



JULY 2019

IASBABA'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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PREFACE

With the present shift in examination pattern of UPSC Civil Services Examination, 'General Studies – II and General Studies III' can safely be replaced with 'Current Affairs'. Moreover, following the recent trend of UPSC, almost all the questions are issue-based rather than news-based. Therefore, the right approach to preparation is to prepare issues, rather than just reading news.

Taking this into account, our website www.iasbaba.com will cover current affairs focusing more on 'issues' on a daily basis. This will help you pick up relevant news items of the day from various national dailies such as The Hindu, Indian Express, Business Standard, LiveMint, Business Line and other important Online sources. Over time, some of these news items will become important issues.

UPSC has the knack of picking such issues and asking general opinion based questions. Answering such questions will require general awareness and an overall understanding of the issue. Therefore, we intend to create the right understanding among aspirants – 'How to cover these issues?'

This is the 50th edition of IASbaba's Monthly Magazine. This edition covers all important issues that were in news in the month of **JULY 2019** which can be accessed from <https://iasbaba.com/current-affairs-for-ias-upsc-exams/>

VALUE ADDITIONS FROM IASBABA

- **Must Read and Connecting the dots.**
- **Also, we have introduced Prelim and mains focused snippets and Test Your Knowledge (Prelims MCQs based on daily current affairs) which shall guide you for better revision.**
- **'Must Read' section**, will give you important links to be read from exam perspective. This will make sure that, you don't miss out on any important news/editorials from various newspapers on daily basis.
- Under each news article, **'Connecting the dots'** facilitates your thinking to connect and ponder over various aspects of an issue. Basically, it helps you in understanding an issue from multi-dimensional view-point. You will understand its importance while giving Mains or Interview.

Must Read Articles: We have not included them in the magazine. Those following DNA on daily basis may follow it- <https://iasbaba.com/current-affairs-for-ias-upsc-exams/>

"Tell my mistakes to me not to others, because these are to be corrected by me, not by them."

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HISTORY/CULTURE/GEOGRAPHY

A demographic window of opportunity

Background

According to the UN Report released recently, India is expected to overtake China as the most populous country by 2027. In this regard, this article discusses as to how the Indian Government must manage its human resources efficiently.

How to reduce the Population Growth rate?

- Punitive actions such as such as restriction on maternity leave, disqualification from panchayat elections for more than 2 children in some states etc. cannot lead to decrease in population growth rate. Such disincentives are not strong enough to overcome the desire for children as the people who desired larger families go ahead in spite of consequences.
- There are sharp differences in the Total Fertility rate (TFR) among the different socio-economic groups in India.
- The TFR of the poorest women was 3.2 as compared to TFR of 1.5 of richer women.
- The lower TFR among the richer households is because of their desire to invest in their children's education and future prospects that seems to drive people to stop at one child. Richer individuals see greater potential for ensuring admission to good colleges and better jobs for their children, inspiring them to limit their family size.
- Thus, we must focus on reducing the TFR among the poorer households by improving the access to education and ensuring better jobs for their children. Such efforts have to be substantiated by provision of contraceptive services.

Integrating Population policy into Development Policies

- The 15th Finance Commission has planned to use the 2011 census data for the distribution of taxes among the states. However, it has been opposed by the Southern states since such a policy would penalize them for taking efforts to reduce the population and it would implicitly reward the populous states which may not have implemented the population control measures strictly.

Continuing with the 1971 census-based allocation would be mistake on the basis of following grounds:

- Varying Stages of Demographic Transition: Different states in India are at different stages of demographic transition. States such as Kerala and TN are already past their demographic dividend stage, while in next 20 years states such as Karnataka would have

window of opportunity. States such as UP and Bihar are expected to have peak in their demographic dividend much later.

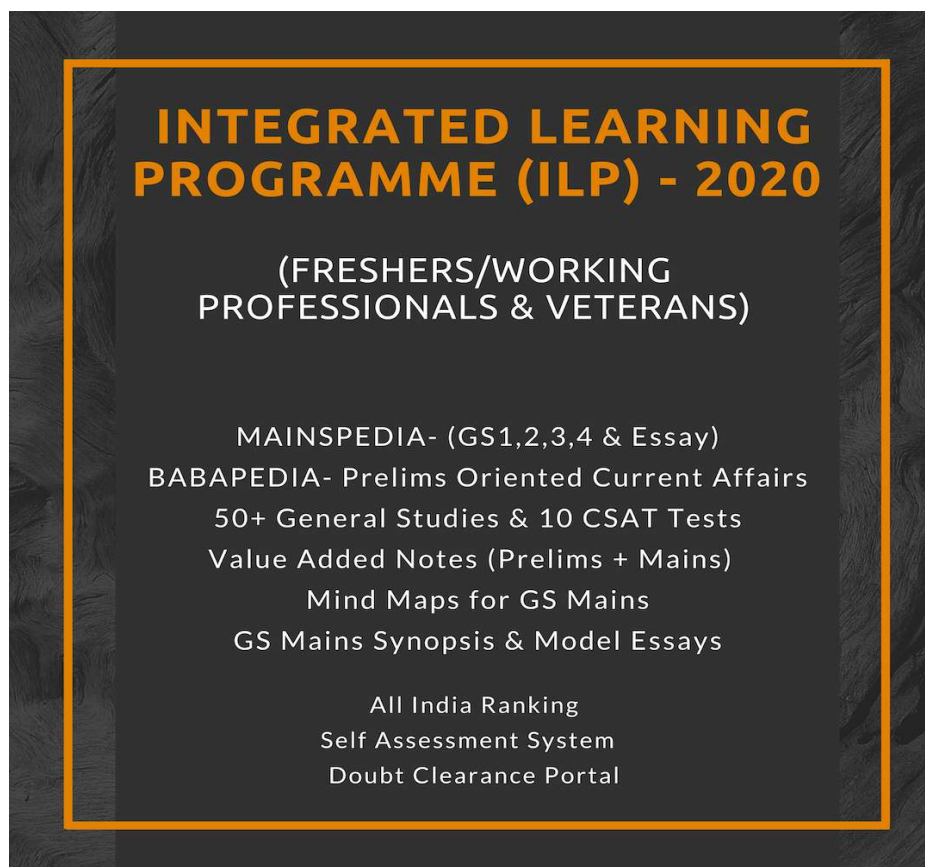
- The states with higher share of workers would be able to contribute to higher revenue to the centre and such revenue can in turn be used to support the states with higher share of ageing population. For example, workers in Haryana would be able to support ageing population of Kerala in future.

Conclusion

- Presently, the states with higher fertility rates and higher population growth need to be supported by the Centre so as to enhance human capital formation in the form of Education, health etc. By sticking to 1971 census, we would not be able to address the demands of such states.

Connecting the dots:

- In India, investing in the laggard States will ensure their role as being the greatest contributors of the future. Comment in context of demographic differences.



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POLITY/GOVERNANCE

[EWS quota: SC to hear pleas for Constitution Bench](#)

Part of: Main GS Paper II– Indian Polity – Constitution and Amendment; Fundamental Rights

In News:

- The Supreme Court has agreed to hear plea to have a Constitution Bench to examine the validity of a constitutional amendment providing 10% economic reservation in government jobs and educational institutions.
- The Constitution (103rd Amendment) Act provides for 10% reservation in government jobs and educational institutions for the economically weaker section in the unreserved category.
- The Act amends Article 15 and 16 to provide for reservation based on economic backwardness.

Do you know?

- The petitioner has said that economic reservation violated the 50% reservation ceiling limit fixed by a nine-judge Bench in the Indra Sawhney case. Further, the 1992 judgment had barred reservation solely on economic criterion.
- The petitioner has also said that the bill violates the basic feature of the Constitution as reservation on economic grounds cannot be limited to the general category.
- The Centre has defended the amendment by stating that the newly inserted provisions are in conformity with the principle of affirmative action.
- The government said that the argument that EWS quota will breach 50% limit of reservation is not true as this limit imposed by the Supreme Court in Indira Sawhney case is not applicable after constitution amendment.
- The Centre also negates the petitioners argument that reservation cannot be provided only on the basis of economic criteria.
- It highlighted that several Committees have been set up wherein quantifiable data has been collected highlighting the need for having reservation for the economically weaker sections of the society.

[U.P. move to shift 17 OBCs to SC list 'unconstitutional'](#)

Part of Prelims and mains GS II constitution and governance

In news

- The Uttar Pradesh government decided to relist 17 OBCs (Other Backward Classes) in the Schedule Caste list.
- Union Ministry for Social Justice and Empowerment opposed the move of UP government stating it as unconstitutional.
- Under Article 341 sub clause (2) of the Constitution, the power to make changes in the SC list lay only with Parliament.
- Even the President of India does not have the power to tinker, alter or make changes in the list.

[Soon, read Supreme Court judgments in your language](#)**Part of:** Prelims and Mains GS II - Judiciary**In news**

- In a novel measure, the Supreme Court will translate its judgments into all vernacular languages for the benefit of the public and litigants across the length and breadth of the country.
- The app, similar to Google's text translation, is likely to be launched in a single phase and cover all vernacular languages.
- The project included not only translating the apex court judgments into Hindi and other vernacular languages but also to provide summaries of the apex court's verdicts.
- This will also benefit litigants, who after fighting their cases for years, were left unable to read the judgments in their own cases for the sole reason that they did not know English.

[Odisha plans scheme for witness protection](#)**Part of** Prelims and mains GS II Judiciary**In news**

- The Odisha government has come up with a special 'Witness Protection Scheme' to provide security to witnesses facing threat during the course of a legal battle.
- According to the notification, a district-level standing committee, chaired by a district and sessions judge, with the district police head as its member and the head of the prosecution in the district as its member secretary, will take a call on the need for protection.

Procedure Analysis and report

- The district police chief will submit a report with regard to the seriousness and credibility of the threat to the witness or his/her family members if the person applies in a prescribed form.
- The report will detail the nature of the threat to the witness or his/her family members, their reputation or property.
- Besides, the intent and motive of the person issuing the threat and the resources available with him/her to execute it will figure in the analysis.
- The threat analysis report, prepared with “full confidentiality”, will reach the competent authority “within five working days of its order for inquiry”.
- Based on the report, the authority will pass an order for protection of identity of the witness.
- The Witness Protection Cell will then ensure that the identities of the witness and his/her family members, including names, parentage, occupation, address and digital footprints, are fully protected.
- Provision of relocation of the witness to a safer place has also been made in the scheme.
- In appropriate cases, where there is a request from the witness for change of identity, based on the threat analysis report, a decision can be taken to confer a new identity upon the witness through a competent authority.

Dedicated cell and fund

- A dedicated cell of the State police or Central police agencies will be assigned with the duty of implementing the witness protection order.
- The ‘Witness Protection Fund’ proposed to be created will bear the expenses incurred during the implementation of the protection order.
- In case the witness has lodged a false complaint, the State home department could initiate proceedings for recovery of the expenditure from the applicant.

[Crimes that India’s statute books have failed to define](#)

Introduction

While pronouncing the judgment in **State v. Sajjan Kumar (2018)**, Delhi high court expressed with grief that neither ‘crimes against humanity’ nor ‘genocide’ has been made part of India’s criminal law. It is a lacuna that needs to be addressed urgently.

Crimes left out

- Crimes against humanity like genocide or mass killing of people which are usually engineered by political actors with the assistance of the law enforcement agencies. Eg 1984 Sikh genocide.
- Internationally such crimes are dealt with under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC). They are defined as offences such as murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation, torture, imprisonment and rape committed as a part of “widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack”.
- Since India is not a part of the Rome statute it is under no obligation at present to enact a separate legislation dealing with CAH.
- India has ratified the Genocide Convention (1948), yet has not enacted it in domestic legislation.

Reasons for reluctance

- India did not become a party in the negotiation process on a separate Convention on CAH, which started in 2014, because the convention adopted the same definition of CAH as provided in the Rome Statute.
- The Indian representatives at the International Law Commission (ILC) have stated that the draft articles should not conflict with or duplicate the existing treaty regimes.
- India had objected to the definition of CAH during negotiations of the Rome Statute on three grounds.

Three grounds for rejecting Rome statute

- First, India was not in favour of using ‘widespread or systematic’ as one of the conditions. It wanted it should be ‘widespread and systematic’, because it would require a higher threshold of proof.
- Second, India wanted a distinction to be made between international and internal armed conflicts. This was probably because its internal conflicts with naxals and other non-state actors in places like Kashmir and the Northeast could fall under the scope of CAH.
- Thirdly, India did not want the inclusion of enforced disappearance of persons under CAH. Though India is a signatory to the UN International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances, it has not yet ratified it. Hence including it in convention would as it would put the country under an obligation to criminalise it through domestic legislation.

Conclusion

- India’s missing voice at the ILC does not go well with its claim of respect for an international rules-based order.

- Turning a blind eye to the mass crimes taking place in its territory and shielding the perpetrators reflect poorly on India's status as a democracy.
- It would be advisable for India to show political will and constructively engage with the ILC, which would also, in the process, address the shortcomings in the domestic criminal justice system.

Connecting the dots:

- Neither 'crimes against humanity' nor 'genocide' has been made part of India's criminal law, a lacuna that needs to be addressed urgently. Comment.

A regrettable conviction

Background:

The conviction of prominent pro-LTTE politician Vaiko on the charge of sedition, based on a typically impassioned speech he had made in Chennai a decade ago, is a worrying development. Even though Section 124A, the IPC section that makes sedition an offence, attracts either a three-year term or imprisonment for life, the trial court sentenced him to a somewhat lenient one-year jail term.

Sedition has been defined in Indian Penal Code under section 124A:

Whoever, by words, either spoken or written, or by signs, or by visible representation, or otherwise, brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts to excite disaffection towards the Government established by law, shall be punished with imprisonment for life, to which fine may be added, or with imprisonment which may extend to three years, to which fine may be added, or with fine.

Article 19:

It guarantees freedom of speech and expression subject to reasonable limitations under Article 19(2) on the grounds of,

- In the interests of the sovereignty and integrity of India,
- The security of the State,
- Friendly relations with foreign States,
- Public order, decency or morality or
- In relation to contempt of court,
- Defamation or

- Incitement to an offence

Section 124A should be scrapped

- There is greater recognition now than in the past that Section 124A is neither relevant nor needed today.
- The Law Commission released a consultation paper highlighting arguments for its reconsideration.
- There is a body of opinion that a modern democracy does not need a free speech restriction based on political concepts such as disloyalty and disaffection towards the state.
- Britain, which introduced the offence of sedition in India in 1870 to check the use of speech and writing to criticise its colonial administration, has abolished it.

Conclusion:

In recent years, there has been an alarming rise in sedition charges being used to quell political dissent. In a modern democracy like India, there is no need of restrictions on freedom of speech based on political concepts.

Connecting the dots:

- What do you understand by sedition? Critically comment on the way section 124a is being used politically.

Single tribunal to hear water disputes

Part of Prelims and mains GS II interstate relations and governance

In news

- The Union Cabinet has approved the Inter-State River Water Disputes (Amendment) Bill, 2019 that will help adjudicate disputes relating to waters of inter-State rivers and river valleys.
- The Bill seeks to amend the Inter State River Water Disputes Act, 1956 to streamline the adjudication of inter-State river water disputes.

Need to amend 1956 Act

- There are about a dozen tribunals that now exist to resolve disputes among States on sharing water from rivers common to them.

- The standalone tribunal so envisaged will have a permanent establishment, office space and infrastructure so as to obviate with the need to set up a separate tribunal for each water dispute - a time consuming process.
- The Bill can also affect the composition of the members of various tribunals, and has a provision to have a technical expert as the head of the tribunal.
- Currently all tribunals are staffed by members of the judiciary, nominated by the Chief Justice.

Adjudication process

- A key feature of the Bill is the constitution of a single tribunal with different Benches, and the setting of strict timelines for adjudication.
- The Bill also proposes a Dispute Resolution Committee set up by the Central Government for amicably resolving inter-State water disputes within 18 months.
- Any dispute that cannot be settled by negotiations would be referred to the tribunal for its adjudication.
- The dispute so referred to the tribunal shall be assigned by the chairperson of the tribunal to a Bench of the tribunal for adjudication.

Single tribunal to settle inter-state water disputes

Context:

- The Inter-State River Water Disputes (Amendment) Bill, 2019, which seeks to amend the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956, proposes setting up of a Central tribunal.

Concerns

- Setting up a tribunal, and awarding of the case, can take anything between six and 20 years
- There are nine tribunals. Four tribunals took 10-28 years to deliver their awards. There is no time-frame to adjudicate disputes, and tribunals are extended indefinitely.

Inter- state river water disputes:

The Inter-State River Water Disputes are one of the most contiguous issues in the Indian federalism today. In extreme cases, it may hamper the relationship between the different states.

India's Federal Water Institutions

The relevant provisions of the Indian Constitution are

- **Entry 17 of State List** deals with water i.e. water supply, irrigation, canal, drainage, embankments, water storage and water power.

- **Entry 56 of Union List** empowers the Union Government for the regulation and development of inter-state rivers and river valleys to the extent declared by Parliament to be expedient in the public interest.

According to **Article 262**, in case of disputes relating to waters:

- Parliament may by law provide for the adjudication of any dispute or complaint with respect to the use, distribution or control of the waters of, or in, any inter-State river or river valley.
- Parliament may, by law provide that neither the Supreme Court nor any other court shall exercise jurisdiction in respect of any such dispute or complaint as mentioned above.

Parliament has enacted two laws according to Article 262:

1) River Board Act, 1956

- The purpose of this Act was to enable the Union Government to create Boards for Interstate Rivers and river valleys in consultation with State Governments. The objective of Boards is to advise on the inter-state basin to prepare development scheme and to prevent the emergence of conflicts.

Note: Till date, no river board as per above Act has been created.

2) Inter-State Water Dispute Act, 1956

- Provisions of the Act: In case, if a particular state or states approach to Union Government for the constitution of the tribunal:
- Central Government should try to resolve the matter by consultation among the aggrieved states.
- In case, if it does not work, then it may constitute the tribunal.

Note: Supreme Court shall not question the Award or formula given by tribunal but it can question the working of the tribunal

Mechanism of Inter-State River Water Disputes Resolution

The resolution of water dispute is governed by the Inter-State Water Disputes Act, 1956.

- According to its provisions, if a State Government makes a request regarding any water dispute and the Central Government is of opinion that the water dispute cannot be settled by negotiations, then a Water Disputes Tribunal is constituted for the adjudication of the water dispute.
- The act was amended in 2002, to include the major recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission.

- The amendments mandated a one year time frame to setup the water disputes tribunal and also a 3 year time frame to give a decision

Major interstate river water disputes

| River (s) | States |
|---------------|--|
| Ravi and Beas | Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan |
| Narmada | Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan |
| Krishna | Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Telangana |
| Vamsadhara | Andhra Pradesh & Odisha |
| Cauvery | Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry |
| Godavari | Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha |
| Mahanadi | Chhattisgarh, Odisha |
| Mahadayi | Goa, Maharashtra, Karnataka |
| Periyar | Tamil Nadu, Kerala |

Issues with the Inter State River Water Dispute Act, 1956

- Under this Act, a separate Tribunal has to be established for each dispute. There are eight inter-state water dispute tribunals, including the Ravi and Beas Waters Tribunal and Krishna River Water Dispute Tribunal.
- Currently there is no time limit for adjudication or publication of reports.
- Only three of the eight tribunals have actually given awards accepted by the states.
- Tribunals like those on the Cauvery and Ravi Beas have been in existence for over 26 and 30 years respectively without any award.
- There is no upper age limit for the chairman or the members.
- The disputes' resolution generally has not been effective- Disputes have recurred, there have been long delays in adjudication and States have not complied with verdicts of tribunals.

Delays in resolving the water disputes

Extreme delays have been a very costly feature of the process of resolving inter-state water disputes in India. There have **been three components or dimensions of delay.**

- There has been **extreme delay in constituting tribunals .For example:** In the case of Cauvery dispute, two of the basin states, Tamil Nadu and Kerala had asked for reference to a tribunal back in the 1970s. The tribunal was constituted only in 1990, after the Supreme Court mediated

- Tribunals have taken **long periods of time to give their awards. For example** :It took nine years from reference in the case of the Narmada Tribunal, four years in the case of the Krishna Tribunal and ten years in the case of the Godavari Tribunal.
- There have been **delays in notifying the orders of tribunals in the Government of India's official gazette**; this has resulted in delays and uncertainty in enforcement. **For example**: The process took three years in the case of the Krishna Award and one year in the case of the Godavari Award. These delays naturally tend to complicate the dispute settlement process

Provisions of the Inter-State River Water Disputes(amendment bill)2019:

- The new Bill proposes to reduce the time it takes to constitute a tribunal by forming a permanent agency, comprising benches that will be permitted to hear more than one dispute.
- The total time period for adjudication of a water dispute by the Tribunal has been fixed at a maximum of four-and-a-half years.
- The decision of the Bench of the Tribunal shall be final and binding on the states with no requirement of the publication in the Official Gazette.

Conclusion

- Current Indian water-dispute settlement mechanisms are ambiguous and opaque.
- A cooperative bargaining framework suggests that water can be shared efficiently, with compensating transfers as necessary, if initial water rights are well-defined, and if institutions to facilitate and implement cooperative agreements are in place.
- Delay in the dimension of agreement over water can encourage inefficient, non-cooperative investments in dams, irrigation, etc.

