.
- The 3 primary advantages mentioned in favour of
- the scheme are

#### **droughts will never occur**

- there will be no more floods in the major rivers and
- an additional **30,000 MW** of hydropower will be generated.

#### ➤ Coordination in aquifer usage

- There is an urgent need for coordination among users for aquifers. There should be laws and contracts for the sharing of aquifers. Groundwater aquifer mapping has started the only once.

#### ➤ River basin authority

- There should be a River Basin Authority for sharing information among states since most of the rivers in India pass through different states. Coordinated efforts among states for the management of groundwater at a localized level.

### Way forward

- India is not a water deficit country, but due to severe neglect and lack of monitoring of water resource development projects, many regions in the country face water stress from time to time. Therefore balancing water demand with available supply is the need of the hour for future economic growth and development as well as for the sustenance of human life.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)



## Environment

### Mining sector vs. Tiger

by Rahul Saigaonker

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

#### Relevance

GS 3 || Environment || Biodiversity || Conservation Efforts

#### Title

Tiger vs Mining Sector - How expanding mining activities are a threat to tigers in India?

#### Why in the news?

Saving the tiger is not just about saving the species. The tiger is a symbol of the health of the forests it inhabits, the same forests that provide water for millions of people

#### Background

- As home to over **50% of the world's remaining wild tigers**, India is a stronghold for the species.
- The cost of securing the long-term viability of the, approximately, four percent of India's landmass that makes up national parks and wildlife sanctuaries is nothing compared to the cost that is borne by society through its decline.
- **Factors determine** tigers population:
  - Poaching
  - Lack of protection and management measures in some areas.
  - Growing conflict with humans
- Healthy forests can provide water security and prevent soil erosion, sedimentation and the subsequent flooding of rivers that can in turn lead to famine and disease

#### India's Tigers

- Nobody knows exactly how many tigers are left in the wild. It is estimated that there are probably fewer than 5000 in the world, with India being home to some 2500 – 3000.

- **Contemporary conservation biologists** accept that it is more important today, rather than attempting to count tigers, to recognize and protect breeding populations, to track tiger population patterns and to decide how many cubs are raised and disperse successfully.
- **Prey, water and cover availability** are also factors that determine the viability of the tiger population, and are often easier to measure than counting tigers.
- **The threats to tigers** are well reported and well recognized. The fact that tigers are poached for supplying their skins and bones with an international criminal market is not in dispute.

#### Mining – A Tool for Sustainable Development

- Mining is an important source of resources for everything from fuel to building materials and also forms the backbone of many countries' economies.
- Mining is often seen as a development vehicle upon which to base the sustainable economic development of countries with economies in transition
- **Environmental Costs of Mining**
  - The true cost to tiger habitat of mining operations can be immense.
  - By its very nature mining is disruptive, necessitating the ripping up of the earth and the depositing of the resulting waste materials, often in huge piles in the vicinity of the mines.
  - Laying aesthetic concerns aside, mining harms the environment in a number of ways: damage to the atmosphere, deforestation, breaking up of the ground, contamination of soil, contamination of surrounding water bodies, contamination and depletion of the water table.
  - All of these have serious repercussions for ecosystems and local communities.
- The relevant mining laws in India state that "Every holder of prospecting licence or mining lease shall undertake the phased restoration, reclamation and rehabilitation of lands affected by prospecting or mining operations and shall complete this work before the conclusion of such operations and the abandonment of prospect or mine"

#### Wildlife Sanctuary- Most affected due to mining

- The negative impacts of mining can be witnessed inside the Jamwa Ramgarh WS in Rajasthan. At 300sq km, Jamwa Ramgarh WS is a vital forest corridor contiguous Sariska Tiger Reserve.
- The working and abandoned mines around Jamwa Ramgarh WS was neither eco friendly nor are they being reclaimed in a phased manner. It is to be hoped that with the expected growth in the mining sector of Rajasthan more than simple lip service will be paid to the guidelines that have been set out by the state Government of Rajasthan
- **State By State, Same Story**
  - **Kudremukh Iron Ore Company Ltd (KIOCL) in Kudremukh National Park, Karnataka:** Kudremukh National Park is located in the Western Ghats in the Indian State Karnataka
  - **Netravalli Wildlife Sanctuary, Goa:** Manganese mines were operating in the north and south of the Netravalli sanctuary when it was notified in 1999. Poor management
    - by the mining companies has led to
    - indiscriminate dumping of overburden in forest covered valleys and pollution of water bodies
  - **Buxa Tiger Reserve, West Bengal:** Dolomite mining inside the Reserve was being undertaken by several private companies and one Government owned company, resulting in deforestation and soil erosion
  - **Panna Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh:** Panna Tiger Reserve in 1998, it was considered a suboptimal habitat, surrounded by illegal sandstone mines that effectively turned it into a fragmented island habitat.

### Need for balance- Development and environment:

- Repeated evidence has shown that mining in India often impacts the local ecology or/and communities living around such areas. Thus the impact that mining activities are having on the habitat and survival of top predator species like tigers, as highlighted in the report, is significant.
- As most of India's mineral deposits are in and around forest areas, the impact of mining on conservation of wildlife in and around forests is significant. The wildlife gets disturbed and it leads to an increase in human-wildlife conflict impacting the local communities. The destruction of wildlife habitat also increases the possibilities of the spread of zoonotic diseases. Thus to ensure that transition of a mining area is just while protecting both communities and wildlife habitat assumes importance.

- But we have **several successful examples** where ongoing mining projects were either discontinued, not renewed or proposals for new mining projects were rejected due to ecological concerns
- "Poor and continued decline in tiger status in the states of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Odisha is a matter of concern." The economy of these three states is heavily dependent on mineral extraction.

### Future threats

- **The detailed 2018 tiger estimation** not only highlights the threat from ongoing mining projects but also talks about proposed mining projects or the development of infrastructure that is being prepared to support the mining activities.
- For instance, while talking about the **Sunabeda Wildlife Sanctuary (in Odisha)** and **Udanti-Sitanadi Tiger Reserve (Chhattisgarh)**, the report noted that this region has a law and order problem due to insurgency and due to the large size of the forested habitat in this landscape, the area has potential for future tiger recovery through protection, restoration of law and order and management to augment prey.
- **During the last four years**, new road network and widening of existing road network traversing these corridors are being carried out so as to combat the insurgents and for the mineral extraction by the mining sector. Appropriate mitigation measures for wildlife passageways need to be thus planned and implemented for maintaining habitat connectivity in this landscape."

### Indian Laws Clearly Prohibit Mining within Protected Areas:

- **The Indian Forest Act (IFA)**, which set aside forests for different purposes and gave them an administrative designation indicating their purpose
- **The Forest (Conservation) Act (FCA)**, applies to any "forest land" irrespective of whether it has been declared as a reserved forest or not under the IFA or State Forest Acts. Section 2 (ii) of this law prohibits the conduct of non-forest activities in "forest land", which includes mining.
- **The Environment (Protection) Act (EPA) of 1986**, provides the Central Government with the power to restrict the area in which industries operate, particularly if they are in proximity to a protected area
- **The Indian Board for Wildlife**, a national expert committee chaired by the Indian Prime Minister, passed a resolution in January 2002 declaring that lands falling within 10 km. of the boundaries of

National Parks and Sanctuaries should be notified as eco-fragile zones under section 3(v) of the EPA and Rule 5 Sub-rule 5(viii) & (x) of the Environment (Protection) Rules.39

- **The Wildlife Protection Act (WPA)** comes into force when an area receives additional special status as a result of its importance for wildlife
- Sections 29 and 35 of the WPA, in relation to areas declared as wildlife sanctuaries and national parks, prohibits the granting of permission, by the Chief Wildlife Warden or any other body of the state Government or central Government, for any activity that damages "the habitat of any wild animal by any act whatsoever".

### Judicial Precedent

- **landmark ruling from the Supreme Court** reiterated that the Central and State Governments were required to ensure the FCA was fully enforced in relation to non-forest activities on forest land
- **Supreme Court has issued two key** rulings specific to the Aravalli hill region in the drought-prone state of Rajasthan, due to well-documented cases of serious drops in the level of the water table and subsequent depletion of the water supply associated with mining
- The Supreme Court went as far as issuing an interim order banning all mining in the entire region.

### Conclusion

- **Mining can contribute to India's economic** development if conducted in a truly sustainable manner, with strict adherence to national legislation in the interests of wildlife, forest and water conservation.
- **Despite policy commitments and legislation**, there are numerous examples of India's protected areas being compromised by industrial encroachment, including vital watershed forest areas that form tiger habitat.
- **Civil society and consumers** are becoming increasingly concerned over the lack of corporate accountability and by the failure of companies to pay more than lip service to the concepts of "sustainable" development.
- **International companies investing** in, or buying from, mines in India have a role to play in ensuring that mining activities do not destroy the habitat of endangered species, such as the tiger, or compromise the water security of local communities.

### Mains oriented question

"Single largest threat to the Central Indian Tiger Landscape is fragmentation due to coal mining over thousands of acres". Illustrate.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

### NOTES

# Plastic pollution in Atlantic

by Siddhant

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

## Relevance

GS 3 || Environment || Environment & Ecology || Pollution

## Title

Plastic pollution in Atlantic Ocean, Study finds huge amount of microplastics in Atlantic

## Why in the news?

The Atlantic Is Awash With Far More Plastic Than Previously Thought, Study Finds. In addition to large plastic trash, researchers estimate that more than 21 million metric tons of tiny plastic debris are floating below the Atlantic Ocean's surface

## Plastic pollution

- It is well-known that pollution from plastic, especially smaller microplastics, have reached the oceans
- and even some of the most remote corners of the Arctic.
- Even so, there is uncertainty about the magnitude of plastic pollution in marine environments and it cannot be exactly said how much pollution does plastic, especially microplastics cause
- Now, a new study published in Nature Communications has estimated the amount of microplastic pollution in the Atlantic Ocean and put million tonnes, indicating that the inputs and stocks of ocean plastics are much higher than determined previously

## How does plastic reach the oceans?

- There are multiple pathways. For instance, riverine and atmospheric transport from coastal and inland areas, illegal dumping activities and direct-at-sea littering from shipping, fishing and aquaculture activities, scientists have said.
- According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), at least 8 million tonnes of plastic end up in the oceans every year and makes

up about 80 percent of all marine debris

## The main causes of marine pollution include

- **Eutrophication** is caused by fertiliser runoff from fields and lawns onto coastal bodies. .e.g. Eutrophication in many parts of the world has produced major dead zones, including the Gulf of Mexico and the Baltic Sea. In the form of plastic bags, balloons, glass bottles, clothes, packaging material etc., solid garbage often finds its way into the ocean
- **Oil spills do significant** harm to the marine ecosystem. P.e.g. In December 2014, a wrecked tanker released about 94,000 gallons of heavy fuel oil (78,271 Imperial gallons) into the Shela River, which runs through the Sundarbans, shared between India and Bangladesh in the Bay of Bengal
- **Chemicals also come into the sea** from activities focused on land. For example, during their manufacture, use or disposal, as well as from accidental leaks or fires in products containing those chemicals, they may escape into water. It has been found that plastic garbage like plastic bottle rings obstruct the breathing passages and stomachs of many marine animals
- **Small organisms feed** on small pieces of broken plastic, or microplastics, and absorb the plastic chemicals into their tissues. Microplastics have a diameter of less than 5 millimeters (0.2 inches) and travel up the food chain, gradually becoming a part of the food that humans consume.
- **Waste flows untreated**, or undertreated, into the ocean in many parts of the world. E.g. 80 percent of discharged municipal waste into the Mediterranean Sea is untreated. Via deliberate dumping man-made pollutants such as pesticides and chemicals and nuclear waste join the sea.

## What study said about plastic pollution?

- In the study, scientists studied pollution of the Atlantic Ocean caused by three types of plastics, polyethylene, polypropylene, and polystyrene, which were suspended in the top 200 metres of the ocean. These three types of plastic are most commonly used for packaging.
- **Smaller plastic particles are a hazard**, the scientists note, as it is easier for them to sink to greater ocean depths and some marine species such as zooplanktons show preferential ingestion of smaller particles, making them easier to enter the food chain



- They also estimate that **based on plastic waste generation trends from 1950-2015** and considering that the Atlantic Ocean has received 0.3-0.8 per cent of the global plastic waste for 65 years, the Atlantic waters could hold 17-47 million tonnes of plastic waste

### Global releases of primary microplastics to the world oceans (identified by IUCN)

- **Plastic pollution has important social,** economic and ecological implications. Marine plastics endanger the health of the ocean, human health, food protection and coastal tourism as well as support climate change.
- **Potential hazardous** effects on humans by alternate ingestion of microparticles can lead to chromosomal alterations that lead to infertility, obesity and cancer.
- **The threat to the marine ecosystem:** it is a matter of growing scientific concern nowadays, as these microparticles are easily accessible to a large variety of aquatic species due to their small size and are eventually transmitted along with the food web.
- **Persistent biological effects** in marine organisms arise from microplastics deposited in their cells and tissues

### Global Initiatives to prevent the marine pollution

- The Global Plan of Action (GPA) for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities: The GPA is the only global intergovernmental mechanism that addresses specifically the connection between land, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems.
- **International conventions:**
  - **MARPOL Convention (1973)** — Protects ship emissions from industrial or unintended causes in the maritime environment. It lists different sources of marine contamination caused by gasoline, noxious liquid substances and packaged hazardous chemicals, sewage and ship garbage, etc.
  - **Greenpeace:** an environmental NGO dedicated to the preservation of oceans and marine life throughout the world. His grassroots efforts resulted in a ban on destructive fishing practices, companies changing their fisheries policies and whale sanctuaries being created.
  - **The London Convention (1972):** Its objective is to promote the effective control of all sources of marine pollution and to take all practicable steps to prevent pollution of the sea by dumping of wastes and other matter.

- **Bangkok Declaration on Combating Marine Debris in ASEAN Region:** Recently Leaders from the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) adopted Bangkok Declaration on Combating Marine Debris in ASEAN Region during the 34th ASEAN Summit.

### Why do we need to act now?

- **Global plastics production** has exceeded over 300 million tons per year according to the UN Environment Programme. Micro plastics (particles of less than 5 mm) such as those used in scrubbers and cosmetics, ingested by marine animals may cause certain chemicals to accumulate and have physiological effects. Micro plastics can interfere with reproduction and development and alter how species function.
- **The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP)** said that, if current emission levels continue, there would be more plastics in the sea than fish by 2050. Every year, nearly eight million tons of plastic-bottles, packaging and other waste-was poured into the ocean. Then this plastic waste kills marine life and goes into the human food chain
- **Unlike POPs (Persistent Organic Pollutants) or chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs),** in terms of international agreements, plastic pollution has received little attention. The health effects of the presence of polypropylene, polyethylene terephthalate and other chemicals in drinking water, food and even inhaled air may not yet be apparent, but these are unquestionably pollutants
- **No one solution can eliminate plastic waste** in the marine environment. Therefore an internationally agreed agreement and a legally binding one is required.
- **Like greenhouse gasses,** plastic is not limited by national borders because it migrates through water and air currents and settles in benthic sediments. Most of the region of the ocean is outside national boundaries, resulting in "garbage fields" in oceanic gyres by the accumulation of plastic waste from various nations.

### What are the solutions?

- **Successful strategies** must take account of all stages of the plastic lifecycle — connecting manufacturers with consumers and eventually with waste managers. Subsidies for fossil fuels drive the plastics market. Countries will also end subsidies to fossil fuels. Annually, raw plastic is manufactured using 4-8 per cent of oil.

- **India has a major problem with plastics**, especially single-use shopping bags which, along with other waste, enter dumping sites, rivers and wetlands. The most effective way of combating pollution is to regulate plastics production and distribution
- **Local measures are necessary** for mitigating plastic waste, using strategies such as bans on plastic bags, maximum daily limits for emissions into watersheds, and incentives for fishing gear retrieval.
- **Countries will work together** to set concrete plastic waste reduction goals. A substantive international agreement-the need for the hour is one with clearly established goals for waste reduction.
- **It is a realistic option to prohibit single-use bags** and to make customers pay a substantial amount for the more durable ones. Enforcing the 2016 Solid Waste Management Rules, which require waste segregation, would recycle materials and substantially reduce the environmental burden. Removal of waste can be done in collaboration with the community and provides a significant opportunity for jobs.

### Conclusion

As stated in the 2030 vision of the European Union document on the development of a circular plastic economy, the response lies in changing the very nature of plastics, from cheap and disposable to renewable, reusable and completely recyclable. Marine plastic pollution is a 'planetary problem' and we would hope for a global 'Paris-style' treaty to address it.

### Additional info

- **Microplastics:** Microplastics are plastic debris smaller than 5mm in length, or about the size of a sesame seed. While they come from a variety of sources, one of them is when larger pieces of plastic degrade into smaller pieces, which are difficult to detect
- Ocean health must be viewed as a global concern in this context, and all nations should work in partnership to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal: 14 i.e. to protect and sustainably use coasts, seas and marine resources for sustainable growth

### Mains oriented question

There is sufficient evidence of the deteriorating status of our seas and oceans and on the pace of this degradation but existing monitoring and assessment programmes are neither integrated nor complete. Illustrate the statement in context of marine pollution, what are its impact?



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

### NOTES

## Delhi to get 4 new forests

by Ankit Agrawal

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

### Relevance

GS 3 || Environment || Biodiversity || Conservation Efforts

### Title

Delhi Forest Department to create 4 new forests in National Capital, Know facts about lungs of Delhi

### Why in the news?

In a piece of good news, **four new forests** are being developed for cleaner air at **Dera Mandi, Jaunapur, Aya Nagar and Mamurpur in Narela** by Delhi Forest Department. Some of these forests are likely to be developed by the end of this year.

### Status of forest cover in Delhi

- ▶ Delhi has **21.9 %** of its geographical area under forest cover which spreads over **324 square kilometres**.
- ▶ The Delhi Forest Department has set a target of increasing Delhi's forest cover to 25% by the end of 2025.

### Significance of urban forests

Urban trees can help to mitigate some of the **negative impacts and social consequences of urbanisation**, and thus make cities more resilient to these changes. Here are ways in which urban trees and forests contribute to making cities socio-economically and environmentally more sustainable –

#### ▶ Food and nutrition security

- Trees can contribute to the increase of local food and nutrition security, providing food such as fruits, nuts and leaves for both human consumption and fodder. Their wood, in turn, can be used for cooking and heating.

#### ▶ Urban biodiversity

- Trees play an important role in increasing urban biodiversity, providing plants and animals with a favourable habitat, food and protection.

#### ▶ Climate change mitigation

- A mature tree can absorb up to 150 kg of CO<sub>2</sub> per year. As a result, trees play an important role in climate change mitigation. Especially in cities with high levels of pollution, trees can improve air quality, making cities healthier places to live in.

#### ▶ Heat island

- Strategic placement of trees in cities can help to cool the air between 2 and 8 degrees Celsius, thus reducing the urban "heat island" effect, and helping urban communities to adapt to the effects of climate change.

#### ▶ Filtering urban pollutants

- Large trees are excellent filters for urban pollutants and fine particulates. They absorb pollutant gases (such as carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, and ozone and sulfur oxides) and filter fine particulates such as dust, dirt or smoke out of the air by trapping them on leaves and bark.

#### ▶ Improving physical and mental health

- Research shows that living in close proximity of urban green spaces and having access to them, can improve physical and mental health, for example by decreasing high blood pressure and stress. This, in turn, contributes to the well-being of urban communities.

#### ▶ Reducing risk of natural disasters

- Mature trees regulate water flow and play a key role in preventing floods and reducing the risk of natural disasters. A mature evergreen tree, for instance, can intercept more than 15 000 liters of water per year.

#### ▶ Reducing carbon emission

- Trees also help to reduce carbon emissions by helping to conserve energy. For example, the correct placement of trees around buildings can reduce the need for air conditioning by 30 percent, and reduce winter heating bills by 20-50 percent.
- Planning urban landscapes with trees can increase property value, by up to 20 percent, and attract tourism and business.

### Nagar Van Scheme

Nagar Van-Udyan is a forested area in the vicinity of a city accessible to the city dwellers suitably managed for providing wholesome natural environment for recreation, conservation education, biodiversity conservation and supported services like water and soil conservation, pollution abatement, reduction of heat islands effect of the city with the essential elements for regular use. It is a Pilot scheme for implementation for a period of **five Years (beginning 2015-16)** by the the Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change.

## Objectives

- To create **200 City Forests** in the Country. A City Forest will be developed in each City with Municipal Council.
- To create **awareness on plants and biodiversity.**
- Conservation education on important flora and fauna of the region including threat perception.
- **Ecological rejuvenation** of the cities-Forests the green lungs will contribute to Environmental improvement of cities by pollution mitigation, cleaner air, noise reduction, water harvesting and reduction of heat islands effect.
- **In-situ Biodiversity conservation.**
- Health benefits to citizens.
- Making cities climate resilient.

## Way forward

For the sustainable use of forests and their conservation to be truly effective, all the stakeholders (**locals, forest department officials, and government**) need to accept the idea of democratic multilayered governance model and work in unison.

The only way forward is to have a more **open dialogue with department officials**, rather than curtailing their powers.

## Mains oriented question

"The increased intensity of pollution in Indian cities has become a challenge to the health of residents." In the light of this statement, analyse the relevance of urban forestry in India.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

NOTES



## Uttarakhand develops 'Green' Ramayana Park

By Prashant Dhawan



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

### Relevance

GS 3|| Environment|| Environment & Ecology|| Sustainable Development

### Title

Uttarakhand develops 'Green' Ramayana Park

### Why in news?

- Uttarakhand's forest department has developed a Green Ramayana Park where plant species mentioned in Valmiki's Ramayan and associated with Lord Rama in six major forest types in India, have been grown.

### Uttarakhand

- It is often referred to as the "**Devabhumi**" The state is divided into two divisions, **Garhwal and Kumaon**, with a total of **13 districts**.
- The winter capital of Uttarakhand is Dehradun, the largest city of the state, which is a railhead. Gairsain, a town in **Chamoli district** is the summer capital of Uttarakhand.

### 'Green' Ramayana park

- Uttarakhand chief conservator of forests (research wing) Sanjiv Chaturvedi said Green Ramayana Park, which took over six months to develop in **Kumaon's Haldwani area**, is the first of its kind thematic project touching the little-explored aspect of Ramayana, especially in the context of the flora mentioned in it and associated with the journey of Lord Rama across four main forest types in India.

### Significance

- During Lord Rama's journey from Ayodhya to Sri Lanka, he came across four types of forests in the Indian subcontinent including Chitrakoot (tropical deciduous), Dandakarnanya (tropical deciduous), Panchavati (tropical dry deciduous) and Kishkindha (dry and moist deciduous). Ashok Vatika (evergreen) is associated with Sita while Dronagiri (alpine forest) is associated with Lord Hanuman
- Experts found that around 90 percent of the **139 species** that have been mentioned in Ramayana are still found in the areas originally mentioned in the religious manuscript.

### Plant species

- Their scientific names and the precise number of 'sh-loka' (hymn) wherein the plant species have been mentioned have also been mentioned.

### Tourism in India

- India in the past attracted a lot of travelers because of its fabled wealth. An example of this is a visit to **Hieun-Tsang**, a devout Chinese Buddhist.
- Pilgrim Travel received a boost when emperors such as Ashoka and Harsha began building pilgrim resting houses.
- '**The Arthashastra**' underlining the importance of travel infrastructure for the state, has played a significant role in the past.
- Post-independence, tourism remained continuously a part of the **Five Year Plans**.
- After the seventh FYP, various forms of tourism were introduced in India, such as business tourism, health tourism, and wildlife tourism, etc.

### Steps taken to promote tourism in India

- The Indian Government took the following steps to tackle the challenges
  - **Swadesh Darshan Scheme-** Under it, the Ministry of Tourism provides the State Governments / Union Territory Administrations with **Central Financial Assistance (CFA)** for the development of the infrastructure of 13 identified thematic circuits.
  - **13 Circuits include-** Northeast India Circuit, Buddhist Circuit, Himalayan Circuit, Coastal Circuit, Krishna Circuit, Desert Circuit, Eco Circuit, Wildlife Circuit, Rural Circuit, Spiritual Circuit, Ramayana

Circuit, and Heritage Circuit.

- The '**National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive**' (PRASHAD) Scheme undertook integrated development of identified pilgrimage destinations (including job creation).
- "**Adopt a Heritage Project**" plans to entrust heritage sites/monuments and other tourist sites for the development of various tourist amenities to private sector companies, public sector companies, and individuals.
- Paryatan Parv celebration to encourage Indians to visit India's tourist destination from 16th to 27th September 2018.

### Important Religious Places

- Hinglaj devi temple - Baluchistan
- Sharda shakti peeth - POK
- Sikh gurudwara in Pakistan
- Pashupatinath temple in nepal
- Buddhist sites in Nepal
- Kailash mansarovar in China
- Ajmer Sharif, Nizamuddin Auliya Dargah in India

### Challenges in tourism sector in India

- **Infrastructure and Connectivity**
  - Network limitations and poor connectivity hamper tourist visits to some heritage sites.
  - A lot of tourist destinations like Kangchenjunga, for example, are still not readily available.
- **Segments of tourism or circuits**
  - India has various tourist destinations but few circuits. Also, on the field, there are several reported tourist circuits yet to be introduced.
- **Promotion and Marketing**
  - While marketing has increased in relation to Indian tourism, online marketing / branding remains restricted and campaigns are not organized.
- **Skill Deficit**
  - A key challenge for offering tourists a world-class experience is the lack of adequately trained individuals for the tourism and hospitality sectors.
  - A limited number of qualified multi-lingual guides, and a limited local knowledge and understanding of the benefits and responsibilities associated with the tourism industry serve as restrictions on the growth of the sector.

### Way forward

- Faster development of all kinds of infrastructure (physical, social, and digital) is an hourly necessity.
- Tourism Safety is a priority. For tourists, an official system of guides can be launched.
- Indian residents should be motivated to treat tourists well so that there is no type of fraud that **tourists face**.
- The size of India and its massive natural, geographic, cultural, and artistic diversity offer huge opportunities. The Indian tourism industry ought to play in that

### IMains model question

- Discuss the economic potential of religious tourism in India.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

### Notes

## Disaster Management

### Munnar Landslide 2020

by Ankit Agrawal

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

#### Relevance

GS 3 || Disaster Management || Major Disasters || Landslides

#### Title

Munnar Landslide Tragedy 2020 - Know geographical reasons behind Kerala landslide

#### Why in the news?

A massive landslide last week crushed a settlement of 83 tea estate workers in Munnar in Idukki, Kerala.

#### What happened recently?

- The landslide happened at Pettimudi,
- A hamlet in Rajamala ward under Munnar village panchayat in Kerala's Idukki district 83 workers of Kanan Devan Hills Plantations Company (P) Ltd were living in Pettimudi.
- Rajamala includes Eravikulam National Park, and the landslide was triggered from a shola forest region in the national park
- Rocks, slurry and sludge crashed down a distance of around 1½ km to a patch of valley in Pettimudi,
- Crushing the single-room houses of estate workers that stood in two rows, face to face.

#### Why is it vulnerable?

- The location where the landslide was triggered, according to the Kerala Geology Department, has a 40° slope, and any slope above 20° is vulnerable to slipping during heavy rain.
- An analysis of landslides in Idukki by the State Disaster Management Authority has shown that high intensity rainfall saturates the soil on the slopes.
- Soil with higher clay content has high water retention capacity and low drainage capacity, leading to

high water pressure in the slope material.

- Human interventions such as heavy loading on the slopes caused by buildings on cut-and-fill ground,
- Without adequate protective measures on the uphill and downhill sides, have made the area particularly vulnerable. Frequent slides have resulted in blockage of river channels and changed the river's course.

#### Causes for landslides in Kerala:

- Unregulated quarrying
- Illegal constructions
- River-wetland encroachments
- Excessive felling of trees
- Heavy rainfall, higher than usual in northern Kerala.

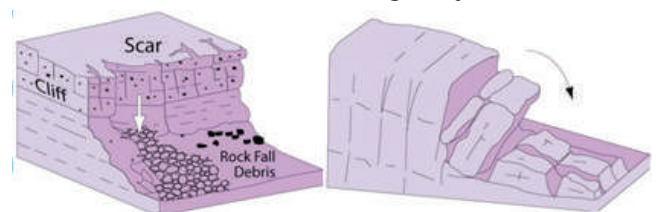
#### Landslides

##### What is it?

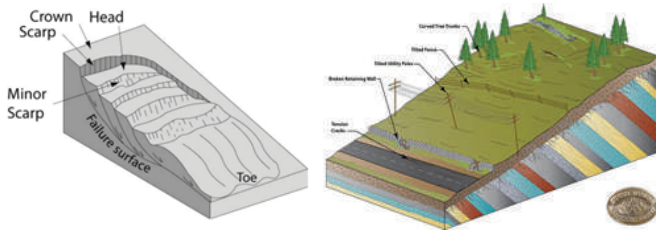
- When soil, rock, and other earth debris can no longer hold it together and gives way to gravity, landslides happen.
- The downward force of a landslide can move slowly or quickly with disastrous effects.
- Landslides can even occur underwater, causing tidal waves and damage to coastal areas. These landslides are called submarine landslides.

#### Types of Landslide

- **Falls:** - When the rocks detach from a steep slope abruptly.
- **Topples:** - When the whole unit falls due to forward rotation under the action of gravity.



- **Slides:** - When rocks or soil slide on a steeper slope forming material.
- **Spread:** - It occurs on very gentle slopes or flat terrain.



### What causes landslides?

- This happens when the effect of a complex force field (stress is force per unit area) is present on a mass of rock or soil on the slope. It happens because of geological causes, morphological causes, physical causes and causes of humans. There are two parameters which decide the landslides:
- **Metrological cause-** Excessive rainfall eg. Assam, Himalayas, Western Ghats, Purvanchal Himalaya
- **Cloudburst:** 10cm rainfall in few hour eg. Kumaun Himalaya, Leh-Ladhak
- **Lightning:** Light can hit rock causing landslide eg. Khasi hills
- There are other two parameters which decide the landslides:
  - **Increased shear stress:** occurs due to elimination of lateral and underlying support; lateral and load increases; transitory stresses such as blasting, earthquakes, etc.; and geological motion.
  - **Loss in material strength:** occurs due to weathering, pore water pressure and structural changes
- The incidents of landslides increasing day by day due to the over urbanization, massive deforestation, construction and development work in landslide prone areas.

### How can landslides be mitigated?

- By restricting or even removing populations from areas prone to landslides.
- By restricting other land use types where the slopes are vulnerable.
- Installation of early warning systems based on monitoring soil conditions, such as rock and soil strain, slope displacement and groundwater levels.

### Remedial steps for landslides

- **Alteration of Slope Geometry:** To increase the stability of unstable or potentially unstable slopes, the slope profile is often modified by digging or filling at the slope's tip.
- **Drainage Control:** The existence of water in joints or in soil slopes has a profound effect on the stability of the slope.

- **Internal Slope Reinforcement Systems:** The purpose of stabilizing the rock slope with structural elements is to support the rock mass by adding external structures which are not part of the rock mass but support it externally.
- **Retaining Walls:** wall building around the issue region of the slopes.