Connecting the Dots:

- 1) Can the setting up of a single tribunal help in resolving river water sharing issues? Discuss.
- 2) Inter-state river water disputes have remained a contentious issue post-independence. Can you suggest few measures to address those?
- 3) Is politicisation of inter-state water disputes contributing to change in tribunals' functioning? Give your opinions
- 4) Inter-State River Water Disputes in India: Is it time for a new mechanism rather than tribunals? Elucidate

[Inter-state water cooperation](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains GS- II - issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure.

In News

- Punjab will reline its Ferozepur feeder for the **Indira Gandhi Canal (IGC)** system, so as to increase its water carrying capacity

Do you know?

- IGC previously known as the Rajasthan Canal aims to bring Himalayan rivers (Sutlej & Beas) flowing in Punjab to arid regions of Rajasthan
- IGC is the longest canal in India which traverses through states of Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan
- IGC is considered as a major step in reclaiming the Thar Desert and checking desertification of fertile areas
- However, excessive irrigation and intensive agriculture have caused new environmental problems like water-logging caused by increased seepage from canal and increase in salinity of ground water.

[Can't be pushed into a decision: Speaker](#)

Part of Prelims and mains GS II structure and functions of State assemblies

In news

- In the context of ongoing ruckus in Karnataka assembly, the Supreme Court asked Karnataka Speaker K.R. Ramesh Kumar to meet 10 rebel legislators from the Congress and the Janata Dal (Secular) and take a decision on their resignations.
- Mr. Ramesh Kumar insisted that he had a responsibility to understand whether the resignations were genuine and voluntary, as prescribed in the Constitution.
- Mr. Ramesh Kumar confirmed that all the 10 fresh resignation letters tendered by the rebel legislators were in accordance with the Rules and Procedure of Conduct of Business in the Assembly.

Do you know?**Article 190 (3)(b)**

If a member of a House of the Legislature of a State, resigns his seat by writing under his hand addressed to the Speaker or the Chairman, and his resignation is accepted by the Speaker or the Chairman, his seat shall thereupon become vacant: Provided that in the case of such resignation the Speaker or the Chairman is satisfied that such resignation is not voluntary or genuine.

Karnataka conundrum: Resignation, Disqualification and defection

Introduction

- In the backdrop of the ongoing crisis in Karnataka, Supreme Court ordered the Speaker of Karnataka to not to decide the issue of MLAs' resignation or disqualification.
- It was argued in court that "the rebel MLAs are trying to avoid disqualification by tendering resignations."
- This is surprising, as the penalty for defection is loss of legislative office.
- Quitting the current post before joining another party is a legal and moral obligation.

Disqualification vs Resignation

- A disqualified member cannot become a Minister without getting elected again, whereas one who resigns can be inducted into an alternative Cabinet without being a member.
- Accepting a resignation is a simple function of being satisfied if it is voluntary, while disqualification is decided on evidence and inquiry.
- Converting resignation into a disqualification matter is an attempt to deny a member's right to quit his seat in the legislature before joining another party, even if the crossing-over is a politically expedient measure.

Role of Speaker

- The Speaker already enjoys extraordinary powers under the Constitution.
- In addition to immunity from judicial scrutiny for legislative matters, such as whether a Bill is a money bill, presiding officers get to decide whether a member has incurred disqualification under the anti-defection law.
- Though the decision is subject to judicial review, many Speakers have evaded judicial scrutiny by merely not acting on disqualification matters.
- The question whether the Speaker's inaction can be challenged in court is pending before another Constitution Bench.
- Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu have instances of Speakers not acting on disqualification questions for years.

Do you know?

What is the anti-defection law?

- Aaya Ram Gaya Ram was a phrase that became popular in Indian politics after a Haryana MLA Gaya Lal changed his party thrice within the same day in 1967.

- The anti-defection law sought to prevent such political defections which may be due to reward of office or other similar considerations.
- The Tenth Schedule was inserted in the Constitution in 1985.

Tenth schedule

- It lays down the process by which legislators may be disqualified on grounds of defection by the Presiding Officer of a legislature based on a petition by any other member of the House.
- A legislator is deemed to have defected if he either voluntarily gives up the membership of his party or disobeys the directives of the party leadership on a vote.
- This implies that a legislator defying (abstaining or voting against) the party whip on any issue can lose his membership of the House. The law applies to both Parliament and state assemblies.

Are there any exceptions under the law?

- The law allows a party to merge with or into another party provided that at least two-thirds of its legislators are in favour of the merger.
- In such a scenario, neither the members who decide to merge, nor the ones who stay with the original party will face disqualification.

Connecting the dots:

- The anti-defection law and issuance of whips by political parties curtail the freedom of independence of mps. Critically analyse.

[Karnataka crisis: What's a 'whip', and what does it do?](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains II – Indian Polity; Parliament - Whip

In news:

- Amid a looming trust vote in the Karnataka Assembly, former chief minister Siddaramaiah appealed to postpone the motion of confidence as the Supreme Court's decision did not shed light on his rights to issue a whip.

What is a whip?

- A whip in parliamentary parlance is a written order that party members be present for an important vote, or that they vote only in a particular way.
- The term is derived from the old British practice of “whipping in” lawmakers to follow the party line.

- In India all parties can issue a whip to their members.
- 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.

Do you know?

- The office of 'whip', on the other hand, is mentioned neither in the Constitution of India nor in the Rules of the House nor in a Parliamentary Statute. It is based on the conventions of the parliamentary government.
- Every political party, whether ruling or Opposition has its own whip in the Parliament. He is appointed by the political party to serve as an assistant floor leader.
- He is charged with the responsibility of ensuring the attendance of his party members in large numbers and securing their support in favour of or against a particular issue.
- He regulates and monitors their behaviour in the Parliament. The members are supposed to follow the directives given by the whip. Otherwise, disciplinary action can be taken.

Kinds of whips

A whip can be classified into three types, based on the number of times it has been underlined.

One-line whip

- A one-line whip, which is underlined once, is issued by the party to inform its members of an important vote in the pipeline, so that a quorum can be established. (A quorum is the minimum number of legislators that need to be present do that a vote can be held.)
- A one-line whip allows the legislators to abstain from voting if they decide to go against the party line. However, they cannot, under any circumstance, vote against the party.

Two-line whip

- A two-line whip, which is underlined twice, demands that party members be present in the House at the time of voting.
- Abstention from voting, in this case, invites more scrutiny from party's high command as compared to a one-line whip.

Three-line whip

- A three-line whip, which is underlined thrice, is the gravest of the whips.
- This places the party members under an obligation to toe the party line and is usually employed when critical bills are tabled in the House or during a motion of no-confidence.

What happens if a legislator does not follow the whip?

- Defying a three-line whip can not only lead to expulsion of the member from the party, but also risk his/her membership in the House.

- Under the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution of India, the Speaker of the House can disqualify a member who goes against the party line under the anti-defection law.
- The only exception is when more than one-third members decide to vote against the directive.

The limits of anti-defection

Concerns:

- The prolonged political crisis in Karnataka has demonstrated the ways in which the nearly 35-year-old anti-defection law can be used and abused.

Context

- The political crisis that began in Karnataka with the resignation of 15 MLAs that took five days and multiple missed deadlines to be put to vote
- This underscored the tortuous working of India's anti-defection law and threw up a range of associated legal and constitutional questions.
- The incident calls for an interpretation of the three provisions of the Constitution: **Article 190 (vacation of seats), Article 164 (1B), and the Xth schedule of the Constitution.**

Anti-defection law:

- The seeds of the anti-defection law were sown after the general elections in 1967.
- Anti-defection provisions in India were first introduced in 1985 through the 52nd amendment to the Constitution.
- It lays down the process by which legislators may be disqualified on grounds of defection by the Presiding Officer of a legislature based on a petition by any other member of the House.
- The practice so far is that courts do not interfere until a decision regarding disqualification is taken
- The anti-defection law does not specify a timeframe for Speakers to decide on defection proceedings.
- When the politics demanded, Speakers were either quick to pass judgment on defection proceedings or delayed acting on them for years on end.

Grounds of disqualification under Anti-Defection law:

- A legislator is deemed to have defected if he either voluntarily gives up the membership of his party or disobeys the directives of the party leadership on a vote. This implies that

a legislator defying (abstaining or voting against) the party whip on any issue can lose his membership of the House. The law applies to both Parliament and state assemblies.

Exceptions under the law:

- Legislators may change their party without the risk of disqualification in certain circumstances.
- The law allows a party to merge with or into another party provided that at least two-thirds of its legislators are in favour of the merger

The amendment, by which the Tenth Schedule was inserted in the Constitution, did three broad things.

- **Firstly**, it made legislators liable to be penalised for their conduct both inside (voting against the whip of the party) and outside (making speeches, etc.) the legislature — the penalty being the loss of their seats in Parliament or the state legislatures.
- **Secondly**, it protected legislators from disqualification in cases where there was a split (with 1/3rd of members splitting) or merger (with 2/3rds of members merging) of a legislature party with another political party.
- **Thirdly**, it made the Presiding Officer of the concerned legislature the sole arbiter of defection proceedings

Early attempts at a law to find the solution to the defections:

- The first one was made by Indira's Home Minister Uma Shankar Dikshit in 1973;
- The second, in 1978, by Shanti Bhushan, Minister for Law and Justice in the Janata Party government of Morarji Desai.
- The third attempt which was successful — was made in 1985, after the Congress won more than 400 seats in Lok Sabha in the aftermath of Indira's assassination.

The 2003 Amendment

- The last step in the legislative journey of the anti-defection law came in 2003.
- A Constitution Amendment Bill was introduced in Parliament by the government of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee to address some of the issues with the law.
- A committee headed by Pranab Mukherjee examined the Bill.

Pranab Mukherjee Committee observations:

- It is observed that the lure of office of profit plays dominant part in the political horse-trading resulting in spate of defections and counter defections.
- The one-third split provision which offered protection to defectors was deleted from the law on the committee's recommendation.

- The 2003 Amendment also incorporated the 1967 advice of the Y B Chavan committee in limiting the size of the Council of Ministers, and preventing defecting legislators from joining the Council of Ministers until their re-election.

Way Forward:

- Politicians found loopholes in this law and used it for their own benefit. It is high time that a watchdog should be provided to our Parliament and there is a need for our constitutional pundits to revisit the issue to combat the menace of corruption and defection which has eroded the values of democracy.
- There is need to build a political consensus so that the room for political and policy expression in parliament for an individual member is expanded.

Conclusion

- The anti-defection law seeks to provide a stable government by ensuring the legislators do not switch sides.
- However, this law also restricts a legislator from voting in line with his conscience, judgement and interests of his electorate.
- Such a situation impedes the oversight function of the legislature over the government, by ensuring that members vote based on the decisions taken by the party leadership, and not what their constituents would like them to vote for.
- The long drawn-out events in the Karnataka Vidhan Sabha have shown that even after three decades, the anti-defection law has not been able to stop political defections

Connecting the dots:

1. Discuss the concerns against anti-defection laws suggest the possible reforms that can be made to anti-defection law?
2. Even after three decades, the anti-defection law has not been able to stop political defections. Critically analyse the given statement?

[Misuse of Money Bills](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains II – Parliament and State legislatures—structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers and privileges and issues arising out of these.

In News:

- The opposition has charged that the 2019 finance bill had provisions to amend a number of laws including the Benami, SEBI and PMLA Acts and that these amendments

to laws were not related to finance but brought as part of financial bill to avoid proper scrutiny.

Types of Bills

Constitution Amendment Bills: These are Bills which seek to amend the Constitution.

Money Bills: A Bill is said to be a Money Bill if it only contains provisions related to taxation, borrowing of money by the government, expenditure from or receipt to the Consolidated Fund of India. Article 110 deals with Money bills.

Do you know?

- Money bill can only be introduced only in Lok Sabha with prior recommendation of the President and must be passed by simple majority.
- Rajya Sabha can only recommend changes to the bill, which Lok Sabha may reject if it chooses to.
- If such recommendations are not given within 14 days, it will have deemed to be passed by Parliament

Who decides if a Bill is a Money Bill?

- The Speaker certifies a Bill as a Money Bill, and the Speaker's decision is final.

Financial Bills: A Bill that contains some provisions related to taxation and expenditure, and additionally contains provisions related to any other matter is called a Financial Bill. Article 117 deals with Financial bills. There are two categories of Financial bills under Article 117

Article 117(i) – Can only be introduced in Lok Sabha with prior recommendation of President. Rajya Sabha can reject or modify it

Article 117(iii) – Can be introduced both in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha with prior recommendation of the President. Rajya Sabha can reject or modify it.

Ordinary Bills: All other Bills are called ordinary bills. This can be introduced in either of the Houses of Parliament. No prior recommendation of President is required and requires simple majority to pass the bill

The Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Bill 2019

Part of: GS Mains Paper II - Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies.

Amendments proposed:

| Sl.No. | Provisions under original Act | Amendments proposed |
|--------|--|--|
| 1. | Under the current Act, the chairperson of the NHRC is a person who has been a Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. | The Bill seeks to provide that a person who has been Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, or a Judge of the Supreme Court will be the chairperson of the NHRC. |
| 2. | The Act provides for two persons having knowledge of human rights to be appointed as members of the NHRC. | The Bill seeks to allow three members to be appointed, of which at least one will be a woman. |
| 3. | Under the Act, chairpersons of various commissions such as the National Commission for Scheduled Castes(NCSC), National Commission for Scheduled Tribes(NCST), and National Commission for Women(NCW) are members of the NHRC. | The Bill provides for including also the chairpersons of the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC), the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), and the Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities as members of the NHRC. |
| 4. | The Act states that the chairperson and members of the NHRC and SHRC will hold office for five years or till the age of seventy years, whichever is earlier. | The Bill reduces the term of office to three years or till the age of seventy years, whichever is earlier. |

Do you know?

- NHRC is established under the Protection of Human Rights Act (PHRA), 1993.
- The act defines Human Rights as the rights relating to life, liberty, equality and dignity of the individual guaranteed by the Constitution or embodied in the International Covenants and enforceable by courts in India.

The Chairperson and members of the NHRC are appointed by the President of India, on the recommendation of a committee consisting of:

- The Prime Minister (Chairperson)
- The Home Minister
- The Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha (Lower House)
- The Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha (Upper House)
- The Speaker of the Lok Sabha (Lower House)
- The Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha (Upper House)

The Right to information(Amendment) Bill,2019

Context

- The government introduced in Loksabha the Right to Information (Amendment) Bill, 2019, which proposes to give the Centre the powers to set the salaries and service conditions of Information Commissioners at central as well as state levels.

Concerns:

- Amendments have been proposed since 2006, just six months after the law was implemented and many times thereafter.
- The deliberate dismantling of this architecture empowers the Central government to unilaterally decide the tenure, salary, allowances and other terms of service of Information Commissioners, both at the Centre and the States

About Right to Information Act:

- Article 19(1) of the Indian Constitution specifies that the Right to Information (RTI) is a part of the fundamental rights. It says that every citizen has freedom of speech and expression.
- In 1976, in the Raj Narain vs the State of UP, it was held by the Supreme Court that people cannot speak unless they know. Hence the Right to Information is embedded in Article 19
- RTI Act provides machinery for exercising this fundamental right.
- As per the RTI Act 2005, every citizen has the right to receive a timely response from the government for any information that is sought by them with respect to the functioning of the government.
- An RTI portal is created by the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions in order to facilitate the process of RTI.
- Besides access to information related to RTI, published disclosures by various public authorities under the state and the central governments, it acts as a gateway for obtaining information on the details of first Appellate Authorities, Principle Information Officers etc

The basic objectives of RTI is

- Empowerment of the citizens
- Promotion of transparency and accountability in the functioning of the government
- Prevention and elimination of corruption
- Making the democracy work FOR the people in its real sense.
- Under the RTI, every citizen is empowered to:

- Seek information / ask questions to the government
- Request for copies of government documents
- Inspect government documents and works
- Request for samples of materials of any government work

Importance of RTI:

- The RTI has been used brilliantly and persistently to ask a million questions across the spectrum — from the village ration shop, the Reserve Bank of India, the Finance Ministry, on demonetisation, non-performing assets, the Rafale fighter aircraft deal, electoral bonds, unemployment figures, the appointment of the Central Vigilance Commissioner (CVC), Election Commissioners, and the (non)-appointment of the Information Commissioners themselves.
- The information related to decision-making at the highest level has in most cases eventually been accessed because of the independence and high status of the Information Commission.
- The RTI movement has struggled to access information and through it, a share of governance and democratic power.
- The Indian RTI law has been a breakthrough in creating mechanisms and platforms for the practice of continual public vigilance that are fundamental to democratic citizenship.

Recent moves of RTI:

- All the provisions related to appointment were carefully examined by a parliamentary standing committee and the law was passed unanimously.
- Section 13 states that salaries, allowances and other terms of service of “the Chief Information Commissioner shall be the same as that of the Chief Election Commissioner”, and those of an Information Commissioner “shall be the same as that of an Election Commissioner”.
- The Bill amends Sections 13 and 16 of the Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005. Section 13 of the original Act sets the term of the central Chief Information Commissioner and Information Commissioners at five years (or until the age of 65, whichever is earlier).
- Section 16 of the original Act deals with state-level Chief Information Commissioners and Information Commissioners. It sets the term for state-level CICs and ICs at five years (or 65 years of age, whichever is earlier).
- It was on the recommendation of the parliamentary standing committee that the Information Commissioner and CIC were made on a par with the Election Commissioner and the CEC, respectively.
- The mandatory pre-legislative consultative policy of the government has been ignored.

Major issues:

- The separation of powers is a concept which underscores this independence and is vital to our democratic checks and balances.

- When power is centralised and the freedom of expression threatened no matter what the context, democracy is definitely in serious danger.
- The Commission which is vested by law with status, independence and authority, will now function like a department of the Central government, and be subject to the same hierarchy and demand for deferential respect.
- Apart from Section 13 which deals with the terms and conditions for the Central information Commission, in amending Section 16, the Central government will also control through rules, the terms and conditions of appointment of Commissioners in the States. This is an assault on the idea of federalism.
- The RTI community is worried. But the sword of Damocles is double-edged. It is an idiom originally used to define the hidden insecurity of an autocrat. Questions are threats to unaccountable power.

Conclusion:

- The RTI has unshackled millions of users who will continue to use this democratic right creatively and to dismantle exclusive power.
- The RTI has been and will be used to withstand attacks on itself and strengthen the movement for transparency and accountability in India.
- The RTI has resulted in a fundamental shift — empowering a citizen's access to power and decision-making. It has been a lifeline for many of the 40 to 60 lakh ordinary users, many of them for survival.

Connecting the dots:

- Has RTI been successful in bringing transparency into governance? Critically evaluate.
- Don't you think Right to Information (RTI) stifles decision making? Critically examine.
- The RTI in its current form and shape requires certain changes to make it more effective. Do you agree? Substantiate.

Private member's bill

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains GS II- Parliament

In News

- Private member bill was introduced in the Rajya Sabha to amend Representation of People's Act, which makes two key proposals
- One, the current **per candidate expenditure** limit of ₹70 lakh for Lok Sabha election should be **lifted**
- Two, there should be **state funding** to ensure a "cleaner polity", which is a public good.

Reasons for such amendments

- Capping of expenditure is like prohibition which is counter-productive as it pushes the elections expenditure underground
- This leads to vicious cycle of black money, cronyism, corruption and criminalisation of politics.
- State funding of elections addresses the unfair advantages enjoyed by National Political Parties vis-à-vis regional parties

Do You know?

- A bill introduced by a legislator who is not a part of executive is called Private member bill
- Only 14 private members bill have been passed by both House and become law in the history of Indian Parliament.
- The last such bill was the Supreme Court (enlargement of criminal appellate jurisdiction) Bill passed in 1970

| PRIVATE MEMBER'S BILLS PASSED BY PARLIAMENT | | | |
|---|---------------------------|-------------|----------------|
| Title | MP's Name | House | Date of Assent |
| 1 The Muslim Wakfs Bill, 1952 | Syed Mohammed Ahmed Kasmi | Lok Sabha | 21.05.1954 |
| 2 The Indian Registration (Amendment) Bill, 1955 | S C Samanta | Lok Sabha | 06.04.1956 |
| 3 The Parliamentary Proceedings (Protection of Publication) Bill, 1956 | Feroze Gandhi | Lok Sabha | 26.05.1956 |
| 4 The Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 1953 | Raghunath Singh | Lok Sabha | 01.09.1956 |
| 5 The Women's and Children's Institutions (Licensing) Bill, 1954 | Kamledu Mati Shah | Lok Sabha | 30.12.1956 |
| 6 The Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 1957 | Subhadra Joshi | Lok Sabha | 26.12.1960 |
| 7 The Salary and Allowances of Members of Parliament (Amendment) Bill, 1964 | Raghunath Singh | Lok Sabha | 29.09.1964 |
| 8 The Hindu Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 1963 | Diwan Chand Sharma | Lok Sabha | 20.12.1964 |
| 9 The Supreme Court (Enlargement of Criminal Appellate Jurisdiction) Bill, 1968 | Anand Narain Mullah | Lok Sabha | 09.08.1970 |
| 10 The Ancient and Historical Monuments and Archeological Sites and Remains (Declaration of National Importance) Bill, 1954 | Dr Raghunath Singh | Rajya Sabha | 15.12.1956 |
| 11 The Hindu Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 1956 | Dr Seeta Parmanand | Rajya Sabha | 20.12.1956 |
| 12 The Orphanages and Other Charitable Homes (Supervision and Control) Bill, 1960 | Kailash Bahari Lall | Rajya Sabha | 09.04.1960 |
| 13 The Marine Insurance Bill, 1959 | MP Bhargava | Rajya Sabha | 18.04.1963 |
| 14 The Indian Penal Code (Amendment) Bill, 1963 | Diwan Chaman Lall | Rajya Sabha | 07.09.1969 |

- Pic: <https://static.toiimg.com/photo/imgsize-,msid-47046357/47046357.jpg>

Private Bill urges state election funding

Context:

- Equating the expenditure limit on election expenses with prohibition, Congress MP Rajeev Gowda on Friday moved a private member's Bill in the Rajya Sabha that seeks removal of the limit and state funding of elections as part of reforms to the way polls are financed in India.