### Most affected region in India due to landslide:

- **Himalyan Region:** India has the highest mountain chain on earth, the Himalayas, which are formed due to collision of Indian and Eurasian plate, the northward movement of the Indian plate towards China causes continuous stress on the rocks rendering them friable, weak and prone to landslides and earthquakes
- **Northeastern region:** The Northeastern region is badly affected by landslide problems of a bewildering variety. Landslides in the Darjeeling district of West Bengal as also those in Sikkim, Mizoram, Tripura, Meghalaya, Assam, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh pose chronic problems, causing recurring economic losses worth billions of rupees.
- **Western Ghats:** A different variety of landslides, characterized by a lateritic cap, pose a constant threat to the Western Ghats in the South, along the steep slopes overlooking the Konkan coast besides Nilgiris, which is highly landslide-prone.

### Strategies for Landslide Risk Treatment:

- Landslide risk treatment is the ultimate objective of the risk management process which aims to mitigate the effects of the hazard. This encompasses a five-pronged strategy comprising:
  - Treating vulnerable slopes and existing hazardous landslides
  - Restricting development in landslide-prone areas.
  - Preparing codes for excavation, construction and grading.
  - Protecting existing developments.
  - Monitoring and warning systems.
  - Putting in place arrangements for landslide insurance and compensation for losses
- **National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM)** - The objective was to bring together all stakeholders including related ministries, universities and experts to discuss / debate / disseminate effectively valuable expertise, insights, information and technologies to the risk and resilience of landfills at national and international level.



**Way forward**

- To reduce damage caused by landslides, the Government can locate development activities on stable ground and utilize the landslide prone areas as open space that may be used for parks, grazing or afforestation.
- Government should properly plan the afforestation program so that there is little slope modification in this process.
- Land use controls can be enacted to prevent hazardous areas from being used for residential buildings and important structures such as roads or transmission lines.
- Another important factor to take into consideration is the water infiltrating into the overburden during heavy rains and consequent increase in prone pressure within the overburden. In steep slopes, the safety factor of the slope material gets considerably reduced which causes it to move down.
- To prevent this situation, the best natural method is reducing infiltration and allowing excess water to move down without hindrance.

**Mains oriented question**

What are the steps taken by the government to manage the landslide in Himalayan region?



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

NOTES

## UNESCO Odisha

## "Tsunami Ready"

by Ankit Agrawal

हिंदी में



#UPSC #HAS

(Click on the above image to watch the video)

## Relevance

GS 3 || Disaster Management || Major Disasters || Tsunami

## Title

What is Tsunami Ready tag by UNESCO - IOC? Two Odisha villages honoured with Tsunami Ready tag

## Why in the news?

UNESCO recognises two Odisha villages as Tsunami Ready tag

## What happened recently?

- India has become the first country to implement 'Tsunami Ready' in the Indian Ocean Region
- Odisha is the first State with two of its villages – Venkatraipur in Ganjam district, Noliasahi in Jagatsingpur district



## Name of the Recognition

- The 2 villages have got **The UNESCO-Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC)'s Certificate of Recognition and Certificate of Appreciation awards**
- In a virtual event organized by the **Indian National Centre for Oceanic Information Services (INCOIS)** and the **Indian Ocean Tsunami Information Center (IOTIC)**

- The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC/UNESCO) was established by resolution 2.31 adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO.
- It first met in Paris at UNESCO Headquarters in 1961. Initially, 40 States became members of the Commission.
- The IOC assists governments to address their individual and collective ocean and coastal management needs, through the sharing of knowledge, information and technology as well as through the coordination of programs and building capacity in ocean and coastal research, observations and services.

## Who implemented this in Odisha?

- Odisha State Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA),
- Which was set up in the state following the 1999 super cyclone that claimed 10,000 lives,
- Has implemented the Tsunami Ready programme in the State

## Criteria for the recognition

- 11 point indicators to claim to be tsunami ready like:-
  - Community tsunami risk reduction plan
  - Designated and mapped tsunami hazard zones
  - Public display of tsunami information
  - Easily understood tsunami evacuation maps
  - Outreach and public education materials
- Future plans of Odisha: It will make Odisha a role model for tsunami preparedness. With this award, the state is motivated to make the 326 villages and urban local bodies tsunami ready in one year's time

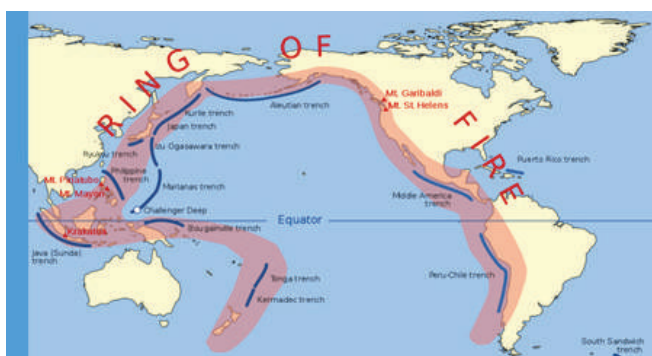
## All about Tsunami

## Tsunami:

- **The seismic waves traveling through the ocean and seawater result in high sea waves which are known as tsunami.**
- A tsunami is a series of ocean waves that sends surges of water.
- Caused by large, undersea earthquakes at tectonic plate boundaries.
- **80%-happen** within the Pacific Ocean's "Ring of Fire" These waves are responsible for **causing considerable destruction in certain coastal areas** where submarine earthquakes occur.
- It is a series of waves of **extremely long wavelength and long period generated** in a body of water by an impulsive disturbance that displaces water.

## Conditions required for Tsunami

- There should be an earthquake from which energy can be transferred.
- There should be a vertical displacement of the water. i.e. during an earthquake, the crust should move vertically. That's why **Tsunamis originated near oceanic trenches** where plates are being subducted. In the Atlantic Ocean, a number of earthquakes occur on Mid – Oceanic ridge but since there is no **sudden vertical movement**, Tsunamis are not formed. Tsunamis can also be triggered if the seamounts break. This can cause a vertical displacement of water.



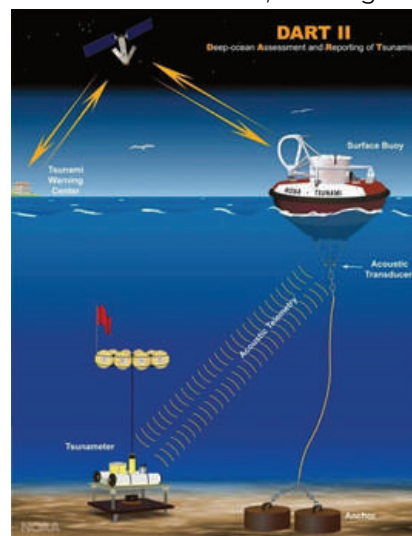
## Causes of Tsunami

- Earthquake
- Landslides
- Undersea volcanoes
- Meteors, asteroids
- Anthropogenic factors like nuclear explosions

## Tsunami Early Warning System

- Although the earthquake cannot be predicted in advance, a three-hour warning of a possible tsunami can be given.
- These early warning systems over the Pacific Ocean are in operation. They were deployed in the Indian Ocean even after 2004.
- **In 1965, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)** initiated an early warning system. NOAA member states include the major Pacific Rim countries.
- NOAA has developed the **‘Deep Ocean Assessment and Reporting of Tsunamis’ (DART) gauge**.
- Each gauge has a very sensitive pressure recorder on the seafloor. Data is generated whenever changes in water pressure occur.
- The data is transmitted to a surface buoy which then relays it over satellite.

- Computer systems at the **Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre (PTWC) in Hawaii** monitor data. Based on the data, warnings are issued.



## Past to present

- **Many disasters have occurred in the states of Tamil Nadu,** Andhra Pradesh and Odisha in the form of floods and cyclones.
- Earlier, there was no predictive capability for tsunami or cyclone. Now there are 12 km high resolution models to give forecasts 5 days in advance. This was visible in Hudhud and Vardha cyclones.
- **In 2004 during the tsunami, all communications had failed** except radio which became the medium of communication between all affected areas. In the event of failure of communication on land, there is use of satellite communication. This will transmit the data directly to the ground station from where the tsunami warning is generated from Hyderabad.
- Earlier, the area covered was huge- upto 250 kms where it could occur. Now it is 25 kms range. So predictive capability of cyclones has strongly improved that has resulted in less loss of life and necessary contingency precautions. National Disaster Management Guidelines in 2010 were released which also focused on advanced systems like topography, GIS database, remote sensing data and national database for emergency management.
- Additionally, during disaster management, drinking water, food and help facilities are critical. **This is handled by NDMA and it has requisite infrastructure and necessary capability** to deal with any kind of disasters. During Vardha cyclone, people staying nearby, Navy, Coast Guard and other organisations geared up to mobilise their infrastructure to provide necessary requirements. That kind of inter-ministerial and inter-related cooperation exists to deal with any kind of disaster like this.

### India's Preparedness

- **The Deep Ocean Assessment and Reporting System (DOARS)** was set up in the Indian Ocean post-2004.
- The Indian government plans to set up a network with Indonesia, Myanmar and Thailand etc.
- A National Tsunami Early Warning Centre, which can detect earthquakes of more than 6 magnitude in the Indian Ocean, was inaugurated in 2007 in India.
- Set up by the Ministry of Earth Sciences in the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS), Hyderabad, the tsunami warning system would take 10-30 minutes to analyse the seismic data following an earthquake.

### International cooperation

- There is **a need for good international cooperation as oceans don't have boundaries**. What happens in Indonesia can affect India too.
- Among **regional cooperation under the framework of UNESCO or UN**, there is great deal of sharing of information data from one country to another country is required.
- India has extended its tsunami early warning system to Vietnam, Malaysia and Philippines as a part of **soft-diplomacy along with countries belonging to IOR**. A disaster may occur in Indonesia but information can be available to India and precautions can be taken.
- Thus, Observations set up at different parts of Indian Ocean will be required to give exact information.

### Conclusion:

Natural disaster are very unpredictable event or occurrence the specific region is hard to track but country should always be ready at the tip as preparedness and response to the disaster should be always faster than the disaster

### Mains Oriented question

In a tsunami event India is in a strong place to handle its impacts. Will you agree? Comment.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

NOTES



## Fire death tragedies at Vijayawada & Ahmedabad hospitals

by Siddhant

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

### Relevance

GS 3|| Disaster Management|| Disaster Management|| Policy framework

### Title

COVID 19 hospital fire death tragedy at Vijayawada and Ahmedabad - Who is responsible for mishaps?

### Why in news?

- The recent fires in **Vijayawada** and **Ahmedabad at hospitals** for Covid-19 patients have pointed to the lack of fire safety measures.

### What are the codes for fire safety?

- The National Building Code of India published by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) is the recommended document for all buildings across the country.
- The chapter on 'Fire and Life Safety' is instrumental in the way the exits and staircases are laid out and electrical circuits and water tanks are mapped.

### What do the rules say?

- An architect with her fire consultant provides the plans to the municipal body of the area for building approval.
- These plans will have fire strategies – from the number of exits and their type, occupants' load, fire escape routes, staircases, the width of passageways and corridors, water tanks, and fire towers.
- The specifications are different for buildings, from hospitals and commercial spaces to cinemas and schools.
- In any building, there has to be a minimum of two

staircases. If it's an 18,000 sq m block for instance, in an institutional building, there has to be a fire door in the middle, besides the mandatory two staircases at two ends.

- In this space, if air-conditioning ducts are passing through, these will have to have fire dampeners to block the smoke in case of a fire.
- Most importantly, the travel distance to the fire exit has to be kept in mind. The distance that the remotest person on the floor can reach a staircase is roughly 24m.
- If fire exits are not naturally ventilated, they should have fire doors.
- The codes also have a say on the electrical distribution cables and wiring, which should have separate ducts sealed with non-combustible material and should be separate from telephone wires or gas and water mains

### Present Status of Fire Services in India

- According to the provisions of Article 243W of the Constitution, fire services in India fall under the 12th schedule of the Constitution, the operation of functions mentioned in the 12th schedule is the responsibility of municipalities.
- The States concerned, the Union Territories (UTs) and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) are currently coordinating programs for fire prevention and fire protection.
- In some states such as Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, etc., fire services are under the respective municipal corporations concerned. In other remaining states, it's in Home Ministry under the department.
- The GoI in 1956 formed a Standing Fire Advisory Committee (SFAC) under the Ministry of Home Affairs, which was renamed the Standing Fire Advisory Council (SFAC) in 1980, considering the deficiencies in the fire services in different states of the country and the need to upgrade it.
- This Committee / Council is represented by each state fire service as well as by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), the Ministry of Defense (MoD), the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoT), the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MoC) and the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS).

### What are the hurdles in the way?

- Anything from cartons to mattresses. Often corridors are blocked and become storage areas. Since fire staircases are used the least, for security reasons they are locked, and people get trapped inside.
- Besides, the enforcement of the building codes is not always adhered to, which happens often when floors are added illegally or inspections are circumvented.

### Who should take the blame?

- While the onus for maintenance and upkeep of the building rests with the management, the contractors who supply the fire equipment – sprinklers, hose pipes, fire extinguishers – should also be held accountable for maintenance.
- Municipal bodies that give the final clearance should be held accountable for giving the NOC for any building.
- The architect/builder must also be questioned on the safety and validity of the building plan.

### The Problems in the Current Structure

- Cities are undergoing rapid physical changes, much like a chain reaction. A rising population demands more space to live and work. As a result, residential and commercial buildings primarily witness expansion and densification over time.
- **Even in this scenario, the Firemaster plan are not being updated or revamped. Moreover, only 30% of the cities in India has any master plan.**
- Many commercial and residential buildings in particular high-rise buildings have been found flouting fire safety norms. Many occupiers or societies do not bother to conduct regular maintenance of the fire prevention systems installed in their buildings.
- Though Fire Safety Audit is found to be an effective tool for assessing fire safety standards of an organization or an occupancy, there are no clear cut provisions in any of the fire safety legislation in India, regarding the scope, objectives, methodology, and periodicity of a fire safety audit.

### Causes of Fire Accidents in India

- Violation of safety standards and lack of standardization and enforcement is a major cause of fire accidents, as the construction of large-scale false roofs in commercial buildings and multiplexes runs counter to the national building code.

- High-rise buildings are more prone to fire-related accidents as they lack adequate built-in fire protection systems which make it difficult to save operations.
- Poorly stored goods, even though they are not flammable, helps to spread fire and hinder firefighters gain access to the seat of the fire or reduce the effectiveness of sprinkler systems.

**Lack of awareness about the safety arrangements** before purchasing or hiring a flat in an apartment or before starting an institution.

Lack of adequate resources, preparedness, and poor fire services fail to ensure fire safety cover to the population.

- According to the Ministry of Home Affairs, in 144 towns with a population over 1 lakh, there is a **huge deficiency of fire fighting infrastructure.**
- 78 percent of the budget allocated to buying fire safety equipment and rescue vehicles went unused across the state between 2010 and 2015.

### Way forward

- Fire Safety Audit should be made mandatory for all over India and the audit work should be entrusted to Third Party Agencies, who have expertise in it. It is reasonable to have a fire safety audit in every year in every occupancy. Above all, the success of fire prevention and fire protection mainly depend upon the active co-operation from all personnel in an occupancy.

**Hazard Identification & Risk Assessment (HIRA)** can be focused to identify potential hazards. A comprehensive fire safety audit can address the inherent fire hazards associated with the day to day activities in occupancy and recommend measures to reduce the potential fire hazards.

### Mains model question

- From fire safety to urban planning, why are Indian regulations not working? Critically analyse.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

## Indian Society

### What is Istanbul Convention? Violence against WOMEN

by Dr Mahipal Rathore

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

#### Relevance

GS 1 || Indian Society || Women || Issues Concerning Women

#### Title

What is Istanbul Convention? Why many countries want to leave it?

#### Why in the news?

Recently, several countries like Poland and Turkey have expressed their wish to leave the Istanbul Convention

#### About Istanbul Convention

- It is also known as the Council of Europe convention on combating and preventing violence against women and domestic violence.
- **Convention adaptation**- It was adopted by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers in 2011. It came into force in 2014.
- **The convention saying**- The convention sets minimum standards for governments to meet when tackling violence against women.
- **When a government ratifies the Convention** - they are legally bound to follow it. Members: As of March 2019, it has been signed by 45 countries and the European Union
- **What is the convention?** - It is an international organisation whose aim is to uphold human rights, democracy and the rule of law in Europe. Founded in 1949 Members it has 47 member states, 27 of which are members of European Union (EU). However, the organisation is distinct from the EU.
- 34 countries have signed, ratified the convention and enforced it. Turkey was the first country to ratify the convention on 12 March 2012. 12 countries have signed the convention without ratifying it. Armenia,

Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and the UK, Russia and Azerbaijan refused to sign

#### Significance of the convention

- Istanbul Convention is the first-ever legally binding set of guidelines that creates "a comprehensive legal framework and approach to combat violence against women" and is focused on preventing domestic violence, protecting victims, and prosecuting accused offenders.
- It also states that violence against women is a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination.
- The Convention does outline which acts must be criminalized by the participating countries.

#### Criticism of the convention

- One of the major points of criticism is that the Convention defines the term "gender" as "the **socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes** that a given society considers appropriate for women and men".
- Some countries considered this definition as too broad and feared it could be interpreted to make way for the allowance of a third gender.
- There is no explicit mention of the terms "**intersex**" and "**transgender**" within the Istanbul Convention.
- Although the treaty does not address issues of gay rights, opponents have claimed that the treaty promotes "**L.G.B.T. ideology**" and poses a threat to Christian morality across East and Central Europe
- The parties are, however, required to avoid any discrimination based on someone's gender or sexual identity.
- Another aspect some countries (Turkey) are hesitant to oblige by is that the Istanbul Convention requires parties to include teaching material on non-stereotyped gender roles.
- This is regarded as an attempt to enforce a liberal, western lifestyle in more traditional and conservative societies

#### Violence against women in India and across the globe

Women's status in India has experienced many significant changes in recent decades. In modern India, women hold senior roles including the President, the Prime Minister, the Speaker of the Lok Sabha and

Leader of the Opposition. However, women in India continue to face atrocities such as rape, acid throwing, dowry killings, and the forced prostitution of young girls.

- **Domestic Violence-** in India domestic abuse is widespread. Around 70 percent of India's women are victims of domestic abuse, for the former Minister of Women and Child Development for the Union. It all happens given the fact that women do the Protection of Women from Domestic Abuse Act constitutionally safeguards India from domestic violence
- **Dowry demand and dowry death-** Historical records indicate that dowry was negligible in ancient India, and daughters had inheritance rights which were exercised by tradition at the time of their marriage. And in India's modern age, dowry has become a prevalent custom.
- **Migration:** The word "Feminization of Migration" was coined in gender studies for a perceived "gendered trends" in migration, suggesting there is a trend of a higher percentage of women among volunteer migrants. The term is often applied to an increase in migrant domestic workers to developed countries, especially those who work as nannies.
- **Securing Urban Spaces for Women:** Compared to rural areas, cities provide more diverse employment opportunities to improve financial independence; greater ease of access to education at various levels; improved access to health care; more opportunities for socializing outside the home; more possibilities for civic or political leadership positions; and, most importantly, more opportunities for redefining traditional roles of men and women
- **Sexual Violence against women:** The violence in society which often defines women has reached pervasive proportions, becoming commonplace rather than extraordinary. Violence is not inherently physical (like rape-the most violent type of abuse), but it may also include stalking, voyeurism and so on.
- **Public Transport and Women:** India was rated by the Thomson Reuters Foundation as the fourth most dangerous place for a woman to take public transport in a poll published in October. The second worst question about protection at night and verbally
- **Bullying.** According to government officials, 40 cases of crimes against women are reported daily by Delhi Police, including at least four cases of rape

### Constitutional provision in India for protection of women

- This state of affairs continues even though the Constitution of India guarantees to all Indian women equality (**Article 14**), no discrimination by the State (**Article 15(1)**), equality of opportunity (Article 16), and equal pay for equal work (**Article 39(d)**).
- Therefore, it requires the State to make special arrangements in respect of women and children (**Article 15(3)**), renounces discriminatory activities derogatory to the dignity of women (**Article 51(A)(e)**), and also allows for provisions to be made by the State for securing just and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief (**Article 42**).

### Measures for tackling Domestic Violence in India and worldwide

- Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005
- **Prohibition of Dowry System:** The payment of a dowry has been prohibited under The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 in Indian civil law and subsequently by Sections 304B and 498A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC).
- **The Government of India made an enactment in 1979** in the name of "Inter-state Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act 1979"
- **National Policy for the Empowerment of Women 2001**, which aims to advance, develop and empower women through gender sensitization and by ensuring access to some fundamental rights for women in India.
- **In 2005–2006 the government of India** launched the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission,
- **The international legal instruments:**
  - Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), 1948;
  - International Convention for the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, 1990;
  - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), 1979;
  - Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 and the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography, 2000;
  - Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, Supplementing the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, 2000;
  - The United Nations has been an advocate for women's rights since its inception in 1945, explicitly stating so in its Charter's Preamble, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (adopted in 1948), the International Covenant on Civil and Political



Rights (adopted in 1966),

- the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (also adopted in 1966) (these three documents are known collectively as the 'International Bill of Rights') and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (2012).
- Now apart from all the law and convention women has also started speaking against any unveil practice
- or crime against them, #metoo movement was one such movement where women spoke their heart out against abuses against them.

### Conclusion

In different news articles and reports the daily coverage speaks for itself. This confirms that everyday women are struggling with abuse in our parks, offices, public transport and from moderate to serious types except in those houses. For how long does the threat continue? What will we do about it? With minimal options in our hands and time going by, it is up to us to wake up and do something. Approximately 50% of registered Indian voters are women, who together need to assert a power stronger India, but a women-sensitive India. Women's issues have to be driven through in every lobby before leaders have no alternative but to give in and hang onto the crisis that looms across every street and every corner of India today. It's the moment we own ourselves. Tall and proud, courageous and unfazed, we stand by each other. Here's the own time up to India any Harassment anymore. Women want what they deserve-for ourselves and our daughters a safer for women in India.

### Mains oriented question

Focusing on improving the status of women in India will contribute enormously to poverty alleviation, crime and illiteracy. Discuss.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

NOTES

# Minimum Age of Marriage for Women

by Rahul Saigaoanker

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

## Relevance

GS 3 || Indian Society || Women|| Issues Concerning Women

## Title

Minimum Marriage Age for Women - Should India increase legal age of marriage for girls?

## Why in the news?

Recently the Prime Minister of India as part of his Independence Day (74th) speech said that the central government has set up a committee to reconsider the minimum age of marriage for women

## What happened recently?

- The minimum age of marriage has been a contentious issue, particularly for women.
- The legislation evolved in the face of a great deal of opposition from religious and social conservatives.
- The legislation officially calls for the minimum age of marriage for men and women to be 21 years and 18 years, respectively.

## Development with the time

- Minimum marriage age was a contentious issue particularly for women.
- Legislation developed in the face of much resistance on the part of religious and social conservatives.
- Legislation legally mandates that the minimum marriage age be 21 years and 18 years, respectively, for men and women.
- In 2018, the Law Commission also proposed that the legal age of marriage for both sexes be set at 18 years, the universal majority age, slicing through religions.
- In the 2020 budget address, the Minister of Finance announced that a task force will study the minimum age of marriage for women, investigate its consequences for maternal health and present its recommendations.

- In June 2020, the government announced a 10-member panel chaired by Jaya Jaitley, consisting of the Ministries of Human Resource Development, Women and Child Development and Health and Family Welfare Secretaries.
- The Committee failed to finalize its report on 31 July and make recommendations

## The History of laws regarding minimum age of marriage

- The law prescribes a minimum age of marriage to essentially outlaw child marriages and prevent abuse of minors.
- The Indian Penal Code enacted in 1860 criminalised any sexual intercourse with a girl below the age of 10
- Age of Consent Bill, 1927 made marriages with a girl under 12 invalid
- **Sarda Act of 1929**
  - In 1929, the Child Marriage Restraint Act set 14 and 18 years as the minimum age of marriage for women and men respectively.
  - The law is popularly known as Sarda Act after its sponsor Harbilas Sarda, a judge and a member of Arya Samaj.
  - The Child Marriage Restraint Act was the first social reform issue taken up by an organized women's group in India.
  - This group pressured many politicians into supporting the act by picketing their delegations, holding placards and shouting slogans.
  - They believed that with the passing of this act, it would show the world that India is serious about social reforms.
- **The Special Marriage Act, 1954**
  - 1978 – Sarda act amended . Since then, the minimum legal age for marriage has been 18 for women and 21 for men.
  - 2006 – Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 also prescribe 18 and 21 years as the minimum age of consent for marriage for women and men respectively. Strict punishments
- **The various laws**
  - Personal laws of various religions that deal with marriage have their own standards, often reflecting custom.
  - For Hindus, Section 5(iii) of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 sets 18 years as the minimum age for the bride and 21 years as the minimum age for the groom
  - In Islam, the marriage of a minor who has attained puberty is considered valid under personal law.
- **Was the law implemented?**

- The Act remained a dead letter during the colonial period of British rule in India
- British did not want to earn the displeasure of the communal elements among the Hindus and Muslims.
- Princely states were exempted.

### Problems arising out of early marriage

- Data reflects that girls who are married before the age of 18 are more likely to experience **unwanted pregnancies**
- Vulnerable to **sexually transmitted diseases** and at a greater risk of pregnancy related complications and maternal mortality.
- Lack the **recourse to proper education and access** to health care, antenatal care, skilled child delivery and the complete vaccination of the infants
- **Infant mortality and death of young children** is significantly higher in children born to mothers who are married at an early age, according to a report by NCBI.

### Concerns regarding increasing age

- **The National Coalition Advocating** for Adolescents expressed its suggestions to the Task Force, which primarily addresses the limitations of revising marriage age.
- It argued **that raising the legal age of marriage** for girls would only "increase artificially the number of married persons considered to be underage and criminalize them and make unlawful married girls.
- It also emphasizes that **the 2006 Prohibition of Child Marriage Act**, instead of curbing child marriages, has acted only as a tool in the parents' hands to punish their daughters for elopement and is used in tandem with other laws to punish boys in self-arranged marriages.
- It **recommended bringing education** for three-to-five year-olds and 15-to-18 years under the Right to Education, instead of confining the law to children between six years to 14 years.
- Activists caution against revising the age of marriage from 18 years to 21 years and appeal that the issue must be addressed by empowering girls as poverty and lack of safety are the main drivers of early marriage.

### Ms. Jaya Jaitly Task Force

- Recently, **the Union Ministry for Women and Child Development** set up a task force to examine matters pertaining to age of motherhood, imperatives of

lowering Maternal Mortality Ratio and the improvement of nutritional levels among women.

- **The task force will examine the correlation of age** of marriage and motherhood with health, medical well-being, and nutritional status of the mother and neonate, infant or child, during pregnancy, birth and thereafter.
- It will also look at key parameters like Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR), Total Fertility Rate (TFR), Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB) and Child Sex Ratio (CSR).

### Recommendations of various national and international bodies

- **CEDAW:** The international treaty Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), calls for the abolition of laws that assume women have a different physical or intellectual rate of growth than men.
- **The Law Commission:** Having different legal standards contributes to the stereotype that wives must be younger than their husbands.
- **Gender-neutral age of marriage:** The Commission recommended that the minimum age of marriage for both genders must be set at 18.
- The Supreme court:
  - **National Legal Services Authority of India v Union of India (2014):** The Supreme Court while recognizing transgenders as the third gender, said that justice is delivered with the assumption that humans have equal value and should be treated as equal by equal laws.
  - **Joseph Shine v Union of India (2019):** The Supreme Court decriminalised adultery, and said that a law that treats women differently based on gender stereotypes is a threat to women's dignity.

### How big a problem is this?

- In 2005-2006, 44.5 % of women between the ages of 20-24 years in India reported being married before 18 years of age.
- As per a UNICEF study, around 27% of the women in India are married before turning 18.
- Girls in the age group of 15-19 who died due to issues during pregnancy and childbirth in the year 2017 – 35,000.
- The number was 103,000 in 2000.

### Conclusion

Despite the well-intended reasons, a change in law may not suffice in ending discrimination against women. Policymakers will do well to delink age of

marriage and age of sexual consent as teen pregnancies happen outside of marriage too. Laws that prevent child marriages and sexual exploitation of minors must be implemented effectively. Without improving other welfare mechanisms including educational and employment opportunities for women, the increase in age of marriage will only delay the problem and not remedy it.

### Mains oriented question

Women is the base of nation building and is the pillars of development needed to be very strong, physically, mentally, emotionally and in the grounds of jobs and education. Illustrate with recent debate taken nationwide for a change in the marriage age of women.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

NOTES



# Should Maharashtra look for a new Capital?

by Rahul Saigaonker

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

## Relevance

GS 1 || Society || Population || Causes & Impact of Over-population

## Title

Should Maharashtra find a new capital for the State?  
Issues faced by overcrowded Mumbai

## Why in the news?

In the progress of Covid-19 in India, Mumbai, unfortunately emerged as one of the most ravaged by the virus. At one point, a little over 20 percent of all national cases had found refuge in this city housing about one percent of India's population.

## Background

- As the state struggles to cope with this unprecedented challenge, there are other inadequacies about Mumbai that spring to a questioning mind.
- One of them: Is Mumbai any longer the right headquarters for the state to work from? Would it not be much wiser to look for another city as its new capital? This is a highly vexed issue; however, it may be worthwhile giving it a dispassionate look. This article lists seven serious drawbacks that seem to disqualify Mumbai as the continuing capital of Maharashtra.

## Certain arguments in favour

### Location of Maharashtra

- To begin with, for a **state almost as large as Germany in geographical area and with a population as large as the combined populations of France and UK**, it is somewhat incongruous that its capital is tucked away in the remotest possible corner of the state
- Despite the fact that improved transport and technology have cut distances and have made communication easy, the approachability of the capital does matter.

- **This becomes clear when we find that the economically best-off region of the state** (western Maharashtra) is closest to Mumbai and the worst (Marathwada and Vidarbha) are the farthest.
- The significance of a state capital in equitable economic distribution warrants that the capital city is more centrally located. It appears that as long as Mumbai continues to be the state's capital, acute regional imbalances are likely to continue.

## Governance of the state

- **Equally significant** is the kind of hindrance the city poses to overall governance.
- Strangely, Mumbai has a similar locational disadvantage as the state — top government offices are housed in the city's south and workers live in far-away north. **The maximum number of office-goers travel by local suburban trains or buses.**
- Both are packed like sardines during peak-hour journeys towards the office and back home. Travel in these conditions tires workers out, tells on their efficiency and impacts their overall well-being.
- **This impacts the speed and quality of the decision-making process in government.** Since the Mantralaya makes decisions for the entire state, the weaknesses of Mumbai cast an unfavourable shadow on the entire state.

## Climate Change

- Scientists have agreed that global warming is inducing rise in sea levels.
- A study by Climate Central, **a US research institute, reveals that Mumbai** would be among the cities to be severely impacted by 2050.
- The areas that run the risk of inundation cover a very large portion of Mumbai, including south Mumbai.