Concerns:

- The limit of funding was counterproductive and only helped those with black money to bribe individual voters and crippled honest candidates,

What is private member bill in the parliament?

- Private member's bills are piloted by non-Minister MPs.
- Their purpose is to draw the government's attention to what individual MPs see as issues and gaps in the existing legal framework, which require legislative intervention.

Who are private members?

- Any MP who is not a Minister is referred to as a private member.
- Parliament's key role is to debate and make laws.
- Both Ministers and private members contribute to the law making process.
- Bills introduced by Ministers are referred to as government bills.
- They are backed by the government, and reflect its legislative agenda.

Procedure for introducing private member bill in parliament:

- The admissibility of a private member's Bill is decided by the Rajya Sabha Chairman and in the case of Lok Sabha, it is the Speaker; the procedure is roughly the same for both Houses.
- The Member must give at least a month's notice before the Bill can be listed for introduction; the House secretariat examines it for compliance with constitutional provisions and rules on legislation before listing.
- Up to 1997, private members could introduce up to three Bills in a week. This led to a piling up of Bills that were introduced but never discussed; Chairman K R Narayanan, therefore, capped the number of private member's Bills to three per session.
- While government Bills can be introduced and discussed on any day, private member's Bills can be introduced and discussed only on Fridays.
- Private member's Bills have been introduced and discussed in Rajya Sabha on 20 days in the last three years
- Upon conclusion of the discussion, the Member piloting the Bill can either withdraw it on the request of the Minister concerned, or he may choose to press ahead with its passage.

- In the latter case, the Bill is put to vote and, if the private member gets the support of the House, it is passed.

Private member bills introduced till now:

- In 1977, Rajya Sabha passed a private member's Bill to amend the Aligarh Muslim University Act.
- The Bill then went to the sixth Lok Sabha, where it lapsed with the dissolution of the House in 1979.
- In 2015, Rajya Sabha passed The Rights of Transgender Persons Bill, 2014 as a private member's Bill.
- The Bill is now pending before Lok Sabha.
- The last time a private member's Bill was passed by both Houses was in 1970, which was the Supreme Court (Enlargement of Criminal Appellate Jurisdiction) Bill, 1968.
- Fourteen private member's Bills, five of which were introduced in Rajya Sabha, have become law so far.
- Some of the important legislations among them include 26th amendment, which related to abolition of privy purses and 61st amendment, which reduced the voting age from 21 to 18.

Some important laws that were introduced as private member bills

- The first private member bill to become a law was the Muslim Wakfs Bill, 1952 aimed to provide better governance and administration of wakfs, it was introduced by Syed Mohammed Ahmed Kasmi in the Lok Sabha and was passed in 1954.
- Proceedings of Legislature (Protection of Publication) Bill, 1956, brought by Feroze Gandhi in the Lok Sabha;
- The Salaries and Allowances of Members of Parliament (Amendment) Bill, 1964, introduced by Raghunath Singh in the Lok Sabha and
- The Indian Penal Code (Amendment) Bill, 1967 introduced by Diwan Chaman Lall in the Rajya Sabha.

What is state funding of Elections ?

- The idea of state funding of elections is a concept designed to reduce corruption by funding elections with government money as opposed to individual campaign contributions.
- Many recommend that state funding of elections can be the best way to achieve transparency in political funding.
- It is also believed that state funding is a natural and necessary cost of democracy. It brings new and growing parties in par with the established parties, thus ensuring fair elections.

- If parties and candidates are financed with only private funds, economical inequalities in the society might translate into political inequalities in government.

State funding of elections – Past recommendations:

- **Indrajit Gupta Committee on State Funding of Elections (1998):** Endorsed state funding of elections in order to establish a fair playing field for parties with less money. The Committee recommended two limitations to state funding.
 - Firstly, that state funds should be given only to national and state parties allotted a symbol and not to independent candidates.
 - Secondly, that in the short-term state funding should only be given in kind, in the form of certain facilities to the recognized political parties and their candidates.
- **Law Commission Report on Reform of the Electoral Laws (1999):** it strongly recommended that the appropriate regulatory framework be put in place with regard to political parties before state funding of elections is attempted.
- **Ethics in Governance, a report of the Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2008):** Recommended partial state funding of elections for the purpose of reducing "illegitimate and unnecessary funding" of elections expenses.
- **National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution, 2001:** Did not endorse state funding of elections but concurred with the 1999 Law Commission report that the appropriate framework for regulation of political parties would need to be implemented before state funding is considered.

What are the challenges of state funding?

- In theory, State funding would provide a level playing field for political parties and cut out money power from the equation, but in practice, things may not work out so linearly. India collects only about 16% of GDP as a tax.
- The state expenditure on many essential public goods such as primary health care and public health engineering is very small.
- Given this situation, the public resources have to be channeled towards and not diverted from such essential services, and that too to finance something that already gets abundantly financed.
- Further, the state funding of elections will not prevent parties from lobbying and getting undisclosed supplementary private funding, with associated implications.
- Therefore State funding is not the solution to the opaque funding of politics in India.

Congress MP Mr. Gowda's Arguments about state election funding:

- He raised the discussion on the Representation of the People (Amendment) Bill with two key proposals.
 - The current per candidate expenditure limit of ₹70 lakh should be lifted and

- There should be state funding to ensure a “cleaner polity”, which is a public good.
- He argued that instead of imposing a limit, transparency should be brought in. All the expenses should be put in the public domain.
- The candidates should be allowed to legitimately raise funds
- Political parties too needed resources and the country simply refused to recognise the amount of money spent in elections.
- He proposed a National Election Fund, under which each political party could be allotted funds according to their recent electoral performance.

Conclusion:

- Partial State funding of elections as Indrajeet Gupta Committee recommended way back in 1998 can be a solution.
- Experiences of the countries having partial and complete state funding should be used to derive some formula for state-based funding of political parties in India.
- Strong disclosure norms, strict statutory limits on election expenses and ceiling on corporate donations to political parties can further strengthen the Electoral System in India

Connecting the dots:

1. What are various electoral and political funding reforms which need to be under taken to bring in transparency and accountability in the Indian political environment. Describe.
2. Why only few private member bills became laws despite of more number of bills introduce in parliament? Explain.

[Himalayan conclave at Mussorie](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains GS II- issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure

In News

- Himalayan states gathered together and made the following demands to the centre
 - A separate Union ministry to deal with problems endemic to them
 - A **green bonus** in recognition of their contribution to environment conservation.
- Rationale behind such demands
 - Most of the country’s rivers originate in the Himalayan states and thus they have to play significant role in water conservation efforts
 - Also large part of their land fell into eco-sensitive zones where developmental activities are severely restricted

- A green bonus is thus needed to compensation for their disadvantages

Do You Know?

- 11 Himalayan states of India are - Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Assam, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Tripura, Mizoram and Manipur
- Ministry of Jal Shakti was formed in May 2019 so as to holistically resolve water crisis
- **Jal Shakti Abhiyan (JSA)** to be started from September 2019 is a time-bound, mission-mode water conservation campaign.
- JSA will focus on five aspects –
 - Water conservation and rainwater harvesting
 - Renovation of traditional and other water bodies
 - Reuse of water and recharging of structures
 - watershed development, and
 - Intensive afforestation

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SOCIAL ISSUE/WELFARE

[Go Tribal campaign](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains Paper II – Issues Related to SCs & STs

Key PT pointers:

- The campaign aims to create awareness and promote tribal arts and crafts as aid in socio economic welfare of over 700 Indian tribes.

Central focus:

- The Tribal Affairs Ministry and Trifed has launched the Go tribal campaign in association with Amazon Global.
- The event also saw the global Launch of Tribes India through Amazon Global Selling under which Tribes India and Amazon Global Marketing will launch TRIBES India products globally.

Note:

- The Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) was established in 1987.
- The basic objective of the TRIFED is to provide good price to the products made or collected from the forest by the tribal peoples.

[SC to decide if illegal migrants can be given the status of refugees](#)

Part of Prelims and mains GS II International Relations

In news

- Two Rohingya men filed a petition against the government's proposal to deport their 40,000-strong community to their native land of Myanmar, where "discrimination and possibly summary executions await them".
- According to the petitions, the Centre's move violated the constitutional guarantee that the Indian State should "protect the life and liberty of every human being, whether citizen or not".
- The Rohingya, who fled to India after violence in the State of Rakhine in Myanmar, are settled in Jammu, Hyderabad, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi-NCR and Rajasthan.
- The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) had also issued notice to the government on the proposed deportation.

Do you know?**Status of refugee in India:-**

- India is not a party to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees or the 1967 Protocol, nor does it have a legal framework and national refugee status determination system.
- As a result, UNHCR processes claims for refugee status in India.
- The UNHCR carries out a Refugee Status Determination (RSD) procedure, which starts with registration as asylum seekers. Following the registration, UNHCR will then conduct interviews with each individual asylum seeker accompanied by a qualified interpreter.
- This process provides a reasoned decision on whether refugee status is granted or not, and gives the individual an opportunity to appeal a decision if the claim is rejected.

88 manual scavenging deaths in 3 years**Part of Prelims and mains GS II Social justice**

Image:https://d39gegkjaqduz9.cloudfront.net/TH/2019/07/10/CNI/Chennai/TH/5_11/3cdbf8ad_3060214_101_mr.jpg

In news

- The number of deaths of sanitation workers while cleaning septic tanks and sewers has risen, despite a ban on manual scavenging, with 620 cases reported since 1993, of which 88 occurred in the past three years, according to the Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry.



- On casualties due to manual scavenging, some States had not reported and some had reported nil, leading to the possibility of the actual deaths from manual scavenging being higher.
- Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 had laid down a mechanism of monitoring its implementation through vigilance committees and monitoring committees at different levels.

[Worker safety code Bill gets Cabinet approval](#)

Part of Prelims and mains GS II social justice GS III labour reforms

In news

- A Bill that seeks to merge 13 labour laws into one code on occupational safety, health and working conditions that would apply to all establishments with 10 or more workers was approved by the Union Cabinet.
- The Code on Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Bill, 2019, which would impact “40 crore unorganised workers”, was approved at a Cabinet meeting.
- The Bill was the second of four proposed codes that aim to merge 44 labour laws, with the Code on Wages Bill, 2019 that was approved on earlier being the first.
- The decision will enhance the coverage of the safety, health and working conditions provisions manifold.

Applicable to

- While the code will be applicable to all trades, including IT establishments and service sector, where more than 10 workers are employed.
- It will be applicable to mines and docks that employ even one worker.
- The code also framed rules for women workers working night shifts.

[Bill to help Transgender introduced in Lok Sabha](#)

Part of: Mains GS Paper I - Social empowerment

In News:

- The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2019, was introduced by Social Justice and Empowerment Minister in Lok Sabha

- The Bill has defined transgenders and has ensured family life for transgender children, made provisions for sex reassignment surgeries, psychological counselling and protection against any form of discrimination against transgender people

Highlights of the Bill

- The Transgender Persons Bill gives a person the right to choose to be identified as a man, woman or transgender, irrespective of sex reassignment surgery and hormonal therapy
- The government has ensured that a person does not have to appear before a district screening committee to be declared a transgender (This was part of earlier draft that received criticism from human rights activists). The new bills has recognised a person's "right to self-perceived gender identity".
- The bill de-criminalised begging by transgenders.
- The bill provide for major education, social security and health facilities for transgender people. The government has decided to pay for medical care facility including sex reassignment surgery and hormonal therapy for transgender people through a health insurance scheme.
- The Bill also provides protection for transgender children. Section 12 (1) says: "No child shall be separated from parents or immediate family on the ground of being a transgender.

Do you know?

- Transgender was declared as third gender only recently in 2014, through a Supreme Court judgement in National Legal Services Authority v. Union of India case.
- Moreover, the court also held that because transgender people were treated as socially and economically backward classes, they should be granted reservations in admissions to educational institutions and jobs.

Drug Menace

Part of: Mains GS-I - Population and associated issues, poverty and developmental issues

In News

- **Northern States** decided to set up **joint working group** to effectively combat drug menace in the region
- The joint group would **undertake joint operations at inter-state borders**, strengthen information sharing on drugs and drug dealers for effective crackdown against them
- Punjab, Rajasthan, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Jammu & Kashmir, Delhi and UT of Chandigarh are part of this group

- The joint group would initiate a **major awareness program** and strive to make eradication of drugs a people's movement

Issues/Impact of Drug Abuse

- India is in close proximity to the **Golden Crescent** (Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan) as well as the **Golden Triangle** (Myanmar, Laos and Thailand) makes it vulnerable to drug trafficking.
- **Wastage of economic potential/productivity of young** population as drug abuse leads to physical, psychological, moral and intellectual decay
- **Increase in crime and violence rates** – leading to domestic violence against women and child abuse
- **Increase in health burden of State** - Increase in incidences of HIV, hepatitis B and C and tuberculosis due to narcotics addiction

Population control

Context:

- On July 11, World Population Day, a Union Minister expressed alarm, in a Tweet, over what he called the “population explosion” in the country, wanting all political parties to enact population control laws and annulling the voting rights of those having more than two children

Concerns

- A large and growing population is at the root of a nation's problems as more and more people chase fewer and fewer resources
- The damage done when mishandling issues of population growth is long lasting.

What does Economic survey 2018-19 says about population control?

- The Survey notes that India is set to witness a “sharp slowdown in population growth in the next two decades”.
- States with high population growth are also the ones with the lowest per capita availability of hospital beds.

What's the fact?

- The fact is that by the 2030s, some States will start transitioning to an ageing society as part of a well-studied process of “demographic transition” which sees nations slowly

move toward a stable population as fertility rates fall with an improvement in social and economic development indices over time.

Dangers of population explosion:

- A large and growing population is at the root of a nation's problems as more and more people chase fewer and fewer resources.
- It does not take much to whip up public sentiment which in turn can quickly degenerate into a deep class or religious conflict that pits the poor, the weak, the downtrodden and the minorities against the more privileged sections.

Population policies:

- Population Policies formulated to address the unmet needs for contraception, health care infrastructure, and health personnel, and to provide integrated service delivery for basic reproductive and child health care.
- The main objective is to achieve a stable population at a level consistent with the requirements of sustainable economic growth, social development, and environmental protection.
- India is the first country in the world to begin a population control programme in 1952. It emphasized the use of natural devices for family planning.
- The National Population Policy (NPP) 2000 provides a policy framework of achieving goals and prioritizing strategies during the next decade to meet the reproductive and child health needs of the people of India along with the target to achieve the net replacement levels (Total Fertility Rate). It aims at stable population by 2045.
- It was forward-looking National Population Policy (NPP) which was introduced in 2000 when Atal Bihari Vajpayee was the Prime Minister.

The following national socio-demographic goals were formulated to be achieved by 2010:

- The 'total fertility rate' to be reduced to 2.1.
- The high class birth control services had to be made available publically so that the standard of two children could be adopted.
- The infant mortality rate had to be reduced to 30 per thousand.
- The mother mortality rate had also to be reduced to below 100 per one lakh.
- The late marriage of girls had to be encouraged.

The essence of NPP(2000)

- Voluntary and informed choice and consent of citizens while availing of reproductive health care services"
- Target free approach in administering family planning services

Argument of NPP

The lifecycle framework” which looks to the health and nutrition needs of mother and child not merely during pregnancy and child birth but “right from the time of conception till the child grows and carrying on till the adolescent stage and further

This argument is not about denying services but about offering choices and a range of services to mother and child on the clear understanding that the demographic dividend can work to support growth and drive opportunity for ordinary people only when the population is healthy.

Crucial connections

- Family health, child survival and the number of children a woman has are closely tied to the levels of health and education of the parents, and in particular the woman
- So the poorer the couple, the more the children they tend to have.
- The poor tend to have more children because child survival is low, son preference remains high, children lend a helping hand in economic activity for poorer households and so support the economic as well as emotional needs of the family.

What does National Family Health Survey-4 (2015-16) says in this context?

- It says that there is depth of the connections between health, education and inequality
- women in the lowest wealth quintile have an average of 1.6 more children than women in the highest wealth quintile
- wealthiest total fertility rate is 1.5 compare to that of the poorest which was 3.2 children
- Women with no schooling have an average 3.1 children, compared with 1.7 children for women with 12 or more years of schooling.

Conclusion

- Turning this into a problem that needs to be controlled is exactly the kind of phraseology, mind set and possibly action that will spell doom for the nation.
- It will undo all the good work that has been done and set the stage for a weaker and poorer health delivery system — exactly the opposite of what a scheme such as Ayushman Bharat seeks to achieve.
- Today, as many as 23 States and Union Territories, including all the States in the south region, already have fertility below the replacement level of 2.1 children per woman. So, support rather than control works.

Connecting the dots

1. Population truly becomes a thriving resource; the life blood of a growing economy. Elucidate
2. Does India have a population policy? What are its objectives? What is the need of having a population policy? Elucidate.

National Commission for Minorities (NCM)

Part of: Mains GS II- Mechanism for protection of vulnerable sections of society

In News

- NCM has refused to entertain a plea to declare Hindus a “minority community” in those States where they do not form a majority of the population.
- **NCM has no power/jurisdiction** to declare new minority communities, such powers lie with the Central government.
- NCM instead works to ensure the progress and development of minorities and protect their religious, cultural and educational rights.
- Supreme Court in its judgement in the **Bal Patil Vs Union of India** case of 1999 had said that NCM’s role was to maintain the unity and integrity of India by eliminating the need for identifying communities as majority and minority

Do you know?

- According to 2011 Census, Hindus are in minority in eight states — Lakshadweep (2.5%), Mizoram (2.75%), Nagaland (8.75%), Meghalaya (11.53%), J&K (28.44%), Arunachal Pradesh (29%), Manipur (31.39%), and Punjab (38.40%).
- Constitution of India doesn't define the word 'Minority' but has used the word minorities considering two attributes religion or language of a person
- The Union Government set up NCM under the NCM Act, 1992 (Statutory body)
- Six religious communities, viz; Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Zoroastrians (Parsis) and Jains(6) have been notified in Gazette of India as minority communities all over India



WOMEN/CHILDREN ISSUE

[Karnataka offers quota for girl children of trafficked women](#)

Part of Prelims and mains GS II Social justice

In news

Recently Karnataka government has announced for providing 1% reservation for girl children of women who were victims of sexual assault or were Devadasis in all State-run universities.

It will be enforced by universities in the 2019-2020 academic year in all undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

Devadasi system in India

- According to the Indian National Commission for Women (NCW), there are still at least 44,000 active devadasi in India.
- Although the numbers are difficult to confirm due to the practice being not only underground but also difficult to differentiate from non-religious prostitution, the practice is particularly concentrated in a few states.
- According to the NCW, the majority of active devadasis are in Karnataka (22,491 individuals), Andhra Pradesh (16,624 individuals), and Maharashtra (2,479 individuals).

[Outlay for child welfare sees a meagre increase](#)

Part of Prelims and mains GS II Social justice

In news

- The outlay for children in the Union Budget has shown a marginal increase of 0.05%, going up from 3.24% in the last fiscal to 3.29%.
- The share is less than the low share of 5% that the National Plan of Action for Children, 2016, has recommended.
- A detailed analysis of the budgetary grant carried out by Child Rights and You shows that allocations are insufficient for the ambitious plan for nutritional development.
- The share of education has increased marginally to 68.54% from 68.2%, but has declined by more than 10 percentage points from the 79.02% of 2015-16. These include schemes such as Samagra Shiksha, National Programme of Mid-day Meal in Schools and Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti.
- Health-related financial allocation as a share of the child health budget has shown a decline of 0.39 percentage point — from 3.9% last fiscal to 3.51%.

- The Anganwadi services and the Poshan Abhiyan (Nutrition Mission) are among the most important government programmes aimed at reducing stunting, anaemia, low weight and low birth weight. Budgetary allocation for both has increased.
- National Child Labour Project Scheme registered a budgetary cut of 16%.

Death penalty for child abuse

Part of Prelims and mains GS II social justice

In news

Cabinet approves Amendment in the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act 2012

Do you know?

Key features of the Act

- The POCSO Act, 2012 was enacted to Protect the Children from Offences of Sexual Assault, Sexual harassment and pornography with due regard for safeguarding the interest and well-being of children.
- The Act defines a child as any person below eighteen years of age, and regards the best interests and welfare of the child as matter of paramount importance at every stage, to ensure the healthy physical, emotional, intellectual and social development of the child.
- The act is gender neutral.

Amendment

- It will make punishment more stringent for committing sexual crimes against children including death penalty.
- The amendments also provide for levy of fines and imprisonment to curb child pornography.

Impact

- The amendment is expected to discourage the trend of child sexual abuse by acting as a deterrent due to strong penal provisions incorporated in the Act.
- It intends to protect the interest of vulnerable children in times of distress and ensures their safety and dignity.
- The amendment is aimed to establish clarity regarding the aspects of child abuse and punishment thereof.

Nearly half of sex offence cases not being investigated in time

Part of Prelims and mains GS II Social Justice

In news

- Investigation into nearly half the sexual offences cases are not being completed within the stipulated 60-day period, according to an analysis of crime data of seven States.
- In many States, the fast-track courts designated to handle rape cases are also handling other criminal cases leading to delay in verdicts.
- The Supreme Court noted that trial had been completed in only 4% of the 24,000 cases of sexual offences that were filed from January to June.