## Capital city dominance

- Mumbai has about **10 percent of the state's population and generates more than 40 percent of its GDP.**
- The disproportionately high economic significance of the city creates a kind of 'capital city dominance.'
- It is common knowledge that some of the key departments in Mantralaya can scarcely get time to look at cities other than Mumbai, MMR and Pune.

## Weather

- Mumbai's weather is not congenial.
- **Torrential rains in Mumbai followed by inundation of parts of the city** has now become an annual feature, bringing life in Mumbai to a standstill for several days.
- Even when the monsoons are not around, Mumbai's weather throughout the year is hot and humid and quite uncomfortable outside the air-conditioned environment.

### Other states with two capital policy

- The **Legislative Assembly of Andhra Pradesh passed the AP Decentralisation and Sustainable Growth of All Regions Bill, 2020**. The Bill intends to form the plan of the state government to have three capitals-executive capital in Visakhapatnam, legislative capital in Amaravati and judicial capital in Kurnool
- The state can have three capitals — legislative, executive and judicial
  - **Visakhapatnam**, which has infrastructure, can be considered for being the **executive capital** without much investment.
  - **Amaravati** can be retained as the **legislative capital**.
  - **Kurnool** can be considered as the **judicial capital**.

### Multiple Capitals in a State

For historical purposes, most states in India have separate judicial capitals i.e. their high courts in the various districts rather than in their state capitals. In Uttar Pradesh, for example, while Lucknow is the state capital, the high court is at Prayagraj. Similarly, in Madhya Pradesh, while Bhopal is the capital of the state, Jabalpur and Gujarat are the high courts, while the state capital is Gandhinagar, the High Court is at Ahmedabad.

### Pros and cons of two capital policy

#### Pros-

- **The multiple capital idea** is not new, it has been a prevailing practice in countries like South Africa, Brazil, Australia and Bolivia and even in some states in India like
- Kerala: where the high court is in Kochi and the legislature and Secretariat in Thiruvananthapuram. And in Uttarakhand and Lucknow. The other argument in favor is it sits in line with various reports like-

- **Sribagh pact**, which happened between Rayalaseema and coastal Andhra in 1937, where it was decided that if the high court is in coastal Andhra, capital should be in Rayalaseema. but after the formation of Andhra Pradesh, it was left out and Hyderabad became the capital. And even the Srikrishna committee, which was set up to decide the capital region for AP recommended having a high court and other institutions in different regions.
- Another one is, having a single capital can result in having most of the development and investments in and around only that region. The classic example is Hyderabad. And because of it, **AP has lost most of its GDP, critical infrastructure and institutions**.

### Cons

- India's east coast faces a higher probability of cyclones in the country and AP is also one of the regions that have been really affected badly due to them. And it's a recurring phenomenon, happens every October and November.
- Having a secretariat, critical executive infrastructure and high density of population in the cyclone-prone region like Vizag can result in a high loss of life and property.
- For example, the Hudhud cyclone caused devastation upon the Vizag city in 2014.
- And another counter-argument is the issue of accessibility. One should realize that these 3 organs, most of the time, have to work in resonance as most of their work is interlinked.

### Which other Indian states have multiple capitals?

- Maharashtra has two capitals- Mumbai and Nagpur (which holds the winter session of the state assembly)
- Himachal Pradesh has capitals at Shimla and Dharmsala (winter).
- The former state of Jammu & Kashmir had Srinagar and Jammu (winter) as capitals.

### Conclusion

In the circumstances highlighted above, it would appear a fair argument that the state should move to a city that does not have the disadvantages of Mumbai and can provide an improved and inclusive working atmosphere. A million plus city that does not require large infrastructure investment and can quickly be refurbished for good governance would be ideal. The city to select should be more centrally located, have nicer weather, well-connected by land and air and decently provided for the living population.

**Mains oriented question**

Should Maharashtra find a new capital for the State?  
What are the major reasons for the overcrowding of the state, what are its impacts?



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

**NOTES**

# Riots break out Again in USA

By Prashant Dhawan



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

## Relevance

GS 1 || Indian Society || Social Movements || Introduction to Social Movements

## Title

Riots break out Again in US over Jacob Blake Shooting

## Why in the news?

After a black man **Jacob Blake** was shot seven times in the back by a police officer in Kenosha, Wisconsin on Sunday, 23 August, people angry about police violence began protesting. Kenosha became the nation's latest flashpoint in a summer of racial unrest after this event.

## Racial protests in USA

- The summer of 2020 has brought USA at the flashpoint of widespread protests in **black solidarity and against the discrimination** faced by them in USA.
- The protests were started after the death of George Floyd in a shooting by police officer. The protests have generated sharp reactions across the western world. The protests have revived Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement.

## The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement

- In 2013, after the acquittal of a civilian who fatally shot teenager Trayvon Martin in Florida the year before, the hashtag **#BlackLivesMatter** began trending on social media, and a movement against systemic violence against the African American community sprung up.
- Black Lives Matter achieved national fame in 2014 during protests against the deaths of **Eric Garner and Michael Brown**—the latter also being a case of fatal police shooting. The movement, started by three African American women, expanded across the US and invited public interest internationally. BLM is largely decentralised and does not have a formal hierarchy.

- Since the death of **George Floyd**, Black Lives Matter protests across the world have sparked renewed debates on racism in everyday life, including the use of offensive symbols and imagery in the corporate arena.

## Understanding the concept of race

Race implies the division of human species into various groups. The basis for this division is physical traits and socio-cultural aspects. The term race is socially significant and creates division among humans. Most defining features of race are visual traits like skin colour, hair and facial features.

## Scientific basis of race

- Science defines race to be nothing more than a social construct, defined by dominant social groups in various legal, political and economic contexts.
- In the last three decades, DNA testing has revealed that all humanity is one. One of the first such studies was the **Human Genome Project**.
- Science has also proved that the physical difference we term as race, including facial structure, hair texture and colour, eye colour and skin colour, are all caused by mutations in human DNA.

## Racism in India

- In India, different forms of discrimination exist in form of casteism and racialism. In India, **regionalism and xenophobic nature** can be seen in various cases. These include discrimination against people of south and people from northeast India. South Indians are discriminated as they have **darker complexion**. The people from North east are discriminated and considered as Nepalese and Chinese.
- India has also seen various **racial attacks on black students**. Majority of the Africans are called as Negro denoting their darker skin complexion. The African students have not been accepted in Indian society. They are refused homes on rent as all are viewed as criminals.

## Reasons for racism in India

Racism may be a modern world evil but it was there still in ancient India. The origin can be traced back to Vedic period in form of Varna system and exclusion of untouchables from the society. There are following reasons for prevalence of racism in India -

- **Colonial legacy**



- During colonialism, European powers justified their conquests over Asian and African countries through white man's burden theory. They described themselves as superior race and colonial people as inferior. **Britishers** propagated the theory of **white supremacy in India** that is still haunting the society.
- **Prejudice against black skin** People with black skin are considered as less hygiene and people generally avoids to make bond with them. This led to social isolation of these groups. In India, this colour based discrimination has its origin in ancient times. During that period, **non-Aryan people** had been subjected to discrimination. There were basically people of darker complexion- **dasa and dasyus**.
- **Multimedia industry**
  - Television, advertisements and cinema often promotes beauty as fair in colour. They neglect other real aspect of beauty. Here too, there is domination of racism. White colour is hailed as parameter of beauty and many products are advertised that promotes the **stigma attached** to the dark colour.
- **Low level of representation of racially discriminated people**
  - Without representation, the real interest of socially isolated and disadvantaged groups cannot be resolved. For example, in India, you can see that there is dominance of north India and upper strata of the society in all sphere of lives.
  - To look into the issues of people from northeast India, the government has appointed the **M.P. Bezbaruah Committee**. The committee was set up following the shocking attack and murder of **19-year-old Nido Tania at a South Delhi market** in January. The committee has recommended the followings-
    1. Creating awareness about North-East.
    2. Quick, strong and fair action by law enforcing agencies.
    3. Institutional guidance, help, information, counselling and orientation.
    4. Legal or legislative measures to support the efforts.

### Other measures need to be taken to end discrimination against Northeast Students

- Suitable innovative ways should be devised to integrate each and every aspect of the North East into the consciousness of people outside.
- **A detailed socio-economic study of the nature** of student migration from the North East would be worthwhile as it will provide valuable insight for

planning of higher education in the region undermining the overall sustainable development of NE people. As we can see that every year, many students came to big cities from Northeast India for higher education.

- There should also be **Fast-track courts and special police squads** to handle the cases related to racial attacks in the country.

### Conclusion

Since **Abraham Lincoln** issued the **Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863**, there have been various movements and initiatives to improve the status of black people in USA. But still their condition has not improved to the extent that it should be. Racism is an **evil in a modern democratic society** and it should be eradicated. For this, society as well as public institutions need to work together.

### Mains oriented question

"Racism is a threat to unity, peace and property of human beings. It affects the so-called backward and poor race to their disadvantages." Discuss this statement in the light of recent protests in USA against the police brutalities on Black people.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

## Zomato's 'Period Leave' for female employees

by Rahul Saigaonker

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

### Relevance

GS 2||Indian Society||Women||Issues Concerning Women

### Title

Zomato's paid Period Leave for female employees - Fighting Menstrual Taboo in India

### Why in news?

- Zomato aims to remove stigma in a nation where menstruation is still considered a taboo by some. It will give female employees up to 10 days of "period leave" a year.
- Zomato's statement along with the policy, "You should feel free to tell people on internal groups, or e-mails that you are on your period leave for the day."
- Millions of women and girls in India still face discrimination and health issues due to a lack of awareness surrounding menstruation.

### International experience

- Several countries have introduced a menstrual leave provision for their employees.
  - Japan (since 1947)
  - Indonesia
  - South Korea
  - Taiwan
  - Even some provinces of China offer this benefit.
- Companies like Nike, CoExist, Cultural Machine, Magzter, Mathrumbi, Gozoopetc have also adopted menstrual leave policies.

### Debate in India

- Bihar Government has been offering two days of period leave to women employees since 1992.
- **2017-** Menstruation Benefit Bill tabled by a Member of Parliament from Arunachal Pradesh Ninong Ering, this year triggered widespread debate.
- **2018-** Congress leader Shashi Tharoor also introduced a Private Member's Bill titled 'The Women's Sexual, Reproductive and Menstrual Rights Bill'.

### The debate in India

- Prejudices employers against hiring women and may lead to their alienation at work. Women are capable of functioning at full capacity even during their periods.
- Ex: Serena Williams won a major tournament while she was pregnant, this highlights that women do not need any "special" treatment.
- Contentions are also being made that menstrual leave is discriminating in nature and goes against the very spirit of gender equality.
- Discrimination against men as women would get additional days off every year.

### Needed

- Different women have different period experiences. Just because some women can pull off remarkable feats their examples should not be used to discredit the experiences of other women.
- **Clinical Evidence Handbook** says, 20 per cent of women suffer from symptoms like cramps, nausea, fever and weakness which are debilitating enough to hamper their daily activities.
- **Endometriosis Society India** suggests, that over 25 million women in India suffer from endometriosis, a chronic condition in which period pain is so bad that women nearly pass out from it.
- Various other studies show more than half of the female population worldwide suffer some form of cramps or pain during their menses at some point in their lives.
- Bias against hiring women do not need additional excuses, it already happens in India.

### Should maternity leave be removed too?

- A belief that period leave policy would discriminate against men is extremely illogical.
- Article 15 – State can discriminate for the welfare of

women

- **Article 42** – State must ensure just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief for women.
- Working with such physical and mental imbalances in those days not only affects women's health, but it also has a negative impact on their work productivity.

### Details

- Menstruation is a perfectly natural biological process, not a disease or a disability...!!
- For some women, it can cause slight discomfort for others it may be a severely debilitating experience. Indian workplaces are designed for men, what we need is to transform our workplaces to be inclusive and sensitive to the needs of all employees.
- The implementation of menstrual leave can be a small step towards the giant improvement in women empowerment. The entire menstrual leave debate will at least help in reducing the menstrual taboos.

### Factors for Low Workforce Participation of Women

- It appears that there are some **non-economic, social and cultural factors**. When the increase in family incomes are there, due to the cultural factors, women leave the work to take care of the family.
- The major pulldown is among the rural women as per Ministry reports where **agriculture is shrinking** and we do not have a robust manufacturing sector yet, we are investing it now and it will take time to reap benefits.
- There are a lot of **crimes against children inside and outside the house** so parents feel at least one parent should stay at home and being a patriarchal society the burden comes to the women
- **One big factor is maternity**. Many women who join in the workforce are unable to re-join after having a child.
- **Higher Education levels of women** also allow them to pursue leisure and other non-work activities, all of which reduce female labour force participation.
- **The structural transformation of Indian agriculture** due to farm mechanization results in lower demand for female agricultural labourers.
- **Cultural factors**-When income increases, men allow Indian women to withdraw from the labour force, thereby avoiding the **stigma of working**.

- Insufficient availability of the type of jobs that women say they would like to do, such as regular part-time jobs that provide steady income and allow women to **reconcile household duties with work**.
- **Social norms about household work** are against women's mobility and participation in paid work. Childbirth and taking care of elderly parents or in-laws account for the subsequent points where **women drop off the employment pipeline**.
- The **cultural baggage about women** working outside the home is so strong that in most traditional Indian families, quitting work is a necessary **precondition to the wedding itself**.

### Global Wage Report 2018-19.

**The International Labour Organization (ILO) has released the Global Wage Report 2018-19.** As per the report, women are paid the most unequally in India, compared to men, when it comes to hourly wages for labour. On average, women are paid 34% less than men.

### Highlights of the report

- The gender wage gap has remained unchanged at 20% from 2016 to 2017.
- **In advanced economies (G20), real wage growth** declined from 0.9 per cent in 2016 to 0.4 per cent in 2017, meaning near-stagnation. By contrast, **in emerging economies** and developing G20 countries, real wage growth dipped marginally from 4.9 per cent in 2016 and 4.3 per cent in 2017.
- **Inequality is higher in monthly wages**, with a gap of 22 per cent.
- Overall, **real wages** grew just 1.8 per cent globally (136 countries) in 2017. In most countries, **women and men differ significantly in respect of working time** – specifically, that part-time work is more prevalent among women than among men.

### Way forward

- A timely audit of the laws is required to ensure proper enforcement of the law.
- Better transportation services introduced at or near workplaces with childcare facilities would help women achieve their full potential.
- Finally, the goal is not merely to increase the participation of women in the labour force, but to provide

opportunities for decent jobs, which in effect would lead to women's economic empowerment.

- This is not enough to bring women into the workplace, it should be followed by their elevation to the leadership positions.
- It will help create a women-centric environment within the organisation.
- Government policies should focus on behavioural changes that make female employment more acceptable in society.
- Government schemes must target the fundamental cultural and social forces that shape patriarchy. Initiatives such as **Skill India, Make in India, and new gender-based quotas** from corporate boards to the police force can spur a positive change. But we need to invest in skill training and job support.
- Drawing **more women into the labour force**, supplemented by **structural reforms** that could help create more jobs would be a source of future growth for India. Only then would India be able to reap the **benefits of "demographic dividend"** from its **large and youthful labour force**.

### Mains model question

- How does patriarchy impact the position of a middle-class working woman in India? Discuss



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

### Notes



## Daughters have equal right in inherit property

by Rahul Saigaonker

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

### Relevance

GS 1 || Indian Society || Women || Issues concerning women

### Title

Supreme Court Judgement gives Equal Inheritance Right to daughters from 1956

### Why in news?

- The Supreme Court recently ruled that a daughter can claim an equal share in parental property irrespective of when she was born and if her father was alive or not at the time of the 2005 amendment to the Hindu Succession Act.
- A **three-judge Bench has ruled that a Hindu woman's right to be a joint heir to the ancestral property is by birth.**

### Highlights of the Statements given by SC

- "Once a daughter always a daughter, a son is a son till he is married".
- The daughter shall remain a coparcener [one who shares equally with others in the inheritance of an undivided joint family property] throughout life, irrespective of whether her father is alive or not.
- **"Daughters must be given equal rights as sons; daughter remains a loving daughter throughout life."**
- That the right of a Hindu woman to be a joint heir to the ancestral property is by birth and does not depend on whether or not her father was alive when the law was passed in 2005.
- The Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005 granted Hindu women the right in the same way that a male heir does to be coparceners or joint legal heirs. Since the coparcenary is by birth, it is not necessary to have the father coparcener live as on 9 September 2005.

- If a daughter is alive on the date the Amendment Act is enforced, she becomes a coparcener with effect from the date of the Amendment Act, regardless of the date of birth earlier in time.
- The judges also used the common saying that a son is a son until he gets a wife while a daughter is a daughter throughout her life.
- The judgment noted that several cases on this issue were pending before different courts and were already delayed.
- The court requested the pending matters to be decided, as far as possible, within six months.

### History of inheritance laws

- Women in India have not been given equal status for a very long time. The same was quite visible in Inheritance laws.
- In India, inheritance laws are governed by religious backing. Hindus have separate governing principles while other religions follow their civil laws.
- In India, the Hindu Succession Act, 1956 codified the laws relating to succession and inheritance among Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, and Sikhs.
- **Muslims follow the Muslim Personal Laws (Shariat) Application Act 1937.**
- Right of Inheritance is the transfer of the property, titles, debts, rights, and obligations to another person on the death of an individual. One can inherit a property in two ways.

### Hindu Succession Act, 1956

- The Mitakshara school of Hindu law was codified as the **Hindu Succession Act, 1956.**
- It governed succession and inheritance of property but only recognised males as legal heirs.
- The law applied to everyone who is not a Muslim, Christian, Parsi, or Jew by religion.
- Buddhists, Sikhs, Jains, and followers of Arya Samaj, Brahmo Samaj are also considered Hindus for this law.
- In a **Hindu Undivided Family (HUF)**, several legal heirs through generations can exist jointly.
  - Traditionally, HUF includes only the male descendants of a common ancestor along with their mothers, wives, and unmarried daughters.
  - The legal heirs hold the family property jointly.

### Hindu Succession Act, 2005

- Women were recognised as **coparceners or joint legal heirs** for partition arising from 2005.

- Section 6 of the Act was amended that year to make a daughter of a coparcener also a coparcener by birth in her own right.
- The law also gave the daughter the same rights and liabilities in the coparcenary property as she would have had if she had been a son.
- It applies to ancestral property and to intestate succession in personal property - where succession happens as per law and not through a will.
- The **174th Law Commission Report** had also recommended this reform in Hindu succession law.
- Even before the 2005 amendment, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu had made this change in the law.
- In a 2008 judgment SC upheld the Hindu succession amendment act 2005 and highlighted that if the father died before September 9, 2005, a daughter will not have any right over ancestral property, while the self-acquired property will be distributed as per the will.
  - The current judgment has scrapped the above provision and said daughters will have equal inheritance rights irrespective of when she was born and if her father was alive or not at the time of the amendments.

### Significance of the Judgement

- **A Move Toward Female Emancipation**
  - This is a big step for females without economic opportunities and sometimes oppressed by male family members. The fact that women's property rights are determined by a statute and not simply by a will is important.
- **Upholding the constitution**
  - The court agreed that gender can not be grounds for denying others their right to inheritance. This Supreme Court interpretation eliminated male primacy over ancestral Hindu property.
  - According to Article 14 of the Indian constitution, granting the daughter equal coparcenary rights is by the spirit of equality.
- **End of ambiguity**
  - The verdict resolved the ambiguity about the law and made it clear that it would have a retrospective effect to amend the Hindu Succession Act, 1956 granting equal rights to daughters to inherit ancestral land.

### Government's Stand

- The Solicitor General of India has argued in favour of an expansive reading of the law to allow equal rights for women.

- He criticised the Mitakshara coparcenary 1956 law because it contributed to discrimination on the ground of gender and was also oppressive and negated the fundamental right of equality (Articles 14 to 18) guaranteed by the Constitution of India.

### Way forward

- While the judgment is a **gradual step** towards creating a level playing field in women's legal rights, bringing behavioral change to the society will play a greater role in achieving the goal of gender parity.
- Therefore, there is a need to bring about a shift in **society's patriarchal mentality** and to ensure that women have access to the same opportunities as men in the acquisition of educational qualifications and the training required to run a company.
- Furthermore, the fact that it took **15 years** to explain the matter illustrates the urgent need for a consistent civil code founded on universal concepts of equal justice and human rights.

### Mains model question

- "Gender equality is a basic concept in every democratic society and state that is progressive." Analyze the assertion in the light of a recent Supreme Court judgement on women's coparcenary rights.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

## Narendra Dabholkar Murder Case

### Full Timeline Explained

by Siddhant

#UPSC #IAS



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#### Relevance

GS 2||Indian Society||Social Movements||Introduction to Social Movements

#### Title

Narendra Dabholkar Murder Case - 7-year timeline of investigation explained

#### Why in news?

- Exactly seven years ago, rationalist **Dr. Narendra Achyut Dabholkar** was shot dead by two bike-borne assailants in Pune. His murder and three more similar killings, that of communist leader Govind Pansare (February 2015), Kannada scholar MM Kalburgi (August 2015), and Bangalore journalist Gauri Lankesh, sparked nationwide debate surrounding issues of freedom of speech and various hostile forces to rational thought.

#### Superstitions prevalent in India

- Superstition is a prevailing problem in India and the ensuing law and order issues are often seen in the news.
- Illiteracy and lack of awareness are the main reasons for the superstitions to thrive. Some people endorse these superstitions out of fear from caste outfits, or due to the apprehension that they may be outcast from their community.

#### Eradication of Superstitions calls

- Various clubs and seminars can be conducted to throw light on the need to abolish superstitions from society. These issues are often best addressed through debates and discussions. Spiritual leaders, cutting across religions, should be the helmsman in creating awareness among the public about various ill effects of superstitions.

- The message that "Religion should bring glory to a man's life but not bring him down to the level of a beast" must be reiterated.
- Swami Vivekananda from whom many a youth draw inspiration, strongly condemned superstitions and urged for the need to bring about a revolution in the existing principles.
- Social media, which is very popular these days, should be instrumental in spreading awareness about the ill effects of superstitions.
- The eradication of superstitions calls for a country-wide campaign involving various social activists, celebrities, eminent people, and reformers.
- Changes should be incorporated in the education system so as to prevent the young minds from getting polluted. Anti-superstition laws must be framed if necessary.
- The assassination of Narendra Dabholkar, an anti-superstition activist and an author from Maharashtra brings the issue of superstitions into the spotlight. The Maharashtra government has brought anti-superstition law, sadly after his demise, for which Mr. Dabholkar had been fighting for a very long time.

#### Need for Anti-superstition And Black Magic Act

- Murder of anti-superstition activists Narendra Dabholkar and Govind Pansare.
- The prevalence of fake seers and quacks exploiting gullible people are on the rise.

#### Issues

- In many places in the country, people stay indoors during the solar eclipse as it is considered inauspicious.
- There are many such beliefs regarding black cats, ladders, etc that are unscientific and irrational.
- Beliefs that demonize and dehumanize a group of people based on their appearance, color of their skin, etc are far more insidious and dangerous.
- We must be cautious against all superstitious beliefs irrespective of the risks that a particular superstitious belief carries.
- This is because it goes against our duty to promote scientific temper (mentioned in Article 51A(h) in The Constitution Of India "to develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform").
- It also makes the individual vulnerable to other dangerous ideas like anti-vaccine propaganda, rumours against vulnerable sections like minorities, etc.

- It also makes people more prone to the effect of fake news thereby impacting the free flow of genuine and verifiable information.
- It is also a matter of great concern that the IPC does not have any specific provisions to tackle this menace.
- Secular temptations and anxieties of money and power in the modern world explain better perhaps the rise in need-based rituals for placating deities than inner tendencies within religion. Lacking access to proper health care and poverty will also make victims fall to such methods.
- If the executive is serious about curbing such practices, active implementation and enforcement of existing laws need to be made more effective.
- Studies in criminology have already established that certainty of punishment curbs the rate of crime and not the type or the quantum of punishment.
- The enforcement machinery needs a major overhaul to make criminal justice more accessible.
- Moral resources for replacing unacceptable practices are explored within the tradition.

### Consequences

- These lead to the exploitation of people by sadhus, maulvis, etc. and hinder social development.
- Violence against women: Many women were sexually assaulted, raped, and killed for the reason that they practice witch-hunt. Sati was practiced with the belief that women will live with the men in heaven.
- They inactivate the reasoning capacity of human beings and arrest human endeavour and initiative.
- People waste their energy, time and money in rituals and ceremonies decreasing economic productivity of the country
- "Mental patients" is another segment most abused which are ill-treated as they are being considered under the effect of evil spirits and they remain deprived of proper treatment.

### Way forward

- Recently Maharashtra government passed the **Maharashtra Prevention and Eradication of Human Sacrifice and Other Inhuman, Evil and Aghori Practices and Black Magic Act, 2013**. Similar laws must be passed at the national level by making relevant changes to the IPC.
- In case of fake doctors and quacks / Faith healers in case of injury of the patient due to unscientific tre-

atment, provisions must be made to charge him/her for medical negligence or manslaughter in case of the patient's death.

- Special courses that teach rationalism, critical thinking, tools to identify fake news, etc must be introduced in all schools and colleges. For example, the "Satyameva Jayate" scheme by Kannur district administration.
- Tackling superstition through legislations is only half the battle. There is a need to educate the masses using mass media, street plays, social media campaigns. Our conventional education system also must be equipped to tackle the scourge of superstition.

### Mains model question

- It is said that superstition is the religion of feeble minds. Comment on the statement and examine why superstition is prevalent in India.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

### Notes



## Security

## Pangong Tso Lake

by Anirudh

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

## Relevance

GS 2 || Security || Tackling Security Threats || Border Management

## Title

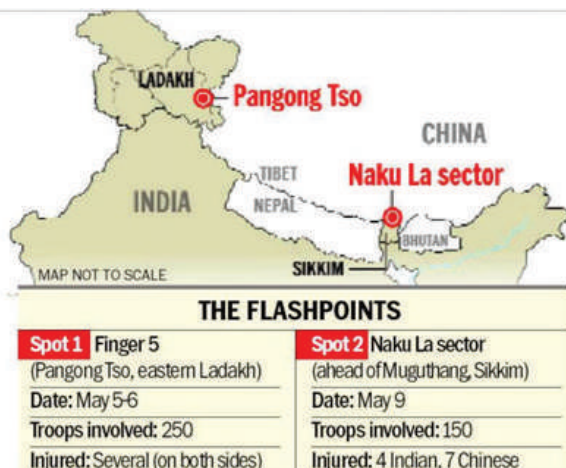
India China Pangong Tso Lake Standoff - China takes a HARD STAND on Pangong Tso Lake

## Why in the news?

China refusing to even discuss Pangong Tso standoff in disengagement talks.

## About Pangong Tso

- Pangong Tso is a long narrow, deep, endorheic (landlocked) lake situated at a height of more than **14,000 ft in the Ladakh Himalayas**.
- **The 135 km-long lake sprawls over 604 sq km** in the shape of a boomerang and is 6 km wide at its broadest point.
- The brackish water lake freezes over in winter and becomes ideal for ice skating and polo.



## The dispute in the area

- The difference in perception over where the LAC lies on the northern bank of the lake, makes this contested terrain.
- In 1999, when the Army unit from the area was moved to Kargil for Operation Vijay, China took the opportunity to build 5 km of road inside Indian Territory along the lake's bank. The August **2017 skirmish** took place in this area.
- The 1999 road added to the extensive network of roads built by the Chinese in the area, which connect with each other and to the **G219 Karakoram Highway**.
- From one of these roads, Chinese positions physically overlook Indian positions on the northern **tip of the Pangong lake**.
- The mountains on the lake's northern bank jut forward in major spurs, which the Army calls "fingers". India claims that the LAC is coterminous with Finger 8.



## Tactical significance of the lake

- Indian assessments show that a major Chinese offensive if it comes, will flow across both the north and south of the lake.
- During the 1962 war, this was where China launched its main offensive —
  - The Indian Army fought heroically at Rezang La, where the Ahir Company of 13 Kumaon led by Maj. Shaitan Singh made its last stand.

## Connectivity in the region

- Over the years, **the Chinese have built motorable roads along their banks of the Pangong Tso**.
- In 1999, when the Army unit from the area was moved to Kargil for Operation Vijay, China took the opportunity to build 5 km of road inside Indian Territory along the lake's bank.
- It points to the importance accorded by the Chinese to the area.



### Present Scenario

- **China is practically refusing to discuss the stand-off in Pangong Tso**, with the deadlock in this friction point now deteriorating because of China simply dismissing it as a talking point.
- It is learned that the **Chinese reluctance that emerged in the fourth round of talks** on July 14-15 has escalated now into an all-out refusal to even acknowledge the Pangong Tso situation as a friction point.
- China's new stance on the Pangong Tso Finger complex stand-off assumes significance considering the Chinese Army **has implemented disengagement protocols in full at the Galwan Valley's Patrol Point 14 and Patrol Point 15 and in the Hot Springs sector just south.**
- Disengagement at Patrol Point 17A at the restive Gogra Post has slowed but it is China's Pangong deployment that has been of chief concern to India so far.

### Two developments the past week

- **One**, the Chinese Ambassador's claim that disengagement was complete and that China was at its line in the Pangong Finger complex -a provocative signal that there would be no further pullback. China's huge deployment in the **disputed stretch between Fingers 4-8** had been overrun by Chinese positions starting early May, with very nominal changes now visible.
- **Two**, China has spent the last three weeks building up in-depth areas of Pangong and activating several supply bases in Aksai Chin, capable of rushing in troops for hostile action at short notice. **The Indian Army isn't taking China's reluctance to talk on Pangong lightly** and has conveyed that there can be no forward movement without a comprehensive and detailed exchange on the current situation in the Finger complex.

### Relations not cordial between the armies

- August 1, was the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Day.
- In a **clear sign of a chill in relations** since the stand-off began in early May, the traditional ceremonial **India-China border personnel meeting (BPM)**, which takes place on PLA Day at Chushul, did not happen yesterday.

- Formal greetings were extended under the **Eastern Command**, but there was no traditional exchange of gifts – both because of the novel coronavirus protocols as well as the steady downward slide in military relations in the past 90 days.

### Conclusion

The fifth round of talks is on at Chushul, and while it is seen as positive that the two sides are still engaging at Chushul-Moldo, there is an increasing view that the Lt Gen level talks have achieved the maximum that they can at their level.

### Mains oriented question

In a wake of the recent Pangong Tso Lake Standoff incident, India needs a holistic plan to address its neighboring countries border issues. Discuss.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

# National Cadet Corps Expansion

by Rahul Saigaonker

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

## Relevance

GS 3 || Security || Tackling Security Threats || Major Laws & Policies

## Title

PM Modi announces National Cadet Corps expansion - Harnessing youth power of India

## Why in the news?

PM Modi has announced an expansion of the NCC, the strength of the 72-year old National Cadet Corps will grow to 15 lakh when the expansion in coastal and border areas is implemented.

## What happened recently?

On the occasion of Independence Day, in speech, Prime Minister spoke about the expansion of the National Cadet Corps (NCC) in coastal and border districts of India. He announced that from the 173 coastal and border districts, one lakh cadets, a third of them girls, will be trained.