Steps Taken by Government

- The Home Ministry launched an analytics tool — Investigation Tracking System for Sexual Offences (ITSSO) to monitor and track time-bound investigation. It is part of the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and System (CCTNS) that connects over 15,000 police stations across the country.
- To check sexual crimes against women and children, the Centre approved the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2018 last year which prescribed the time-limit for completion of investigation.

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HEALTH ISSUE

Self care in India: Miles to go

Introduction

- World Health Organization has released self-help guidelines for sexual and reproductive health.

Need of self care

- With the ability to prevent disease, maintain health and cope with illness and disability with or without reliance on health-care workers, self-care interventions are gaining more importance.
- Millions of people, including in India, face the twin problems of acute shortage of healthcare workers and lack of access to essential health services.
- According to WHO reports over 400 million across the world already lack access to essential health services and there will be a shortage of about 13 million health-care workers by 2035.

About Self care

- Self-care would mean different things for people living in very diverse conditions.
- While it would mean convenience, privacy and ease for people belonging to the upper strata who have easy access to healthcare facilities anytime, for those living in conditions of vulnerability and lack access to health care, it becomes the primary, timely and reliable form of care.
- The WHO recognises self-care interventions as a means to expand access to health services. Soon, the WHO would expand the guidelines to include other self-care interventions, including for prevention and treatment of non-communicable diseases.

Self care in India

Pregnancy and abortion

- India has some distance to go before making self-care interventions for sexual and reproductive health freely available to women.
- Home-based pregnancy testing is the most commonly used self-help diagnostics in this area in India. Interventions include self-managed abortions using approved drugs that can be had without the supervision of a healthcare provider.
- While the morning-after pills are available over the counter, mifepristone and misoprostol are scheduled drugs and need a prescription from a medical practitioner, thus defeating the very purpose of the drugs.

HIV self test

- The next commonly consumed drug to prevent illness and disease is the pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) for HIV prevention. India is yet to come up with guidelines for PrEP use and include it in the national HIV prevention programme.
- One of the reasons why people shy away from getting tested for HIV is stigma and discrimination.
- The home-based testing provides privacy. WHO approved the HIV self-test to improve access to HIV diagnosis in 2016.

Conclusion

Self-care, which mostly happens outside the formal health system, is nothing new. India has some distance to cover before making self-care interventions freely available.

Connecting the dots:

- Self-care interventions can act as a means to expand access to health services. Comment.

[Don't blame the litchi: On deaths in Bihar](#)

Introduction

Muzaffarpur in Bihar is famous for litchis and infamous for children dying due to annual seasonal brain disease outbreaks.

Outbreaks

- The common brain diseases in children with high mortality are meningitis, encephalitis and encephalopathy.
- These three have clear-cut differences and very different treatments. Trained paediatricians know how to distinguish the three.
- If diagnostic criteria are not applied for various reasons, then the three are not distinguished by doctors.
- That is when an easy diagnostic term covering all three — “acute encephalitis syndrome” (AES) is used.

Viral attack or Encephalopathy

The disease description;

1. Only under-nourished children are affected;
2. Only children between two and 10 years are affected
3. The onset of convulsions and unconsciousness is always between 4 am and 7 am

These are clear pointers against any virus infection causing the disease. Viruses, including JE, do not respect nutritional status, age and diurnal rhythm.

Encephalopathy (Brain disease)

- The early morning onset and frequent finding of low blood glucose level (hypoglycaemia) point to a biochemical disease related to glucose metabolism.
- Several hours after food intake (early morning) is when the body tends to develop hypoglycaemia.
- In addition, there is brain swelling caused by toxic damage to brain cells — encephalopathy, specifically, “hypoglycaemic encephalopathy”.
- If the fasting interval is longer than 6-7 hours, because some children were not given a night meal, the situation becomes more severe.
- Malnourished children do not have glucose reserves in the liver, which makes matters worse.
- Moreover, many children were referred to Muzaffarpur medical college, and the long delay in reaching there resulted in many deaths. Prevention is simple, as is treatment.

Prevention is possible

- In 2016 and 2017, a simple intervention — all grass root health workers consistently teaching rural families not to allow children sleep without a cooked meal — had brought down the case numbers drastically.
- If doctors had treated the sick and unconscious children with a 10 per cent glucose infusion within four hours of onset, all the children would have recovered.
- The high blood glucose level created with 10 per cent glucose actually turns off the fatty acid oxidation cycle immediately, so no more amino acids accumulate to further damage brain cells.

Malnutrition and Litchies

- The external stimulus that blocks the fatty acid oxidation cycle for glucose synthesis is methylene cyclo-propyl glycine, present in the edible pulp of litchies.
- Normally-nourished children or adults suffer no adverse effects from litchis. Only when malnutrition and skipping the night meal come together does the litchi eaten the previous day become the last straw.
- The socio-behavioural risk factors are the real cause of the outbreak.
- Where litchi orchards and gross malnutrition are not superimposed, like in Punjab and Haryana, hypoglycemic encephalopathy is not a problem.

Way forward

Following interventions can reduce the impact of outbreak;

- Training of the doctors for immediate treatment
- Increase in availability of health care services within the reach of patients
- Curbing malnutrition
- Addressing the socio-behavioral risk factors

Connecting the dots

The outbreak of "acute encephalitis syndrome" in Bihar is preventable healthcare disaster. comment.

Healthcare's primary problem

Background

The deaths of 154 children in Bihar due to acute encephalitis syndrome (AES) has been linked to two factors:

- Litchi consumption by starving children and
- a long ongoing heat wave

Prevention of AES

AES is largely preventable both before and just after the onset of the disease and treatable with high chances of success on availability of medical intervention within 2-4 hours of symptoms.

Therefore, the first signs of an outbreak must prompt strong prevention measures.

These include:

- A robust health education drive
- Replenishing primary health centres (PHCs) with essential supplies,
- Extensive deployment of peripheral health workers (ASHA workers)
- Ambulance services to facilitate rapid identification
- Management of suspected cases.
- Vacant doctor positions in PHCs must be urgently filled through deputation.
- Short-term scaling-up of the Poshan Abhiyaan
- The supplementary nutrition programme which makes available hot, cooked meals for pre-school children at Anganwadis along with take home ration for mothers and distribution of glucose/ORS packets in risk households.

Nearly every one of these elements lies undermined in Bihar.

Crumbling healthcare in Bihar

- In Bihar, one PHC caters to about 1 lakh people rather than the norm of 1 PHC per 30,000 people. Furthermore, it is critical for such a PHC, catering to more than three times the standard population size, to have at least two doctors.
- Three-fourths of the nearly 1,900 PHCs in Bihar have just one doctor each.
- Muzaffarpur has 103 PHCs (about 70 short of the ideal number) with 98 of them falling short of basic requirements outlined by the Health Management Information System.
- Bihar, one of the most populous States, had a doctor-population ratio of 1:17,685 in 2018, 60% higher than the national average, and with only 2% of the total MBBS seats in the country.
- There is also a one-fifth shortage of ASHA personnel, and nearly one-third of the sub-health centres have no health workers at all.
- While the State reels under the highest load of malnutrition in India, a study found that around 71% and 38% of funds meant for hot, cooked meals and take home ration, respectively, under the supplementary nutrition programme, were pilfered.
- Meals were served for just more than half the number of prescribed days, and only about half the number of beneficiaries on average actually got them.
- Even those PHCs with adequate supplies remain underutilized. Perennial subscription to selective healthcare services by PHCs, like family planning and immunization, have cultivated the perception that PHCs are inept as centres of general healthcare.
- This leads patients either directly to apex government hospitals situated far away or to unqualified private providers. This results in a patient losing precious time in transit and landing up in a hospital in a critical and often irreversible stage of illness.

Way forward

- Revamp primary health infrastructure
- The solution lies in building more functional PHCs and sub-health centers;
- Scaling-up the cadres of ASHA workers;
- Strict monitoring of nutrition programmes;
- Addressing the maldistribution of doctors, medical colleges and vacancies.
- The resultant robust primary care system can then be geared towards being more responsive to future outbreaks.
- We should also bolster our technical capacity to better investigate the causes of such outbreaks and operationalise a concrete long-term strategy.
- Decades of hospital-centric growth of health services have eroded faith in community-based healthcare. In these circumstances, even easily manageable illnesses increase demand for hospital services rather than PHCs.

Conclusion

- Merely strengthening the tertiary care sector will be inefficient and ineffective.
- Primary healthcare should be the strong foundation of health development narrative.
- There is need to work on inculcating confidence in community-based care.

Connecting the dots:

- In the context of the breakout of the acute encephalitis syndrome (AES) in Bihar, analyse the shortcomings of healthcare sector.

The malaise of malnutrition

Introduction

A new report, 'Food and Nutrition Security Analysis, India, 2019', authored by the Government of India and the United Nations World Food Programme, paints a picture of hunger and malnutrition amongst children in large pockets of India.

Vicious cycle poverty, malnutrition

- The report shows the poorest sections of society caught in a trap of poverty and malnutrition, which is being passed on from generation to generation.
- Mothers who are hungry and malnourished produce children who are stunted, underweight and unlikely to develop to achieve their full human potential.
- According to a study in the Lancet, these disadvantaged children are likely to do poorly in school and subsequently have low incomes, high fertility, and provide poor care for their children, thus contributing to the intergenerational transmission of poverty.
- In other words, today's poor hungry children are likely to be tomorrow's hungry, unemployed and undereducated adults.

Effects of malnourishment on cognitive development

- The effects of malnourishment in a small child are not merely physical.
- A developing brain that is deprived of nutrients does not reach its full mental potential.
- According to Lancet study, undernutrition can affect cognitive development by causing direct structural damage to the brain and by impairing infant motor development.
- This in turn affects the child's ability to learn at school, leading to a lifetime of poverty and lack of opportunity.

Progress so far

- India has long been home to the largest number of malnourished children in the world. Some progress has been made in reducing the extent of malnutrition.
- The proportion of children with chronic malnutrition decreased from 48% percent in 2005-06 to 38.4% in 2015-16.
- The percentage of underweight children decreased from 42.5% to 35.7% over the same period.
- Anaemia in young children decreased from 69.5% to 58.5% during this period. But this progress is small.

An ambitious target

- The government's National Nutrition Mission (renamed as Poshan Abhiyaan) aims to reduce stunting by 2% a year, bringing down the proportion of stunted children in the population to 25% by 2022.
- A year after it was launched, State and Union Territory governments have only used 16% of the funds allocated to them.
- Fortified rice and milk were to be introduced in one district per State, this had not been done.
- Anganwadis are key to the distribution of services to mothers and children. But many States, including Bihar and Odisha, which have large vulnerable populations, are struggling to set up functioning anganwadis, and recruit staff.

Pattern of socio-economic exclusion

- Malnutrition is a reflection of age-old patterns of social and economic exclusion. Over 40% of children from Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes are stunted.
- Close to 40% of children from the Other Backward Classes are stunted.
- The lack of nutrition in their childhood years can reduce their mental as well as physical development and condemn them to a life in the margins of society.

The problem is access to food

- As Amartya Sen noted, famines are caused not by shortages of food, but by inadequate access to food.
- For the poor and marginalised, access to food is impeded by social, administrative and economic barriers
- In the case of children and their mothers, this could be anything from non-functioning or neglectful governments at the State, district and local levels to entrenched social attitudes that see the poor and marginalised as less than equal citizens.

Conclusion

UN report punctures the image of a nation marching towards prosperity. It raises moral and ethical questions about the nature of a state and society that, after 70 years of independence, still condemns hundreds of millions of its poorest and vulnerable citizens to lives of hunger and desperation. The poorest two-fifths of the country's population, that is still largely untouched by the modern economy which the rest of the country inhabits.

Connecting the dots

- Despite rapid economic growth, declining levels of poverty, enough food to export, and a multiplicity of government programmes, malnutrition amongst the poorest remains high. Comment.

Government in process of finalising OTC drug policy

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains II – Health issue; Government schemes and policies

In news:

- The practice of **self-medication** is rampant in India
- Over-the-counter (**OTC**) **drugs** are medicines **sold directly** to a consumer **without a need of prescription** from a healthcare professional
- In the absence of a legal framework, chemists are selling some commonly used 'prescription only' drugs like paracetamol as well as other drugs over the counter
- Thus, lack of well-defined regulation for OTC medicines is **impacting patient safety**
- **Drugs** that are known to have negligible side effects can be **classified as OTC** so that **access** to them **becomes easy and wide**.
- When drugs for common viral infections, sore throat, acidity, indigestion, nausea, vomiting, stomach pain, injury, cuts, wounds, burns, acne etc are made available under OTC, people will get access to the right medication

Concerns

- Rise of **antibiotic resistance** due to use of over-the-counter drugs
- An antibiotic is a drug meant to treat a bacterial infection.
- This will further strengthen the practice of self-medication

Do you know?

- The Union health ministry's Anti-Microbial Resistance awareness campaign urges people not to use medicines marked with a red vertical line, including antibiotics, without a doctor's prescription – **Red Line Campaign**



<http://healthlove.in/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Antibiotic-with-red-strip-on-back.jpg>

Two from Araku test positive for Anthrax

Part of Prelims and mains GS II issues related to health

In news

Two persons from Araku mandal of Andhra Pradesh, tested positive for the disease cutaneous anthrax.

What is anthrax?

Anthrax is a serious infectious disease caused by gram-positive, rod-shaped bacteria known as *Bacillus anthracis*. Anthrax can be found naturally in soil and commonly affects domestic and wild animals around the world.

- According to officials from the Health Department, anthrax can spread in three forms — cutaneous anthrax (through the skin), pulmonary anthrax (through inhalation), and gastrointestinal anthrax (through the stomach).
- In Cutaneous anthrax, anthrax spores get into the skin usually through a cut or a scrape, which can happen when a person handles infected animals.
- After consumption of affected animals' meat, there are chances of contracting gastrointestinal anthrax.

Vaccine trials started to check Tuberculosis spread

Part of Prelims and Mains GS II Governance; Health services

In news:

- Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has started a TB vaccine trial with a view to preventing the occurrence of tuberculosis among the close contacts of a patient.
- Trial is being conducted to come up with the first TB vaccine for adults as the BCG vaccine is only for new-borns.
- Two vaccines — VPM1002 and Mycobacterium Indicus Pranii (MIP) — had been short-listed for the phase III trial among the healthy household contacts of a sputum smear-positive patient.

Do you know?

- India contributes to 27% of global TB population.
- Few TB drugs of TB are Isoniazid, Rifampicin.
- Nikshay is a web based solution for monitoring TB, launched by the Health Ministry.
- India want to end TB by 2025

About Tuberculosis (TB)

- A serious infectious bacterial disease that mainly affects the lungs.
- TB is an infectious disease usually caused by Mycobacterium tuberculosis (MTB)
- Spread when an infected person. Through airborne respiratory droplets (coughs or sneezes) and by saliva (kissing or shared drinks).
- TB is Curable and preventable, when medicines are provided and taken properly.

A WASH for healthcare

Introduction

Healthcare facilities are many and varied. Some are primary, others are tertiary. Many are public, some are private. Some meet specific needs, whether dentistry or occupational therapy, and some are temporary, providing acute care when disaster strikes.

Adequate water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) amenities, including waste management and environmental cleaning services, are critical to their safe functioning.

Impacts of lack of WASH facilities

- When a healthcare facility lacks adequate WASH services, infection prevention and control are severely compromised.
- This has the potential to make patients and health workers sick from avoidable infections.
- As a result, efforts to improve maternal, neonatal and child health are undermined. Lack of WASH facilities also results in unnecessary use of antibiotics, thereby spreading antimicrobial resistance.

Current scenario

- According to a report, published this year by the World Health Organization and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) jointly, outlines WASH services in many facilities across the world are missing or substandard.
- According to data from 2016, an estimated 896 million people globally had no water service at their healthcare facility.
- More than 1.5 billion had no sanitation service.
- One in every six healthcare facilities was estimated to have no hygiene service. While data on waste management and environmental cleaning was inadequate across the board.

Need of WASH services

- In WHO's South-East Asia region, efforts to tackle the problem and achieve related Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets are being vigorously pursued.
- Improving WASH services in health-care facilities is crucial to accelerating progress towards each of the region's 'flagship priorities', especially the achievement of universal health coverage.
- Improving WASH services was deemed essential to enhancing the quality of primary healthcare services, increasing equity and bridging the rural-urban divide.

Resolution to provide WASH services

A World Health Assembly Resolution is hoping to catalyse domestic and external investments to help reach the global targets.

These include ensuring;

- At least 60% of all healthcare facilities have basic WASH services by 2022;
- At least 80% have the same by 2025; and
- 100% of all facilities provide basic WASH services by 2030.

Way forward

- Member states should implement each of the WHO- and UNICEF-recommended practical steps.
- Health authorities should conduct in-depth assessments and establish national standards and accountability mechanisms.
- Across the region, and the world, a lack of quality baseline data limits authorities' understanding of the problem.
- Health authorities should create clear and measurable benchmarks that can be used to improve and maintain infrastructure and ensure that facilities are 'fit to serve'.
- Health authorities should increase engagement and work to instil a culture of cleanliness and safety in all health-care facilities.
- Alongside information campaigns that target facility administrators, all workers in the health system — from doctors and nurses to midwives and cleaners — should be made aware of, and made to practise, current WASH and infection prevention and control procedures (IPC).
- Modules on WASH services and IPC should be included in pre-service training and as part of ongoing professional development.
- In addition, authorities should work more closely with communities, especially in rural areas, to promote demand for WASH services.
- Authorities should ensure that collection of data on key WASH indicators becomes routine.
- Doing so will help accelerate progress by promoting continued action and accountability.
- It will also help spur innovation by documenting the links between policies and outcomes.

Conclusion

As member states strive to achieve the 'flagship priorities' and work towards the SDG targets, that outcome is crucial. Indeed, whatever the healthcare facility, whoever the provider, and wherever it is located, securing safe health services is an objective member states must boldly pursue.

Connecting the dots:

- Without adequate water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) amenities, infection control is severely compromised in India's healthcare system. Comment.

[Ebola outbreak a global health emergency: WHO](#)

In news:

- World Health Organization declared the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo a public health emergency of international concern.

About Ebola

- Ebola virus disease (EVD), formerly known as Ebola haemorrhagic fever, is a severe, often fatal illness in humans.
- The Ebola virus is transmitted to people from wild animals and spreads in the human population through human-to-human transmission.
- The Ebola virus causes an acute, serious illness which is often fatal if untreated.
- There are currently no licensed Ebola vaccines but 2 potential candidates are undergoing evaluation.

[Vaccination for rotavirus](#)

Part of: Main GS Paper II- Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population

In news:

- Around 20 lakh children in the Maharashtra State will be vaccinated against rotavirus.
- Annually, 3.34 lakh children succumb to diarrhoeal diseases in India, of which close to **one lakh die of rotavirus diarrhoea**.
- Vaccination is a step towards achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goal **target of reducing Child (under 5 years) Mortality rate to 25** or less per 1000 live births **by 2030**.

Do you know?

- India's Under Five Mortality (U5MR) declined from 125 per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 43 per 1,000 live births in 2015.
- In 2016, India's **infant (0-1 year) mortality rate** was 44 per 1,000 live births.
- To achieve full immunization coverage for all children and pregnant women at a rapid pace, the Government of India launched "**Mission Indradhanush**" in December 2014.
- Under Mission Indradhanush vaccination is being provided against eight vaccine-preventable diseases nationally, i.e. Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus, Polio, Measles, severe form of Childhood Tuberculosis, Hepatitis B, meningitis & pneumonia caused by Haemophilus influenza type B; and *against Rotavirus Diarrhea and Japanese Encephalitis in selected states and districts respectively.*

Measles-Rubella Vaccination

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains II – Health issue

Key pointers:

- Measles-Rubella vaccination drive started in Rajasthan to cover 2.26 crore children up to 15 years of age.
- Measles and rubella are **contagious viral infections** preventable by vaccine and best known by its distinctive red rash.
- The drive helps in achieving the UN SDG target of reducing Child (under 5 years) Mortality rate to 25 or less per 1000 live births by 2030.

Do you know?

- India accounted for 36% of deaths of the world's children by measles.
- To achieve full immunization coverage for all children and pregnant women at a rapid pace, the Government of India launched "**Mission Indradhanush**" in December 2014.
- Under Mission Indradhanush vaccination is being provided against eight vaccine-preventable diseases nationally, i.e. Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus, Polio, Measles, severe form of Childhood Tuberculosis, Hepatitis B, meningitis & pneumonia caused by Haemophilus influenza type B; and against Rotavirus Diarrhea and Japanese Encephalitis in selected states and districts respectively

Loosening strength in anti-AIDS march

Context

- The commitment to end the AIDS pandemic by 2030 needs strong and fearless leadership

Concerns

- The Joint UN programme on AIDS, commonly known as UNAIDS, is facing one of the worst challenges afflicting the global AIDS response
- Appointment a new executive director after the departure of Michel Sidibé in May 2019 on the recommendation of the programme.
- The commitment to end AIDS by 2030 is ambitious but not impossible to achieve because every year there are about 1.7 million new infections.

About UNAIDS:

- UNAIDS is leading the global effort to end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030 as part of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- It started operations in 1996
- UNAIDS provides the strategic direction, advocacy, coordination and technical support needed to catalyse and connect leadership from governments, the private sector and communities to deliver life-saving HIV services.

Achievements of UNAIDS:

- It has successfully mobilised world opinion to mount an exceptional response to an epidemic.
- The slashing of prices of AIDS drugs by Indian generics have brought treatment within the reach of many countries by the Creation of GFATM.
- Preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV has become an achievable goal by 2020.

Challenges to reach the goal to end AIDS pandemic by 2030:

- The organisation has started to falter in its strategy.
- Regions such as Eastern Europe and Central Asia and West Asia are nowhere near reaching the goal of ending AIDS.
- It is forgotten that AIDS affects the poor, the marginalised and criminalised communities in accessing the 'test and treat' programmes.
- Funding for non-governmental organisations and community-based organisations working on prevention has been gradually decreased.
- The weakening of country leadership of UNAIDS in many high-prevalence countries.

Suggestions

- The strategy to end AIDS should go back to the World Health Organisation (WHO) where it originally belonged to some 25 years ago.
- And that the new executive director should be equipped with an exit strategy to wind up the organisation.
- The new executive director has to work relentlessly to place prevention of the epidemic and empowering communities at the centre of global response.
- The new executive director should strive for the strengthening of organisation presence at country level.

Conclusion:

- The commitment to end AIDS by 2030 is ambitious but not impossible to achieve.

- We need to re-energised UNAIDS with a strong and fearless leadership from a person of high integrity and commitment along with a sincere effort to remove the deadwood from the organisation.

Connecting the dots

1. What is HIV and how is it a life threatening disease? How has India battled against HIV? Critically examine.
2. Elaborate on the Policy actions initiated by the government w.r.t. HIV AIDS and the necessary concerns associated. Highlight the provisions of the recent legislation
3. 'AIDS affects the poor, the marginalised and criminalised communities'. Discuss the challenges and solutions with respect to the statement.

Healthcare system needs more healing hands

Context:

- The fault lines of the Indian healthcare system, especially those of our understaffed and under-skilled health workforce, are in urgent need of repair

Concerns:

- The Supreme Court has averred that health is a human right, while expressing its anguish at the spate of child deaths in Muzaffarpur.
- The tragedy in Bihar comes at a time when doctors and patients are locked in an aggressively adversarial relationship across the country.
- These are strict reminders that we need to urgently repair the fault lines in our health system.
- One of the major drawback is in terms of lack of health care workforce.

How many health workers do we need?

As per Millennium Development Goals (MDGs):

- The minimum number of health workers needed per 1,000 populations is 22 as per world health organisation.
- The services includes maternal and child health as well as major infectious diseases.
- India's National Health Mission too pursued the restricted MDG agenda, in which nearly 80% of population health needs were unaddressed.

As per Sustainable development Goals(SDG):

- The minimum number of health workers needed per 1,000 population are 44.5 as per WHO.
- This was based on 12 health indicators and the need to deliver universal health coverage.
- The services include non-communicable diseases, mental health and other conditions.

About WHO:

- World Health Organisation is a specialised agency of UN
- Established in 1948
- HQ : Geneva, Switzerland
- It is concerned with international public health
- It acts as coordinating authority on international public health
- India is a founder member of WHO.
- It is a member of UN Development Group (UNDP).

Recent statistics from National Sample Survey of 2016:

- Qualified allopathic doctors are overall 4.5 per 10, 000 Population, but only 1 per 11,000 in the public sector.
- The ratio of nurses and midwives to doctors is 1.7, while it should be at least 3:1
- India needs 2.5 million midwives, there are a total of only 1.3 million nurses overall, with many of them lacking adequate midwifery skills.
- Midwifery has been subsumed under general nursing, after independence.

How do we overcome these challenges?

- The reconstituted Medical Council of India, with a nominated Board of Governors, is doing a commendable job in reforming a moribund regulatory system of medical education.
- It proposes now to permit consortia of large private institutions of repute to start medical colleges or even partner with existing medical colleges to train more undergraduate students.
- It is necessary to upgrade district hospitals in these states and make them robust training facilities for undergraduate and postgraduate medical and nursing education as well as allied health professional training
- The National Health Mission should consider recruiting fresh medical graduates into a 3-year short service commission to provide for flexibility in posting to underserved states and areas.
- There is a need to revive midwifery training programmes to full potential by enhancing scale, skills, scope, social status and salaries.

- Digital technology, with decision support systems, management algorithms and teleconsulting, can greatly amplify their effectiveness.
- Advanced clinical nursing, needed for multiple specialities, can be developed by starting diplomas and fellowships affiliated to the NBE.

Conclusion:

- There are far less healthcare providers than needed and those available are severely maldistributed across states, and between rural and urban areas.
- As the number of health workers raises and the country's health system needs are saturated, the surplus may also invigorate the global health workforce as countries with ageing populations and shrinking workforce stretch their hands to seek support from India's demographic bounty. But till then, India and Bihar first.

Connecting the dots:

1. Discuss the challenges faced by health care system in India. Suggest the measures to address the challenges
2. While the private sector dominates healthcare delivery across the country, a majority of the population living below the poverty line (BPL) continues to rely on the under-financed and short-staffed public sector for its healthcare needs, as a result of which these remain unmet. Comment. Also suggest ideas to improve the status of public healthcare in India.
3. "Health is a Human Right". Elucidate the statement
4. Discuss the goals and objectives of National health policy 2017



GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

It's time to act, not do more research: On National Education Policy

Background

- Government has begun to rethink of higher education policies through the draft NEP (National Education Policy) and EQUIP (Education Quality Upgradation and Inclusion Programme).
- Before this draft education policy and EQUIP, there are many reports aimed at improving higher education in independent India such as Radhakrishnan Commission of 1949, the National Education Policies of 1968 and 1986, the Yashpal Committee of 2009, the National Knowledge Commission in 2007, etc.
- Recommendations of most of these reports are similar. Therefore the time, energy and resources that EQUIP will require can be better spent on implementing rather than further research.

Challenges before Current Higher Education System

Inadequate allocation of funds

- Higher education in India has been chronically underfunded — it spends less than most other BRICS countries on higher education. Inadequate funding is evident at all levels.
- The last Budget allocated only ₹37,461 crore for the higher education sector.
- Other related ministries and departments such as Space, Scientific and Industrial Research, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Science and Technology, Health Research and Agricultural Research have been allocated only modest support.
- Funding for basic research, which is largely a Central government responsibility, lags behind peer countries.

Low enrollment and Non completion

- At present, India's gross enrolment ratio is 25.8%, significantly behind China's 51% or much of Europe and North America, where 80% or more young people enroll in higher education. India's challenge is even greater because half of the population is under 25 years of age.
- It is interesting to note that while the draft NEP aims at increasing the gross enrolment ratio to at least 50% by 2035, EQUIP targets doubling the gross enrolment ratio to 52% by 2024.

- The challenge is not only to enrol students, but to ensure that they can graduate. Non-completion is a serious problem in the sector.

Standard of quality of education

- It is universally recognised that much of Indian higher education is of relatively poor quality. Employers often complain that they cannot hire graduates without additional training.

Poor quality and commercial interests of private sector

- The private sector is a key part of the equation. India has the largest number of students in private higher education in the world. But much of private higher education is of poor quality and commercially oriented.

Structure and governance of higher education system

- There is too much bureaucracy at all levels, and in some places, political and other pressures are immense. Professors have little authority and the hand of government and managements is too heavy. At the same time, accountability for performance is generally lacking.

Way forward

India needs;

- Dramatically increased funding from diverse sources, and the NEP's recommendation for a new National Research Foundation is a welcome step in this direction;
- Significantly increased access to post-secondary education, but with careful attention to both quality and affordability, and with better rates of degree completion;
- Longitudinal studies on student outcomes;
- To develop "world class" research-intensive universities, so that it can compete for the best brains, produce top research, and be fully engaged in the global knowledge economy;
- To ensure that the private higher education sector works for the public good;
- To develop a differentiated and integrated higher education system, with institutions serving manifold societal and academic needs;
- Reforms in the governance of college and universities to permit autonomy and innovation at the institutional level;
- Better coordination between the University Grants Commission and ministries and departments involved in higher education, skill development, and research.

Connecting the dots

- What are the challenges before current higher education system of India? Critically analyse in context of draft national education policy 2019.

Lessons from Bhutan

Introduction

- Bhutan has recently announced a policy wherein Bhutan's teachers, doctors and other medical staff will earn more than civil servants of corresponding grades.
- This is a novel move as no other country has accorded teachers and doctors such pride of place in its government service, both in terms of remuneration and symbolism.

About the policy

- The policy's has been referred in Bhutan's 12th Five Year Plan (2018-23), published by its Gross National Happiness Commission, the country's highest policy-making body.
- The commission's strategy is to achieve desired national outcomes through education. The strategy opens with the notation, "making teaching a profession of choice". Therefore the proposal aims to achieve the country's human developmental objectives.
- The decision also comes in the wake of high levels of teacher attrition. Clearly, the government has formulated the policy to put a stop to such fall in numbers of teachers.

Significance

- As per The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) there is distinct correlation between student outcomes in a country and the status that its teachers enjoy.
- Further already Bhutan spends about 7.5% of its GDP on education. The fiscal implications of the new salary structure are unclear now.
- OECD's 'Education at a Glance 2018' report says that, "The quality of education can be a strong predictor of a country's economic prosperity".

Can India afford a similar policy?

- India currently spends about 3% of its GDP on education, accounting for about 10% of the Centre's and States' budgetary expenses and salaries of teachers and other staff constitute a large portion of this expenditure.
- The NITI Aayog in its report last year recommended that India raise this to 6% of GDP by 2022.
- Paying teachers significantly higher salaries may seem like a difficult task, but the Central and State governments could consider rationalising both teacher recruitment and allocation of funds to existing programmes.
- Some programmes may have outlived their purpose, while others could be better directed. In fact, improving accountability in the system could lead to reduction in cost.

- A World Bank study found that teacher absenteeism in India was nearly 24%, which costs the country about \$1.5 billion annually.
- Absenteeism could be the result of many factors, including teachers taking up a second job or farming to boost incomes, providing parental or nursing care in the absence of support systems, or lacking motivation.
- Hence, the incentive of a desirable income with strong accountability, can help mitigate many ills that plague the system, free fiscal space and help meet important national developmental objectives.
- Further, implementing a policy may be easier in a smaller State such as Delhi.
- Education is a key focus area for the Delhi government; the State invests 26% of its annual budget in the sector (much more than the national average).
- The administration has also worked on improving teacher motivation as a strategy for better educational outcomes. The base has been set.
- Moreover, since the State is highly urban and well-connected, it would be easier to enforce accountability measures.

Conclusion

- No investment that enables an educated, healthy, responsible and happy community can be deemed too high by any society.
- Improving teacher status by offering top notch salaries to attract the best to the profession could be that revolutionary policy-step forward, which Bhutan has shown a willingness to take.

Connecting the dots

The quality of education can be a strong predictor of a country's economic prosperity. Substantiate.

[27% of children with disabilities have never been to school: UNESCO](#)

Part of: Prelims and Mains GS II - Services related to Health and Education

In news

According to a report by UNESCO and the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, more than one in four children with disabilities between ages 5 and 19 in India have never attended any educational institution, while three-fourths of five-year-olds with disabilities are not in school.

Findings of the report

- There are more than 78 lakh children with disabilities in the country between 5-19 years.
- Only 61% of them were attending an educational institution. About 12% had dropped out, while 27% had never been to school at all.
- The number of children [with disabilities] enrolled in school drops significantly with each successive level of schooling. There are fewer girls with disabilities in school than boys.
- Differences remain among various types of disabilities. Only 20% of children with visual and hearing impairments had never been in school. However, among children with multiple disabilities or mental illness, that figure rose to more than 50%.

Lacunae in policy

- The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan teacher is supposed to visit and check students seeking home based education, but they rarely visit.
- The Right to Education Act mandates enrolment, but not the provision of resources needed for the actual education of a child with disabilities.
- The government data on enrolment includes home-based education, which often exists only on paper for children with disabilities.

Recommendations

- Amendments to the RTE Act, 2009 to make it align with the Right of Persons With Disabilities Act, 2016 are among the major recommendations of the report.
- Report recommends structural, funding and attitudinal changes to ensure that no child is left out of the right to education.

[A scheme for farmers that has not reached most farmers](#)

Introduction

PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) was launched in budget 2019 to ameliorate farm distress. The scheme's original objective to supplement the financial needs of the small and marginal farmers has been broadened to include all the categories of agricultural landowners.

Reasons of farm distress or agrarian crisis and the need for the scheme:

- Falling farm incomes due to decline in international prices
- Low domestic food inflation
- Fragmented land holdings
- Increasing indebtedness, small and marginal farmers usually take credit from informal channels at usurious rates.

- Farmer suicides

Envisaged benefits of the scheme:

- Providing structured income support to the small and marginal landholding farmers for procuring inputs such as seeds, fertilisers, equipment, labour and technological up gradation.
- Farmers will avoid falling in debt trap.

Features of the scheme:

- Annual support of Rs 6,000 to be provided in three Rs 2000 instalments each.
- Entirely funded by Union Government.
- Applicable from retrospective effect from December 2018
- Allocation of Rs 20,000 for the current financial year (2018-19) and Rs 75,000 crore in 2019-20.

Challenges for the scheme:

- Land records not adequately digitised.
- Implementation issues
- Fiscal space

Positive aspects of the scheme:

- This support is over and above all the existing schemes for the farming sector.
- Pan India coverage; approximately 12 crore farming families to benefit
- Assured income support to the farming class will provide sense of confidence.
- Family is taken as a unit, hence in large joint families the accrued benefit may be larger.

Negative aspects of the scheme:

- Support of Rs 500 per family is not enough to alleviate farm income
- Tenant farmers and landless agricultural labourers will not this benefit.
- The cash transfer is not linked to the size of the farmer's land, unlike
- Telangana's Rythu Bandhu scheme, under which farmers receive ₹8,000 per annum for every acre owned.
- Telangana's RYTHU BANDHU scheme and Odisha's KALIA scheme offer more than PM-KISAN.
- It would be recurring expenditure as it is hard to roll back. Also, it would add to fiscal deficit.

Lacunae in implementation

- There are 125 million farming households, who constitute the scheme's original intended beneficiaries. However, at present, the list of beneficiaries includes only 32% (40.27 million) of these households.
- A majority of the intended beneficiary households are yet to receive even their first instalment of ₹2,000.
- Implementation in certain States has been prioritised. U.P., for instance, accounts for one-third of total beneficiary households. A total of 17 States have received a negligible share of the first instalment, accounting for less than 9%.

Way forward

- For the scheme to be effective, PM-Kisan needs to be uniformly implemented across regions.
- Tenants constitute 13.7% of farm households and incur the additional input cost of land rent. There is a strong case to include landless tenants and other poor families.
- There is need of the necessary link with scale of production (farm size).
- If income support is indeed the objective, the most deserving need to be given precedence.

Connecting the dots:

- Critically examine the provisions and implementation of PM-KISAN scheme.

Private funds needed for Swachh Bharat

Part of Prelims and mains GS III Indian Economy, GS II Governance

In news

- 99.2% of rural India is now open defecation-free & therefore the next goal of the Swachh Bharat should be to have 100% safe and scientific disposal of solid and liquid waste.
- The safe and scientific disposal of solid and liquid waste would include improvement in working conditions for sanitation workers and manual scavengers, sewer construction and water availability, treatment of industrial effluence, drain bio-remediation, river surface cleaning, apart from other measures.
- Government must also allocate adequate resources to undertake such measures and apart from this, private partnerships such as through corporate social responsibility, crowd funding aligned with local government financing, among other measures can be undertaken to finance scientific disposal of waste.

[Green light for rural roads](#)

Part of Prelims and mains GS III Inclusive growth, rural infrastructure development

In news

- PMGSY-III scheme was announced by the Finance Minister in Budget Speech for the year 2018-19.
- **Objective:** It involves consolidation of Through Routes and Major Rural Links connecting habitations to Gramin Agricultural Markets (GrAMs), Higher Secondary Schools and Hospitals.
- **Impact:** This would facilitate easy and faster movement to and from Gramin Agricultural Markets (GrAMs), Higher Secondary Schools and Hospitals. Roads constructed under PMGSY would also be maintained properly.
- Project period: 2019-20 to 2024-25.

Do you know?

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)

PMGSY was launched in December, 2000 with an objective to provide single all-weather road connectivity to eligible unconnected habitation of designated population size (500+ in plain areas and 250+ in North-East, hill, tribal and desert areas as per Census, 2001) for overall socio-economic development of the areas. 97% of the eligible and feasible habitations have already been connected by all-weather road.

[Centre, Assam move SC for sample re-verification of NRC](#)

Part of : Mains GS paper II - Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

In news :

- The Centre and the State of Assam made an urgent mention before the Chief Justice of India for an extension of the deadline for final publication of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) for the State from July 31, 2019 to a “future date”.

Why?

To conduct a “sample re-verification process” in relation to names included in the draft NRC published on July 30, 2018.

Background:

The first draft of the updated National Register of Citizens (NRC) of Assam has been published recently by the Office of the State Coordinator of NRC on December 31, 2017.

The objective behind updating and publishing the 1951 NRC is to compile a list of the names of genuine Indian citizens residing in Assam and, in the process, detect foreigners (read Bangladeshis) who may have illegally entered the state after March 24, 1971.

The publication of the initial NRC list is the outcome of a long-standing demand of the Assamese people to detect and deport illegal Bangladeshi migrants from their state.

- The Assam Accord of 1985 did not contain any specific mention of updating the NRC.
- The Government of India constituted a number of Tribunals and Appellate Courts under both the Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunals) Act of 1983 and the Foreigners Tribunal Act of 1964 to detect illegal Bangladeshis.
- In May 2005 that the first step towards updating the NRC of 1951 was taken, when a tripartite meeting between the Centre, the Assam government and AASU was held to review the progress made in the implementation of the Assam Accord.
- Successive governments have been extremely reluctant to update the NRC of 1951 due to various political considerations and vested interests. Supreme Court ordered the Union and State governments to begin the process of updating of the NRC in Assam.
- Accordingly, the Ministry of Home Affairs, issued the notification for starting the work of updating the NRC. The Supreme Court constituted a Committee “to take care of any clarification that would be required with regard to the modalities in the preparation of the NRC.”

[Supreme Court questions the need for re-verification of NRC](#)

Part of: GS Mains Paper II – Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation

In news:

- The Centre and the State of Assam had urged the Supreme Court more time to conduct sample re-verification process of NRC.
- However, the Supreme Court has questioned the need for re-verification of NRC.

With exam point of view, one needs to focus on the following –

- About NRC and background
- Benefits of NRC
- Why has the National Register of Citizens (NRC) been in controversy lately?

- Issues/Challenges with NRC process
- Conclusion

We have already learnt about NRC

National register of citizens is a register containing names of all genuine Indians residing in India. Assam faced influx from Bangladesh, to remove the illegal migration from neighbouring countries NRC as prepared in 1951.

Benefits of NRC:

- Detection of illegal immigrants, inclusion will be a shield against harassment and a ticket to enjoying all the constitutional rights and safeguards and the benefits of government schemes.
- To safeguard the indigenous population and civilization.
- Illegal activities like terrorism, human trafficking, drug trafficking can be checked.
- To safeguard Voting rights and properties such as land and house.

Controversies related to the National Register of Citizens (NRC):

- Laborious process: Adding a person to NRC is complex procedure because of presenting many documents and layers of verification.
- Document verification: “Family tree verification” has become difficult process for left out children.
- Rejection of certificate: More than 40 lakh people are rejected for panchayath residency certificates.
- Citizenship related: Failed to ensure legal clarity over the manner in which the claims of citizenship could be decided.
- Role of Supreme Court: lack of monitoring process, inability to comprehend political and policy actions in case of loss of citizenship.
- Huge population: Given the size of India’s population, implementation of the NRC will be a mammoth task and demands a detailed analysis.

Criticism of the NRC:

- The first report was announced on December 31-January 1, 2017, the removal of 40 lakh people leads to a major social and political crisis.
- The mass insecurity and social crisis stalking the 40 lakh people of Assam.
- Many people are in stake who lives in strategic and sensitive border state. Their documents are being ambiguous.
- Assam has a peculiar problem of villages getting ravaged, or disappearing, due to annual floods unleashed by the fiery Brahmaputra. Documents get destroyed, geographies shift, addresses change.
- Several cases of transparent injustice whereby families have been divided – some declared Doubtful Voters and foreigners, others as bonafide citizens.

- Widespread perception that specifically linguistic and religious minorities are being targeted – namely, Bengali speaking Muslims and Hindus.

Conclusion

It is important and essential for the union government to proactively come out with an equitable, predictable and transparent plan on the way forward, for those who will be identified as ‘foreigners’. The left out from the NRC must be handled carefully on humanitarian basis.

[National Medical Commission Bill](#)

Part of: GS Mains II – Health sector; Education reforms; Government schemes and policies

In news:

- Centre plans to introduce the National Medical Commission Bill (NMC Bill) and repeal the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956.
- NMC Bill was first introduced in Parliament in December 2017 and had provoked widespread protests over a proposal for bridge courses to allow AYUSH practitioners to prescribe allopathic medicines. However, the 2017 bill lapsed with the dissolution of the 16th Lok Sabha.
- The current Bill proposes to convert the final year MBBS examination into a licentiate exam, which will be a requirement for doctors to practise medicine.
- The examination, to be called the National Exit Test (NEXT), will also be used for entrance into post-graduate medical courses, and act as a screening test for foreign medical graduates.

[An unbalanced view of the technical interventions in MGNREGA](#)**Context:**

- Economic Survey has presented an unbalanced view of the technical interventions in MGNREGA
- The Survey draws heavily from the Indian School of Business’s working paper titled “A Friend Indeed: Does The Use of Digital Identity Make Welfare Programs Truly Counter-Cyclical?”