## Key Highlights

- A total of 83 NCC units (Army 53, Navy 20, and Air Force 10) will be upgraded as part of the expansion program to include NCC training for border and coastal cadets. Currently the NCC is in 716 of the country's 718 districts.
- The scheme is **defined as farsighted, because it will catalyze positive change**. "This program will be implemented in collaboration with the States and will help prepare the youth for and incorporate them into the mainstream for particular challenges faced in those regions.
- Trainers should **hold regular training camps** contributing to the availability of qualified manpower in national calamity and emergency situations. Our program also covers social care and economic development.

- **NCC cadets have already played a major role in handling the COVID-19** pandemic and nearly 1, 25 lakh cadets have supported the National Disaster Relief Force (NDRF), the Armed Forces and the Red Cross in recent flood areas such as Bihar, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. NCC plans to begin the NDRF's training of cadets in a big way soon.

## Expansion of NCC to Borders and Coastal Areas

- In a speech on Independence Day, the Prime Minister talked about the growth of the National Cadet Corps (NCC) in India's coastal and frontier districts. He declared one lakh cadet would be educated from the 173 coastal and border districts. Among these one-third lakh cadets will be female cadets.
- **The Army must train the cadets in frontier regions.** The Navy must train the cadets at the coastal region. So the Air Force must conduct training exercises where there are airbases. Border and coastal regions are having specialized disaster-fighting manpower. Young people should learn the skills needed for armed forces careers.
- **Discussions were also conducted** on can the organization's footprints in tribal areas too. Minister of Defense Rajnath Singh reiterated on 5 May that the MoD was willing to continue the expansion of coastal and border regions.

## Significance of Expansion of NCC in Border and Coastal Areas

- **Restructuring of the NCC** was one of the key recommendations of the Committee of Experts (CoE) headed by Lt Gen DB Shekatkar (Retd) and constituted by then Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar back in mid-2016.
- While the **NCC has units in many frontiers** and coastal districts, officials say there is plenty of room for expansion.
- **The trained** cadets will play a significant role in various contingencies in the border region and also in supporting roles to the Armed Forces in different capacities.
- Training in coastal regions where youth are already familiar with the sea will increase interest in Navy careers, Coast Guard careers and also Merchant shipping avenues.

## All about National Cadet Corps

NCC

- ▶ The NCC, founded in **1948, has its origins in British-era** uniformed service organizations such as the University Corps or the University Officer Training Corps.
- ▶ It enrolls high school and college cadets and grants certificates to complete the different phases.
- ▶ **Headed by a three-star military director-general**, the NCC falls under the remit of MoD and is headed by Armed Forces officers serving in different hierarchical roles.
- ▶ **The NCC** currently has 17 regional directorates administering the NCC in units of various States or classes of States and territories of the Union.
- ▶ **Associate NCC officers** and cadets are also given different leadership positions in the form of cadet assignments for each school and college unit.
- ▶ NCC has a dual funding model that provides budget support to both the center and the states or union territories.

### Training the cadets

- ▶ **The cadets of the NCC undergo advanced military** training at various levels and have basic academic curricula related to and functioning of the Armed Forces.
- ▶ An important part of NCC preparation is the **numerous training camps**, adventure events and military training camps.
- ▶ Through the years, NCC cadets have played an significant role in the relief efforts during various emergencies.
- ▶ More than **60,000 NCC cadets were mobilized for volunteer** relief work during the ongoing pandemic in collaboration with district and state authorities throughout the country.

### Additional info

- ▶ **Shekatkar Committee:** Under the chairmanship of Lt. Gen (Retd) DB Shekatkar, the Ministry of Defense had formed a committee to recommend steps to improve the armed forces' combat capability and re-balance defense expenditure, which submitted its report in December 2016.
- ▶ **Few Recommendations:**
  - Closure in quiet areas of military farms and military postal establishments.
  - Increased requirements for the training of clerical staff and army drivers.
  - Improving the National Cadet Corps' efficiency.
  - Proposed a roll-on defense program to provide ample capital spending available for modernisati-

tion compared to the existing trend of surrendering unused capital budget at the end of each financial year.

### Mains oriented question

The expansion of the National Cadet Corps (NCC) in coastal and border districts of India, this scheme is defined as farsighted, because it will catalyze positive change. Illustrate.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

### NOTES

# Jamtara e-SIM phishing racket

by Siddhant

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

## Relevance

GS 3 || Security || Internal Security Threats || Cyber Security

## Title

Jamtara eSIM phishing racket - How eSIM fraud is conducted? How to protect yourself from phishing?

## Why in the news?

With the Haryana Police making arrests and launching an investigation into a **multi-state phishing scam** involving more than 300 bank accounts, questions over **internet safety and cyber-hygiene** have once again come to the forefront. In this particular case, perpetrators allegedly swapped SIMs of potential victims into e-SIMs before gaining access to their bank accounts.

## What is Phishing?

- Phishing is a **cybercrime** in which a target or targets are **contacted by email, telephone or text message** by someone posing as a legitimate institution to lure individuals into providing sensitive data such as personally identifiable information, banking and credit card details, and passwords.

## Modus operandi

- The cyber criminals first acquire a **series of mobile numbers**. They use all of them to try and log in to a
- bank account. If a number prompts an OTP, they call the number's owner and pretend to be customer care executives of the mobile operator offering to **upgrade SIM cards or Know Your Customer (KYC)** details.
- Then send an email to the victim containing text to be sent to the official customer care number. It's a ruse to register your email ID with the victim's number, so that you can put in an official request to **convert the SIM into an e-SIM**. Once done, the

victim's phone number and everything else it is linked to, including the bank account, is under your control.

## How is India placed as far as internet-related monetary frauds are concerned?

- In 2019-20, banks reported **2,678 card and internet-related fraud, totalling Rs 195 crore** in value, which was more than double the value of such frauds reported by banks in 2018-19, according to the latest data from Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

## Understanding the cyber security

Cyber security refers to the body of technologies, processes, and practices designed to protect networks, devices, programs, and data from attack, damage, or unauthorised access. Cyber security may also be referred to as information technology security.

## Importance of cyber security

- It is important because government, military, corporate, financial, and medical organisations collect, process, and store unprecedented amounts of data on computers and other devices.
- A significant portion of that data can be sensitive information, whether that be intellectual property, financial data, personal information, or other types of data for which unauthorised access or exposure could have negative consequences.
- Organisations transmit sensitive data across networks and to other devices in the course of doing businesses, and cyber security describes the discipline dedicated to protecting that information and the systems used to process or store it.

## Challenges before cyber security

- **Lack of national level architecture for Cybersecurity**
  - Critical infrastructure is owned by private sector, and the armed forces have their own firefighting agencies. However there is no national security architecture that unifies the efforts of all these agencies to be able to assess the nature of any threat and tackle them effectively.
- **Lack of awareness**
  - As there is no National regulatory policy in place for cybersecurity there is a **lack of awareness at both company level as well as individual level**. Domestic netizens can protect and be protected from the cyber attacks only if there is a guided and supervised legal framework.



### ► Weak internet of things architecture

- We're rolling out more and more sensor-packed, internet-connected devices, but the Internet of Things remains a major weak point for defences. All too often these devices lack basic security features. This in turn is giving **rise to botnets**, which can be used for volumetric attacks, to exfiltrate stolen data, to identify further vulnerabilities, or for brute force attacks.

### ► Skills shortage

- The dearth of skilled cybersecurity professionals continues to be a major problem for many organisations. Even with average InfoSec salaries soaring, there are thousands of vacant positions. This is leading many companies to engage external cybersecurity services and virtual CISOs. We expect to see more outsourcing as employers try to find a way to fill the skills gap.

### Various initiatives by Indian government towards cyber security

#### ► Information and Technology Act, 2000

- It came into force in October 2000, called Indian Cyber Act. It provides legal recognition to all e-transactions. It aims to protect online privacy and curb online crimes.

#### ► Information Technology Amendment Act 2008 (ITAA)

- The amendments in the IT Act mentioned several key terms such as Data Privacy, Information Security, definition of Cyber Café and Digital Signature. It recognises the role of CERT-In in the cyber security.

#### ► Cyber Swachhta Kendra

- It is the Botnet Cleaning and Malware Analysis Centre under the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY). The aim of Cyber Swachhta Kendra is to promote awareness among Indian citizens to secure their data in computers, mobile phones, and other electronic devices.

#### ► e-BAAT programmes

- The central bank therefore directed all banks and authorised payment system operators to undertake targeted multi-lingual campaigns by way of SMSs, advertisements in print and visual media, etc, to educate their users on safe and secure use of digital payments.

### Measures need to be taken

Cyber security requires a comprehensive strategy to deal the new challenges. The following measure can be helpful –

### ► Network Security

- As there is no National regulatory policy in place for cybersecurity there is a **lack of awareness at both company level as well as individual level**. Domestic netizens can protect and be protected from the cyber attacks only if there is a guided and supervised legal framework.

### ► Monitoring

- Establish a monitoring strategy and produce supporting policies. Continuously monitor all ICT system and networks. Analyse logs for unusual activity that could indicate an attack.

### ► User Education and Awareness

- Produce user policies covering acceptable and secure use of the organisation's systems. Establish a staff training programme. Maintain user awareness of the cyber risks.

### ► Secure Configuration

- Apply security patches and ensure that the secure configuration of all ICT systems is maintained. Create a system inventory & define a base line build for all ICT devices.

### ► Managing User Privileges

- Establish account management processes and limit the number of privileged accounts. Limit user privileges and monitor user activity. Control access to activity and audit logs.

### ► Information Risk Management Regime

- Establish and effective governance structure and determine your risk appetite. Maintain board's engagement with cyber risk. Produce supporting information risk management policies.

### Mains question

Indian Government is coming up with the **National Cyber Security Strategy 2020** entailing the provisions to secure cyberspace in India. Critically analyse the need for a national cyber security framework in India and also suggest some measures to improve cyber security architecture in India.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

## 1st anniversary of Article 370 abrogation

### Rise in terrorist encounters in J&K

by Anirudh

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

#### Relevance

GS 3||Security||Internal Security Threats||J&K Militancy

#### Title

First anniversary of Article 370 and Article 35A abrogation, Rise of terrorist encounters in Kashmir

#### Why in news?

- August 5 marked the **first anniversary of the abrogation of the special status of Jammu and Kashmir (Article 370)** and conversion of the erstwhile state into two Union Territories — Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.



#### Background

- On 5 August 2019, the Government of India revoked the special status, or limited autonomy, granted under Article 370 of the Indian Constitution to Jammu and Kashmir.
- Article 370 gave Jammu and Kashmir its **constitution and decision-making rights** for all matters barring defence, communications, and foreign affairs. Its removal ended special status for Kashmir, which was key to its accession to India in 1947.

#### Good yielded after the abrogation of Article 370 and 35A Blow to Terrorist Organisations

- It is believed that the terror network has been dealt a severe blow in the last few months, as its leadership has been taken out in operations.
- The “domination of the hinterland” by security forces has had a “crippling effect on the terrorist tanzeems (organisations) and, resultantly, their ability to undertake terror incidents was degraded”, said a source.
- Hizbul Mujahideen (HM), which is believed to have the largest presence in the region, is said to have suffered the highest casualties of **more than 50 militants including its commander Riyaz Naikoo**.
- The militant commander was killed in an encounter with security forces in May this year.

#### Terrorist Incidents Came Down

- Terrorist related incidents declined to 120 from 188 during this period.
- **Number of Terrorists Gunned Down**
  - Between August and December 2019, as many as 25 terrorists were killed, bringing the total number for 2019 to 152.
  - This year, until March-end, the total number of terrorists killed was 32, but then came the jump that has taken the total up to 148, as mentioned before.
- The most important development in the Valley after August 5, 2019, has been the drastic fall in the number of civilians pelting stones on security forces during encounters.

#### Local Recruitment Came Down

- In terms of recruitment, as many as 219 residents had joined terror groups in 2018, while the number dropped to 119 in 2019.
- This year, the figure stood at 74 until 30 June.
- Local recruitment is also decreasing and primarily limited to four districts of south Kashmir, giving a serious blow to nefarious designs of Pakistan to indigenise the movement and fuel unrest in the Valley.

#### IED Blast Attempts were foiled

- Besides, six attempts at IED blasts were foiled in the current year, as a result of the proactiveness of intelligence agencies and alertness of troops on the ground.

Synergised conduct of hard intelligence-based counter-terror operations resulted in significant successes in the past one year.

### Better grip

- Lt Gen. Satish Dua (ret'd), former commander of the Army's 15 Corps, under whose charge Hizbul Mujahideen commander Burhan Wani was killed, said the forces have a firmer grip on the terror infrastructure now from a security point of view.

### Laws are applicable

- These developments extend to a wide range of issues like social and political equality, education, jobs, reservations, and other rights enjoyed by the underprivileged in the rest of the country.
- For the first time after seven decades, the Indian Constitution and all the 890 Central laws are fully applicable to J&K.
- This has meant the application of 170 more Central laws to J&K, including progressive laws such as the Scheduled Caste and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1954, the Whistle-Blowers Protection Act, 2014, the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis Act, 1993, the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forests Rights) Act, 2007, the National Commission for Minorities Act, and the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009.

### Development

- Apart from these initiatives, the last 12 months have seen several other momentous developments.
- The first of these is the rehabilitation of the Kashmiri Pandits, who were hounded out of the Valley 30 years ago by militants.
- 4,000 of them have got jobs in the UT and many others are listed for employment.
- Also, **over 20,000 refugees from West Pakistan**, who were treated as aliens in their own country and denied all rights, have been given domicile rights and financial assistance of **Rs 5.50 lakh per family**. The follow-up after the constitution of the two Union Territories has been swift. Simple rules have been formulated for issuing domicile certificates.

- The J&K government has also initiated a massive recruitment drive to fill up 10,000 vacancies in the local government; another drive to fill up **25,000 posts** is in the pipeline.
- Other measures which have ensured mainstreaming of the region are the enforcement of the Right to Information Act, 2005, direct supervision of the Central Vigilance Commission with regard to anti-corruption cases and the setting up of the **18th Bench of the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT)** for the UTs of J&K and Ladakh.

### The bad

- Sudden Jump before the 370 Scrapping Anniversary.
- The Kashmir valley has seen a sudden jump in the number of encounters with terrorists, ahead of the first anniversary of the scrapping of Article 370 on 5 August.
- The number just goes to show that terrorism continues to be the main challenge in Jammu and Kashmir, just as it was before the special status of the state was scrapped.

### The ugly

- Official figures show that the terrorist strength in the Kashmir valley is now below 200.

### In transition

- The repeal of Article 370 and 35 A in Jammu and Kashmir was followed by internet shutdowns and restrictions on the movement of locals. The political leadership, including chief ministers Farooq Abdullah, **Mehbooba Mufti**, and **Omar Abdullah**, was placed under house arrest and slapped with the **Public Safety Act**.
- Early this year, the Abdullahs were released but Mufti remains under house arrest and **4G internet connection continues to remain blocked**.

### Way forward

- The first step to solve the Kashmir issue is to identify the problems behind the alienation of Kashmir. Here are some of them:
- To find a solution to the Kashmir issue all stakeholders should be considered. What is the need of the hour is proper integration of Kashmir, Jammu, and Ladakh with India. Integration should not be seen in a limited dimension of territory.

- It lies in critically examining various outcomes of this process. New Delhi must work with the local people and leaders to reduce the trust and legitimacy deficit that we see today.

### Mains model question

- Examine how the problem in Kashmir is different from the Maoist insurgency or the insurgency in Assam, in the context of their root causes?



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

### Notes



## Defence Production & Export Promotion Policy 2020

by Anirudh

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

### Relevance

GS 3|| Security|| Tackling Security Threats|| Major Laws and Policies

### Title

Defence Production & Export Promotion Policy 2020, Aims to achieve Rs 1.75 lakh turnover by 2025

### Why in news?

- Recently, the Ministry of Defence has formulated a draft Defence Production and Export Promotion Policy 2020 (DPEPP 2020).  
The DPEPP 2020 is envisaged as an overarching guiding document to provide a focused, structured and significant thrust to defence production capabilities of the country for self-reliance and exports.

### Goals and objectives

- To achieve a **turnover of Rs 1,75,000 Crores** (US\$ 25Bn) including export of Rs 35,000 Crore (US\$ 5 Billi- on) in Aerospace and Defence goods and services **by 2025**.
- To develop a dynamic, robust and competitive Defence industry, including Aerospace and Naval Shipbuilding industry to cater to the needs of Armed forces with quality products.
- To reduce dependence on imports and take forward "Make in India" initiatives through domestic design and development.
- To promote the export of defence products and become part of the global defence value chains.
- To create an environment that encourages R&D rewards innovation creates Indian IP ownership and promotes a robust and self-reliant defence industry.
- The **share of domestic procurement in overall defence procurement is about 60%**. To enhance procurement from domestic industry, it is incumbent that **procurement is doubled from the current ₹ 70,000 crore to ₹1,40,000 crore by 2025**.

### Strategies

#### ➤ Procurement Reforms

- It also aims to move away from licensed production to design, develop and produce indigenously.
- A **Project Management Unit (PMU)** to be set up for the development and production of technologies involved, life cycle costs and maintenance requirements of platforms, equipment and weapon systems

#### ➤ Indigenization & Support to MSMEs/Startups

- It aims to create an industry ecosystem to indigenise the imported components (including alloys and special materials) and sub-assemblies for defence equipment and platforms manufactured in India. 5,000 such items are proposed to be indigenised by 2025.

#### ➤ Optimize Resource Allocation

- The share of domestic procurement in overall Defence procurement is about 60% and to increase the procurement from domestic industry, the procurement needs to be doubled from the current Rs. 70, 000 crore to Rs. 1,40,000 crore by 2025.

#### ➤ Investment Promotion

- India is already a wide aerospace market with increasing passenger traffic and increased military spending, resulting in increased demand for aircraft (fixed and rotary wings).
- The aerospace industry opportunities have been established in the following segments: aircraft construction work, aircraft servicing, repair and overhaul (MRO), helicopters, engine manufacturing and MRO work, line replaceable units, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) and enhancements and improvements.
- The growth in business size, demographic dividend and the availability of different skill sets are evident from India's ranking in the 'Ease of Doing Business' (EoDB) study by the World Bank.

#### ➤ Innovation and R&D

- Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) has been operationalised to provide necessary incubation and infrastructure support to the startups in the defence area.
- iDEX would be further scaled up to engage with 300 more startups and develop 60 new technologies/products during the next five years.
- **Mission Raksha Gyan Shakti** was launched to **promote a greater culture of innovation and technology development** and file a higher number of patents in Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs), Ordnance Factory Board (OFB).
- It would be scaled up for promoting the creation of Intellectual Property in the sector and its commercial utilisation.

## India a major market for defence majors

- India continues to remain one of the most lucrative markets for global defence majors.
- According to the agency report, New Delhi is expected to spend USD 130 billion in capital procurement over the next five years.
- **Silver lining** -India has clawed its way to the 23rd position among the top 25 weapon exporters, with Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Mauritius being its biggest clients.
- **Export of defence equipment from India was about ₹2,000 crore in 2014, the year Modi took office.**
- In the last two years, it had gone up to ₹17,000 crores.

## Export Promotion

- Defence exports have grown manifold over the last few years. To achieve the target of Rs 35,000 crore (US\$ 5 Bn) of Defence Exports by 2025, the following strategies are proposed.
- Subject to strategic considerations, domestically manufactured defence products will be promoted through Govt to Govt agreements and Lines of Credit/Funding.
- Export Promotion Cell set up to promote Defence exports through coordinated action to support the industry would be further strengthened and professionalized.
- The end-to-end export clearance process in the Department of Defence Production would be further upgraded to make the process seamless and time-bound.
- **Exports**
  - 5.56x45mm Ball MK N(SS109) cartridges: **Australia**
  - protective headgear and hard armour plates: **Azerbaijan**
  - helmets, bomb suppression blanket and soft armour panels: **Germany**

## Governance

- The concerned departments of the Ministry of Defence would take necessary action to implement the respective strategies outlined in this Policy.
- The Department of Defence Production would be the nodal department for coordination on various components of the Defence Production & Export Promotion Policy (DPEPP) 2020 including obtain

ing approvals of the competent authorities for various schemes, programs and projects outlined in the strategies to achieve the objectives set in this Policy.

## The Issue

- For years India has been among the top three defence importers in the world, the government wants to reduce the dependence on imported items in defence and give a shot in the arm to the domestic defence manufacturing industry.
- Estimates suggest the Indian armed forces could spend about \$130 billion to procure defence equipment in the next five years.

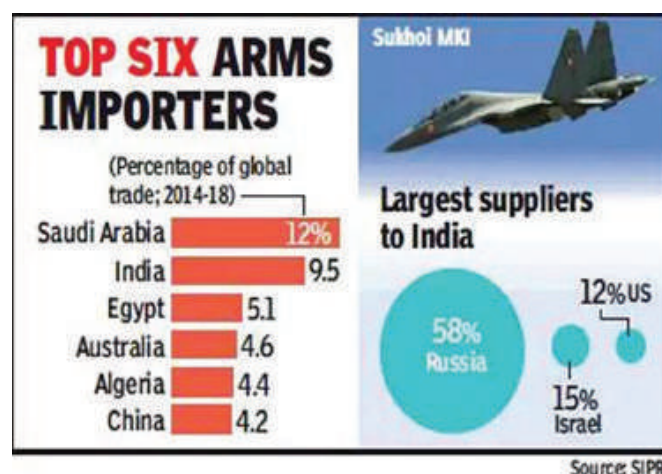
## SIPRI Estimates

- As per Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, which tracks defence exports and imports globally, India has been the second-largest importer between 2014 and 2019 with US\$ 16.75 billion worth of imports during this period.
- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh announced a list of 101 items that the Defence Ministry will stop importing. It essentially means that the Armed Forces—Army, Navy and Air Force—will only procure all of these 101 items from domestic manufacturers. The manufacturers could be private sector players or Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs).



The Ministry of Defence is now ready for a big push to #AtmanirbharBharat initiative. MoD will introduce import embargo on 101 items beyond given timeline to boost indigenisation of defence production.

10:00 AM · Aug 9, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone



## Governance

- Singh said that the “embargo on imports is planned to be progressively implemented between 2020 to 2025” and the government wants to “apprise the-

Indian defence industry about the anticipated requirements of the Armed Forces so that they are better prepared to realise the goal of indigenisation”.

- The list is likely to grow as “more such equipment for import embargo would be identified progressively” by the Department of Military Affairs headed by the Chief of Defence Staff after consulting all stakeholders. “A due note of this will also be made in the DAP (Defence Acquisition Procedure) to ensure that no item in the negative list is processed for import in the future”.
- The move to ban the import of 101 items would open up new avenues for the Indian defence sector as contracts worth Rs 4,00,000 crore would be given to defence equipment manufacturers.
- The embargoed list includes artillery guns, missile destroyers, ship-borne cruise missiles, light combat aircraft, light transport aircraft, long-range land-attack cruise missiles, communication satellites, basic trainer aircraft, multi-barrel rocket launchers, a variety of radars, assault rifles, sniper rifles, mini UAVs and different types of ammunition. The statement also indicates when the embargo kicks in for different items ---between 2020 and 2025.
- Modern field artillery can also be split into two other subcategories: towed and self-propelled. As the name suggests, towed artillery has a prime mover, usually an artillery tractor or truck, to move the piece, crew, and ammunition around.

### Way forward

- Self-reliance in the manufacture of weapons is a key component of successful security capability and retaining national autonomy and achieving military supremacy.
- This would ensure strategic independence, cost-effective military equipment which will result in savings on military import bills, which can then fund physical and social infrastructure.

### Mains model question

- Critically assess the need for military reform in India, giving special importance to recommendations of the Naresh Chandra Committee.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

### Notes

## Mozambique Port पर ISIS का कब्जा

By Prashant Dhawan



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

### Relevance

GS 3|| Security|| Internal Security Threats|| Terrorism

### Title

Mozambique Port पर IS का कब्जा key gas Rich Port in Northern Mozambique lost

### Why in news?

- The port of Mocimboa da Praia was captured by the terrorists at dawn on Wednesday following days of attacks claimed by an Islamic State-affiliated group.

### Mozambique

- The capital and largest city of Mozambique is Maputo
- Currency -Mozambican metical
- Population - 3 crore

### Details

- The town is near the site of natural gas projects worth \$60bn (£46bn).  
In recent months militants have taken several northern towns, displacing tens of thousands of people.
- The question now is whether the rebels will -as they have hinted -try to hold on to this strategic city.
- That would mark a new escalation in a shadowy conflict that represents a major threat to Mozambique and to international plans to develop vast offshore gas fields.
- The rebels have formal ties to IS but are also feeding on local grievances in a long-neglected corner of the country.
- Mozambique's neighbours are watching with growing anxiety. A private security contractor based in South Africa is supplying helicopter support to the army. But this latest attack appears to show the rebellion is still gaining in strength and sophistication.

### ISIS

- The **Islamic State**, which at its peak controlled territories straddling the **Iraq-Syria border** of the **size of Great Britain**, is now fighting for half a square kilometre in eastern Syria.
- The **Syrian Democratic Forces, the Kurdish rebel group assisted by the U.S** has effectively laid siege to Baghouz, the eastern Syrian village where about 500 IS jihadists along with 4,000 women and children are caught.
- When the IS lost bigger cities such as **Raqqa and Deir Ezzor** in eastern Syria, militants moved to Baghouz and the deserts in the south.

### Current Situation in Mozambique

- Islamist militants occupied a key port in gas-rich northern Mozambique on Wednesday following days of attacks claimed by an Islamic State-affiliated group,
- Mocimboa da Praia lies less than 80 kilometres (50 miles) south of the Afungi peninsula where a liquefied natural gas (LNG) facility, one of Africa's biggest single investment projects, is located.
- The port is currently a major traffic hub for the gas project.  
The military source said that during Wednesday's assault a rocket-propelled grenade sank a boat owned by former president Armando Guebuza.

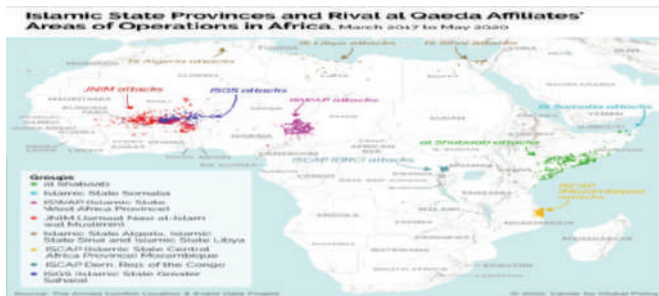
### Rise of ISIS again

- The government only disclosed the debt in 2016 -- a development that plunged the poor, donor-dependent southern African country into its worst-ever financial crisis.
- Attacks in the northern region have already killed at least 1,300 people, according to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED).
- Displaced people number more than 250,000, according to aid organisations working locally.
- In its latest weekly report released on Wednesday, ACLED said "insurgents and government security forces have been in more or less constant running battles in the area" for the past week.
- The attacks started in 2017 in Mocimboa da Praia and have since spread to massive swathes of Cabo Delgado province.
- The latest attack -- the third on the town this year -- was claimed by the Islamic State Central Africa Province (ISCAP).



### ISIS Spreading influence

- Islam is the other major religion in Africa alongside Christianity, with 41% of the population being Muslim, accounting for 1/4 of the world's Muslim population.
- Africa population -121.61 crores.



### How this large Crisis has been slowly turning off

- The **Syrian Observatory for Human Rights** estimates that nearly **59,000 people** have left IS-held territory since December, and at least 4,000 jihadists have surrendered since February.
- Both President Donald Trump and the SDF commanders say victory against the IS is imminent. Victory in Baghouz will also mean the **IS's territorial caliphate is shattered**.
- Since the **battle for Kobane in 2015**, which marked the **beginning of the end of the IS**, Syrian Kurdish rebels have been in the **forefront of the war**. Naturally, the SDF would claim the final victory against the IS.

### Can it still organise or inspire attacks overseas?

- As Islamic State clung to its last scrap of land, the head of **Britain's spy agency MI6** warned that the group would **return to "asymmetric" attacks**.
- Even after it **began losing ground militarily**, IS still claimed responsibility for attacks made in different countries, though often these have been blamed on **"lone wolves" without its direction**.
- It started years ago to call on followers abroad to plan their attacks, rather than focusing purely on ones staged by trained operatives supported by the **group's hierarchy**.
- In early 2018 the head of U.S. military central command said Islamic State was resilient and remained capable of **"inspiring attacks throughout the region and outside of the Middle East"**.

### Conclusion

- Thousands of **Islamic State insurgents** and civilian followers have also been killed and thousands more captured. An unknown number remain at large in both Syria and Iraq.
- It is important to understand that even though different **territories has been reclaimed**, the fight against ISIS and violent extremists is not over. The U.S., the Kurdish rebels, the Syrian government and other stakeholders in the region should be **mindful of the geopolitical and sectarian minefields** that groups such as the IS could exploit for their re-emergence.

### Mains model question

- Critically analyse the present status of ISIS operations and its ability to lure youths from across the world including India.



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)



## Bengaluru violence over Facebook post

by Ankit Agrawal

#UPSC #IAS



(Click on the above image to watch the video)

### Relevance

GS 3 || Security || Internal Security Threats || Social Media and Internal Security

### Title

Bengaluru violence over a Facebook post, Section 144 imposed in the Bengaluru city

### Why in news?

- According to the police, a relative of MLA Akhanda Srinivas Murthy's, P. Naveen, posted a communal and derogatory post on social media about Prophet Muhammad.
- A mob of about 1,000 people reportedly attacked a Congress MLA's house in Bengaluru's Pulakeshi Nagar on Tuesday night and vandalised police station.
- Curfew has been imposed in the Banaswadi police sub-division, and Section 144 is reportedly imposed across the city.

### Hate Speech

- **Company executives** of Facebook opposed the move to ban controversial politicians in countries where Facebook has a large presence.
- **Some employees** of Facebook have alleged that the company is following a policy of favouritism towards the ruling party.
- In the year 2017, Bharatiya Janata Party Telangana MLA Raja Singh used his Facebook account to give hate speech against the Muslim community.
- That post went viral within a few hours.
- An FIR was registered against him and Ram Sena's Pramod Muthalik for instigating hatred towards other communities.

### Facebook's Enquiry

- By March of this year, after almost three years, Facebook concluded Mr. Singh had violated the company's hate-speech rules.
- Employees of the Facebook hate speech monitoring department argued that his rhetoric could lead to communal violence.
- They said his account should be permanently banned from the company's platforms.

### Company's Response

- The company's top public-policy executive in the country, Ankhi Das, opposed applying the hate-speech rules to Mr. Singh and at least three other leaders.
- Ms. Das told staff members that punishing violations by politicians from the ruling party would damage the company's business prospects in the country.

### Corona Jihad Incident

- In April this year, Anant Kumar Hegde, BJP politician posted content on Facebook accusing Muslims of intentionally spreading the coronavirus and waging Corona Jihad against the nation.
- It violated Facebook's hate speech rules, which bars direct attacks on people based on their religion.
- While Twitter has suspended Mr. Hegde's account, Facebook took no action except removing that post.