Concerns:

- Economic survey presents a skewed and unbalanced view of the programme's technical interventions instead of taking a comprehensive view of the implementation.
- The Survey completely ignores numerous instances where technology has resulted in violation of workers' rights under the MGNREGA.

About MNREGA

- The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, earlier known as the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act was passed on **7th September 2005** to augment employment generation and social security in India. It covers all districts of India except the ones with 100% urban population.
- "Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act", MGNREGA), is an Indian labour law and social security measure that aims to guarantee the "**Right to Work**".

MGNREGA History:

In 1991, the P.V Narashima Rao government proposed a pilot scheme for generating employment in rural areas with the following goals:

- Employment Generation for agricultural labour during the lean season.
- Infrastructure Development
- Enhanced Food Security

This scheme was called the Employment Assurance Scheme which later evolved into the MGNREGA after the merger with the Food for Work Programme in the early 2000s.

Objectives of MGNREGA:

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) has the following objectives:

- MGNREGA guarantee "Right To Work" for at least one member of family for 100 days annually, 150 days for SC/STs during non-agricultural seasons .
- Employment provided within 15 days of enrollment , failing to which the government will give unemployment wages to work-seekers
- Increase economic security
- Decrease migration of labour from rural to urban areas

Changes in MNREGA structure

- By 2009-10, MGNREGA wages were only 90% of market wages for males, but 26% higher than market wages for females.
- By 2011-12, they were lower than market wages for both category of workers, but for females, they were close to market levels.

- The 2017-18 PLFS estimates show that private market wages for males were higher than MGNREGA wages by 74%, and female market wages were higher than MGNREGA wages by 21%.
- Clearly, no male worker is going to demand MGNREGA work when he can get a much higher daily wage with the same effort .
- However, women continue to demand and work under MGNREGA, though market wages are higher, because of non-availability of work and discrimination as well as exclusion from the private labour market.

Six reasons why the Economic Survey's presentation of the MGNREGA is misleading

1. Lack of adequate financial allocation, pending liabilities and low wages.

- 20% of the Budget allocation in each of the last five years is of **pending wage liabilities** from previous years
- MGNREGA wages in many **States are about 40% lower** than the Ministry of Labour's national minimum wage.
- Instead of sufficiently funding MGNREGA, a legal right, in times of severe drought, there is **disproportionate attention** by the government

2. Misrepresentation of continuous technological interventions in the MGNREGA since its inception

- Electronic funds transfer started as far back as in 2011 through the **Electronic Fund Management System (eFMS)**, which became symbolic of **the Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT)**.
- In 2016 **National Electronic Fund Management System (N-eFMS)** has been introduced.
- The Survey uses the term "ALP" for **Aadhaar-linked payments** and conflates it with the DBT .
- The **merging of two terms** prevents one from making an honest assessment on the effect that different interventions have had.

3. The Survey makes strong assertions that timely payment of wages have positively impacted worker participation.

- The Survey makes claims on reduction in payment delays due to the introduction of Aadhaar
- Wage payments to MGNREGA workers happen in two stages
- **First stage:** it is the time taken by the blocks to generate the electronic Funds Transfer Orders (FTO) and send it digitally to the Central government.
- **second stage:** it is the time taken by the Central government to process these FTOs and transfer wages to workers' accounts.

- Delays in the first stage have reduced, those in the second stage continue to be unacceptably high(takes more than 50 days).

4. An increase in demand for and supply of work in drought-affected areas to Aadhaar ignoring other crucial factors.

- Judicial-administrative directives, which came into effect after Aadhaar was introduced, played an important role in the increase in the MGNREGA work uptake in drought areas.
- **Examples:**
 - In Rajasthan- 67% increase in employment generated and a record number of households having completed 100 days of work under the MGNREGA as a part of 'work demand campaign'
 - In Karnataka- There is a three-fold increase in employment generation in Karnataka in 2019 compared to 2018.

5. The Survey rightfully acknowledges the nature of positive targeting of the MGNREGA — with women, Dalits and Adivasis benefitting the most — it wrongfully attributes it wholly to the introduction of Aadhaar.

6. Aadhaar-linked payments identifying “ghost beneficiaries” is exaggerated as an RTI query showed that they accounted for only about 1.4% of total households in 2016-17.

Conclusion

- Overlooking the fundamental issues, cherry-picking studies and using flawed analyses to justify technocracy is an example of ethical paralysis.
- The Economic Survey harps about an ill-designed technological pipeline, the fact is that a landmark labour programme is being put on a ventilator.

Connecting the dots:

- “Technology is neither good nor bad; nor is it neutral” Elucidate?
- In the Light of continuation of MNREGA in the present year. Discuss its achievements and limitations
- MNREGA- is a great example of proactive disclosure of information through its Management Information System (MIS). Discuss
- MNREGA, despite of all the limitations and failure, it is in agreement with sustainable development. Elucidate.

How not to educate India

Context

- Draft National Education Policy ignores key issues of learning

Draft National Education Policy:

- The draft of New National Education Policy has been recently submitted by the Committee led by the Chairman Dr. Kasturirangan on education policy.

Need for DNEP

- The extant National Policy on Education, 1986 modified in 1992 required changes to meet the contemporary and futuristic needs of India's large youth population.
- A New Education Policy is designed to meet the changing dynamics of the requirements in terms of quality education, innovation and research.
- The policy aims at making India a knowledge superpower by equipping students with the necessary skills and knowledge.
- It also focuses on eliminating the shortage of manpower in science, technology, academics and industry.
- The Draft Policy is built on the foundational pillars of Access, Equity, Quality, Affordability and Accountability.

Why we should know about DNEP?

- It has implications for India's ability to reap its "demographic dividend".
- Accelerated economic development is dependent upon youthful labour force, this can be achieved only by investments in human development, including education.

Key changes proposed in DNEP

- The committee has proposed to rename the Ministry of Human Resource Development as Ministry of Education (MoE).
- Curriculum - In school education, a major reconfiguration of curricular and pedagogical structure was proposed.
- The policy calls for an Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) as an integral part of school education.
- A 5+3+3+4 curricular and pedagogical structure based on cognitive and socio-emotional developmental stages of children was proposed.
- RTE Act - The committee recommends Extension of Right to Education Act 2009 to cover children of ages 3 to 18 (currently, 6-14).
- The committee proposes for massive transformation in teacher education.
- Institution - A new apex body Rashtriya Shiksha Ayog is proposed.

- The National Research Foundation, an apex body, is proposed for creating a strong research culture
- National Higher Education Regulatory Authority will be the only regulator for all higher education including professional education
- UGC is to be transformed to Higher Education Grants Commission (HEGC).
- The policy proposes to create an accreditation eco-system led by a revamped NAAC (National Assessment and Accreditation Council).
- Language - Promotion of Indian and classical languages and setting up three new National Institutes for Pali, Persian and Prakrit were proposed.
- Indian Institute of Translation and Interpretation (IITI) has been recommended.
- The policy called for the proper implementation of the three-language formula (dating back to 1968) in schools across the country.
- Accordingly, students in Hindi-speaking states should learn a modern Indian language, apart from Hindi and English.

Issues not addressed in DNEP

Five issues that the draft must consider incorporating:

1. Financing of education

- This report lost an opportunity to discuss the advantages of public investments in elementary and high school education that generate “public good”, as against the university-level policy focus on promoting “private good

2. Privatisation-

- Reckless and unregulated private schools and colleges, besides compromising on quality, will only increase (not reduce) social inequalities in India..

3. Technology (ICT) as a leveler and equity enhancer

4. English as a medium of instruction

- This issue was discussed that too mostly by undermining the role and importance of the English language.

5. The state’s responsibility in educating the masses.

What can be done?

- Education reform must focus on certain fundamental principles like personalised learning, literacy and numeracy, scientific temper that promotes competition and collaboration
- Technological platforms must be immediately harnessed to impart equitable access at primary, elementary and high school levels and to increase the quality of education
- Regular assessment of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

- A new “public-private-partnership” model will succeed in achieving the objectives of quality, affordability and equality of access.
- It should emphasise enough the role and importance of state governments in imparting education to the masses.

Conclusion:

- Education is a powerful instrument for reducing poverty and inequality; and it enhances competitiveness in the global economy.
- Ensuring access to quality education for all is central to the economic and social development of India, according to the World Bank.

Connecting the dots:

1. Discuss unique features of the draft National Education Policy, 2019. Also comment on the challenges in implementation of suggested recommendations?
2. Education is a powerful instrument for reducing poverty and inequality- Analyse

Measures to improve quality of Education

Part of: Mains GS II- Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Education

In News

- **Substandard teacher training colleges to be shut down**
- The National Council for Teacher Education(NCTE) has begun the process, as recommended by draft National Educational Policy
- A reduction in quantity is needed to boost quality – India produces 19.5 lakh teachers every year, though the annual requirement is less than 3 lakh

Other measures required to improve Teacher education

- To choose 700 colleges — at least one per district — as **model teacher training institutions** so as to guide other such institutes
- Review the outdated **curriculum** of teacher training through
 - Inclusion of more practical component
 - Incorporate **digital** technological advances into teaching method
 - Child centric curriculum
- Launch of the four-year integrated B.Ed programmes

Do you know?

- **NCTE is a statutory body** under NCTE Act,1993. Earlier it used to function as advisory body under NCERT
- NCTE functions for the central as well as state governments on all matter with regard to the Teacher Education

[Reservation in Private Jobs](#)

Part of: Mains GS-II - Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors

In News

- **Andhra Pradesh** Becomes First State to Reserve **75% Private Jobs for Local Youths**
- According to the new law, if a company does not find the necessary skills in locals, then it will need to train them in association with the state government,
- The law is applicable to all industrial units, factories, joint ventures and PPP projects.
- The step is positive in that it **promotes local hiring**
- This helps in **addressing the discontent among native youth** about loss of jobs to migrant labour from other states (like UP, Bihar)

Issues

- It is **against the spirit of free-market economy**
- If required skills are not found in local youth, then industries have to skill them **increasing their cost of operations**
- This will **discourage major industries** from outside the state to set up its unit in the state of AP
- Similar laws are proposed in other states like Madhya Pradesh, which cumulatively impacts the unity of India and freedom of its citizens (Article 19(1)(d), 19(1)(e),19(1)(g))

[Pradhan Mantri Laghu Vyapari Maan-dhan Yojana \(PMLVMDY\)](#)

Part of: Mains GS-II - Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes.

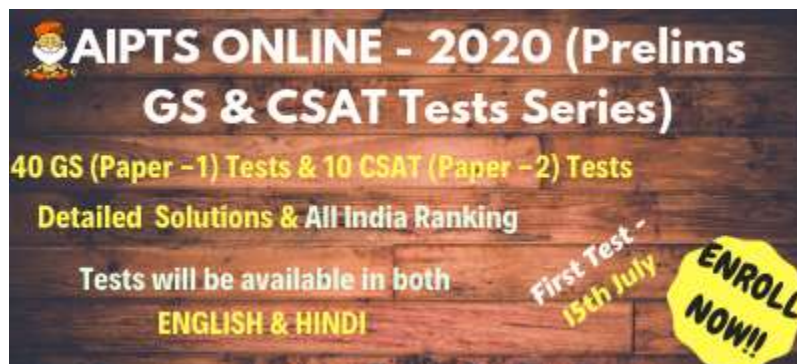
In News

- The centre's **pension scheme for small traders (PMLVMDY)** has been notified and being introduced on trial basis from this week

- The scheme assures a **minimum monthly pension of Rs. 3,000/- month** after attaining the age of 60 years
- **Who can enrol for this scheme?**
 - All small shopkeepers and self-employed persons as well as the retail traders with GST turnover below Rs. 1.5 crore and age between 18-40 years
- **Potential of the Scheme?**
 - The scheme would benefit more than 5 crore small shopkeepers and traders.
- **Simplified process of enrolment-** based on self-declaration as no documents are required except Aadhaar and bank account. Interested persons can enrol themselves through more than 3.25 lakh Common Service Centres spread across the country.
- **Government of India will make matching contribution** in the subscribers' account
- **LIC** has been chosen as pension fund for this scheme.

Do you know?

- Only 7.4% of the working age population in India is covered under a pension program(65% for Germany & 31% for Brazil) according to the 2017 WEF's report on Global Human Capital.
- Demographically, India will transition slowly from a 'young' to a 'greying' country, where persons above the age of 60 would increase from 8.9% of the population now to 19.4% by 2050
- **Ramadorai Committee on Household finances** – India is sitting on a **ticking pension time bomb**, whereby demographic dividend can become demographic concern



INTERNATIONAL

[Hong Kong protests undermine rule of law, social order: China](#)

Part of Prelims and mains GS II International events

In news

- People in Hong Kong are protesting over controversial Extradition Bill.
- Beijing denies interfering, but for many Hong Kong residents, the extradition Bill is the latest step in a relentless march towards mainland control.
- China condemned violent protests in Hong Kong as an “undisguised challenge” to the formula under which the city is ruled.

“One country two system” formula

- The former British colony of Hong Kong returned to China in 1997 under a “one country, two systems” formula that allows freedoms not enjoyed in mainland China, including freedom to protest and an independent judiciary.
- 1 July 2019 was the 22nd anniversary of the handover.

About protest in Hong Kong

- Millions of people have taken to the streets in the past few weeks to protest against the now-suspended extradition Bill that would allow people to be sent to mainland China to face trial in courts controlled by the Communist Party.
- Lawyers and rights groups say China’s justice system is marked by torture, forced confessions and arbitrary detention.
- The business, diplomatic and legal communities fear the corrosion of the legal autonomy of Hong Kong and the difficulty of guaranteeing a fair trial in China.

[New Constitution calls Kim head of state instead of ‘supreme leader’](#)

Part of Prelims and mains GS II International Relations

In news

- Kim Jong-un has been formally named head of state of North Korea and the Commander-in-Chief of the military in a new Constitution observers said was possibly aimed at preparing for a peace treaty with the United States.

- North Korea has also long called for a peace deal with the United States to normalise relations and end the technical state of war that has existed since the 1950-1953 Korean War concluded with an armistice rather than a peace treaty.
- A previous Constitution simply called Mr. Kim “supreme leader” who commands the country’s “overall military force”

India’s Agenda in UNSC

Context:

- India secured UNSC non-permanent membership for 2021-22 with support from Asia-Pacific group including Pakistan and China.
- Each year the 193-member UN General Assembly (UNGA) elects five non-permanent members for a two-year term at the high-table.
- India has been at the forefront of the years-long effort to reform the security council saying it rightly deserves a place as a permanent member of the council, which, in its current form, does not represent the geopolitical realities of the 21st Century.

Concerns:

- Currently, the world is in a greater state of disorder than at any time since the end of World War II.
- Fear, populism, polarisation, and ultra-nationalism have become the basis of politics in many countries.
- The benign and supportive international system that followed the Cold War has disappeared.
- India finds itself in a troubled region between West and East Asia - a region with insurgencies, terrorism, human and narcotics trafficking, and great power rivalries (ranging from turmoil in Gulf, Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (Daesh), Iraq and Syria issue to Afghanistan’s peace process).
- India also faces issues in Asia such as strategic mistrust or misperception, unresolved borders and territorial disputes, the absence of a pan-Asia security architecture, and competition over energy and strategic minerals.

Role of UNSC:

- Prime function of the UNSC should be to maintain international peace and security.
- It should also focus on shared goals, especially international social and economic cooperation.
- Try to bring coordination between 193 sovereign member nations.

To this end, the permanent members (P-5) as also other UN members must consider it worth their while to reform the Council.

What should India aim to do?

Studies and reports predict that – by 2050, China will be the world’s number one economic power, followed by India. UNSC permanent seat will come India’s way more by invitation and less by self-canvassing.

As a non-permanent member of UNSC, India’s objectives should be –

- to help build a stable and secure external environment
- to promote regional and global security
- to promote growth and its own people’s prosperity
- to promote a rule-based world order
- to emerge as a partner of choice for developing and developed countries alike

India must leverage this latest opportunity to project itself as a responsible nation.

- India will have to increase its financial contribution, as the apportionment of UN expenses for each of the P-5 countries is significantly larger than that for India.
- Although India has been a leading provider of peacekeepers, its assessed contribution to UN peacekeeping operations is minuscule.
- At a time when there is a deficit of international leadership on global issues, especially on security, migrant movement, poverty, and climate change, India has an opportunity to promote well-balanced, common solutions.
- India must help guide the Council away from the perils of invoking the principles of humanitarian interventionism or ‘Responsibility to Protect’.
- Given the fragile and complex international system, which can become even more unpredictable and conflictual, India should work towards a rules-based global order. Sustainable development and promoting peoples’ welfare should become its new drivers.
- India should push to ensure that the UNSC Sanctions Committee targets all those individuals and entities warranting sanctions.
- Having good relations with all the great powers, India must lead the way by pursuing inclusion, the rule of law, constitutionalism, and rational internationalism.
- India should once again become a consensus-builder, instead of the outlier it has progressively become.
- It should find a harmonised response for dealing with global problems of climate change, disarmament, terrorism, trade, and development.

Conclusion:

- A rules-based international order helps rather than hinders India.
- India will be a rich country in the future and will acquire greater military muscle, but its people will remain relatively poor.
- India is a great nation, but not a great power.
- India cannot stride the global stage with confidence in the absence of stable relations with its neighbours.
- Besides whatever else is done within the UN and the UNSC, India must lift its game in South Asia and its larger neighbourhood.

Connecting the dots:

- What do you understand by the term or concept – “Rules-Based International Order”? Also discuss the challenges to the rules-based international order and its impact on India.
- India is a great nation, but not a great power. Do you agree? Elucidate your opinion.
- Does the composition and rights in the Security Council represent 21st century world dynamics? Critically examine.
- Why is the permanent membership in UNSC so important for India? Do you think India’s claim to permanent membership is valid? Elucidate.

[Organisation of Islamic Cooperation \(OIC\) report to Xinjiang on Uighurs](#)

Context:

- The below article deals with OIC record on China’s Xinjiang province, which is in the news on account of alleged violations of human rights and curbs on religious freedom of Uighurs and other Muslim ethnic groups.
- A Human Rights Watch report issued in September 2018 had also criticised Beijing’s policies in Xinjiang.

About OIC

- The OIC, represents 57 member states and a population of about 1.8 billion people.
- It is the world’s second-largest intergovernmental organisation after the UN
- It is committed to protect the interests of the Muslim world.
- It routinely expresses solidarity with Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria and Bosnia, as well as with the peoples of the Turkish Cypriot state, Kosovo and Jammu and Kashmir

Who are Uighurs?

- The Uighurs are a minority Turkic ethnic group originating from and culturally affiliated with the general region of Central and East Asia.
- The Uighurs have been recognized as native to only one region, the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China

Indian and OIC:

- India became the 'Guest of Honour' at the 46th session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) held in Abu Dhabi in March.
- The final declaration ignored the customary reference to Jammu and Kashmir.

Reasons for the ignorance

- The strong personal and state-to-state ties built by the Indian government with important OIC states, especially the UAE.
- However, one of the resolutions did refer to Kashmir and expressed concern at the situation of Muslims in India.

OIC's report on China's Xinjiang province:

- The main Abu Dhabi declaration, like the Dhaka Declaration, made no reference to China or its Muslim minorities.
- It is fascinating to come across the resolution passed at Abu Dhabi which chose to commend the efforts of the People's Republic of China in providing care to its Muslim citizens.
- China has defended its policies and claimed that it's so-called 'internment camps' are actually vocational centres meant to "to educate and save the local people of Xinjiang who were influenced by religious extremism".

Reasons for favouring China:

- China is a major power
- It is a permanent member of the UN Security Council
- It has a large market for hydrocarbons and a source of arms and investment
- Moreover, China refrains from preaching to others about human rights or systems of governance.
- As China's continued import of oil from Iran suggests, countries under U.S. pressure and sanctions often turn to China for relief. In return, they do their best to guard China's interests at the OIC.

Do you know?

- Recently Pakistan's Minister for Religious Affairs urged China to lift restrictions on Muslims in Xinjiang.

- Pakistan chief raised concerns about the Uighur issue with the Chinese Ambassador that has cone has deep embarrassment to the OIC.

Connecting the dots:

- What is Organisation of Islamic Cooperation? Discuss its objectives and also discuss the significance of OIC's first-time invitation to India.

BRICS Foreign ministers meet

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains GS-II -Important International institutions.

In News

- Foreign Ministers of BRICS meeting to take place in Rio de Janerio
- The goal is to prepare for the summit of the BRICS leaders, scheduled in November at Brasilia, Brazil's capital city
- **Digital economy - 5G and data localisation-** will dominate the BRICS foreign ministers meeting

Do you know?

- US has banned Chinese telecom company Huawei (forerunner in 5G technology) on allegations of theft of Intellectual property, financial fraud and National security risk
- India is yet to clarify whether it will include Huawei in its trials of 5G equipment scheduled to start in September
- Data localisation – RBI has passed guidelines that financial data pertaining to Indians is stored only in Indian servers
- BRICS is an **informal grouping** of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa formed in 2006
- BRICS countries represent 41% of global population and together contribute nearly 23% of gross world product

Rise of China

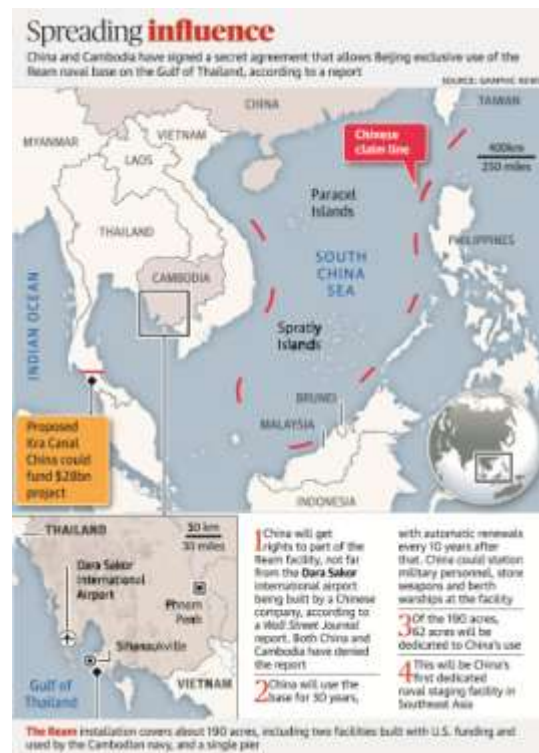
Part of: GS Prelims and Mains GS II- International Politics

In News

- China and Cambodia have signed a secret agreement that allows Beijing exclusive use of Ream Naval base of Cambodia located in Gulf of Thailand
- This will be China's first dedicated naval staging facility in South East Asia

Do You Know?

- China has proposed to build **Kra Canal** that would connect the Gulf of Thailand with the Andaman Sea across the Kra Isthmus in southern Thailand.
- All these initiatives are to counter the USA's dominance of **Malacca Strait** – important shipping lane which carries about 25% of the world's traded goods
- **South China Sea dispute** involves contesting claims, both maritime and islands, by 7 countries viz. Brunei, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Taiwan, and Vietnam.



https://d39gegkjaqduz9.cloudfront.net/TH/2019/07/27/CNI/Chennai/TH/5_16/6a017006_7f4ff3bf_101_mr.jpg

RCEP negotiations

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains GS- II – International Relations

In News:

- Australia is leading a negotiation team of RCEP countries so as to convince India to commit to the deal (Free Trade Agreement) by this year end.

About RCEP:

- Regional Comprehensive Cooperation agreement – is a proposed free trade agreement between 10 members of ASEAN and its five FTA partners (China, India, Australia, Japan, New Zealand)
- **RCEP negotiation** was formally launched in **2012**, whose member states together account for 3.4 billion people and approximately 40% of world's GDP.

Do you know?

Members of Indian Industry are resisting RCEP due to following concerns

- **Flooding of the market with Chinese goods** impacting domestic manufacturers
 - Lack of access to **Indian services** in the RCEP countries (Services is India's strong area and has huge potential to tap into RCEP market)
-



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INDIA AND THE WORLD

Reclaiming the Indo-Pacific narrative

Background

At the 34th summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in Bangkok in June 2019, its member states finally managed to articulate a collective vision for the Indo-Pacific region in a document titled “The ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific”. However, it is a non-binding document.

ASEAN reluctance

ASEAN has been reluctant to frontally engage with the Indo-Pacific discourse as the perception was that it may antagonise China. But there was soon a realisation that such an approach might allow others to shape the regional architecture and marginalise the ASEAN itself. And so the final outlook that the ASEAN has come up with effectively seeks to take its own position rather than following any one power’s lead.

Indian Response: India has welcomed the ASEAN’s outlook on the Indo-Pacific as it sees “important elements of convergence” with its own approach.

Significance

- The ASEAN’s intent to be in the driving seat is clear as it seeks to manage the emerging regional order with policy moves.
- ASEAN to reclaim the strategic narrative in its favour in order to underscore its centrality in the emerging regional order.
- The rise of material powers, i.e. economic and military, requires avoiding the deepening of mistrust, miscalculation and patterns of behaviour based on a zero-sum game.
- Should also complement existing frameworks of cooperation at the regional and sub-regional levels.
- Quick conclusion of a Code of Conduct in the South China Sea, an increasingly contested maritime space which is claimed largely by China and in parts by the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia and Malaysia. Tensions continue to rise over the militarisation of this waterway.
- The ASEAN outlook does not see the Indo-Pacific as one continuous territorial space, it emphasises development and connectivity, underlining the need for maritime cooperation, infrastructure connectivity and broader economic cooperation.

Connecting the dots:

- Explain briefly: The significance of ASEAN in Indo-pacific.

Visa-free year-long access for pilgrims to Kartarpur Sahib

Part of Prelims and mains GS II International Relations

In news

- Pakistan agreed to give year-long visa-free access for Indian pilgrims to the holy Gurdwara of Kartarpur Sahib.
- It was agreed to allow visa-free travel for the Indian passport-holders and OCI card-holders seven days a week.

Do you know?

- The Kartarpur Corridor is a proposed border corridor between the neighbouring nations of India and Pakistan, connecting the Sikh shrines of Dera Baba Nanak Sahib (located in Punjab, India) and Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur (in Punjab, Pakistan).
- Currently under planning, the corridor is intended to allow religious devotees from India to visit the Gurdwara in Kartarpur, 4.7 kilometres (2.9 miles) from the Pakistan-India border, without a visa.
- The Kartarpur Corridor was first proposed in early 1999 by the prime ministers of India and Pakistan, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Nawaz Sharif, respectively, as part of the Delhi–Lahore Bus diplomacy.
- The corridor will reportedly be completed before the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev in November 2019.
- Currently pilgrims from India have to take a bus to Lahore to get to Kartarpur, which is a 125 km journey, despite the fact that people on the Indian side of the border can physically see Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur on the Pakistani side. An elevated platform has also been constructed for the same on the Indian side, where people use binoculars to get a good view.

Pakistan opens its airspace after 6 months

Part of : Mains GS paper II - India and its neighbourhood- relations

In news :

- Pakistan reopened its airspace for all flights early after a gap of six months
- Pakistan shut its airspace in February after India carried out an air strike against what it said was a terrorist training camp in Pakistani territory.

How does the curb affect India?

- Airlines had to take a longer route to their destinations and burn more fuel,
- stop midway for refuelling
- Roster more pilots and cabin crew as their duty hours are regulated.
- An increase in fuel expenses, which constitute 40% of an airline's operational costs

Advantage of lifting the curb on airspace

- The move will benefit Indian carriers as well as the airlines that enter or exit Pakistan from its eastern border with India.
- Flights between Delhi and the west will see travel times drop by up to four hours

[Indo-Afghan trade chokes on U.S. curbs](#)

Part of Prelims and mains GS III and II - Indian Economy and International relations

In news

- The government's decision to slash its allocation for Iran's Chabahar port by two-thirds will be a further blow to India-Afghan trade, already hit by Pakistan's decision to ban airspace rights to most flights to and from India, and U.S. sanctions on Iran.
- The government, which had been allocating ₹150 crore for the port each year for the past few years, has slashed its allocation to just ₹45 crore in the Budget for 2019-20.

Waiver of little help

- Technically, the U.S. has issued India a waiver to develop the Chabahar port, to promote trade with Afghanistan as part of its "South Asia" strategy.
- In practice, however, the cancellation of all waivers for oil and crippling economic sanctions imposed by the Trump administration, have all but frozen deals.
- Afghan banks are hesitant to open credit lines for shipments, and shippers and cargo handlers are staying away from servicing the Iranian port.
- As a result of Pakistan's airspace ban, Afghan fruit and agricultural products that had made up a bulk of the cargo on flights between Kabul and Delhi are being shipped to other international markets.

[Netanyahu expected in Delhi](#)

Part of Prelims and mains GS II International Relations

In news

Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is planning to travel to India in September 2019.

India Israel relations

- India-Israel relations have been growing rapidly in the past few years. India Israel relationship is moving in an “upward trajectory”.
- Mr. Modi became the first Indian Prime Minister to visit Israel in 2017, a visit Mr. Netanyahu returned in January 2018, which marked 25 years since the establishment of full diplomatic relations.

Bilateral talks

- In the run-up to the visit, bilateral talks on defence issues have focussed on the emergency procurement of ‘Spike’ anti-tank missiles and the purchase of more precision-guided munitions.
- The two sides are also discussing a long-pending proposal to buy 2 Phalcon AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System).
- Israel is expected to make a case for India to align itself less with Tehran to join Israel and the U.S. in putting pressure on the regime there.
- Israel considers Iran as number one threat to regional and global peace & security.

India's stand

While India has fallen in line with the U.S. sanctions on cutting its oil imports from Iran, it retains a strong relationship with the Iranian government, and has publicly expressed its concerns over the impact of a war in West Asia on the millions of Indians living and working in the region.

[A shot at economic logic](#)

Background

The 12th Extra-Ordinary Summit of the African Union (AU) which concluded on July 8 at Niamey, the capital of the Niger Republic, saw 54 of 55 of its member states signing the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) for goods and services.

What is African Continental FTA?

The 18th session of the African Union, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in 2012 adopted a decision to establish a Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) by 2017.

Most of the African countries signed the African Continental Free Trade Area and the Protocol establishing the African Economic Community in Kigali, Rwanda in 2018. This led to the Kigali Declaration.

Objectives of AfCFTA:

- Create a single continental market for goods and services
- Free movement of business persons and investments
- Accelerate the establishment of the Continental Customs Union and the African customs union
- Expand intra African trade
- Coordination among members for trade facilitation regimes and instruments
- Enhance competitiveness at the industry and enterprise level on Pan-African level
- Exploiting opportunities for scale production and continental market access

Hurdles & Roadblocks for AfCFTA:

- The African Union has been largely ineffective in dealing with the continent's various problems & therefore, AU past failures and ineffectiveness raises concerns whether it can successfully implement AfCFTA.
- AfCFTA has to work against the ongoing global protectionist trends as seen in the U.S.-China trade conflict, Brexit and the problems in WTO functioning.
- The intra-African trade currently comprises just about 15% of the continent's trade. This is quite low when compared to regional trade in other continents – roughly 67% in Europe, 58% in Asia and 48% in North America.
- The exports of most African countries are predominantly primary commodity. This would need to be pared down in international trade and adjusted among members.
- Most African countries currently lack in additive manufacturing, automation and other fourth industrial revolution innovations. This issue is highly un-likely to be resolved by CFTA.
- Negotiations on important issues like intellectual property rights, tariffs for some goods, are still on-going among AU members.
- Nigeria and South Africa, the two largest economies of Africa have shown reluctance for AfCFTA.

AfCFTA impact on India:

- Africa is an important economic partner for India with total annual merchandise trade estimated at \$70 billion & with India as Africa's third largest trading partner.

- India's global exports have weakened due to the economic slowdown, however India's exports to Africa has increased.
- Africa has a strong demand market for goods and services that India produces such as automobiles, pharmaceuticals, consumer goods, IT/IT-Enabled Service, health care and education, among other.
- AfCFTA would ensure African economies would become more formalised and transparent and this would be in India's interest.
- Local manufactured items and services may ultimately compete with Indian exports, however it also provides Indian firms an opportunity for joint ventures with African firms.
- India had donated \$15 million to Niger to fund the Niamey AU Summit & similarly India can also help the African Union to prepare the requisite architecture, such as common external tariffs, competition policy, intellectual property rights, and natural persons' movement.
- India can identify various African transnational corporations which are destined to play a greater role in a future continental common market and engage with them strategically.
- India can augment its economic strength in Africa by engaging with Indian diaspora in Africa.
- After the AfCFTA is accepted & implemented in Africa, both India and Africa can negotiate for an India-African FTA.

Conclusion

If taken to its logical conclusion, this audacious project would eventually create an African Common Market of 1.2 billion people and a GDP of over \$3.4 billion — the metrics are comparable to India's. The AfCFTA would be world's largest FTA, and in a world dependent on African markets and commodities, it would have global impact.

Connecting the dots:

Analyse the significance of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) for India and the world.

[India's foreign policy needs rework in the next five years](#)

Introduction

The geopolitical scenario of the world is changing and this has brought up new global issues for India deal with. Therefore, various aspects of India's foreign policy also is required to be changed to fit the changing geopolitics of the world.

Earlier Scenario: Strategic autonomy

- In the past, India did manage a shift from non-alignment to multi-alignment.
- We could improve our relations with the United States without jeopardising our long-term relationship with Russia.
- We could paper over our prickly relations with China without conceding too much ground; all the while maintaining our strategic independence.

Current Scenario - Impact of U.S. conflict with Russia/ China

- Deepening India-U.S. relations today again carry the danger of India becoming involved in a new kind of Cold War.
- According to the author, the earlier policy of multi-alignment based on strategic autonomy has now become unsustainable.
- Firstly, it is due to rise in confrontation between the US with Russia & China. And Secondly this earlier policy needs to be changed because of the recent policies of Donald Trump.
- Even the definition of a liberal order seems to be undergoing changes.

Recommendations:

- South Asia, the region of our highest priority, needs close attention.
- Began engagement with Pakistan.
- Involve India further in Afghanistan to secure India's interest in expected US withdrawal from Afghanistan.
- Ensure resistance to BRI among India's neighbours.
- Avoid alignment in the new Cold War between US with Russia and China.
- India should focus on developing disruptive technologies such as AI, cyber technology, etc as part of its defence policy.
- Focus and build India's economic power.
- India must ensure that it does not become a party to the conflicts and rivalries between the U.S. and a rising China, the heightened tensions between the U.S. and Russia, and also avoid becoming a pawn in the U.S.-Iran conflict.

Connecting the dots:

- With the change in global political scenario, India must also change its strategy of foreign relations. Comment.

[Kulbushan Jadhav case and ICJ ruling](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains II – India and its neighbourhood- relations; India and Pakistan relations

In news:

- The International Court of Justice ruled that Pakistan should “review and reconsider” Kulbushan Jadhav’s conviction and death sentence.
- ICJ also ruled that Pakistan should give the Indian government consular access to Kulbushan Jadhav.

Do you know?

- Jadhav, a retired Indian Navy officer, was sentenced to death by a Pakistani military court on charges of “espionage and terrorism” after a closed trial in April 2017.
- His sentencing evoked a sharp reaction in India.
- India moved the ICJ in the same year for the “egregious violation” of the provisions of the Vienna Convention by Pakistan by repeatedly denying New Delhi consular access to the 48-year-old Indian national.

Important Value Additions:

- ICJ is the “principled judicial organ of the United Nations” (ICJ, 1945), and is based at the Hague in the Netherlands.
- Statute of the International Court of Justice, which is an integral part of the United Nations Charter established the ICJ.
- The ICJ is made up of 15 jurists from different countries (elected to nine-year terms by Permanent members of the UNSC) and no two judges at any given time may be from the same country. The court’s composition is static but generally includes jurists from a variety of cultures.
- The function of the ICJ is to resolve disputes between sovereign states.

ECONOMY

[GST enters its third year](#)

Part of Mains GS III Indian Economy

In news:

- The Goods and Services Tax (GST) has entered its third year.
- There is a need to ease the complexity surrounding procedures, especially with regard to registration and return filing.
- Addressing procedural complexities of the GST portal system, implementation concerns and making compliance easier will further accelerate ease of doing business for industry in India
- A key highlight of the new indirect tax system, according to trade bodies, has been the way the GST Council, the nodal body deciding rates and procedures, has addressed industry's concerns and modified rules to make the system easier.
- While the proactive manner in which the GST Council has addressed concerns has put industry at ease, there are still several procedural issues that need resolution.

[Not by wishful thinking: On \\$5 Trillion Economy Target](#)

Background

- PM in a recent NITI ayog meeting has set an economic target of \$5 trillion by 2024 for Indian Economy.
- It means ₹350,00,000 crore of gross domestic product (GDP) at current prices, at ₹70 to a U.S. dollar exchange rate.
- The target implies an output expansion by 84% in five years, or at 13% compound annual growth rate.
- The required growth rate in real, or inflation-adjusted, terms should be 9% per year. In last five years India officially grew at 7.1% only. Thus the target is an ambitious one.

What efforts are required?

- China in its best five years, during 2003-07, grew at 11.7%; South Korea, between 1983 and 1987, grew at 11%. In the same way India needs to grow with double digit growth rate.

- In the last five years, on average, the domestic saving rate was 30.8% of gross national domestic income (GNDI), and the investment rate (gross capital formation to GDP ratio) was 32.5%.
- India will have to turn into an investment-led economy as it happened during the boom last decade (2003-08) before the financial crisis, or like China since the 1980s.
- India has low domestic savings rate. India requires nearly 8-9 percentage point boost to saving and investment rates.
- In order to accelerate its growth rate, India would require an increase in the domestic saving rate to close to 40% of GDP. Which means investment in the economy should be based on domestic resources.
- Although FDI can fulfil important gaps in investment. However it cannot be a substitute for domestic resources as has been witnessed in the Chinese growth story.

Challenges

- The domestic saving rate has declined from 31.4% in 2013-14 to 29.6% in 2016-17; and gross capital formation rate from 33.8% to 30.6% during the same period.
- The banking sector's ability to boost credit growth is limited by non-performing assets (NPAs) and the governance crisis in the financial sector.
- Export to GDP ratio has declined rapidly, with a looming global trade war on the horizon.

Conclusion

The \$5 trillion target appears challenging . To achieve such a target policymakers should focus on stepping up domestic saving and investment, and not just relying on FDI-led growth accelerations in uncertain economic times.

Connecting the dots:

- Suggest a roadmap for India to achieve \$5 Trillion Economy Target.

[Survey sets out blueprint for \\$5 tn economy](#)

Part of Prelims and mains GS III Indian Economy

In news

- The Economic Survey 2019 focusses on moving to a “virtuous cycle” of savings, investments and exports to transform India into a \$5 trillion economy in the next five years.

- According to the survey, India's GDP is forecast to expand by 7% in fiscal 2019-20, slightly higher than the 6.8% in 2018-19.

Virtuous and Vicious cycles of economy

- When the economy is in a virtuous cycle, investment, productivity growth, job creation, demand and exports feed into each other and enable animal spirits in the economy to thrive.
- In contrast, when the economy is in a vicious cycle, moderation in these variables dampen each other and thereby dampen the animal spirits in the economy.

Investment led economy

- Private investment was a key driver for demand, capacity, labour productivity, new technology adoption, and for job creation.
- Investment by the private sector cannot happen unless there is no crowding out because of the government.
- Moving the economy into a virtuous cycle would require the adoption of certain practices and norms on data, legal reforms and policy certainty, and some micro-economic aspects such as boosting MSMEs and reducing the cost of capital.

Fiscal glide path

There is emphasis on private investment because the government had and would stick to its fiscal consolidation glide path. It has committed to a fiscal deficit of 3.4% of GDP in 2019-20, and 3% each in the subsequent two years.

On "Data"

- The data of societal interest is generated by the people, it can be created as a public good within the legal framework of data privacy.
- The government must intervene in creating data as a public good, especially of the poor and in social sectors.
- The Survey made the point that data must be viewed as a public good and used in a concerted way to deliver services.
- The Survey talked about merging the distinct datasets held by the government into a single dataset, which would generate "multiple benefits."

On MSME sector

- The 'dwarf' firms (with less than 100 workers), accounted for more than 50% of all organised firms in manufacturing by number.
- Despite this, their contribution to employment was just 14% and to productivity a mere 8%.

- Large firms, on the other hand, are just 15% in number but account for 75% employment and close to 90% of productivity.
- Therefore, there is a need to “unshackle” MSMEs and enable them to grow into larger firms.

Employment and labour reform

- Capital investment fosters job creation since capital goods production, research and development, and supply chains also generate jobs.
- The factories in States that have flexible labour markets are much more productive than those in States with rigid laws. Therefore there is need of labour reforms.

[Govt. can sell PSU land, reduce majority stake to boost non-tax revenue: CEA](#)

Part of Prelims and mains GS III Indian Economy

In news

- According to Chief Economic Advisor, the government can sell land held by PSUs and potentially reduce its majority stake in some companies to make up for the significant shortfall in tax revenues.
- The non-tax revenues have a significant potential to expand, especially because many of the PSUs are sitting on large pools of land which can be monetised.
- There is also an opportunity for greater returns from divestment. The government could reduce its holdings in some PSUs to below the majority stake of 51% of direct control.

[‘Greying India must delay retirement’](#)

Part of Prelims and mains GS II Social protection schemes GS III Indian Economy

In news

- India may have to raise the retirement age as the country sees a rapid increase in the size of the elderly population over the next two decades due to the slowing down of the population growth rate, according to the Economic Survey 2018-19.
- It is forecast that the population rate will grow less than 1% from 2021 to 2031 and under 0.5% from 2031 to 2041.
- This is primarily due to the fall in the total fertility rate (TFR).

- TFR is projected to decline between 2021-2041 and fall below replacement level fertility at 1.8 as early as 2021.

Replacement level fertility rate

The total fertility rate of 2.1 is called the replacement level fertility below which populations begin to decline.

Replacement level fertility rate for India

- For India, the effective replacement level fertility is slightly higher than the normal benchmark due to the skewed gender ratio and is at 2.15-2.2.
- The current TFR in 14 out of the 22 major States is already below the effective replacement level fertility.
- At the State level, southern States as well as West Bengal, Punjab, Maharashtra and Himachal Pradesh have below replacement level fertility and will see TFR decline to 1.5-1.6 by 2021.
- By 2031, all States are likely to see below replacement level fertility.

Change in demography

- The working-age population is expected to see a large increase leading to India's demographic dividend peaking around 2041, when the share of those in the age group of 20-59 is expected to hit 59%.
- The size of the elderly population, 60 years and above, is expected to nearly double from 8.6% in 2011 to 16% by 2041.
- The population size of those between 0-19 years, which is on the decline, is likely to drop from as high as 41% in 2011 to 25% by 2041.

New policy Challenges

- Provisions for health and old-age care
- Access to retirement-related financial services
- Public pension funding
- Retirement age, etc.