### February Delhi Riots

- In February, the former BJP lawmaker Kapil Mishra uploaded a videotaped message on Facebook.
- Speech warned police that if they didn't clear protesters demonstrating against a citizenship bill, his supporters would do so by force.
- Within hours of the videotaped message rioting broke out that left dozens of people dead. Mishra became Popular on Facebook
- Mr. Zuckerberg cited Mr. Mishra's post as an example of the sort of behavior that the platform wouldn't tolerate from a politician.
- The company took down the video post. But within two months of the video of the speech being posted, traffic on Mishra's Facebook page grew **from a couple hundred to more than 2.5 million.**

### Favouritism

- The current and previous interventions by Ms. Das on

behalf of ruling party legislators are part of a broader pattern of favoritism by Facebook toward the ruling government.

- Facebook sometimes adapts its policies to meet political realities in key markets.
- India is a vital market for Facebook. India has more Facebook and WhatsApp users than any other country.

### Future Plans

- Facebook has chosen India as the market to introduce payments and encryption initiatives.
- In April, Facebook said it would spend \$5.7 billion on a new partnership with an Indian telecom operator to expand operations in the country.

### Appeasing Governments Worldwide

- Facebook polices content has emerged as a major issue in the U.S., where the company faces regular accusations of political bias. Some high-profile advertisers recently boycotted the platform over its handling of hateful content
- In **Germany**, Facebook agreed to abide by stricter hate-speech rules than in the U.S. or elsewhere.
- In **Singapore**, it has agreed to append a "correction notice" to news stories deemed false by the government.
- In **Vietnam**, Facebook's local servers were taken offline to place significant pressure on it to increase compliance with legal takedown orders.
- Facebook agreed to restrict access to dissident political content deemed illegal in exchange for the government ending its practice of disrupting Facebook's local servers.

### Facebook's Response

- Facebook says it doesn't tolerate efforts to use its platforms to instigate violence anywhere in the world.
- Chief Executive Mark Zuckerberg has been trying to reassure employees and advertisers in the U.S. that the company won't let its platform be used to incite violence or interfere with the democratic process.
- He said People should be able to see what politicians say but there are lines, and we will enforce them.

### National Social media policy

- In India, social media platforms already come under the purview of **the Information Technology (IT) Act, the 'intermediaries guidelines'** that were notified under the IT Act in 2011 and the Indian Penal Code.
- Under existing laws, **social media channels are already required to take down content if they are directed to do so by a court or law enforcement.**
- There are also reporting mechanisms on these platforms, where **they exercise discretion to ascertain whether a reported post is violating community guidelines and needs to be taken down.**

### Laws and Regulation to Curb Fake News in India

- There is no specific law against fake news in India. Free publication of news flows from Article 19 of the Constitution guaranteeing freedom of speech.
- **Press Council of India**, a regulatory body, can warn, admonish or censure the newspaper, the news agency, the editor or the journalist or disapprove the conduct of the editor or the journalist if it finds that a newspaper or a news agency has violated journalistic ethics.
- **News Broadcasters Association (NBA)** represents the private television news and current affairs broadcasters. The self-regulatory body probes complaints against electronic media.
- **Indian Broadcast Foundation (IBF)** also looks into the complaints against contents aired by channels.
- **Broadcasting Content Complaint Council (BCCC)** admits complaints against TV broadcasters for objectionable TV content and fake news.
- **Indian Penal Code (IPC)** has certain sections which could curb fake news: Sections 153 (wantonly giving provocation with intent to cause riot) and 295 (injuring or defiling place of worship with intent to insult the religion of any class) can be invoked to guard against fake news.

### Social media and communal & ethnic violence

- Post-2012 period, where content circulating through internet-enabled mobile phones and on social media has reconfigured the way in which the law, police, and civil society have grappled with this issue.
- In August 2012, the circulation of threatening SMSs and MMSs in Bengaluru, Pune, Chennai and other cities with a sizeable population of persons from the North East,

- Was one of the first incidents where the configuration involving dangerous speech, social media, and public disorder became visible
- In 2014, violence took place using the pretext of morphed images, including those of Shivaji and the late leader of the Shiv Sena Bal Thackeray, on social media.

### ShreyaSinghal v. Union of India

- The Supreme Court sought the Center's reaction to a petition alleging that following the apex court's striking down of draconian Section 66A of the IT Act in 2015, police in various states were still invoking it in FIRs to crackdown on social media site freedom of expression.
- The petition said a recent Internet Freedom Foundation working paper revealed that pending cases according to Section 66A had not been terminated, and further it continued to be cited by police across India in FIRs registered after the 2015 trial.

### How to stop it?

- In March 2016, the Pune police inaugurated a Social Media Monitoring Laboratory.
- It is meant to monitor "unlawful activity" on social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.
- The lab would have 18 police personnel working in shifts round the clock to identify hate speech and take prompt action before complaints are received from the public.
- The Pune social media monitoring laboratory is modeled on existing social media labs in Mumbai and Uttar Pradesh at Meerut and Lucknow.
- The Mumbai Social Media Lab (MSML) was set up in 2013 in collaboration with the National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM), the Data Security Council of India (DSCI), and Reliance

### Threats from AI

- **In an interconnected world, a small number of companies are collecting vast amounts of data** - access to this consolidated data would allow an accurate replay of anybody's day-to-day life in terms of activities, interactions and explicitly stated or implicitly identified interests; somebody (or something) could know our mobility history and patterns, or anything of anyone's mundane life pattern.

- **The right to privacy is under threat**, obviously considering the possibility of unauthorized access to one's online activity data. But even in the case of an offline user somebody who has deliberately decided to stay 'disconnected' the right to privacy is still under threat, like a disconnected user moving through a 'smart city'.

### Way Forward

- Social media awareness is needed which may enable citizens to be in a position to distinguish between truth and falsehood and to know when democratic processes are being manipulated.
- Social Media Platforms can provide safeguards if democratic processes are being intentionally disrupted or harmful falsehoods are spreading; it can help people find out what is true.
- **AI technological** revolution brings great opportunities for prosperity and growth but it has to be ensured that the technology will be applied and used in the right direction.

### Mains model question

- Discuss Social Media as an Open Government instrument? Comment



(Scan the QR code to watch the video)

## Prelims Bits

### Environment and Ecology

#### Pyrolysis

- **Context:** Plastic made from personal protective equipment used (PPE) can be transformed into sustainable, chemical liquid fuels a new study says, named pyrolysis.
- **About:** Pyrolysis is a thermochemical treatment, which can be applied to any organic (carbon-based) product. In this treatment, material is exposed to high temperature, and in the absence of oxygen goes through chemical and physical separation into different molecules.
  - Aspirational applications of pyrolysis would convert biomass into syngas and biochar, waste plastics back into usable oil, or waste into safely disposable substances
  - The decomposition takes place thanks to the limited thermal stability of chemical bonds of materials, which allows them to be disintegrated by using the heat.
  - The word is coined from the Greek-derived elements pyro “fire” and lysis “separating”

#### Aarhus Convention:

- **Context:** The Aarhus Convention was in news with regarding to Draft EIA notification.
- **About:** The Aarhus Convention, 1998, which stipulates that environmental rights and human rights are linked.
  - It states that the present generation owes an obligation to future generations. It establishes that sustainable development can be achieved only through the involvement of all stakeholders.
  - It links government accountability and environmental protection. It focuses on interactions between the public and public authorities in a democratic context.
  - It establishes a number of rights of the public, individuals and their associations with regard to the environment.

#### India's first Snow Leopard conservation Centre:

- **Context:** India's first snow leopard conservation centre to come up in Uttarakhand
- **About:** Taking another step towards conservation of elusive snow leopards, India's first Snow Leopard Conservation Centre will be opened in Uttarkashi forest division in Uttarakhand.
  - JS Suhag, chief wildlife warden of Uttarakhand said that the conservation centre will be built at a place named Lanka, near Bhaironghati bridge in Uttarkashi district
  - The conservation centre will be built by the Uttarakhand forest department along with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as part of its six-year long project, SECURE Himalayas.

### Polity

#### New dismissal rules for IAS IPS posted in J&K:

- **Context:** IAS, IPS officers in J&K accused of ‘anti-national’ activity can now be fired without probe
- **About:** Article 311(2)(c) of the Constitution states that no government official can be dismissed or removed from service or reduced in rank in the absence of an inquiry, except circumstances “where the President or the Governor, as the case may be, is satisfied that in the interest of the security of the State, it is not expedient to hold such inquiry”.
  - Government officials could be removed or dismissed from service earlier, but not without an inquiry.
  - Any government official in Jammu & Kashmir (J&K), including senior IAS and IPS officers, can now be dismissed from service without an inquiry if found to be engaged in “anti-national” activity.
  - A thorough background check of government officials will be undertaken and action could be initiated if found to have been involved in “anti-national activities” even in the past.
  - Order from Last Week: “Sanction is hereby accorded to the constitution of a committee for scrutinising and recommending cases under Article 311(2)(c) of the Constitution of India”.
  - A committee has been formed under Chief Secretary B.V.R. Subrahmanyam to examine and recommend action, including dismissal from service, with regard to officers “working against the ‘integrity and security’” of India.
  - Composition of Committee: The committee also comprises the J&K home secretary, the director general of police, administrative secretaries of the general administration and law & justice departments, and additional director general



of police (CID).

## Geography

### Pokkali Rice: Kerala

**Context:** Farmers in West Bengal are experimenting with the pokkali variety of rice to tide over a crisis-like situation created by severe seawater incursion into paddy fields in the Sundarbans (owing to Cyclone Amphan).

► **About:** The pokkali variety of rice is known for its saltwater resistance and flourishes in the rice paddies of coastal Kerala districts. The uniqueness of the rice has brought it the Geographical Indication (GI) tag and is the subject of continuing research

- The organically-grown Pokkali is famed for its peculiar taste and its high protein content. Pokkali has medicinal properties and its higher value of antioxidants and low carbohydrate content makes it preferable to those on a low sugar diet.
- Pokkali is a rice variety cultivated in the water-logged coastal regions, in Alappuzha, Thrissur and Ernakulam districts of Kerala.

### Galapagos Islands:

► **Context:** Ecuador is on alert due to the appearance of Chinese fishing boats off its Galapagos Islands.

► **About:** Islands are in the Pacific Ocean. It is administratively a province of Ecuador

- The islands were formed at the meeting point of three tectonic plates—the Nazca, Cocos, and Pacific and are situated at the crossroads of three major Pacific currents.
- In 1978, the Galapagos Islands was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site.
- The islands are known for their large number of endemic species such as land iguana, giant tortoise that were studied by Charles Darwin which contributed to the inception of Darwin's theory of evolution.
- Chinese fishing ships are frequent in Ecuador's waters during August month of the year as the cold Humboldt Current brings in nutrients that lead to a high congregation of hammerhead sharks.

### Agatti Island:

► **Context:** Recently, the southern bench of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has granted an interim stay on felling of coconut trees on Agatti Island in Lakshadweep

► **About:** It is in the UT of Lakshadweep. It is at a distance of 459 km (248 nautical miles) from Kochi and is located to the west of Kavaratti Island.

- The lagoon area of this island is habitat of coral growth and multicolored coral fishes in the lagoons.
- Fishing is the most important industry which is perhaps the only island besides Minicoy getting surplus fish. Next to fishing, coir (coconut fibre) and copra (dried meat or kernel of the coconut) are the main industries.

### Aerial Seeding:

► **Context:** The Haryana Forest Department has employed aerial seeding technique to improve green cover in the Aravalli area of Faridabad

**About:** A plantation technique wherein seed balls —seeds covered with mixture of clay, compost, char and other components, Sprayed using aerial devices, including planes, helicopters or drones.

- Seeds balls/pellets are dispersed in a targeted area by low-flying drones, with the coating providing the required weight for seeds to airdrop on a pre-determined location rather than getting deterred by the wind.
- These pellets sprout when there is enough rain, with nutrients present within them helping in initial growth
- The method of plantation is being implemented on 100 acres of land during the pilot phase "to test efficacy of the seed dispersal mechanism and review the success rate".
- It was implemented in Yamunanagar and Mahendragarh earlier in July.

## Economy

### Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA)

► **Context:** Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) has secured a financial assistance of Rs 455 crore from the Higher Education Funding Agency (HEFA) for construction of new academic buildings, hostels and research centres.

► **About:** It was formed in 2017 as a joint venture of the Canara Bank and Ministry of Human Resource Development (now renamed as Ministry of Education).

- It is registered under Section 8 [Not-for-profit] under the Companies Act 2013 as a Union Govt company and as Non-deposit taking NBFC with RBI
- Its aim is to enable India's premier educational institutions to excel and reach the top in global rankings by financing building world class infrastructure including R&D Infrastructure

#### NPCI caps UPI transaction limit:

► **Context:** NPCI caps UPI transaction limit, how it will impact payment apps and users?

► **About:** UPI or Unified Payments Interface is an immediate real-time payment system that helps in instantly transferring the funds between the two bank accounts through a mobile platform.

- Hence, UPI is a concept that allows multiple bank accounts to get into a single mobile application.
- To limit the damage to the payments ecosystem in case one of their systems collapses.
- Though the transaction limit will hamper the growth of the players operating in the segment,
- It will ensure that there is no major impact on the Indian payments ecosystem in case UPI collapses.

### Science and Technology

#### Perseverance- NASA's mission to Mars:

► **Context:** National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has launched its Mars 2020 Perseverance rover aboard a United Launch Alliance Atlas V.

► **About:** It is a part of NASA's Mars Exploration Program, a long-term effort of robotic exploration of the Red Planet.

- Perseverance is loaded with seven instruments chosen to help it achieve its mission objectives.
- The launch took place from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida.
- This is the third launch to Mars this month, following the UAE's Hope and China's Tianwen-1 spacecraft.

#### Barakah Nuclear Energy Plant:

► **Context:** UAE becomes first country in Arab World to produce nuclear energy.

► **About:** It is the United Arab Emirates's first nuclear power station and the first commercial nuclear power station in the Arab World. The Nuclear plant has achieved criticality and has successfully started towards power production.

- It is a term that signifies the initiation of a controlled but sustained nuclear fission reaction.

#### Ammonium Nitrate:

► **Context:** The catastrophic explosion at Beirut port in Lebanon was caused by over 2,700 tonnes of ammonium nitrate kept in storage for over six years.

► **About:** Ammonium nitrate ( $\text{NH}_4\text{NO}_3$ ) is one of the world's most widely used fertilizers and is also used as one of the main components in mining explosives.

- Ammonium nitrate does not burn on its own, instead it acts as a source of oxygen that can accelerate the combustion (burning) of other materials.
- Ammonium nitrate prills provide a much more concentrated supply of oxygen than the air around us. This is why it is effective in mining explosives, where it's mixed with oil and other fuels.
- At high enough temperatures, however, ammonium nitrate can violently decompose on its own. This process creates gases including nitrogen oxides and water vapor. It is this rapid release of gases that causes an explosion.

### International Relations

#### Zimbabwe:

► **Context:** Recently, the US has imposed sanctions on an ally of Zimbabwe's president

► **About:** It is a landlocked country of southern Africa. It shares border with the Republic of South Africa, Botswana, Zambia, and Mozambique.

#### Rising power of Xi Jinping:

► **Context:** Xi Jinping Leader of the "Second Hundred"

- **About:** Mao Zedong was a Chinese communist revolutionary who became the founding father of the People's Republic of China.
- He ruled China as the chairman of the Communist Party of China from its establishment in 1949 until his death in 1976.
  - Zhou Enlai was the first Premier of the People's Republic of China, Liu Shaoqi was a Chinese revolutionary, politician, and theorist.
  - In 1966 Mao initiated the Cultural Revolution. It was targeted against first-generation revolutionaries such as Deng Xiaoping and moderate faction led by Premier Hua and PLA commander Wang.
  - October 6, 1976, leaders of the two factions decided to make a move against the Gang of Four with the help of the Beijing garrison.
  - Last seven years have seen unprecedented elevation of Xi's cult of personality and Amendments in Constitution which suit Xi's interests.
  - President Xi has assumed the position of the Commander-in-Chief of the PLA, a title even Mao had not assumed despite his considerable experience of higher military command

#### Trans- pacific cable route:

- **Context:** Chile picks Japan's trans- pacific cable route in snub to china
- **About:** A submarine communications cable is a cable laid on the sea bed between land-based stations to carry telecommunication signals across stretches of ocean and sea.
- Currently 99% of the data traffic that is crossing oceans is carried by undersea cables.
  - Also, the total carrying capacity of submarine cables is in the terabits per second, while satellites typically offer only 1,000 megabits per second
  - Chile has chosen a route proposed by Japan for the first fiber-optic cable to directly connect South America and the Asia-Pacific region, designating Australia and New Zealand as endpoints while stopping short of landing in China.
  - Japan's Proposal: Under the Japanese proposal, the undersea fiber-optic cable would stretch roughly 13,000 km across the Pacific Ocean, pass through New Zealand then arrive at its terminus in Sydney.
  - China's Proposal: Japan's route beat out a pitch by China that would have made Shanghai the final landing point.
- Japan and Australia just completed their own submarine cable linking the two countries this month, meaning Japan could easily connect to the trans-Pacific cable.

### Government scheme and Initiative

#### AIM iCREST:

- **Context:** Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) has launched 'AIM-iCREST' in partnership with Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Wadhvani foundation.
- **About:** AIM's iCREST stands for Incubator Capabilities enhancement program for a Robust ecosystem focused on creating high performing Startups
- This is a first of its kind initiative for advancing innovation at scale in India to encourage and enable holistic progress in the incubator ecosystem across the country
  - These are institutions that support entrepreneurs in developing their businesses especially in initial stages.
  - It was set up by NITI Aayog in 2016 to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship by creating institutions and programs that enhance innovation in schools, colleges, and entrepreneurs in general.

#### Parivar Pehchan Patra (PPP):

- **Context:** Haryana Chief Minister has launched a unique identity card called Parivar Pehchan Patra(PPP).
- **About:** It is a 8-digit unique identification number meant for each family to enable smooth and automatic delivery of several citizen-centric services launched by the state government from time to time.
- How is PPP different from the Aadhaar card?
  - Aadhaar represents an individual as a unit while PPP represents a family as a unit.
  - PPP is mandatory for families availing benefits under government schemes.
  - It is also mandatory for government employees to apply for PPP failing which their salaries may also be withheld.
  - It will be easier for the state government to maintain a complete database of all families as most government schemes are structured around the family and not around an individual

- The PPP will have the name of the head of the family, besides the names, age, income, mobile number of each and every member of the family. In case of an unmarried girl in the family, her name will be struck off from the PPP after she gets married and it will subsequently be added to the PPP of her husband's family.

#### Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA):

- **Context:** Jawaharlal Nehru University(JNU) has secured a financial assistance of Rs 455 crore from the Higher Education Funding Agency(HEFA) for construction of new academic buildings, hostels and research centres
- **About:** It was formed in 2017 as a joint venture of the Canara Bank and Ministry of Human Resource Development (now renamed as Ministry of Education)
  - It is registered under Section 8 (Not-for-profit) under the Companies Act 2013 as a Union Govt company and as Non-deposit taking NBFC with RBI
  - Aim to enable To enable India's premier educational institutions to excel and reach the top in global rankings by financing building world class infrastructure including R&D Infrastructure.to

It provides timely finance at a competitive interest rate for capital assets creation in India's educational institutions and supplements it with grants by channelizing CSR funds from the corporate and donations from others

- All the Centrally Funded Educational Institutions in Higher Education, School Education and Medical Education sectors are eligible to avail of loans through HEFA.

#### Bharat Airfiber:

- **Context:** The Union Ministry of Communications has inaugurated "Bharat Air Fibre Services" at Akola in Maharashtra.
- **About:** The Bharat Air Fibre services are introduced by BSNL as part of Digital India initiatives by the GoI.
  - It aims to provide Wireless Connectivity in the range of 20 KMs from the BSNL Locations.
  - It provides internet connectivity upto 100 Mbps speed
  - It is completely wireless and offers broadband up to 10Mbps up to a distance of 5 Kms. These services are special and different from other operators as BSNL is providing unlimited free voice calling.
  - Customers at remote places also will be benefitted as BSNL comes with the cheapest services with the support of Telecom Infrastructure Partners (TIPs)

#### Notes



## Environment and Ecology

### BEEG (Bio -compost Enriched Eco-friendly Globule)

- **Context:** IIT Kanpur has developed indigenous seed balls named BEEG (Bio - compost Enriched Eco-friendly Globule) which will help farmers in plantation with safety in Corona times.
- **About:** BEEG is enriched with the right ingredients and seeds to germinate early and are the best way to utilise monsoon and plant as many trees as possible without risking lives by social gathering during Covid 19

### World Biofuel Day:

- **Context:** A webinar on the occasion of the World Biofuel day was organized by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas with the theme "Biofuels towards Atmanirbhar Bharat".
- **About:** It is observed every year on 10th August to create awareness about the importance of non-fossil fuels as an alternative to conventional fossil fuels
  - These are liquid/ solid or gaseous fuels produced from biomass resources. They are used in place of, or in addition to, diesel, petrol or other fossil fuels for transport, stationary, portable and other applications

## Polity

### IAS, IPS officers in J&K accused of 'anti-national' activity:

- **Context:** The Government of India revoked the special status, or limited autonomy, granted under Article 370 of the Indian Constitution to Jammu and Kashmir.
- **About: Article 311 (2)(C)** of the Constitution states that no government official can be dismissed or removed from service or reduced in rank in the absence of an inquiry, except in circumstances "where the President or the Governor, as the case may be, is satisfied that in the interest of the security of the State, it is not expedient to hold such inquiry".
  - Government officials could be removed or dismissed from service earlier, but not without an inquiry
  - Any government official in Jammu & Kashmir (J&K), including senior IAS and IPS officers, can now be dismissed from service without an inquiry if found to be engaged in "anti-national" activity.
  - A thorough background check of government officials will be undertaken and action could be initiated if found to have been involved in "anti-national activities"
  - Punishment for the erring officials will be "differential", and depend on the degree of their "offence".
  - The action will range from suspension, fines, termination of services and even legal proceedings in extreme cases

### Supreme Court verdict on Hindu women's inheritance rights:

- **Context:** Supreme Court has expanded on a Hindu woman's right to be a joint legal heir and inherit ancestral property on terms equal to male heirs.
- **About:** The Court ruled that a Hindu woman's right to be a joint heir to the ancestral property is by birth and does not depend on whether her father was alive or not when the law was enacted in 2005.
  - The Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005 gave Hindu women the right to be coparceners or joint legal heirs in the same way a male heir does.

## History

### Abanindranath Tagore:

- **Context:** National Gallery of Modern Art has decided organize the virtual tour titled "The Great Maestro- Abanindranath Tagore", to commemorate his 150th Birth Anniversary
- **About:** Abanindranath Tagore, the nephew of Rabindranath Tagore, was one of the most prominent artists of Bengal school of art in India.
  - He was the first major supporter of swadeshi values in Indian art.

## Geography

**Mullaperiyar Dam:**

- **Context:** The rising water levels in the Mullaperiyar Dam due to heavy rains and issuance of the first warning has triggered panic among people living downstream.
- **About:** It is located on the confluence of the Mullayar and the Periyar rivers in Kerala, and is operated and maintained by Tamil Nadu. The dam is in the state of Kerala but it was given on lease to the Tamil Nadu on 29th October, 1886 for 999 years.
  - Tamil Nadu was permitted to generate power from the dam, through an agreement in 1970.

**Mediterranean Sea:**

- **About:** France has temporarily reinforced its military presence in the eastern Mediterranean Sea amid tensions between neighbours Greece and Turkey over recently discovered gas reserves.
- **Context:** The Mediterranean is a vast sea positioned between Europe to the north, Africa to the south, and Asia to the east.
  - The Mediterranean Sea connects to the Atlantic Ocean by the Strait of Gibraltar (known in Homer's writings as the "Pillars of Hercules") in the west. to the Sea of Marmara and the Black Sea, by the Straits of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus respectively, in the east
  - The 163 km (101 mi) long artificial Suez Canal in the southeast connects the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea.

**Economy****K V Kamath committee set up by RBI:**

- **Context:** Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has formed a five member committee under the chairmanship of former ICICI Bank CEO KV Kamath.
- **About:** Role of committee-
  - The committee, which has been constituted by the RBI will make recommendations on, The required financial parameters to be factored into the resolution plans (with sector specific benchmark ranges for such parameters), Will submit its recommendations to the RBI
  - A resolution plan is a proposal that aims to provide, a resolution to the problem of the corporate debtor's insolvency and its consequent inability to pay off debts.
  - The central bank will then notify the same along with modifications, if any, in 30 days
  - Only those borrower accounts will be eligible for resolution (under this framework which were classified as standard, but not in default for more than 30 days with any lending institution as on March 1, 2020.
  - The lending institutions may allow extension of the residual tenor of the loan, with or without payment moratorium, by a period of not more than two years.

**Kisan Rail:**

- **Context:** Kisan Rail or India's first Kisan Special Parcel Train has been inaugurated recently
- **About:** The train will transport material between Maharashtra's Devlali and Bihar's Danapur Railway station. It will carry fruits and vegetables and will make stoppages at several stations and pick-up and deliver them
  - This will help in bringing perishable agricultural products like vegetables, fruits to the market in a short period of time.
  - The Kisan Rail train with frozen containers is expected to build a seamless national cold supply chain for perishables, inclusive of fish, meat and milk.
  - Initially, it will be operated on a weekly basis. However, further modifications can be done based on user experience.
  - According to Railway Ministry, Kisan Rail is a step towards realizing the goal of doubling farmers' incomes by the year 2022. For Kisan Rail, aggressive marketing is being done with local farmers, loaders, individuals and APMC.
  - The demand for this is being aggregated.

**UK crashes into deepest Recession:**

- **Context:** The UK economy suffered its biggest slump as coronavirus lockdown measures pushed the country officially into recession
- **About:** The UK released data on Wednesday that showed its economic output shrank by 20.4 per cent in the second quarter of 2020,

- After 2.2 per cent contraction recorded by the British economy in the March quarter
- Pushing the country into the deepest recession recorded by any major global economy so far
- The services sector, which powers four-fifths of the economy, suffered the biggest quarterly decline on record.
- The collapse in output was driven by the closure of shops, hotels, restaurants, schools and car repair shops.
- The blow is hitting hardest in countries where the pandemic has been the most severe and where there is heavy reliance on global trade, tourism, commodity exports, and external financing
- In the June quarter, the US economy too shrank by 32.9 per cent – a bigger loss than any decline on record.

#### Business confidence index:

- **Context:** National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) has released Business Confidence Index (BCI). This business confidence indicator provides information on future developments
- **About:** It tracks the business sentiments of around 600 Indian companies to compute the composite index
  - It stood at 46.4 in the first quarter of 2020-21, a drop of 40.1 % from its level of 77.4 in the previous quarter.
  - This is the lowest that the BCI has ever fallen in the history of 113 Rounds of the NCAER Business Expectations Survey (BES).

### Science and Technology

#### E-Sanjeevani Tele-Medicine Platform:

- **Context:** 1.5 lakh teleconsultations were recently completed on the “eSanjeevani” and “eSanjeevani OPD” tele-medicine.
- **About:** E-Sanjeevani is a platform independent, browser-based application facilitating both doctor-to-doctor and patient-to-doctor tele-consultations.
  - It aims to make healthcare services equitable by bridging the digital divide that exists in both rural areas and isolated communities.
  - The application is based on invite-system which restricts it to the actual beneficiaries of the application.

#### Submarine optical fibre cable project:

- **Context:** Prime Minister has launched the submarine optical fibre cable project in Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- **About:** It is a 2,300 kilometre undersea cable that provides better connectivity from Chennai to Port Blair and seven other Islands — Swaraj Dweep (Havelock), Long Island, Rangat, Hutbay (Little Andaman), Kamorta, Car Nicobar and Campbell Bay (Great Nicobar)
  - Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF):
  - It was set up in 2002 and was given statutory status under the Indian
  - Telegraph (Amendment) Act, 2003. Enabling rural Indians to achieve their fullest potential and participate productively in the development of the nation by virtue of being effectively connected through a reliable and ubiquitous telecommunications network.

#### Raman:

- **Context:** Aerospace startup Skyroot Aerospace has successfully test fired an upper-stage rocket engine recently
- **About:** It was developed by the Skyroot firm that is headquartered at Hyderabad. The 3-D printed rocket engine was named as Raman, after Nobel laureate CV Raman.
  - It is India's first 100% 3D-printed bi-propellant liquid rocket engine injector.
  - The engine is capable of multiple restarts, enabling the launch vehicle to insert various satellites into multiple orbits in a single mission.

### International Relations

#### Mauritius declares emergency over oil spill:

- **Context:** The Mauritius government declared a state of environmental emergency over a large amount of fuel that leaked into the sea from a stranded Japanese-owned bulk carrier off the country's coast.
- **About:** MV Wakashio ran aground on a coral reef off the Indian Ocean island on 25 July and its crew was evacuated.
  - But the large bulk carrier has since begun leaking tons of fuel into the surrounding waters.

- The ship is currently lying at Pointe d'Esny, in an area of wetlands near a marine park.
- Mauritius is home to world-renowned coral reefs, and tourism is a crucial part of the nation's economy.
- The French embassy in Mauritius said a military aircraft from Reunion would bring pollution control equipment to Mauritius.

#### Protest in Belarus:

- **Context:** Dramatic protests erupted across Belarus overnight
- **About:** As the country's authoritarian president declared a sweeping victory over a popular opposition candidate in elections widely seen as riddled with irregularities
  - According to official exit polling released by the country's Central Election Commission after polls closed, Lukashenko was on his way to receiving more than 80% of votes cast from a turnout of more than 80 percent
  - Observers believe these presidential candidates attracted large crowds during their campaign rallies over the past few months in a large part
    - Due to the public's dissatisfaction at Lukashenko's mishandling of the COVID-19 pandemic.
    - For her part the opposition leader Svetlana rejected the results and asserted that she was the winner of Sunday's contest.
  - Internet access in Belarus was heavily curtailed as polls closed, making it difficult to ascertain exactly what was going on.
  - Many foreign journalists were denied accreditation to enter the country to cover the election, further complicating the picture.
  - The European Union condemned the police crackdown and called for an immediate release of all those detained

### Security

#### Exercise Kavkaz 2020:

- **Context:** India will take part in the exercise, Indian contingent includes 150 Army personnel and a smaller number of personnel from the Navy and Air Force.
- **About:** Kavkaz 2020, also referred to as Caucasus-2020 is a multilateral strategic command post exercise, that is about to be held in Russia.
  - The invitation for participation to Kavkaz 2020, has been extended to at least 18 countries including China, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey apart from other Central Asian Republics part of the SCO.
  - It is Russian Exercise. A small tri-service contingent will take part in the exercise to be held in Astrakhan in southern Russia

#### OPV Sarthak:

- **Context:** Recently, an Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) for the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) was launched and named as Indian Coast Guard Ship 'Sarthak'.
- **About:** It is an offshore Patrol Vessel (OPVs) designed and built indigenously by Goa Shipyard Limited.
  - The Ship is fitted with state-of-the-art Navigation and Communication equipment, sensor and machinery.
  - It is designed to embark and carry a twin-engine helicopter, four high speed boats and one inflatable boat for swift boarding and Search & Rescue operations.
  - It is also capable of carrying limited pollution response equipment to undertake oil spill pollution response at sea

### Government scheme and Initiative

#### National Handloom Day:

- **Context:** August 7th was celebrated as the National Handloom Day. It was in 2015, the first National Handloom Day was celebrated.
- **About:** With the partition of Bengal, the Swadeshi Movement gained strength. It was on August 7, 1905, that a formal proclamation was made at the Calcutta Town Hall to boycott foreign goods and rely on Indian-made products.

#### Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization (SMAM):

- **Context:** Recently union government has released Rs. 553 crore to states under the scheme to promote mechanization

ion in the agriculture sector.

► **About:** The Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization (SMAM) was launched in April 2014 to have inclusive growth of farm mechanization to boost productivity

- It aims to promote the usage of farm mechanization and increase the ratio of farm power to cultivable unit area up to 2 kW/ha.

#### FARMS-app:

► **Context:** Union Agriculture ministry has developed a Multi lingual Mobile App 'CHC (Custom Hiring Centers) - Farm Machinery' which connects farmers with Custom Hiring Service Centers situated in their locality.

► **About:** It encourages small and marginal farmers to take machines on rental basis for agriculture practices without them having to purchase such high priced machines. The app has been further modified and been given the acronym of FARMS-app (Farm Machinery Solutions-app).

### Miscellaneous

#### Tabletop airports in India:

► **Context:** Generally, tabletop runways are constructed on a hilly or an elevated terrain and are built in a way that there is a trench or valley at the front and back of the length of the runway

► **About:** Therefore, an accurate landing is very important.

- The tabletops are very tricky and known to be extremely challenging even for the best of pilots.
- These table top runways also have a problem of access roads around the airfield, which may need to be used in case of aircraft accidents.
- The narrow and winding roads can delay and hinder the rescue operations.
- The tragic accident in Kerala last evening when a plane attempting to land amid heavy tailwinds and rain on the table-top runway at the Kozhikode airport has once again shone light on the safety concerns over flight operations at such runways in the country.
- The safety concerns were first raised following the 2010 Air India Express crash in Mangalore that killed 160 people on board.
- Civil Aviation Safety Advisory Council (CASAC) had also warned the authorities 10 years back that Kozhikode runway was very risky for landing during rains and harsh weather conditions.
- The Air India Express accident in Mangalore should have alerted the Airport Authority to make the runway conditions safe.

### Notes



## Economy

### RBI gives surplus to the government

► **Context:** The RBI in the board meeting has approved the transfer of dividend of Rs 57,128 crore as surplus to the central government for the year 2019-2020.

- Reserve Bank of India was established in 1935 in accordance with the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934.
- Though privately owned initially, but with the coming up of Banking Regulation Act, it was nationalised in 1949 and since then it is fully owned by the Government of India.

### ► Why this transfer?

- According to section 47 of the RBI Act 1934, RBI shall transfer the "surplus" i.e. the excess of income over expenditure to the government.
- Bimal Jalan Committee on Economic Capital Framework
- The committee was set up in December 2018 in the backdrop of tussle between RBI and Centre on the issue of transfer of surplus. The Central Board of RBI accepted the recommendations of the committee to transfer the excess capital from the central bank to the government.

### ► Economic Capital Framework

- It is the capital that an institution requires or needs to hold as a counter against unforeseen risks or events or losses in the future.
- Accepting the recommendations, RBI agreed on 5.5% Contingency Risk Buffer and decided to transfer 1.3% surplus to the government.
- Contingency Risk Buffer: It is a component of RBI's economic capital required to cover its monetary and financial stability, credit and operational risks.

## Polity

### Re-joining administration after resignation: Rules for IAS

► **Context:** Shad Faisal, a former IAS officer of the J&K cadre resigned from the services in January 2019. He resigned in protest against the unabated killing in Kashmir. He then founded a political party called Jammu and Kashmir People's Movement (JKPM). But after 1.5 years of resignation, Shah Faisal has stepped down from the presidentship of the party he founded and quitted politics altogether.

► **About:** Resignation related aspects of IAS, IPS, IFS officers are dealt under Rule 5(1) and 5(1)(a) of the All India Services (Death-cum-retirement benefits) Rules, 1958

- The resignation is to be submitted by the serving officer to the Chief Secretary of the state in which he/she is serving. But if an officer is on central deputation, he/she is required to submit his/her resignation to the secretary of the concerned Ministry or Department.

Can the resignation be withdrawn after it has been accepted

- According to the rules, the resignation can be withdrawn within 90 days of its acceptance and the government may (discretion) permit an officer under Rule 5(1A)(i) to withdraw the resignation "in public interest".
- However, the request for withdrawal of resignation shall not be accepted by the central government if the member after resigning is found to be associated with any political party or any political movement or activity or take part in an election to legislature or local authority.

Can the resignation be withdrawn when it is pending before the Ministry and has not been accepted till now?

- Yes. The resignation will be deemed to have been automatically withdrawn if the officer who submitted the resignation sends an intimation in writing to withdraw it before its acceptance is done by the competent authority.
- Shah Faisal's resignation is yet to be accepted and on the website of the ministry he is still reflected as a "serving" officer and hence can re-join the service.

### National Recruitment Agency

- **Context:** The government has approved the setting up of a National Recruitment Agency (NRA)
- **About:** The proposed NRA will conduct a common preliminary examination for various recruitments in the central government (not for state government recruitment)
  - NRA once set up will conduct a common eligibility test (CET) and based on the CET score a candidate can apply for a vacancy with the respective agency.
  - NRA will have representatives from SSC, IBPS and RRB
  - The test will be conducted once a year.
  - The test will be conducted for three levels: graduate, 12th class pass and 10th class pass candidates.
  - The present recruitment agencies- IBPS, RRB and SSC will remain in place. (NRA will conduct the screening round only but the later phases of the exam like Tier II and Interview etc would be done by the already present agencies- IBPS, RRB, SSC).
  - CET will be conducted in an online mode and in multiple languages.
  - The CET score of a candidate shall be valid for a period of three years from the declaration of result.

### Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements (ARIIA) 2020

- **Context:** The Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements (ARIIA) 2020 has been released by the Ministry of Education, GoI
- **About:** There are two broad categories
  1. Public funded institution
  2. Private or Self-financed institution
  - IIT Madras has emerged as the best institute under the institute of national importance category (Central Universities and Central Funded Technical Institutes category)
  - Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) of Odisha was awarded in the private or self-financed universities category.
  - Avinashlingam Institute for Home Sciences and Higher Education, Coimbatore in the higher educational institutions for women category.

## Environment and Ecology

### Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to be converted into Biofuels

- **Context:** A method has been proposed for converting PPE into Biofuel.
- **About:** Any hydrocarbon fuel that is produced from an organic matter (living or once living material) in a short period of time is considered a biofuel.
  - Biofuels may be solid, liquid or gaseous in nature.
    1. Solid: Wood, dried plant material, and manure
    2. Liquid: Bioethanol and Biodiesel
    3. Gaseous: Biogas
  - There are 4 generations of Biofuels
    1. **First generation biofuels:** These are made from food sources such as sugar, starch, vegetable oil, or animal fats using conventional technology.
    2. **Second generation biofuels:** These are produced from non-food crops or portions of food crops that are not edible and considered as wastes, e.g. stems, husks, wood chips, and fruit skins and peeling. (made from sustainable feedstocks and are called Advanced Biofuel)
    3. **Third generation biofuels:** These are produced from micro-organisms like algae.
    4. **Fourth Generation Biofuels:** In the production of these fuels, crops that are genetically engineered to take in high amounts of carbon are grown and harvested as biomass.
  - **National Policy on Biofuel, 2018:** It aims to achieve 20% ethanol blending in petrol and 5% of biodiesel blending in diesel by 2030
  - **Pyrolysis:** It is a chemical process for breaking down the plastic at high temperature between 300-400 degree centigrade for an hour without oxygen.
  - The research finding has concluded and calls for converting the PPE (plastic) waste into fuel using pyrolysis. This will change the chemical composition of plastic into biofuel

### Mauritius declares State of Environmental Emergency

► **Context:** MV Wakashio, a Japanese ship ran aground in Mauritius shore on 25th July. The ship is currently lying at Pointe d'Esny, an area of wetlands near marine park in Mauritius.

► **About:** Over large amount of fuel leaked into the sea from this stranded Japanese-owned bulk carrier off the Mauritius coast.

- The Mauritius government had declared a State of Environmental Emergency due to oil spill from the ship which has become a concern for the environment around.
- Mauritius is located south of India in the Indian Ocean region.
- It lies to the east of Madagascar.
- Reunion island is located southwest of Mauritius which is a French Island.

### China's Clean Plate Campaign

- China has launched a "Clean Plate" campaign against food waste.
- This is done to maintain a sense of crisis about food security.

### Turkey finds huge reservoir of Natural Gas

► **Context:** Turkey has found a huge reservoir of Natural Gas in the Black Sea in its own exclusive territory.

► **About:** Turkey occupies a unique geographical position, lying partly in Asia and partly in Europe.

- Turkey has acted as both- a barrier and a bridge between the two continents.
- Turkey is bounded on the north by the Black Sea and on the southwest and west by the Mediterranean Sea and the Aegean Sea.
- Fatih is the name of the ship which is Turkey's first oil gas drilling vessel. It started drilling on 20th July, 2020 and discovered the gas after one month of drilling.
- The area where the gas has been found is called by Turkey as Tuna-I field.

## Government Schemes/Initiative

### National Health ID

► **Context:** The government has announced a national health ID for every Indian

► **About:** The National Health ID will be a repository of all health-related information of a person.

- Every patient who wishes to have their health records available digitally must have a Health ID. It will be a 14-digit number which can be linked to the Aadhar Card. Linking this Health ID number with Aadhar is optional or voluntary.
- National Health ID will be run in Union territories as a pilot project on trial basis and then later on launched in the entire nation.
- The initiative of the government comes under the National Digital Health Mission (NDHM) which is run under Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojna

## International Relations

### India-Bhutan: Yeti Territory

► **Context:** Bhutan is facing a geo-political challenge from China and India is helping Bhutan to tackle it.

► **About:** Bhutan is a landlocked country with a total population of around 8 Lakhs.

- Bhutan shares border with four Indian States: Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, West Bengal and Sikkim.
- China claims rights over Sakteng wildlife sanctuary in eastern Bhutan that borders **Arunachal Pradesh**.
- The areas around the sanctuary have traditionally been believed to be home to the mythical 'Yeti' or 'Migoi' in Bhutanese and hence the area has been termed locally as Yeti territory.
- India has proposed to build a road in Bhutan's 'Yeti territory' which China claimed recently.
- This will enable India to have quick access to Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh, which borders China.
- The road will start from Assam, enter Bhutan and join Tawang in Arunachal.
- This will be a message to China affirming Yeti territory to be a part Bhutan.

### China's influence increasing in Central And Eastern Europe

► **Context:** China claims that the America's anti-China campaign will fail in Central and Eastern Europe.

• **China and Central and Eastern European Countries** also known as China-CEE or China-CEEC or 17+1 is an initiative of Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs to promote business and investment relations between China and 17 countries of CEE (CEEC).

• 17 countries include Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia.

• 17 + 1 format was founded in 2012 in Budapest to push for cooperation of the "17+1". The Secretariat is in Beijing.

• **Two countries in which China's influence is growing is Greece and Serbia**

• **Greece:** It shares land borders with Albania to the northwest, North Macedonia and Bulgaria to the north and Turkey to the northwest. The Aegean Sea lies to the east of the mainland, the Ionian Sea to the west, the Cretan Sea and the Mediterranean Sea to the south. Greece is considered the cradle of western civilization.

• Port of Piraeus is the chief sea port of Athens in Greece located on the Saronic Gulf on the western coasts of the Aegean Sea. Recently China has increased its total stake in the port to 67% under their government company COSCO (China Ocean Shipping Company).

• **Serbia:** It is situated north of Greece. It is not a part of European Union. It is a landlocked country.

• **Serbia** shares land boundary with Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, North Macedonia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro.

### Japan-China dispute on Senkaku Island

► **Context:** China has aggressively started to police the waters off the Japanese-administered Senkaku Islands in recent times.

• **Senkaku Islands:** Its sovereignty is contested by 3 countries- Japan, China and Taiwan. It lies in the East China Sea. The island group are known to consist of five uninhabited islets and three barren rocks.

• These islands are currently under Japanese administration

### China-Russia: Financial alliance

► **Context:** China and Russia have reduced the use of Dollar in the bilateral transaction between them from 90% in 2015 to below 50% in 2020.

► **About:** China and Russia are said to be slowly partnering towards a financial alliance by reducing the use to America's dollar in their bilateral trade in order to avoid the interference of U.S banks and replacing it with their national currencies for their bilateral settlements. This can be termed as De-dollarization.

• De-dollarization, therefore, is a process of substituting US Dollar as the currency used for

1. Trading oil and other commodities.
2. Buying US dollars for the forex reserves
3. Bilateral trade agreements
4. Dollar-denominated assets.

### Political crisis in Mali

► **Context:** Military coup has happened in Mali and President Ibrahim Keita is arrested by the military.

► **About:** Mali is landlocked country which stretches to the Sahara Desert in West Africa. The capital of Mali is Bamako. It got its independence from France in 1960.

• **MINUSMA** is a Peacekeeping force of the United Nations in Mali deployed to stabilize areas that were formerly controlled by insurgents.

• **MINUSMA stands for** Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali

• **June 5 Movement** is a movement by the opposition coalition which is led by Mahmoud Dicko calling for the resignation of President Ibrahim Keita in the wake of April parliamentary elections

### Financial Action Task Force

► **Context:** Pakistan government has sanctioned 88 new terrorist including Dawood Ibrahim to avoid FATF black list.

► **About:** The Paris based Financial Action Task Force (FATF) had put Pakistan on the "Grey List" in June 2018.

• The FATF was set up as intergovernmental organisation in 1989 by the G7 countries with the objective of combatting money laundering.

• The FATF has 39 members.

- India is a member of FATF while Pakistan is not a member of FATF
- There are two list in FATF- Black list (major restrictions imposed on import and export) and Grey list.
- Presently there are only 2 countries in black list- North Korea and Iran.

### QAnon Theory

#### ► Context:

- It's a concoction of allegations against Democratic politicians, celebrities and supposed members of a "deep state" government bureaucracy, against whom Trump is seen as waging a valiant battle.
- QAnon shares roots with the so-called PizzaGate conspiracy theory that took hold during the 2016 presidential campaign. It held that top Democrats including Hillary Clinton, Trump's presidential opponent, were involved in a child sex-trafficking ring operating out of a Washington pizza restaurant.
- One common belief among QAnon subscribers is that Q is a Trump-supporting, high-ranking government official with access to sensitive military information. Anon stands for Anonymous.
- America's Federal Bureau of Investigation has called QAnon a potential domestic terrorism threat.

## Science and Technology

### Skyroot Aerospace to launch rocket with ISRO's help in 2021

- **Context:** On the eve of 101st birth anniversary of Vikram Sarabhai, Skyroot Aerospace became the first Indian start-up to successfully test-fire India's 1st private rocket engine "Raman" (named after Nobel laureate C.V.Raman)
- **About:** India's aerospace company Skyroot will launch rockets into space by December 2021 with the help of ISRO.
  - Skyroot has named its first launch rocket Vikram-I. It will be a 4-stage rocket.
  - Father of Indian Space programme- Vikram Sarabhai
  - IN-SPACe: Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre
  - IN-SPACe is an autonomous body which would be established under the Department of Space (DoS) for permitting and regulating activities of the private space sector.

### Malaysia detects New COVID-19 strain

- **Context:** New strain of COVID-19 already present in United States and Europe is now detected in Malaysia as well.
- **About:** Malaysia has detected a highly infectious D614G virus, which is a new strain of COVID-19
  - It is found to be 10 times easier to infect other individuals than Covid-19
  - Corona Virus is made up of a genetic material called Ribonucleic acid (RNA). The human body is made up of DNA. The RNA and DNA do have similarities but they are not the same.
  - Mutation: When the virus infects us, it enters the cell body. The virus inside the cell releases its RNA and then start making the copies of RNA in the host cell to create new virus RNA which helps them to spread. If there's a copying mistake, the RNA gets changed. This change in RNA is termed as mutation.

### Dwarf Planet Ceres gets the status of "Ocean World"

- **Context: Researchers have found traces of water on the dwarf planet Ceres.**
  - Dwarf Planet are worlds too small to be considered full-fledged planet, but too large to fall into smaller categories.
  - There are 5 dwarf planets in our solar system in order of size are: Pluto, Eris, Makemake, Haumea and Ceres.
  - 6th dwarf planet claimant is Hygiea which so far has been considered to be an asteroid.
  - Ceres lies in the asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter and is also the largest object in that belt.
  - Ceres has got the status of an "ocean world".
  - Ceres was first spotted by Giuseppe Piazzi in 1801 and was considered to be a missing planet. It was declared a dwarf planet in 2006 and is now the 1st dwarf planet to be orbited by a spacecraft. NASA's DAWN mission studied Ceres. Pluto was downgraded from the status of a planet in 2006.

### NASA mission to explore Jupiter's Volcanic Moon

- **Context:** NASA has proposed to launch a mission to Jupiter's moon Io.
  - Jupiter is the largest planet in our solar system. It has 79 satellites (as of 2019).
  - 4 out of these 79 natural satellites dominate around the region of Jupiter. These satellites are called as Galilean Satellites.



- These Galilean Satellites are Europa, Ganymede, Callisto, Io
  - Europa is supposed to be an oceanic world. NASA has proposed to launch Clipper Mission to study Europa
  - Another mission that is proposed by NASA is **Io Volcano Observer (IVO)** to explore Jupiter's moon Io.
  - Io or Jupiter I, is the innermost and third-largest of the four Galilean moons of the planet Jupiter.
  - Io is the most volcanically active world in the solar system and is suspected to have a magma ocean hidden beneath its surface.
  - Io is volcanically active because it is in a constant gravitational tug-of-war with Jupiter and other big moons.
  - It's thought that the constant stretching and squishing causes frictional "tidal heating" so great that an ocean of magma is created under the surface
- Other missions: "Trident" will study Triton (icy moon of Neptune), "VERITAS" and "DAVINCI+" will study Venus.

## Art & Culture

### Tribal Freedom Fighters Museum

- **Context:** Government to develop 9 Tribal Freedom Fighters Museum
- **About:** The government desires and is planning to set up museums in the States where Tribals lived, struggled against the British and refused to bow down.
- Ministry of Tribal Affairs is developing Tribal Freedom Fighters Museum.
- All museums will have strong usage of technologies like Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality, 3D/7D holographic projections etc.
- The designs of the museums are studied from Manav Sangrahalaya Museum in Bhopal & Virasat-e-Khalsa museum in Punjab

State	Location	Dedicated to
Gujarat	Rajpipla	Prominent freedom fighters from across the country ( will be largest museum)
Jharkhand	Ranchi	Birsa Munda
Andhra Pradesh	Lambasingi	Shri Alluri Seetha Ram Raju
Chhattisgarh	Raipur	Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh
Kerala	Kozhikode	Thalakkal Chandu
Madhya Pradesh	Chhindwara	Tantya Bheel, Bheema Nayak, Khajaya Nayak
Telangana	Hyderabad	Ramji Gond
Manipur	Senapati	Rani Gaidnilu
Mizoram	Mualngo, Kelsih	-----

- The **Museum of Manipur** will be dedicated to the freedom fighter Rani Gaidnilu. She was involved in Heraka religious movement. During the movement she was considered to be the incarnation of Goddess Cherachamdinilu. The movement later on turned into a political movement.
- The **Museum of Chhattisgarh** is dedicated to Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh. He is considered to be the 1st Chhattisgarhi freedom fighter. He led the 1857 war of independence in Chhattisgarh.
- The **Museum of Ranchi** will be dedicated to Birsa Munda. He led the Munda rebellion in 1899-1900 and asked the masses to stop paying debts/interest to moneylenders and taxes to the British.
- The **Museum of Andhra Pradesh** is dedicated to Shri Alluri Seetha Ram Raju. He led the Rampa Rebellion in 1922. He protested against the Madras Forest Act of 1882 in Visakhapatnam.
- The **Museum of Telangana** is dedicated to Ramji Gond. He fought a guerrilla campaign in 1850s against the British government to preserve his Gond Kingdom.

## Miscellaneous

### World's tallest pier bridge

- **Context:** Railways is constructing world's tallest pier bridge in Manipur
- **About:** This bridge is being constructed across the river Ijai near Noney in Manipur is an engineering marvel because the tallest pier height will be of 141 metre. This bridge will be called the Noney Bridge. The 141 metre pier will beat 139 m-

etre pier of Mala-Rijeka Viaduct bridge in Montenegro in Europe.

- The bridge is a part of Jiribam-Tupul-Imphal new BG line project
- River Ijai flows 60 km away from capital city of Imphal.
- This bridge would improve the connectivity to North Eastern part of the country.
- Manipur shares boundary on the east by Myanmar (Burma), on the north by the State of Nagaland, on the west by the State of Assam and on the south by the State of Mizoram.

### Delhi-Katra Expressway

► **Context:** The government will be constructing an expressway connecting Delhi-Amritsar- Katra which would boost connectivity.

- Delhi-Amritsar - Katra Expressway is an under construction 687 km long and 6 to 8 lanes expressway which will connect Delhi with Amritsar in Punjab and Katra in Jammu and Kashmir.
- The National Expressway Authority of India (NEAI) is run under Ministry of Road Transport and Highways will be in-charge of the construction and maintenance of expressways.
- The National Highways Development Project by the GoI aims to expand the country's current expressway network.
- We already have a train running between Delhi and Katra launched in 2019.

### National Sports Awards 2020

► **Context:** The government has announced the National Sports Awards 2020.

- **Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award:** It is given for the most spectacular and outstanding performance in the field of sports by a sportsperson over a period of 4 years. (Started in 1991-1992).

Awardees	Discipline
Rohit Sharma	Cricket
Mariyappam T	Para Athletics
Manika Batra	Tanle Tennis
Vinesh	Wrestling
Rani	Hockey

- **Dronacharya Award:** It is given to coaches for producing medal winners at prestigious international sports events (launched in 1985).
- **Arjuna Award:** It is given for consistent outstanding performance for 4 years (started in 1961)
- **Dhyan Chand Award:** It is given for lifetime contribution to sports development (started in 2002).
- **Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award:** It is given to recognise the spirit of adventure among the people of the country.
- **Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (MAKA) Trophy:** It is given to overall top performing university in the inter-university tournaments. This year it is given to Panjab University, Chandigarh.
- **Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puruskar:** It is given to the corporate entities (both in private and public sector) and individuals who have contributed in sports promotion and development.

### Teesta River

- **Context:** China is set to lend Bangladesh almost \$1 billion for Teesta River Project.
- **About:** Teesta is a 414 km long river which originates from Tso Lhamo Lake (Sikkim)
- It flows through 2 Indian states of Sikkim and West Bengal.
- It enters Bangladesh and eventually meet Padma river and then drains into Bay of Bengal.
- It is one of the largest transboundary river shared between India and Bangladesh after Ganges and Brahmaputra river system.

## Person in News

### Susan B Anthony

- **Context:** President Donald Trump announced that he would pardon Susan B Anthony.
- **About:** Susan Anthony was a feminist leader who was arrested and fined \$100 in 1872 for voting and defying laws that

only allow men to cast vote.

- She was born in 1820.

She advocated for women rights and is considered among the role suffrage leader of the late 19th century. Her efforts ultimately led to the passing of 19th Constitutional Amendment in 1920.

- The 19th amendment to the US constitution granted American women the right to vote.
- So, on the 100th anniversary of 19th amendment Trump announces to pardon Susan Anthony.

### Notes

## Science & Technology

### MIST Cable System

- **Context:** Orient Link Pte. Ltd. (OLL) and NEC Corporation (NEC) announced that they have signed an agreement to build the MIST Cable System (MIST).
- **About:** MIST is a fibre pair underwater cable system which will directly connect Singapore, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand and India (Mumbai and Chennai) and deliver a design capacity of more than 216 terabits per second (Tbps)
  - A few days back, Chennai-Andaman & Nicobar submarine Optical fibre link was launched through which the GoI ensured high speed internet connectivity in Andaman & Nicobar like that in the mainland of India. The project was executed by BSNL in collaboration with NEC (a Japanese firm).
  - The work of the Japan based company (NEC) is to connect countries via under-sea optical fibre cable.
  - JUPITER: It is a trans-ocean under-sea cable connectivity project between Philippines, Japan and US
  - ASE: Asia Submarine cable Express is connecting Singapore, China and Japan
  - PC-1: Japan- US cable system (being developed)

### Cytokines Storm

- **Context:** A research published in NATURE says that Coronavirus hits men harder than women.
- **About:** The immune system of men is weaker than women.
  - Men have higher level of certain inflammation causing proteins like Cytokines, chemokines etc.
  - These proteins are more in men than women.
  - Cytokines are proteins which is released by our immune system. For example, If we get infected by any virus then immune system releases cytokines and fights the virus. But sometimes the problem arises when cytokines bring storm i.e. it causes hyper reaction. It means that cytokines fail to differentiate between good and infected cells and destroy both the cells. This condition is known as Cytokines Storm.
  - These cytokines are more in men and hence the reason for weak immunity in men.
  - Therefore, the cell mediated (T-cell) response of women is better than men.

### Asteroid 2018VP1

- **Context:** Asteroid 2018VP1 is heading towards our planet Earth.
- **About:** Asteroids are small, rocky objects that orbit the sun but are much smaller than the planets. They are left over parts during the formation of our solar system.
  - Larger Asteroids have been called Planetoids
  - Asteroid belt is found between Mars and Jupiter.
  - The objects which pass close to earth are called Near-Earth-Object (NEO)
  - Asteroid 2018VP1 is also known as Election Day Asteroid because it will be seen on the day when Presidential Elections are to be held in US (2 nd November)
  - The Chicxulub impactor, the celestial object that caused the sudden extinction of most dinosaur species 66 million years ago has a diameter of over 10 kilometres
  - 2018VP1 has a diameter of only 2 metres.
  - Double Asteroid Redirection Test (DART) is a planetary defense-driven test of technologies for preventing an impact of Earth by a hazardous asteroid.
  - It will be launched by NASA
  - DART will be the first demonstration of the kinetic impactor technique to change the motion of an asteroid in space.
  - The binary near-Earth asteroid Didymos is the target for the DART demonstration

### Saliva Test

- **Context:** USA has given its nod to the Saliva Test for Covid-19
- **About:** RT PCR and Rapid Antigen test are invasive process of Corona test.
  - RT-PCR is time taking test although Rapid Antigen is a fast testing method but both adhere to invasive process of testing.
  - Rapid Antigen test is the serological test which looks for antibodies developed by the body against the virus. This

determines if a person has been exposed to the infection.

- Saliva test is the 5<sup>th</sup> test that has been approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) of testing for Covid-19.
- Unlike the RT-PCR which required swab for collection of sample and skilled healthcare providers, Saliva test will not require swab thus lowering the test cost.
- Saliva test is reported to be more accurate than RT-PCR.
- Saliva test is non-invasive test.

### Dengue Mosquitoes: Indonesia

- **Context:** A study conducted in Indonesia concludes that the successful control on Dengue can be done by the use of bacteria.
- **About:** Dengue spreads from a female mosquito Genus *Flavivirus* (*Aedes Aegypti*)
- In 2019, Dengvaxia, a dengue vaccine was approved by US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) for all four types of Dengue.
  - The key to bring down the dengue which is spread by mosquitoes with the help of other mosquitoes is the bacteria *Wolbachia*.
  - *Wolbachia* occurs in some species of insects (mosquito) but does not naturally occur in *Aedes Aegypti* (the mosquito species that spreads dengue and other diseases like chikungunya, zika etc).
  - So *Wolbachia* bacteria is inserted in normal mosquitoes and they transmit the bacteria to other mosquitoes through breeding. In this way, the bacteria also enter *Aedes Aegypti* on breeding.
  - The Australia based research group-World Mosquito Program (WMP)-in 2008 discovered that *Aedes Aegypti* mosquitoes can no longer spread dengue when they are carrying *Wolbachia*. This is because the dengue virus struggles to replicate inside the mosquito when these bacteria are present.

### Brain Computer Interface

- **Context:** Elon Musk's company Neuralink implants a small computer in a Pig.
- **About:** Neuralink is a company of Elon Musk founded in 2016 with the goal of creating a wireless brain-machine interface, something which scientist hope can help cure neurological conditions.
- Neuralink unveiled a design that involved implanting tiny electrodes "threads" into the brains as well as another behind the ear.
  - All this is under research and nothing substantive data has been provided by Elon Musk.

### Polio Virus

- **Context:** WHO declared Africa free of Polio Virus
- **About:** The Africa Regional Certification Commission (ARCC) was a board appointed by WHO in 1998 tasked with monitoring the eradication of wild Poliovirus from African continent
- It declared Africa free of Wild Polio Virus.
  - Polio is a virus which spreads from person to person usually through contaminated water effecting the nervous system and hence leading to paralysis.
  - Two out of three strains of wild polio virus have already been eradicated worldwide.
  - Now, Africa has been declared free of the last remaining strain of wild poliovirus.
  - Vaccine-Derived Polio: The oral polio vaccine contains an attenuated (weakened) vaccine-virus which activates the immune system in the body. When a child is immunized with OPV, the weakened vaccine-virus replicates in the intestine thereby developing immunity by building up antibodies. This vaccine virus is also excreted and if there is an inadequate sanitation, then the virus can spread in the community.
  - Polio vaccine was developed in 1952 by Dr. Jonas Salk
  - In 1961, Albert Sabin pioneered the OPV which has been used by most nations in immunisation programmes.
  - In 1996, polio virus effected the entire African continent and in this scenario, Nelson Mandela launched the "Kick Polio Out of Africa" programme.
  - Nigeria is the last country in Africa to be declared free from wild polio
  - Pakistan and Afghanistan are the only two countries in the world left with Wild Poliovirus cases.



## Polity

### National Recruitment Agency (NRA)

- **Context:** The government has approved the setting up of a National Recruitment Agency (NRA)
- **About:** The NRA will conduct a common preliminary examination for various recruitments in the central government (not for state government recruitment) from 2021
  - The proposal for NRA was first introduced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the Union Budget 2020.
  - NRA is a multi-agency body that will hold Common Eligibility Test (CET) as a preliminary exam to shortlist candidates for Group B and C posts in the IBPS, SSC and Railways.
  - The Agency will be headed by a Chairman of the rank of Secretary to the GoI, having representatives from Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Railways, SSC, RRB & IBPS will be the members of NRA.
  - Common Eligibility Test (CET) is an online exam that will screen candidates at the preliminary stage for IBPS, SSC and RRBs
  - The present recruitment agencies- IBPS, RRB and SSC will remain in place. (NRA will conduct the screening round only but the later phases of the exam like Tier II and Interview etc would be done by the already present agencies- IBPS, RRB, SSC).
  - The test will be conducted twice a year.
  - The test will be conducted for three levels: Graduate, Higher Secondary and Matriculate pass candidates.
  - CET will be conducted in multiple languages.
  - The CET score of a candidate shall be valid for a period of three years from the declaration of result.

### Digital Quality of Life Index 2020

- **Context:** India has cheap internet & good e-governance, but lacks good digital life quality
- **About:** This index is prepared by Surfshark, which is a Virtual Private Network (VPN) provider based in the British Virgin Islands.
  - It has pillar that determine the digital quality of life:
    1. Internet affordability
    2. Internet quality
    3. Electronic infrastructure
    4. Electronic government
    5. Electronic Security

### Gupkar Declaration

- **Context:** The President of the National Conference, Farooq Abdullah said that they will raise the issue of Gupkar Declaration in the upcoming parliament session.
- **About:** 6 political parties of Jammu and Kashmir have vowed to fight collectively against the revocation of Jammu and Kashmir's special constitutional status.
  - A declaration signed by the Kashmiri (not Jammu) parties at Farooq Abdulla's residence on the Gupkar Road (called Gupkar Residence) demanding the restoration of special status to J&K is called Gupkar Declaration

## International Relations

### Operation Serval

- **Context:** A Military Coup happened in Mali in August 2020 against President Ibrahim Keita just before the elections.
- **About:** Operation Serval was a French Military operation in Mali in January 2013. The aim of the operation was to oust Islamic militants from the north of Mali, who had begun to push into the centre of Mali.
  - This operation was replaced by Operation Barkhane which was started in 2014 which is still going on in Mali by the French army against the Islamic militants.
  - The Operation Serval was named after a wild cat specie in Africa.
  - Mali is a landlocked country.
  - Tropic of Cancer passes through Mali.
  - It is 3rd largest producer of Gold
  - Mali got independence from France in 1960

### USA Australia working to reduce dependence on China.

- **Context:** USA and Australia are working on ways to reduce dependence on China by developing a supply chain for Rare Earth Metals.
- **About:** Rare Earth are a group of 17 chemical elements of periodic table used in everything from hi-tech consumer electronics to military equipment.
  - The 17 chemical elements include fifteen lanthanides as well as scandium and yttrium.
  - They are called Rare elements not because of the less availability on Earth but due to their difficult economic exploitation prospects. Infact, these Rare Earth metals are relatively plentiful in Earth's crust.
  - The Rare earth elements are typically dispersed and not often found concentrated in rare-earth minerals and hence difficult to exploit.
  - China has the maximum reserves and the maximum production capacity of Rare Earth Minerals.

### Belarus Protest 2020

- **Context:** Tens of Thousands gather in Minsk for biggest protest in Belarus History.
- **About:** The 2020 Belarusian protest is a series of political demonstrations against the Belarusian government and President Alexander Lukashenko.
  - The demonstrations are part of Belarusian democracy movement where the country's authoritarian ruler Lukashenko claimed to have secured 80% of the vote in a presidential election.
  - The protest began since January 2020- nicknamed as Slipper Revolution and Anti-Cockroach Revolution.
  - Alexander has been the head of the state of Belarus since 1994.
  - Belarus is a landlocked country in Eastern Europe.
  - It is bordered by Russia to the northeast, Ukraine to the south, Poland to the west, and Lithuania and Latvia to the northwest.
  - The countries on the western boundary of Belarus- Lithuania, Latvia and Poland-share coastline with Baltic Sea.

### Manasarovar Lake

- **Context:** China is building surface-to-air missile base at Manasarovar Lake
- **About:** Lake Manasarovar or Manas Sarovar, also called Mapam Yumtso is a high-altitude freshwater lake fed by the Kailash Glaciers near Mount Kailash in Tibet autonomous region, China.
  - The lake is revered as a sacred place in four religions: Bon, Buddhism, Jainism and Hinduism
  - India-Nepal dispute began since India inaugurated a new road called the Kailash-Mansarovar Yatra Route which almost goes up to Lipulekh Pass at the India-China border.
  - Lipulekh Pass is located on the tri-junction of India, Nepal and China.

### Turkey-Israel Relations: Hamas Issue

- **Context:** Turkey has started supporting Hamas against Israel
- **About:** Palestine is a combination of West Bank and Gaza Strip.
  - The government in West Bank is quite stable but there are crisis in Gaza Strip. Hamas are in power in Gaa Strip.
  - Hamas is the militant outfit and has been the de facto governing authority of Gaza Strip since its takeover of that area in 2007
  - Israel, USA and European Union term Hamas as a terrorist organisation
  - Gaza Strip shares its coast with the Mediterranean Sea.
  - Turkey is a transcontinental country located mainly on the Anatolian peninsula in western Asia with some portions on South-eastern Europe.
  - Turkey is bordered by Black Sea in the north and Aegean Sea in the west.

### Riots in Sweden

- **Context:** Danish (Denmark) Party's leader Rasmus Paludan was denied permission to hold a meeting in Sweden's Malmo about "Islamization in the Nordic Countries" which led to riots in the country.
- **About:** 85% population of Sweden is Christian and approximately 8% of the population is Muslim.
  - Sweden is a Nordic country in Northern Europe. It borders Norway to the west and north, Finland to the east and is connected to Denmark in the southwest by a bridge-tunnel across the Orseund Strait.

## Economy

### Private sector in retail payments

- **Context:** Reserve Bank of India has allowed private players in the Retail Payments
- **About:** Retail Payments usually involve transactions between two consumers, between consumers and businesses, or between two businesses.
  - Retail payments do not have a clear-cut division with that of the wholesale payments but retail payments system generally have higher transaction volumes and lower average values than the wholesale payments systems.
  - National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI): It was established by RBI and Indian Bank's Association (IBA) in 2008
  - It is a 'not-for-profit' entity registered under section 8 of Companies Act and is owned by a consortium of leading public and private sector banks.
  - The NPCI is directly responsible for functioning of important digital payment channels such as United Payment Interface etc
  - In order to prevent the monopoly and concentration risk, the RBI has allowed a new entity to provide services similar to NPCI.
  - But the new entity will have an option to operate as a "for-profit" entity.
  - So, Payment system operators and payments and technology service providers with 3 years of experience are eligible to apply and set up the new pan-India platform.
  - The minimum paid-up capital of the entity has been set at Rs 500 crore and a minimum net worth of Rs 300 crore has to be maintained at all times.
  - The promoter should be owned and controlled by resident Indian.
  - Promoter is a person who comes up with the Idea of the company.
  - No single promoter can invest more than 40% of the paid-up capital.

### Ease of Doing Business Report

- **Context:** World Bank has paused the publication of "Ease of Doing Business" Report for India, Pakistan and China due to the irregularities noticed in the data in the previous reports of 2018 and 2020.
- **About:** Ease of Doing Business is published by World Bank with its headquarterd at Washington DC (USA)
  - In Ease of Doing Business report 2020 (which was released in October 2019), India was ranked 63.
  - New Zealand was ranked first.

## Art & Culture

### ASI Circles

- **Context:** Ministry of Culture has announced setting up of 7 new circles under Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) for better upkeep of monuments.
- **About:** ASI is an organisation for the archaeological researches and protection of the cultural heritage of the nation. It was established in 1861 by Alexander Cunningham who also became it 1st Director-General. It comes under Ministry of Culture.
  - For the better upkeep and maintenance of ancient monuments and archaeological sites, the entire country is divided into 29 Circles.
  - 7 New Circles created are Jabalpur (MP), Trichy (TN), Jhansi and Meerut (UP), Hampi (Karnataka), Raiganj (West Bengal) and Rajkot (Gujarat)

## Geography

### Typhoon Bavi

- **Context:** The typhoon has caused destruction in Korean Peninsula and is now heading to make landfall in China.
  - **About:** Cyclones are centres of low pressure and surrounded by isobars having increasing pressure outward. Due to the Coriolis force, the winds get deflected rightwards in northern hemisphere and leftward in southern hemisphere from their paths and that is why it gets circular wind and blowing system.
    - Tropical cyclones and names by which they are called in different regions
1. South-East Asia (China and Japan Sea)- Typhoons

2. Caribbean Sea- Hurricanes
3. Indian Ocean- Tropical Cyclones
4. North East Coast of Australia- Willy-Willy
  - Jeju Island was first hit by the Typhoon Bavi.
  - Jeju island is the largest island in South Korea. It lies in the Korean Strait, below the Korean Peninsula. (Surrounded from sea on 3 sides)
  - North Korea shares its borders with China.

## Defence & Security

### Kavkaz 2020 Exercise

► **Context:** India has withdrawn from the military exercise to be held in Russia along with troops from China and Pakistan

**About:** Kavkaz 2020 is a multi-lateral strategic command-post exercise to be held in September

- Members of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation are participating in this exercise.
- Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is a Eurasian political, economic and security alliance created on 15th June 2001 in Shanghai, China.
- India and Pakistan are its latest members admitted in 2017 to SCO
- Kavkaz 2020 is also known as Caucasus 2020.
- Caucasus is also a region that lies between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. The countries which come under this region includes Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Southwestern Russia.
- Caucasus mountains are also found in this region which are part of European physiography.
- Greater Caucasus mountain range is considered to be a natural barrier between Eastern Europe and Western Asia.
- Russia conducts the military exercises in four major drills on a rotating basis: Zapad (West) in 2017, Vostok (East) in 2018, Tsentr (Centre) in 2019 and Kavkaz (South) in 2020.

### Warship sold to Pakistan by China

► **Context:** China sells most advanced warship to Pakistan

► **About:** The Type 039A submarine (NATO reporting name: Yuan class) is a class of diesel electric submarine of China's Navy. It is China's first Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) powered submarine and presumed to be one of the quietest diesel-electric submarine classes in service.

- Jiangkai II Frigate: The Type 054A (NATO codename Jiangkai II) frigate is a class of Chinese multi-role frigates, the first of which entered service with the Chinese Navy in 2007.
- The Type-054 class is equipped with the latest surface, subsurface, anti-air weapons, combat management system, and sensors
- Frigates play an important role in supporting the submarines.
- Frigate is a warship with a mixed armament, generally lighter than a destroyer and used for convoy escort work.
- Frigate is not used for large scale attacks. Countries use it for patrolling purpose.
- F-22P Zulfikar-class frigate: This frigate is based on an updated model of the Chinese Type 053H3 frigate. It is a class of multi mission guided missile frigate, currently in service with the Pakistan Navy.
- Pakistan's heaviest frigate is U.S made Alagiri (F260)
- India's Shivalik class or Project 17 class is a class of multi-role frigates in service with the Indian Navy. They are the first stealth warships built in India. They were designed to have better stealth features and land-attack capabilities than the preceding Talwar-class frigates.
- Three frigates of Shivalik class includes: INS Shivalik, INS Satpura and INS Sahyadri.

### New Ladakh – Darcha Road

► **Context:** India is building road between Ladakh and Darcha to counter China.

► **About:** Darcha is a village near Hemis National Park

- Darch-PAzum-Leh connectivity road will be alternative to the earlier used roads to reach Leh (Manali-Leh Road & Srinagar-Leh Highway).

### Project Cheetah

- **Context:** Indian armed forces have decided to revive 'Project Cheetah' amid tensions with China
- **About:** The project will arm the Heron UAV with laser-guided bombs, precision-guided munitions and anti-tank missiles.
  - Heron is a medium altitude long endurance Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) built by Israel. It can carry sensors, cameras, intelligence system, visible light air borne ground surveillance system up to 250 kgs.
  - If the Heron loses its connectivity with base station, then it can on its own return back to its base station
  - Heron will be armed with SPIKE missile (Israeli made fire and forget anti-tank guided missile; can be manually fired) and SPICE bomb (Israeli made bomb; precise and cost-effectiveness)

### Miscellaneous

#### Amul in Rabobank's Global top 20 list

- **Context:** Amul becomes the 1st Indian Dairy company to be in Rabobank's Global Top 20 List.
- **About:** Amul is an Indian dairy cooperative society established in 1946 which is based at Anand in Gujarat.
  - Amul spurred India's White Revolution, which made the country the world's largest producer of milk and milk products.
  - Verghese Kurien is known as the "Father of White Revolution" in India.
  - Operation Flood made dairy farming India's largest self-sustaining industry and the largest rural employment sector.
  - Rabobank is a Dutch multinational banking and financial services company
  - In the Rabobank Global list, Switzerland's Nestle topped and India's Amul was ranked at 16th position

#### Covid-19 in Andaman

- **Context:** Corona Virus hits 10 members of Andamanese Tribe
- **About:** The population of Andamanese tribe is just around 50. They are characterised as the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTGs)
  - They live on the tiny Strait Island where the government looks after their food and shelter.
  - The Andaman Islands are home to 4 Negrito tribes- Great Andamanese, Onge, Jarwa, Sentinelese
  - The Nicobar Islands are home to 2 Mongoloid tribes- Shompen and Nicobarese
  - The Andamans are separated from the Nicobar group by a Ten Degree channel
  - The highest point is located in North Andaman Island called Saddle Peak

#### Atal Tunnel

- **Context:** Atal tunnel to be inaugurated by the GoI by late September.
- **About:** Atal tunnel is also known as Rohtang tunnel as it passes through Rohtang Pass.
  - It is a 9 km long tunnel under the Pir Panjal range.
  - It will be the world's longest highway tunnel above the altitude of 10,000 feet North to South position of various ranges: Karakoram, Ladakh, Zaskar, Pir Panjal, Dhauladhar Range
  - Karakoram, Ladakh and Zaskar are a part of Trans-Himalaya range

### Notes



## Prelims Capsule

**Ques-1) "Dare to Dream 2.0" is an open challenge to promote the innovators and startups of the country that was launched recently.**

Who launched it:

- A. NITI AAYOG
- B. Defence Research and Development Organisation (DPIIT)
- C. Defence Research and Development Organisation
- D. None of the above

**Ques -2) Recently, the Cabinet gave ex-post facto approval to an agreement between India and this country on cooperation in the field of traditional systems of medicine and homeopathy. The MoU aims to provide a framework for cooperation between the two countries for the promotion of traditional systems of medicine and homeopathy and will mutually benefit both nations in the field of traditional medicine.**

Which country are we referring to?

- A. Australia
- B. Kenya
- C. Zimbabwe
- D. Thailand

**Ques -3) The Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) has set up a committee to look into the possibility of including what are called "pre-packs" under the current insolvency regime to offer faster insolvency resolution under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC)**

Which of the following best describes "Pre-Packs"?

- A. Pre-packs serve as securities which are immediately released to lenders in case of default to alleviate the suffering of the lender
- B. Percentage based formula for deciding the time period within which insolvency matter will be settled
- C. An agreement for the resolution of the debt of a distressed company
- D. None of the above

**Ques -4) All five Rafale combat aircraft landed at the Ambala air base in India on July 29, 2020. Consider the following about them:**

- A. Rafale jet can reach almost double the speed of sound, with a top speed of 1.8 Mach**
- B. Each aircraft has 14 storage stations for weapons. The jets come with one of the most advanced Meteor air-to-air missiles**

Which of the above is correct?

- 1. A only
- 2. B only
- 3. Both A and B
- 4. Neither A nor B

**Ques -5) The Ministry of Human Resource and Development (MHRD) has been renamed as Ministry of Education. Further, The Union Cabinet has also approved a new education policy- National Education Policy 2020**

Consider the following statements related to it:

- A. The New Education Policy expands age group 6-14 years of mandatory schooling to 3-18 years of schooling**
- B. Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) will be set up as a single overarching umbrella body for entire higher education, excluding medical and legal education**
- C. Under the NEP, the undergraduate degree will be of either 3 or 4-year duration with multiple exit options within this period.**

Which of the above is correct?

- 1. A and B
- 2. B and C
- 3. A and C
- 4. All of the above

**Ques -6) Consider the following statements:**

**Assertion (A): According to a new study, one in three children worldwide are threatened by unacceptably high lead levels in the blood**

**Reason (R): The increase in the recycling of lead in automotive batteries to satisfy the increasing usage of cars and trucks, especially in the developing world is one of the leading contributors**

In the context of the above, which of these is correct?

1. A is correct, and R is an appropriate explanation of A
2. A is correct, but R is not an appropriate explanation of A
3. A is correct, but R is incorrect
4. A is incorrect, but R is correct

**Ques -7) More than 35,000 Indians became citizens of this country in 2019-2020, a 60 per cent increase from the previous year and the largest diaspora group to be granted the country's citizenship.**

Which country is this?

- A. USA
- B. Australia
- C. UK
- D. Canada

**Ques -8) Consider the following about International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER):**

**A) It is international nuclear fusion research and engineering megaproject**

**B) The goal of ITER is to demonstrate the scientific and technological feasibility of fusion energy for peaceful use Which of the above is correct?**

1. A only
2. B only
3. Both A and B
4. Neither A nor B

**Ques -9) This country released its first list of verified news portals yesterday. Announcing this, the Minister said, the registration of online news portals will be a continuous and ongoing process.**

Which nation initiated this process?

- A. Germany
- B. France
- C. India
- D. Bangladesh

**Ques -10) Blue Heart campaign and related events were in the news recently.**

**What does it relate to?**

- A. Initiative aimed at ensuring adequate blood donor availability across seas
- B. Initiative aimed at taking extra care for the elderly and senior citizens
- C. Initiative to fight human trafficking
- D. None of the above

**Ques -11) Recently, Union Agriculture Minister inaugurated India's first honey testing lab set up by National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) Where is the lab located?**

- A. Maharashtra
- B. Gujarat
- C. Madhya Pradesh
- D. Tamil Nadu

**Ques -12) Mahatma Gandhi Setu is a bridge that is in news recently which is also the third-longest river bridge in India**

Which state does it belong to?

1. Punjab
2. Tamil Nadu
3. Bihar
4. Gujarat

**Ques -13) A Whip is an often used term for Parliament and Legislative Assembly.**

Which of the following best describes it?

- A. Used by the Prime Minister to control its cabinet
- B. Used by presiding officer to admonish members who display undesired behavior
- C. Tool used to ensure fellow political party legislators act in accordance with the wish of the party
- D. None of the above

**Ques -14) The Supreme Court has decided to consider the plea demanding to reduce the water level in the Mullaperiyar dam during monsoon. This dam has been in the news quite often.**

Where is the dam located?

- A. Tamil Nadu
- B. Kerala
- C. Karnataka
- D. Andhra Pradesh

**Ques -15) Consider the following about findings made by Central Water Commission (CWC):**

**A. There is 155 per cent more water than in 2019 and 119 per cent more than average storage in the dams in the past 10 years**

**B. Of the 123 reservoirs covered by CWC, 92 reported more than 80 per cent normal storage**

Which of the above is correct?

- 1. A only
- 2. B only
- 3. Both A and B
- 4. Neither A nor B

**Ques -16) The first nuclear reactor at the Barakah Nuclear Energy Plant has achieved first criticality and successfully started up.**

Where is it located?

- 1. Iraq
- 2. Iran
- 3. UAE
- 4. Saudi Arabia

**Ques -17) Consider the following about the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology's (MeitY) production linked incentive (PLI) scheme :**

**A. The scheme shall extend an incentive of 4% to 6% on incremental sales (over base year) of goods manufactured in India and covered under target segments**

**B. The benefits are available for a period of ten years with financial year (FY) 2019-20 considered as the base year for calculation of incentives**

Which of the above is correct?

- 1. A only
- 2. B only
- 3. Both A and B
- 4. Neither A nor B

**Ques -18) The National Transit Pass System was recently introduced in India. Which of the following best describes it?**

- A) Enables smoother employment opportunities to work across different units of the PSU's across states
- B) Pass enables seamless movement of forest produce
- C) Pass that ensures dedicated lanes at tolls without having to wait in long queues
- D) None of the above

**Ques -19) The state has decided to set up a snow leopard conservation centre to promote winter tourism in the state**

Which State/UT are we referring to?

- A. Himachal Pradesh
- B. Uttarakhand
- C. Assam
- D. Arunachal Pradesh

**Ques -20) Consider the following statements:**

**Assertion (A): The Government for the third time extended the deadline for filing income tax returns for 2018-19 financial year for two months till September 30**

**Reason (R): Government feels that earlier timeline was too short for tax payers to file their return**

In the context of the above, which of these is correct?

- 1. A is correct, and R is an appropriate explanation of A
- 2. A is correct, but R is not an appropriate explanation of A
- 3. A is correct, but R is incorrect
- 4. A is incorrect, but R is correct

**Ques -21) For the first time in a landmark move to protect independent journalism, The country will force US tech giant Facebook Inc. and Alphabet Inc's Google to pay local media publishers for news content**

Which country are we talking about?

- A. New Zealand
- B. China
- C. South Korea
- D. Australia

**Ques -22) "Samarth" is an initiative by a private company which has been in the news. Which of the following best describes it?**

- A. Aiding the differently abled by providing them free of cost assisted living devices
- B. Helping local artisans use the online e-commerce platform to sell their products
- C. Helping women become bread earners of the family
- D. None of the above

**Ques -23) According to the government of Lebanon, The catastrophic explosion at Beirut port was caused by over 2,700 tonnes of ammonium nitrate kept in storage for over six years**

**Consider the following about ammonium nitrate:**

**A. A common chemical ingredient of agricultural fertilisers, the nitrogen rich compound is also the main component of the explosive composition known as ANFO — ammonium nitrate fuel oil B. In its pure form, ammonium nitrate (NH<sub>4</sub>NO<sub>3</sub>) is a white, crystalline chemical which is insoluble in water. It is the main ingredient in the manufacture of commercial explosives used in mining and construction**

Which of the above is correct?

- 1. A only
- 2. B only
- 3. Both A and B
- 4. Neither A nor B

**Ques -24) Consider the following about Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA)**

**A) It works with a vision to enable India's premier educational institutions to excel and reach the top in global rankings by financing building world class infrastructure including R&D Infra.**

**B) HEFA incorporated in 2017, is a joint venture of Ministry of HRD, GOI and Canara Bank with an agreed equity participation in the ratio of 90.91% and 09.09% respectively.**

**C) HEFA is registered as a society under Society registration act 1860 Which of the above is correct?**

- 1. A and B
- 2. B and C
- 3. A and C
- 4. All of the above

**Ques -25) Consider the following about India's relations with Maldives:**

**A. The Indian government has extended the Line of Credit worth of 100 million US dollars to the Maldives government for the expansion of fishing facilities at Maldives Industrial Fisheries Company (MIFCO)**

**B. The project plans for the investment in fish collection and storage facilities and setting up of a fishmeal plant and tuna cooked plant.**

Which of the above is correct?

- 1. A only
- 2. B only
- 3. Both A and B
- 4. Neither A nor B

**Ques -26) Three organisations representing the Bru community displaced from Mizoram have been in the news**

**Consider the following about Bru community:**

**A. The Brus, also referred to as the Reangs, are spread across the northeastern states of Tripura, Assam, Manipur, and Mizoram**

**B. In Tripura, they are recognised as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group**

Which of the above is correct?

- 1. A only
- 2. B only
- 3. Both A and B
- 4. Neither A nor B

**Ques -27) Which of the following best describes “Rashtriya Swachhata Kendra” which was recently inaugurated:**

- A) R & D facility to ensure India is well equipped to deal with multiple threats emanating from different quarters
- B) Centralized procurement center for brooms, gloves, masks etc for volunteers engaged in the mission to keep India clean
- C) An interactive experience centre on the Swachh Bharat Mission
- D) None of the above

**Ques -28) The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) constituted an expert committee to make recommendations on norms for the resolution of COVID-19 related stressed loans**

Who is the chairman of the committee?

- A) Mahesh Kumar Jain
- B) KV Kamath
- C) Prasanna Kumar Mohanty
- D) B.P. Kanungo

**Ques -29) Which of the following best describes “Loya Jirga” which has been in the news recently?**

- A. Mass national gathering in Afghanistan that brings together various tribes and other groups
- B. Special cuisine prepared in anticipation of harvest of Kharif crop in certain parts of central India
- C. Tribal dance festival prevalent in the North East
- D. None of the above

**Ques -30) Kavkaz 2020 has been in the news recently involving India.**

**Which of the following best describes it?**

- A. Assembly of nations of Central Asia held in Kyrgyzstan which saw India being invited for it
- B. The Russian strategic command-post exercise
- C. Military exercise conducted in Caspian Sea by Kazakhstan which was attended by India
- D. None of the above

**Ques -31) TRAFFIC has been in the news surrounding wildlife. Consider the following related to it:**

- A) The TRAFFIC, the Wildlife Trade Monitoring Network, is a leading nongovernmental organisation working on wildlife trade in the context of both biodiversity conservation and sustainable development**
- B) It is a joint program of World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)**

Which of the above is correct?

- 1. A only
- 2. B only
- 3. Both A and B
- 4. Neither A nor B

**Ques -32) eSanjeevani initiative of the government has been in the news.**

Which of the following best describes it?

- A. Digital education platform launched by the government
- B. Digital initiative aimed at distributing seedlings to farmers located in remote areas
- C. Telemedicine services of the government
- D. None of the above

**Ques -33) Assertion (A): Daughters will have the right over parental property even if the coparcener had died prior to the coming into force of the Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005**

**Reason (R): Supreme Court in its order recent order has said that a daughter is entitled to equal property rights under the amended Hindu Succession Act.**

In the context of the above, which of these is correct?

- 1. A is correct, and R is an appropriate explanation of A
- 2. A is correct, but R is not an appropriate explanation of A
- 3. A is correct, but R is incorrect
- 4. A is incorrect, but R is correct

**Ques -34) Consider the following statements:**

**Assertion (A): Saudi Arabia has ended its loan and oil supply to Pakistan**

**Reason (R): It is due to blunt warning issued by Pakistan Foreign Minister to the Saudi Arabia-led Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) for not taking an anti-India stance on the Kashmir issue.**



In the context of the above, which of these is correct?

1. A is correct, and R is an appropriate explanation of A
2. A is correct, but R is not an appropriate explanation of A
3. A is correct, but R is incorrect
4. A is incorrect, but R is correct

**Ques -35) A new microwave device called 'Atulya', which can disinfect any premises in just 30 seconds was recently launched by the Government recently:**

Who launched the device?

- A. Ministry of MSME
- B. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
- C. Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology
- D. Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship

**Ques -36) Clause 6 of the Assam Accord has very much been in news. Which of the following best describes it?**

1. To safeguard the socio-political rights and culture of the "indigenous people of Assam
2. It delineates the geographic boundaries to ensure there is adequate living space for indigenous Assamese
3. Provides for reservation of local population in government jobs and colleges over and above the threshold set by Central Government
4. None of the above

**Ques -37) Consider the following statements:**

**Assertion (A):** Recently, The Government announced that it has allowed the sale and registration of electric vehicles without pre-fitted batteries.

**Reason (R):** This will reduce the upfront cost of these vehicles as the prefitted batteries account for almost 30-40 percent of the total cost of the electric vehicles

In the context of the above, which of these is correct?

1. A is correct, and R is an appropriate explanation of A
2. A is correct, but R is not an appropriate explanation of A
3. A is correct, but R is incorrect
4. A is incorrect, but R is correct

**Ques -38) Consider the following about Papum Reserve Forest:**

**A. It is an Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs) in Kerala**

**B. It is a nesting habitat of three species of the large, colourful fruit-eating hornbills**

Which of the above is correct?

1. A only
2. B only
3. Both A and B
4. Neither A nor B

**Ques -39) Consider the following statements:**

**Assertion (A):** Indian Navy has pushed forward a proposal to urgently acquire 10 ship-borne drones

**Reason (R):** The procurement is in sync with the announcements made in this years Union budget

In the context of the above, which of these is correct?

1. A is correct, and R is an appropriate explanation of A
2. A is correct, but R is not an appropriate explanation of A
3. A is correct, but R is incorrect
4. A is incorrect, but R is correct

**Ques -40) Consider the following about Naval Innovation and Indigenisation Organisation (NIIO):**

**A) The NIIO puts in place dedicated structures for the end users to interact with academia and industry towards fostering innovation and indigenisation for self-reliance in defence in keeping with the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat**

**B) It consists of Naval Technology Acceleration Council (N-TAC) that will bring together the twin aspects of innovation and indigenisation and provide apex level directives**

Which of the above is correct?

1. A only
2. B only
3. Both A and B
4. Neither A nor B

**Ques -41) The far-flung tribal village of Chullyu will soon be bustling with spinning and weaving activities with Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) set to open the first of its kind Training cum Production Center of Silk in the State.**

Which state are we talking about?

- A. Arunachal Pradesh
- B. Meghalaya
- C. Manipur
- D. Nagaland

**Ques -42) Consider the following about developments related to the Lok Sabha:**

**A. The Lok Sabha has launched a new French Course at beginner level for the staff and officials to help them acquire knowledge of French language in the interconnected world.**

**B. The initiative is to be implemented by the Parliamentary Research and Training Institute for Democracy (PRIDE)**

Which of the above is correct?

1. A only
2. B only
3. Both A and B
4. Neither A nor B

**Ques -43) Consider the following statements:**

**Assertion (A): Sea Surface Temperature is a vital factor that governs Indian Monsoon**

**Reason (R): It regulates moisture production in the sea and also affects wind circulation patterns causing rainfall in the monsoon season.**

In the context of the above, which of these is correct?

1. A is correct, and R is an appropriate explanation of A
2. A is correct, but R is not an appropriate explanation of A
3. A is correct, but R is incorrect
4. A is incorrect, but R is correct

**Ques -44) Consider the following statements:**

**Assertion (A): The United Nations defeated the US demand of extending arms embargo on Iran indefinitely.**

**Reason (R): The United Nations Security council voted against extension of arms embargo on Iran In the context of the above, which of these is correct?**

1. A is correct, and R is an appropriate explanation of A
2. A is correct, but R is not an appropriate explanation of A
3. A is correct, but R is incorrect
4. A is incorrect, but R is correct

**Ques -45) Consider the following statements: Assertion**

**(A): A high-level ministerial panel of Goods and Services Tax council recently favored e-way bill for intra state movement of gold**

**Reason (R): It will help track movement of gold under tax evasion and smuggling**

In the context of the above, which of these is correct?

1. A is correct, and R is an appropriate explanation of A
2. A is correct, but R is not an appropriate explanation of A
3. A is correct, but R is incorrect
4. A is incorrect, but R is correct

**Ques -46) The Indian Railways is constructing world's tallest pier bridge in India. The bridge is 141 metres high. It has surpassed the record of 139 metres tall Mala-Rijeka bridge in Montenegro, Europe**

Which state will witness the historic development?

1. Gujarat
2. Manipur
3. Arunachal Pradesh
4. Tamil Nadu

**Ques -47) Chandrayaan 2 had recently captured an image of a crater on Moon. ISRO released the image and named the crater after Indian astrophysicist Vikram Sarabhai on the occasion his birth centenary. Consider the following related to the crater:**

- A. The Sarabhai Crater is located on Mare Serenitatis in the southwest quadrant of the Moon**  
**B. The Sarabhai crater with its raised rim, small hummocky floor and gradient inner walls is ideal to understand the impact processes on the lava-filled region of the Moon**

Which of the above is correct?

1. A only
2. B only
3. Both A and B
4. Neither A nor B

**Ques -48) Which of the following describes 'No Go' areas in coal mining in India:**

- A. Those areas that have been notified by the respective state government as prohibited for not carrying out any mining activity  
B. Those areas having either more than 30 per cent weighted forest cover (WFC) or more than 10 per cent gross forest cover (GFC).  
C. Those areas having either more than 10 per cent weighted forest cover (WFC) or more than 30 per cent gross forest cover (GFC).  
D. None of the above

**Ques -49) Consider the following statements:**

**Assertion (A): The Delhi High Court slammed the Animal Welfare Board of India for not performing a systematic survey of the animal circuses**

**Reason (R): A petition was filed by the Federation for Indian Animal Protection Organizations (FIAPO) seeking directions to rescue the animals in circuses amid the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and alleging violation of provisions of Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960**

In the context of the above, which of these is correct?

1. A is correct, and R is an appropriate explanation of A
2. A is correct, but R is not an appropriate explanation of A
3. A is correct, but R is incorrect
4. A is incorrect, but R is correct

### Notes

## Solutions

### Ans-1(C)

DRDO recently launched innovation contest Dare to Dream 2.0! The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) launched 'Dare to Dream 2.0', which is an innovation contest.

- The contest was launched on the fifth death anniversary of renowned scientist and former President of India Dr APJ Abdul Kalam
- According to the statement, the innovation contest was launched to promote individuals as well as start-ups to use emerging technologies for innovation in aerospace and defence sectors in the country.
- <https://www.financialexpress.com/education-2/dare-to-dream-2-0-drdo-launches-innovation-contest-in-honour-of-dr-abdul-kalam-allyou-need-to-know/2037221/>

### Ans-2(C)

The areas of cooperation identified by the MoU include promotion in the regulation of teaching, practice, drugs and drugless therapies, supply of all medicine materials and documents necessary for demonstration and reference in achieving the objectives and exchange of experts for the training of practitioners, paramedics, scientists, teaching professionals and students among others

- The main objective of the MoU is to strengthen, promote and develop co-operation in traditional medicine systems between the two countries on the basis of equality and mutual benefit
- Read more: <https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2020/jul/30/cabinetapproves-mou-between-india-zimbabwe-on-cooperation-intraditional-medicine-homeopathy-2176826.html>

### Ans-3(C)

I. A pre-pack is an agreement for the resolution of the debt of a distressed company through an agreement between secured creditors and investors instead of a public bidding process.

II. This system of insolvency proceedings has become an increasingly popular mechanism for insolvency resolution in the UK and Europe over the past decade.

III. In India's case, such a system would likely require that financial creditors agree on terms with potential investors and seek approval of the resolution plan from the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT)

IV. Read more: <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/insolvencyand-bankruptcy-code-pre-packs-explained-6527116/>

### Ans-4(3)

Rafale aircrafts were in the news for all the good and the bad reasons and it is important to develop an understanding about the specifics of the aircraft as an aspirant

- Read more: <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-rafalefighter-jets-india-specs-speedrange-6528893/>

### Ans-5(4)

All the options are correct

- This question is important for both Preliminary as well as mains
- The New Education Policy expands age group 6-14 years of mandatory schooling to 3-18 years of schooling. The NEP introduces hitherto uncovered three years of pre-schooling, age group of 3-6 years under the school curriculum. The new system will have 12 years of schooling with three years of Anganwadi/ pre-schooling.
- Higher Education Commission of India(HECI) will be set up as a single overarching umbrella body for entire higher education, excluding medical and legal education. Public and private higher education institutions will be governed by the same set of norms for regulation, accreditation and academic standards
- Higher Education Commission of India(HECI) will be set up as a single overarching umbrella body for entire higher education, excluding medical and legal education. Public and private higher education institutions will be governed by the same set of norms for regulation, accreditation and academic standard

**Ans-6(1)**

Lead poisoning is affecting one in three children worldwide, leading to heart disease and impairing their cognitive development, according to a study published by UNICEF in collaboration with Pure Earth, a New York-based non profit

B. Most children impacted by lead are from Africa and Asia. Many are also from Central and South America as well as Eastern Europe.

C. One of the most worrying sources of lead exposure is “unsound recycling of used lead-acid batteries (ULABs)”, says the report. Most of these are found in cars, trucks and other vehicles. D. The sources of childhood lead exposure include water from the use of leaded pipes, lead solder in food cans, and lead in spices, cosmetics, ayurvedic medicines, toys and other consumer products

**Ans-7(B)**

While USA on one hand is tightening norms and pushing for local population, Australia is seen as an interesting opportunity

- More than 38,000 Indians became Australian citizens in 2019-2020, a 60 per cent increase from the previous year and the largest diaspora group to be granted the country's citizenship.
- Out of the over 200,000 people who became Australian citizens in 2019-2020, 38,209 were Indians, the highest number on record, followed by 25,011 Britishers, 14,764 Chinese and 8821 Pakistanis.
- Read more: [https://www.business-standard.com/article/currentaffairs/with-over-38-000-indians-lead-in-getting-australian-citizenshipin-2019-20-120072900728\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/currentaffairs/with-over-38-000-indians-lead-in-getting-australian-citizenshipin-2019-20-120072900728_1.html)

**Ans-8(3)**

Both the statements are correct. Such important scientific developments are important from both Preliminary and Mains (Paper 3) point of view

- International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) is a collaboration of 35 nations launched in 1985. It is located in France.
- Aim: It aims to build the world's largest tokamak to prove the feasibility of fusion as a large-scale and carbon-free source of energy.
- The tokamak is an experimental machine designed to harness the energy of fusion. Inside a tokamak, the energy produced through the fusion of atoms is absorbed as heat in the walls of the vessel. Like a conventional power plant, a fusion power plant uses this heat to produce steam and then electricity by way of turbines and generators.
- Read about the government releases related to it:
- <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1642139> · [http://dae.gov.in/writereaddata/iter2020\\_message\\_pm\\_india\\_shri\\_narendra\\_modi.pdf](http://dae.gov.in/writereaddata/iter2020_message_pm_india_shri_narendra_modi.pdf)

**Ans-9(D)**

• The Bangladesh Government released its first list of verified news portals yesterday. Announcing this in Dhaka, Information Minister said, the registration of online news portals will be a continuous and ongoing process. He said it is just the beginning of the process. It may not have names of many well established online news portals but that does not mean that there is a negative report about these news portals. The reports about many of the news portals have not yet been received, said Dr. Mahmud. He said the names of the news portals for which No-objection certificates have been received by the government will be uploaded on the official website.

**Ans-10(C)**

It is a global awareness raising initiative to fight human trafficking and its impact on society. \

- It seeks to encourage involvement from governments, civil society, the corporate sector and individuals alike, to inspire action and help prevent this heinous crime.
- The Blue Heart is increasingly recognized as the international symbol against human trafficking, representing the sadness of those who are trafficked while reminding us of the cold-heartedness of those who buy & sell fellow human beings



**Ans-11(B)**

In Gujarat, India's first honey testing laboratory has been set up at the National Dairy Development Board in Anand district.

- Inaugurating the facility through electronic mode, Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said the new lab will test honey as per the norms specified by the food safety regulator FSSAI.
- The purity of honey, adulteration, chemical substances, residues, heavy metals or antibodies can be checked.
- News: <http://www.newsonair.com/News?title=Gujarat%3AIndia%E2%80%99s-first-honey-testing-laboratory-set-up-at-NDDB-inAnand-district&id=395681>

**Ans-12(3)**

Context: Places in news

It is a bridge over the river Ganges in Bihar, India, connecting Patna in the south to Hajipur in the north. Read more: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/patna/westernflank-of-gandhi-setu-reopens-for-traffic/article-show/77292155.cms>

Wikipedia information: Mahatma Gandhi Setu (also called Gandhi Setu or Ganga Setu) is a bridge over the river Ganges in Bihar, India, connecting Patna in the south to Hajipur in the north. Its length is 5,750 metres (18,860 ft) and it is the third-longest river bridge in India. It was inaugurated in May 1982 in a ceremony in Hajipur by the then prime minister, Indira Gandhi.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma\\_Gandhi\\_Setu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi_Setu)

**Ans-13(C)**

A whip is an official of a political party who acts as the party's 'enforcer' inside the legislative assembly or house of parliament.

- Parties appoint a senior member from among their House contingents to issue whips — this member is called a Chief Whip, and he/she is assisted by additional Whips.
- India inherited the concept of the whip from the British parliamentary system.
- Role of whips: They try to ensure that their fellow political party legislators attend voting sessions and vote according to their party's official policy.
- Context: Rajasthan Congress Chief whip Mahesh Joshi on Friday moved the Supreme Court against the High Court order asking the speaker to defer disqualification proceeding against sacked deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot and 18 MLAs, saying they indulged in the "grossest form of defection" by making "grave and sinister attempts" to topple the Ashok Gehlot government.
- <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/rajasthan-congress-chiefwhip-moves-sc-against-order-of-status-quo-in-disqualification-process-of-sachin-pilotmlas/articleshow/77287249.cms>

**Ans-14(B)**

The petition was filed by a resident of Idukki district of Kerala to lower the water level of Mullaperiyar dam to 130 feet saying there is a danger of earthquakes and floods in the area as monsoon progresses in the State <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/sc-to-hear-idukki-residentplea-to-lower-mullaperiyar-dam-level/article32238702.ece>

- Although the dam is located in Kerala, it is operated by Tamil Nadu following an 1886 lease indenture for 999 years (the Periyar Lake Lease Agreement) that was signed between the Maharaja of Travancore and the Secretary of State for India for the Periyar Irrigation works.
- Such dams/places which are often in news can be asked by UPSC and aspirants must keep their eyes open for such news items
- Read more about the issue with the dam: <https://www.drishtiias.com/daily-updates/daily-newsanalysis/mullaperiyar-dam>

**Ans-15(3)**

Both the statements are correct and such authentic statistics must be quoted to generate authenticity to your remarks in the question paper

II. According to CWC, around 123 reservoirs were monitored. There are 66.372 billion cubic metres of water currently available in the reservoirs. This is 39% of total live storage capacity of the reservoirs.

III. Capture more interesting insights: <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/water/india-s-reservoirsnow-have-155-more-water-than-last-yr-72471>

### Ans-16(3)

Context: Historic development and Places in news ii. The United Arab Emirates announced over the weekend the successful start up of its Barakah nuclear energy plant, the first in the Arab world and a significant step toward the country's goal of emissions-free electricity. iii. With the announcement Saturday, the UAE becomes the newest member of an exclusive club of 31 countries running nuclear power operations. It's also the first new country to launch a nuclear power plant in three decades, the last being China in 1990. iv. Read more: <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/08/03/uae-becomesfirst-arab-country-to-launch-local-nuclear-energy-program.html>

### Ans-17(I)

The scheme shall extend an incentive of 4% to 6% on incremental sales (over base year) of goods manufactured in India and covered under target segments, to eligible companies, for a period of five (5) years with financial year (FY) 2019-20 considered as the base year for calculation of incentives.

- Context: Global electronics giants such as Samsung, Pegatron, Flex, and Foxconn among others are looking to either set shop or expand their presence in India. These companies are in final stages of negotiations to benefit from the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology's (MeitY) production linked incentive (PLI) scheme for making mobile phones and certain other specified electronic components.
- According to the scheme, companies that make mobile phones which sell for Rs 15,000 or more will get an incentive of up to 6 per cent on incremental sales of all such mobile phones made in India
- Read more: <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/national-policy-onelectronics-production-linked-incentive-scheme-explained-6530777/>

### Ans-18(B)

National Transit Pass System (NTPS) will bring ease of business and expedite issuance of transit permits for timber, bamboo and other minor forest produce without physically going to forest offices. Through mobile application e-pass will be issued for transit of forest produce.

- Environment Minister virtually launched piloting of the National Transit Pass System at Indira Paryavaran Bhawan in Delhi. Speaking on the occasion, Mr Javadekar said the National Pass System enhances seamless movement of forest produce. The Minister said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has laid a lot of stress on the Ease of Movement.
- Read : <http://www.newsonair.com/Text-Bulletin-Details.aspx?id=34100>

### Ans-19(B)

• A snow leopard conservation centre will be set up in Uttarkashi forest division area, that will promote winter tourism in the state, officials said.

• The total number of snow leopards should be counted in the state, special efforts should be made to preserve and increase the number of snow leopards. In the last few years, the areas where snow leopards have been seen should be identified by the forest department by the cooperation of local people and military forces. These areas should be calculated by making grids

• The snow leopard is one of the rarest animals found in India. Inhabiting the higher reaches of Himalayas in the states of Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, it is difficult to sight them. Taking one step forward, the Uttarakhand government has decided to open India's first Snow Leopard Conservation Centre, to ensure the conservation of the rare species

• Read more: <https://www.scoopwhoop.com/news/indias-first-snow-leopardconservation-centre-to-open-in-uttarakhand/>

### Ans-20(3)

It is due to ongoing pandemic that such relief has been extended to tax payers

• The government on Wednesday extended the deadline for filing income tax returns for 2018-19 fiscal by two months till September 30.

“In view of the constraints due to the Covid pandemic & to further ease compliances for taxpayers, CBDT extends the due date for filing of Income Tax Returns for FY 2018-19 (AY 2019-20) from 31st July, 2020 to 30th September, 2020,” the Income Tax Department said in a tweet

#### Ans-21(D)

Australia will become first such country which will help its native media company to gain royalty under the royalty-style system. If everything goes well between the stakeholders it will become law later this year.

- Australia is moving to impose sweeping new rules that would require Facebook (FB) and Google (GOOGL) to pay media organizations for the use of their news content.
- Regulators released draft legislation that would let news publishers in the country negotiate compensation with the two tech companies for sharing or displaying their stories.
- The legislation will next undergo a public consultation phase, after which it will be finalized and put forward to Australian parliament, where lawmakers will vote on whether to pass it.
- <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/07/31/media/facebook-google-australia-mediaintl-hnk/index.html>

#### Ans-22(B)

Walmart-owned Flipkart said it supports over six lakh artisans, weavers and craftsmen across the country through its Samarth programme and is working on onboarding more such sellers to the platform.

- The Samarth programme was launched last year, wherein the e-commerce major had partnered with five non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to help artisans use the online marketplace to sell their products.
- Samarth supports the livelihood of over six lakh artisans, weavers and craftsmen through partnerships with NGOs and government entities, and provides the artisans an access to a pan-India customer base of more than 200 million, Flipkart said in a statement.
- Such initiatives and examples must be used in answer writing
- Read more: <https://www.livemint.com/companies/news/flipkart-supports-6-lakh-artisans-in-india-through-samarth-programme-11596212876732.html>

#### Ans-23(I)

This question is asked just because it was so much in news. In its pure form, ammonium nitrate is a white, crystalline chemical which is soluble in water

ii. In India, The Ammonium Nitrate Rules, 2012, under The Explosives Act, 1884, define ammonium nitrate as the “compound with formula  $\text{NH}_4\text{NO}_3$  including any mixture or compound having more than 45 per cent ammonium nitrate by weight including emulsions, suspensions, melts or gels but excluding emulsion or slurry explosives and non explosives emulsion matrix and fertilizers from which the ammonium nitrate cannot be separated”.

iii. Large quantities of stored ammonium nitrate are regarded as a major fire hazard, with multiple reported cases across the world. The explosion of large storage can happen primarily in two ways.

iv. One is by some type detonation or initiation because the storage comes in contact with explosive mixture. Second, the blast can result due to a fire which starts in the ammonium nitrate store because of the heat generated due to the oxidation process at large scale

#### Ans-24(I)

Context of question: The Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) has received a funding of Rs 455.02 crore for the construction of new academic buildings, hostels, and research centres, among others, under the Union ministry of human resources development (MHRD)'s higher education funding agency (HEFA).

- Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA) is a joint venture of MHRD Government of India and Canara Bank for financing creation of capital assets in premier educational institutions in India as part of rising 2022 HEFA's scope is greatly expanded to cover school education, educational institutes under Ministry of health etc.
- HEFA is registered under Section 8 [Not-for-profit] under the Companies Act 2013 as a Union Govt company and as Non-deposit taking NBFC (NBFC-ND-Type II) with RBI

- Read more: <https://hefa.co.in/about-us>

### Ans-25(2)

India has extended Line of Credit worth 18 million US dollars to the Government of Maldives for the expansion of fishing facilities at Maldives Industrial Fisheries Company (MIFCO).

ii. It is part of the 800 million US dollars line of credit offered by India with repayment tenor of 20 years and a 5-year moratorium. Indian High Commission in Male said fishing is deeply connected to the Maldivian way of life and is a key driver of the economy through exports

iii. News: <http://newsonair.com/News?title=India-extends-Line-ofCredit-worth-18-million-dollars-to-Maldives&id=396608>

### Ans-26(3)

Read more: <https://indianexpress.com/article/north-east-india/tripura/who-are-the-brus-two-teens-use-instagram-to-document-the-ancient-tribe-5695019/>

- Recognised by the Constitution of India as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) owing to their traditional life patterns (shifting cultivation, use of primitive tools, habitation in inaccessible areas), the Brus of Tripura — referred to as Reangs — have piqued anthropological interest over the years.
- While a few Bru tribals live in urban areas, a majority of the population (pegged at 2,34,000 according to a survey by the Bru Socio-Cultural Organisation in 2015) live in “deep forests and mountains” in rural areas
- Context of question: Three organisations representing the Bru community displaced from Mizoram have rejected the sites proposed by the Joint Movement Committee (JMC), an umbrella group of non-Brus in Tripura, for their resettlement <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/brus-reject-resettlement-sitesproposed-by-tripura-non-brus/article32275912.ece>

### Ans-27(C)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the ‘Rashtriya Swachhata Kendra’, an interactive experience centre on the Swachh Bharat Mission, in New Delhi and said that Swachh Bharat Mission or the cleanliness drive has been a big support in fight against coronavirus.

- A tribute to Mahatma Gandhi, the Rashtriya Swachhata Kendra (RSK) was first announced by the prime minister on April 10, 2017 on the occasion of the centenary celebrations of Gandhiji’s Champaran ‘satyagraha’.
- Read more: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/primeminister-narendra-modi-inaugurates-the-rashtriya-swachhatakendra/story-H5O1tfCA9uqwapSsLRCAvL.html>

### Ans-28(B)

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has formed a five member committee under the chairmanship of former ICICI Bank CEO KV Kamath to make recommendations on the financial parameters to be considered in the restructuring of loans impacted by the Covid 19 pandemic.

- Other members of the committee are former State Bank of India executive Diwakar Gupta, current Canara Bank chairman TN Manoharan, consultant Ashvin Parekh and Indian Banks’ Association (IBA) CEO Sunil Mehta who will also be a secretary to the committee. More members may be added to the committee if required, RBI said
- The Indian Banks’ Association (IBA) will function as the secretariat to the committee and the committee will be fully empowered to consult or invite any person it deems fit. (Will be covered in next question)
- <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/rbi-forms-fivemember-committee-under-kv-kamath-panel-to-recommend-parameters-forloan-restructuring/articleshow/77411332.cms>

### Ans-29(A)

- It is a mass national gathering that brings together representatives from the various ethnic, religious, and tribal communities in Afghanistan.
- It is a highly respected centuries-old consultative body that has been convened at times of national crisis or to settle national issues.
- According to the Afghan Constitution, a Loya Jirga is considered the highest expression of the Afghan people. It is not an official decision-making body and its decisions are not legally binding.

- However, the Loya Jirga's decision is seen as final, with the president and parliament expected to respect the ruling. Explained: <https://www.rferl.org/a/afghanistan-loya-jirga-explainer/25174483.html>
- Context: Recently, a three-day Loya Jirga-grand assembly has been called in Afghanistan to decide on freeing about 400 Taliban fighters convicted for serious crimes including murder and abductions
- UPSC can ask such bouncers and we have to be fully ready about such things being covered in the Indian newspapers · <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/afghan-jirga-approves-prisoner-release/article32310894.ece>

### Ans-30(B)

Post COVID-19, India gets ready to participate in the Russian Kavkaz 2020 strategic command-post exercise. All the bilateral and multilateral military exercises had been put on hold due to the global pandemic of COVID-19 and now their resumption is starting gradually.

- The Kavkaz 2020 - also referred to as Caucasus-2020 - is an exercise aimed at assessing the ability of the armed forces to ensure military security in Russia's southwest.
- The invitees also include China and Pakistan, apart from other member-states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation

### Ans-31(3)

- It was established in 1976 and has developed into a global network, research-driven and action-oriented, committed to delivering innovative and practical conservation solutions
- The TRAFFIC is governed by the TRAFFIC Committee, a steering group composed of members of TRAFFIC's partner organizations, WWF and IUCN.
- TRAFFIC also works in close co-operation with the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).
- Read more: · <https://www.traffic.org/about-us/our-organisation/>
- [https://www.wwfindia.org/about\\_wwf/enablers/traffic/about\\_traffic/](https://www.wwfindia.org/about_wwf/enablers/traffic/about_traffic/)

### Ans-32(C)

Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, presided over a review meeting with States/UTs on the "eSanjeevani" and "eSanjeevaniOPD" platforms as 1.5 lakh tele-consultations were completed on the telemedicine service platforms of the Health Ministry

II. In a short span of time since November 2019, tele-consultation by eSanjeevani and eSanjeevaniOPD have been implemented by 23 States (which covers 75% of the population) and other States are in the process of rolling it out.

III. This eSanjeevani platform has enabled two types of telemedicine services viz. Doctor-to-Doctor (eSanjeevani) and Patient-to-Doctor (eSanjeevani OPD) Tele-consultations.

IV. Read more: <https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=214483>

### Ans-33(1)

The Supreme Court on August 11, 2020 ruled that daughters are entitled to equal property rights even if they were not born at the time of the 2005 amendment to the Hindu Succession Act, 1956 or irrespective

ii. The apex court ruled that daughters would have equal coparcenary rights in Hindu Undivided Family (HUF) properties. This would hold irrespective of whether the father was alive or not at the time of the amendment.

iii. Explanation of the verdict: <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/reading-supremecourt-verdict-on-hindu-womens-inheritance-rights-6550767/>

### Ans-34(1)

With Saudi Arabia ending loan and oil supply to Pakistan, the decade-long friendship between the two countries has finally ended, reported Middle East Monitor

ii. This development came after Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi had given a blunt warning to Saudi Arabia-led Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) for not taking a stance against India over the Kashmir issue



iii. <https://www.livemint.com/news/world/no-loan-oil-supply-forpakistan-says-saudi-arabia-11597212952081.html>

### Ans-35(A)

A microwave device named 'Atulya' that can disinfect any premises in just 30 seconds, disintegrating COVID-19 virus was unveiled by Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Nitin Gadkari in Nagpur.

- Certified by the Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) and based on French and American standards, the device is 100 per cent Made in India and has been manufactured under the aegis of the MSME.

### Ans-36(1)

• Part of the Assam Accord that came at the culmination of a movement against immigration from Bangladesh, Clause 6 reads: "Constitutional, legislative and administrative safeguards, as may be appropriate, shall be provided to protect, preserve and promote the cultural, social, linguistic identity and heritage of the Assamese people."

• For recognition as citizens, the Accord sets March 24, 1971 as the cutoff. Former Chief Minister Prafulla Mahanta, one of the signatories to the 1985 Accord as then AASU president, explained to The Indian Express last year that immigrants up to the cutoff date would get all rights as Indian citizens. Therefore, he said, Clause 6 was inserted to safeguard the socio-political rights and culture of the "indigenous people of Assam".

• Read more (Article by Indian Express): <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-what-is-clause-6-of-assamaccord-6550486/>

### Ans-37(1)

The key component in an electric vehicle (EV) is the battery unit and the range of the vehicle is determined by its capacity and efficiency. However, it also constitutes 30%-40% of the total cost of the vehicle. In order to bring down prices and increase adoption, the Indian government has taken an important decision to promote the use of EVs in the country. Vehicles that don't come pre-fitted with batteries will be allowed to register.

ii. According to a statement by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, vehicles without batteries can be sold and registered based on the type approval certificate issued by the Test Agency. Further, there is no need to specify the Make/Type or any other details of the battery for the purpose of registration

iii. Read more: <https://www.livemint.com/auto-news/indian-govt-to-allowregistration-of-electric-vehicles-without-batteries-11597243630452.html>

### Ans-38(2)

Context: Places in news A study has flagged a high rate of deforestation in Papum Reserve Forest (RF), a major hornbill habitat in Arunachal Pradesh

- Papum Reserve Forest (RF) is an Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs) in Arunachal Pradesh.
- It is located between two IBAs, Itanagar Wildlife Sanctuary to the east and Pakke Wildlife Sanctuary to the west.
- Papum Reserve Forest forms part of the Eastern Himalayas Endemic Bird Area. A large part of the site is covered by Subtropical Dry Evergreen and Semievergreen Forests, while the higher areas are under Subtropical Broadleaf Hill Forest cover
- Read more: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/forest-cover-lossthreatens-hornbills-in-arunachal/article32339946.ece>

### Ans-39(3)

Aiming to boost surveillance capabilities against enemy warships operating in the Indian Ocean region, the Indian Navy has moved a proposal to urgently acquire 10 shipborne drones which can keep a close eye on activities of the adversaries.

ii. "A proposal has been moved in fast track mode by the Indian Navy before the Defence Ministry under which it plans to buy 10 Naval Shipborne Unmanned Aerial Systems for over ₹1,240 crores," Government sources told ANI

iii. <https://www.livemint.com/news/india/indian-navy-to-urgentlybuy-10-ship-based-drones-11597409699622.html>

### Ans-40(3)

The Indian Navy has set up a Naval Innovation and Indigenisation Organisation (NIIO) to bridge its technological gap through innovation and the involvement of both the academia and the industry.

- Launched by the Defence Minister, the Navy stated in its press release that the NIIO "puts in place dedicated structures for end-users to interact with academia and industry towards fostering innovation and indigenisation for self-reliance in defence in keeping with the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat."

### Ans-41(A)

Conceived just six months ago, the Centre will be launched in the first week of September.

- The KVIC has refurbished and converted a dilapidated school building into the training cum production center. The school building has been provided to KVIC by the education department of Arunachal Pradesh Government zero rent.
- Machinery like handlooms, Charkha, Silk reeling machines and warping drums have already arrived and installation of machines are in full swing. The first batch of 25 local artisans of Chullyu village has been selected to begin the training with.
- Link: <https://www.dailypioneer.com/2020/india/kvic-set-to-open-firstof-its-kind-training-cum-production-centre-of-silk-in-arunachalpradesh.html>

### Ans-42(3)

Lok Sabha has started a beginner-level course in French for the officials and staff of the Lok Sabha Secretariat at the Parliament House. As many as 57 officials registered for the course.

II. Inaugurating the course, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla said, knowledge of language is extremely relevant in today's interconnected world and is a necessary skill for success in different fields. Observing that language brings people together and helps improve their efficiency and skill, he said the languages enrich us and bring people together.

III. Read more: <http://newsonair.com/News?title=Lok-Sabha-startsbeginner-level-course-in-French&id=397079>

IV. This is an example of how globalization affects the world

### Ans-43(1)

Context: A recent study from Pune-based Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) has stated that corals found in the North Indian Ocean had potential to provide new insights into the onset and withdrawal of the Indian monsoon until a few hundred years ago

ii. Sea Surface Temperature (SST) is one of the many vital factors that governs the Indian monsoon. In this sense, SST regulates the moisture production in the sea and affects the wind circulation pattern causing rainfall during the monsoon season.

iii. Scientists say that in most oceans around the world, the salinity of the sea water increases with an increase in SST. That is, warmer conditions lead to a higher rate of evaporation of seawater, thus leaving behind larger concentrations of salt in the sea. This is commonly observed during summers. But, in case of waters over the North Indian Ocean, especially in the Lakshadweep Sea, there was a departure in this trend.

### Ans-44(1)

• The US suffered a humiliating defeat at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) when only one country joined it to vote in favor for a proposal to indefinitely extend an arms embargo on Iran, which is set to expire on October 18. Eleven members on the 15-member body, including Washington's strongest allies, such as France, Germany and the UK, abstained, despite pressure from the Trump administration.

• Although the US is pushing hard for an extension of the UN arms embargo on Iran, it has gained little support from the international community. Its European allies, in particular, also disagree with the US plan. The embarrassing defeat at the UNSC has laid bare the US' deepening global isolation on Iran.

### Ans-45(1)

A high-level ministerial panel under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council has favoured an e-way bill for intra-state movement of gold. The move will help track the movement of gold to help plug tax evasion and smuggling amid rising prices and subdued GST collections. While the idea of a countrywide introduction was rejected on feasibility grounds, willing states may be allowed to introduce it themselves.

B. The group of ministers (GoM) on e-way bill for gold movement, headed by Kerala finance minister, also discussed the idea of introducing e-invoicing for gold transactions, which will be further discussed in the next meeting.

C. As of now gold is exempt from e-way bill

D. Read more: [https://www.business-standard.com/article/economypolicy/gom-favours-e-way-bill-for-intra-state-gold-movement-discusses-einvoicing-120081500031\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/economypolicy/gom-favours-e-way-bill-for-intra-state-gold-movement-discusses-einvoicing-120081500031_1.html)

### Ans-46(2)

Context: Historical achievements and Places in news

- Indian Railways is constructing the world's tallest pier bridge in Manipur. The bridge which is being constructed across river Ijai near Noney is an engineering marvel because the tallest pier height will be 141 meter.
- It will surpass the existing record of 139 meter of Mala - Rijeka viaduct, Montenegro in Europe. The Manipur bridge is located at the hilly terrain of Marangching village in Noney district, about 65 km west of Imphal. The total estimated cost of the bridge is 280 crore rupees, and it will be completed by March 2022.
- The bridge is a part of Jiribam-Tupul-Imphal new BG line project. The total length of the bridge will be 703 meter. The piers of the bridge are constructed using hydraulic augers, the tall piers needed specially designed "slip-form technique" to ensure efficient and continual construction.
- <http://newsonair.com/Main-News-Details.aspx?id=397469>

### Ans-47(2)

The crater is a circular bowl-shaped crater on Mare Serenitatis in the north east quadrant of moon. It is 250 to 300 kilometres east of this is where Apollo 17 and Luna 21 Missions had landed

- Read more: <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/science/isro-releases-sarabhai-crater-images-to-mark-birth-centenary-of-father-of-indian-space-programme/article32357976.ece>

### Ans-48(C)

Every time the government offers newer opportunities for mining coal, it targets denser forests.

- Since 2015, of the 49 blocks cleared for coal mining, nine were in NoGo areas (No-Go refers to "unfragmented forest landscapes having a gross forest coverage  $\geq 30$  per cent and weighted forest coverage  $\geq 10$  per cent").
- In 2020, of the 41 blocks put up for auction, 21 feature in the original No-Go list
- Read about the raised environment concern: <https://www.cseindia.org/do-we-really-need-to-mine-more-coaland-cut-more-forests--10318>

### Ans-49(1)

The Delhi High Court slammed the Animal Welfare Board of India for not performing a systematic survey of the animal circuses and directed them again to conduct a physical survey themselves or send the State Animal Husbandry Boards at the registered circuses.

- A divisional bench of Justices Vipin Saghi and Rajnish Bhatnagar, while hearing the matter through video conferencing, noted that as per the affidavit only seven out of 19 circuses registered had stated that their animals are kept in good condition and are not inclined towards surrendering their animals.
- The petition has been filed by the Federation for Indian Animal Protection Organizations (FIAPO) seeking directions to rescue the animals in circuses amid the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and further challenging section 21- 27 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, alleging that they permit exhibition and training of animals with regards to circuses, seeking a ban on the use of animals in circuses

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