Suggestions

- Increasing the retirement age for both men and women going forward could be considered in line with the experience of other countries.
- It would also help increase female labour force participation in the older age-groups.
- Many countries such as the U.S., Germany and France have already raised the retirement age to reduce the burden on pension funding.

- Additional jobs will have to be created to keep pace with annual increase in working-age population of 9.7 million during 2021-31 and 4.2 million during 2031-41.

[Needed: a well-designed minimum wage system](#)

Part of Prelims and mains GS III Indian Economy

In news

- As per economic survey, a well-designed and streamlined minimum wage system is required to reduce wage inequality in the country.
- Currently, the minimum wage system, under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948, in India is complex, with 1,915 different minimum wages defined for different job categories across States.
- According to ILO, one in every three wage workers in India is not protected by the minimum wage law.
- For instance domestic workers were covered under minimum wage laws in only 18 States and Union Territories.
- While the law did not discriminate between men and women, analysis of different wages showed a bias.

An example of bias

Women dominate in the category of domestic workers while men dominate in the category of security guards. While both these occupations fall within the category of unskilled workers, the minimum wage rate for domestic workers within a State is consistently lower than that for the minimum wage rates for security guards.

Recommendations of survey

- Minimum wages should be decided on the basis of skills and split across geographical regions.
- The government is in the process of bringing the Code on Wages Bill in Parliament, the rationalisation of minimum wages proposed by the Bill should be supported.
- The government should notify a “national floor minimum wage” across five regions, after which the States can fix their own minimum wages, but not lower than the floor wage.
- This would bring uniformity and make States almost equally attractive from the point of view of labour cost for investment as well as reduce distress migration.

[Call to ease legal logjam for better contract enforcement](#)

Part of Prelims and mains GS III Indian Economy

In news

- Contract enforcement remains the single biggest constraint to improve India's Ease of Doing Business (EODB) ranking, which currently stands at 163 in the world ranking.
- In spite of a number of actions to expedite and improve the contract enforcement regime, economic activity was affected by the long shadow of delays and pendency across the legal landscape.

Recommendations

- According to economic survey, two key issues need to be dealt with in order to make the judiciary more efficient;
- Firstly, the courts must achieve a 100% case clearance rate (CCR) so that there is zero accumulation to the existing pendency.
- Secondly, the backlog of cases already present in the system must be removed.
- It suggested improving the efficiency of the courts, increasing number of working days of courts, establishment of Indian Courts and Tribunal Services, and deployment of technology in legal system.

Case clearance rate (CCR)

CCR is the ratio of the number of cases disposed of in a given year to the number of cases instituted in that year.

['Shift focus to water productivity'](#)

Part of Prelims and mains GS III Indian Economy

In news

- The Economic Survey 2018-19, regarding agriculture, suggested that the country should shift its focus from land productivity to irrigation water productivity and on devising policies to incentivise farmers to adopt efficient ways of water use.
- This should become a national priority to avert a looming water crisis.
- Agriculture remains the predominant occupation in terms of number of people employed. Also, agriculture is dependent highly on water. So, appropriate mechanism needs to be framed for economical use of water among small and marginal farmers.

Government policies and Cropping pattern

- The cropping pattern in India is highly skewed towards crops that are water-intensive.
- The incentive structures like minimum support price, heavily subsidised electricity, water and fertilizers have played a significant role in the misalignment of crop patterns in the country.
- The water guzzlers, paddy and sugarcane, consume more than 60% of irrigation water available in the country, reducing water availability for other crops.
- States such as Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh, which have high land productivity, tend to have very low irrigation water productivity, reflecting inefficient use of water and the need to re-calibrate cropping pattern.

[India could host 'Detroit' of EVs](#)

Part of Prelims and mains GS III Indian Economy

In news

- According to economic survey, with the right policies, it's possible that one of India's cities could become the 'Detroit of electric vehicles'.

National Electric Mobility Mission Plan 2020 (NEMMP) and FAME

- India has a "National Electric Mobility Mission Plan 2020 (NEMMP)" in place to "achieve sales" of 60-70 lakh units of electric vehicles (that includes buses, two-wheelers and cars) by 2020.
- In 2015, the Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric vehicles (FAME) scheme was launched to fast-track the goals of NEMMP.
- FAME India Phase II, with an emphasis on electrification of public transport, was also launched from April 1, 2019.

Global scenario

- Globally, the sales of electric cars have grown from just over 2,000 units sold in 2008 to over 10 lakh in 2017.
- The market share of electric cars is around 2% in China while it is around 39% in Norway.

In India

- Electric two wheelers have been the major part of EV sales with sales of around 54,800 in 2018.
- Indian market share in electric cars is only 0.06%.

- Uttar Pradesh topped the list of the States with highest EV sales of 6,878 units in 2017-18.

Renewable energy in India

- India's adoption of electric vehicles was part of its larger thrust towards increasing the share of renewable energy and reducing carbon dioxide emissions.
- The share of renewables (excluding hydro above 25 MW) in total power generation was around 10% in 2018-19 compared with around 6% in 2014-15.
- India stands fourth in wind power, fifth in solar power and fifth in renewable power installed capacity.

[Step by step Nirmala's maiden Budget is all about incremental measures](#)

Part of Prelims and mains GS III Indian Economy

In news



Taxation

- GST on electric vehicles **cut to 5%**. Additional income tax deduction of ₹1.5 lakh on interest on loans taken to buy electric vehicles
- Customs duty on gold and other precious metals increased from **10% to 12.5%**. Hiked for PVCs and autoparts. **Duty imposed on newsprint**
- Excise duty on fuel **hiked by ₹1**
- TDS of 2% imposed on **cash withdrawals exceeding ₹1 crore** in a year from bank accounts to discourage business payments in cash
- Threshold for applicability of **lower corporate tax rate** of 25% increased from ₹250 crore to ₹400 crore



Social sector

- Pension benefit extended to 3 crore **retail traders**
- 60% of the amount received by subscribers of **National Pension System** on closure of account to be exempt from income tax
- Expansion of **women SHG** interest subvention programme to all districts
- ₹1 lakh loan under **MUDRA scheme** for one woman in every SHG
- 8 crore more free **LPG connections** to be given under Ujjwala Yojana
- Labour laws to be rationalised into **four labour codes**



Industry

- Minimum public shareholding in listed companies to be increased from **25% to 35%**
- 100% FDI to be permitted for **insurance intermediaries**
- Local sourcing norms to be eased for FDI in **single brand retail**



Infrastructure

- To expand Swachh Bharat Mission to undertake **solid waste management** in all villages
- ₹70,000 crore fresh **re-capitalisation** for PSBs
- RBI to be the regulatory authority for the **housing finance sector**



[Budget proposes higher income tax on rich](#)

Part of Prelims and mains GS III Indian Economy

In news

- The Union Budget has propose to increase surcharge on individuals having taxable income from ₹2 crore to ₹5 crore and ₹5 crore and above so that effective tax rates for these two categories will increase by around 3% and 7% respectively.
- According to the government, this increase in the surcharge is expected to earn the government an additional ₹12,000 crore a year.
- The direct tax collections are now growing in double digits every year.
- Companies with a turnover of up to ₹400 crore a year would now have to pay tax at 25%. This turnover limit was earlier ₹250 crore a year. The new limit will now cover 99.3% of companies.
- This is a welcome move towards bridging the gap of corporate tax with the ASEAN countries.
- A number of measures were announced, such as electronic face-less assessments, to improve transparency in income tax assessment process and also to ease the return filing process for tax filers.
- To start with, such e-assessments are to be carried out in cases requiring verification of certain specified transactions or discrepancies.

[Aadhaar can be interchanged with PAN for filing tax returns](#)

Part of Prelims and mains GS III Indian Economy

In news

- More than 120 crore Indians now have Aadhaar. Whereas, according to data with the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), 42 crore PAN cards have been issued, of which only 23 crore have been linked with Aadhaar.
- The Union Budget 2019-20 has proposed to make Aadhaar interchangeable with PAN, thereby allowing people without PAN to file income tax returns using only their Aadhaar.
- The Income Tax Department shall allot PAN to such persons on the basis of Aadhaar after obtaining demographic data from the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI).

- It has been made clear that the intent is not to replace PAN with Aadhaar as the primary identity proof when it comes to income tax.
- It has been proposed allotting Aadhaar to non-resident Indians, arriving in India, on an expedited basis.
- So far, non-resident Indians with an Indian passport had to wait for 180 days after their arrival in India before they can apply for Aadhaar. The Budget proposed to remove this waiting time.

[Government eases angel tax norms](#)

Part of: Prelims and mains GS III - Indian Economy

In news

- To encourage start-ups in the country, a series of measures has been announced for the sector, including easing of the much-debated angle tax.
- Now, the start-ups who file requisite declarations will not be subject to any kind of scrutiny in respect of valuations of share premiums.
- Additionally, the issue of establishing identity of the investor and source of his funds will be resolved by putting in place a mechanism of e-verification.

Angel Tax

- Angel tax is applicable to unlisted companies that have raised capital through sale of shares at a value above their fair market value.
- This excess capital is treated as income and taxed accordingly. This tax predominantly affects start-ups and the angel investments they attract.

Channel for start-ups

- The Finance Minister has also proposed to start a television programme within the DD bouquet of channels exclusively for start-ups.
- The proposed programme on start-ups will serve as a platform for promoting start-ups, discussing issues affecting their growth, matchmaking with venture capitalists and for funding and tax planning, etc.
- The channel will be designed and executed by start-ups themselves.

[Fiscal deficit target revised downwards to 3.3%](#)

Part of: Prelims and mains GS III Indian Economy

In news

- The government is estimating a fiscal deficit of 3.3% of GDP in financial year 2019-20, lower than the 3.4% estimated earlier in the interim Budget presented in February.
- The main reason for this is an increase on the revenue side, while expenditure is being controlled.
- To achieve this goal(of 3.3%), it is relying on one-off disinvestment income, as well as higher taxes on the rich, and increased excise duties on petrol, diesel, precious metals and tobacco products.
- Also, the government had budgeted a dividend from the Reserve Bank of India amounting to about ₹90,000 crore.
- The government has cut the allocations for several major schemes. Most significant of these is the ₹4,334 crore cut for the Swachh Bharat scheme.

[Slew of steps to boost digital payments](#)

Part of: Prelims and mains GS III Indian Economy

In news

- To push digital payments, multiple measures has been announced including levying 2% tax deducted at source on cash withdrawals exceeding ₹1 crore in a year from a bank account.
- The business establishments with an annual turnover of more than ₹50 crore shall offer low-cost digital modes of payment such as BHIM UPI, UPI-QR Code, Aadhaar Pay, certain Debit cards, NEFT and RTGS, to their customers and no charges or Merchant Discount Rate shall be imposed on customers as well as merchants.
- These measures would help create a robust payments infrastructure in the country. But there is need for sufficient Internet penetration and data reach to achieve the aspirations.

[RBI can supersede NBFC board](#)

Part of: Prelims and mains GS III Indian Economy

In news

- Non-banking finance companies that are facing a crisis of confidence saw a slew of measures from the Budget to restore investor confidence.
- The Reserve Bank of India also stepped in as it announced additional liquidity support to the sector through banks to the tune of ₹1.34 lakh crore.
- The government has decided to give more powers to the Central bank to regulate the non-banking finance companies.
- According to the Finance Bill, if the RBI is satisfied that in the 'public interest' or to prevent the affairs of an NBFC being conducted in a manner detrimental to the interest of the depositors or creditors, the board can be superseded for a maximum five years and an administrator can be appointed.
- The RBI will also regulate housing finance companies which are under the purview of the National Housing Bank.
- The budget also proposed that foreign institutional investors and foreign portfolio investors will be allowed to invest in debt securities by shadow banks, which help NBFCs to raise more funds.
- The budget also provided some tax incentives to the NBFCs by treating them on par with banks.

[Reward top taxpayers, shame defaulters](#)

Part of Prelims and mains GS III Indian Economy**In news**

- The Economic survey highlights the usage of behavioural economics to bring a social change among people in India.
- The economic survey highlights the Swachh Bharat Mission, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao and other government schemes and policies that have been successful in changing the social mindset within India.
- Similarly, the economic survey intends to ensure a social change or a change in mindset of people in India to achieve three main goals: Gender equality, Healthy India and increase in tax compliance.
- Using behavioural economics, Economic Survey proposes for social change:
 - From BBBP to BADLAV (Beti Aapki Dhan Lakshmi Aur Vijay Lakshmi);
 - From Swachh Bharat to Sundar Bharat;
 - From "Give it up" for the LPG subsidy to "Think about the Subsidy"; and
 - From tax evasion to tax compliance.

- An example in Economic Survey is to provide services to high tax paying individuals that honors them such as expedited boarding privileges at airports, fast-lane privileges on roads and toll booths, special 'diplomatic' type lanes at immigration counters, etc.
- It added that the highest taxpayers over a decade could be recognised by naming important buildings, monuments, roads, trains, initiatives, schools and universities, hospitals and airports in their name.
- Apart from this, tax evaders can be publicly shamed to nudge them and make other tax evaders fearful of tax evasion.

[Making a pitch for PPP model in railways](#)

Part of Prelims and mains GS III Indian Economy

In news

Union Finance Minister has proposed a capital expenditure of more than Rs. 1,60,000 crore for the Railway Ministry for 2019-20. This is the highest ever allocation for Indian Railways.

Railways network will require an investment of Rs. 50 lakh crore till 2030. Thus, to ensure such big investment in modernising Indian railways and its network, the route of public-private partnership (PPP) model has been pitched to achieve faster development.

The money required for Indian Railways will be provided from different sources such as

1. Budgetary support
2. Nirbhaya Fund
3. Internal resources
4. Extra budgetary resources

Ways to improve Indian Railways

To modernise and ease congestion of Indian railways, there is a need for **constructing new railway lines**, gauge conversions (mostly from meter gauge to broad gauge), doubling the present single line, maintain rolling stock and improving signalling and telecommunication along the railway tracks.

There is also need to **improve passenger amenities**, modernise railway stations and completion of existing dedicated freight corridor projects. Such freight corridor will free up some of the existing railway network for passenger trains. FM highlighted that completing all sanctioned projects will take decades considering its capital nature of investment.

Thus, in such projects **PPP model** will help in unleashing faster development for completion of work on tracks, rolling stock manufacturing and delivery of passenger freight services.

The government expects that its earnings from Indian Railways will improve primarily from

- Growth in number of passengers
- Growth in freight volume

Suburban Railways: For growth of Indian Railways in suburban India, Finance Minister has encouraged to invest more in Suburban railways through Special Purpose Vehicles (SPV) structures like Rapid Regional Transport System (RRTS) which is presently proposed on Delhi-Meerut Route.

Metro Railways: Enhancement of metro railways initiatives was also proposed by encouraging more PPP initiatives and ensuring completion of sanctioned works. While supporting the growth of metro railways network, the minister also supported transit oriented development to ensure commercial activity around such transit hubs.

[Bucks for the banks: Union Budget](#)

Introduction

The 2019-20 budget has many interesting features, but it does not have a defining central theme. There were expectations of a big growth push through either tax cuts or large expenditure programmes even if it meant a rise in the fiscal deficit. But the Finance Minister has chosen to be fiscally conservative, opting to play the long-term game, though it could lead to pain in the short term.

Banking sector and NBFCs

- Budget provided for ₹70,000 crore capital infusion in banks. It is hoped that it will spur lending to growth sectors in the economy.
- It has comprehensively addressed the important issues of liquidity, solvency and poor governance in the NBFC sector.
- A liquidity window of ₹1 lakh crore has been made available to public sector banks through the Reserve Bank of India to buy pooled assets of NBFCs and offered a one-time credit guarantee for first loss of up to 10%.
- To enable better supervision of the sector, housing finance companies will come under the RBI's regulatory ambit.
- A long-standing demand of NBFCs for equitable treatment with banks in the matter of taxing interest receivable on bad loans has been conceded.

- They will not need to maintain a Debenture Redemption Reserve on public placements that was leading to locking-up of funds, which is their raw material for business.
- The big problem faced by NBFC financing infrastructure is the lack of long-term funding sources to match their lending tenure.
- This pushed them into borrowing short-term funds to lend to long-term projects, leading to asset-liability mismatches.
- The proposal to set up a committee to study the issue, including the experience with development finance institutions, is welcome.

Do you know?

Debenture Redemption Reserve

A debenture redemption reserve (DRR) is a provision stating that any Indian corporation that issues debentures must create a debenture redemption service in an effort to protect investors from the possibility of a company defaulting.

Strategic disinvestment

The government reiterated its commitment to strategic disinvestment and the declared that it is willing to allow its stake to fall below 51% in non-financial PSUs.

Aadhaar and PAN

- The government seems to be moving towards a single identity card for citizens in the form of Aadhaar, which will now be interchangeable with the PAN card.
- Taxpayers who do not have a PAN card can file returns quoting their Aadhaar number, which effectively can be a substitute for PAN in all transactions.

Faceless e-assessment of tax returns

- Another reform measure is the introduction of faceless e-assessment of tax returns taken up for scrutiny.
- This will eliminate the scope for rent-seeking by officers as there will be no interface between assessee and official.
- In fact, the assessee will not even know the identity of the officer scrutinising the return.
- This is an absolutely welcome measure but needs to be closely watched for implementation.

Start-ups and corporate sector

- Start-ups can heave a sigh of relief as the angel tax is practically off the table.

- The corporate sector has got a minor sop with the turnover limit for the 25% tax bracket being raised to ₹400 crore per annum from ₹250 crore.
- The expectation was that this would be extended to all companies irrespective of size.
- It appears that the government wants to wait for the finalisation of the Direct Taxes Code, which is being examined by a committee.

Real estate sector

- Real estate companies may have reason to cheer as the generous tax concession for affordable housing may create demand, especially in the smaller metros.

Nudge theory

The 'nudge theory' of economist Richard Thaler, mentioned extensively in the Economic Survey 2018-19, has been put to use to push forward two of this government's pet themes — increasing digitalisation of money and promoting electric mobility.

Nudging for digitalization

- On the first, there will now be a 2% tax deducted at source when withdrawals from bank accounts exceed ₹1 crore in a year.
- This is a commendable measure, but it could lead to genuine problems for businesses such as construction and real estate that are forced to deal in cash for wage payments.

Nudging towards electric vehicles

- Here those taking loans to buy one will get a tax deduction of up to ₹1.5 lakh on the interest paid by them.
- But the fact is that there are not too many electric vehicles in the market now. And even for those that are there, the waiting period to deliver one is long.
- Besides, there is no ecosystem, such as charging points, even in the major cities. The government's hope seems to be that this incentive will create a market for e-vehicles that will then lead to the development of the ecosystem.

Fiscal deficit

- The budget documents show that the government has stuck to the glide path for fiscal deficit, which will be at 3.3% this fiscal. This is, however, based on exaggerated growth projections in tax revenues.
- It will be possible with a comfortable buffer if the Bimal Jalan committee that is going into the sharing of RBI's reserves with the government comes up with favourable recommendations.
- The government also appears to be sliding into a protectionist mode, going by the increase in customs duty on many things.

Connecting the dots:

The Union Budget 2019-20 is hoping to spur the economy by revitalising the financial sector. Analyse.

RBI board finalises 'Utkarsh 2022'

Part of Prelims and mains GS III Indian Economy, Banking

In news

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) board finalised a three year roadmap to improve regulation and supervision, among other functions of the central bank.
- This medium term strategy, named Utkarsh 2022, is in line with the global central banks' plan to strengthen the regulatory and supervisory mechanism.

Details

- Worldwide, all central banks strengthen the regulatory and supervisory mechanism, everybody is formulating a long-term plan and a medium-term plan.
- RBI has also decided it will formulate a programme to outline what is to be achieved in the next three years.
- An internal committee was formed to identify issues that needed to be addressed over the next three years.
- While around a dozen areas were identified by the committee, some board members felt that areas could be filtered and lesser number of areas can be identified for implementation in the next three years.
- The idea is that the central bank plays a proactive role and takes preemptive action to avoid any crisis.
- RBI board finalised the three -year medium-term strategy document of the Reserve Bank, which covered, inter-alia, its mission and vision statement.
- Other matters discussed by the board included issues relating to currency management and payment systems, etc.

Bimal Jalan committee on RBI's economic capital framework (ECF)

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains III – Indian Economy and issues related to it; RBI

In news:

- Bimal Jalan panel was formed to address the issue of RBI reserves, one of the sticking points between the central bank and the government.
- The expert panel to suggest how the central bank should handle its reserves and whether it can transfer its surplus to the government.
- Jalan panel to submit its report soon.

Issue:

- The government has been insisting that the central bank hand over its surplus reserves amid a shortfall in revenue collections.
- Access to the funds will allow finance minister to meet deficit targets, infuse capital into weak banks to boost lending and fund welfare programmes.
- Therefore, the Jalan panel was set up to decide whether RBI is holding provisions, reserves and buffers in surplus of the required levels.

[Bill to tackle Ponzi schemes](#)

Part of Prelims and mains GS III Economic Issues**In news**

- The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister had earlier given its approval to move official amendments to The Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Bill, 2018, after the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Finance (SCF).
- The 2019 Bill will replace the The Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Ordinance 2019.
- The 2019 ordinance helped in the creation of a central repository of all deposit schemes under operation, thus making it easier for the Centre to regulate their activities and prevent fraud from being committed against ordinary people.
- The ordinance allowed for compensation to be offered to victims through the liquidation of the assets of those offering illegal deposit schemes.

Background

- The Finance Minister in the Budget Speech 2016-17 had announced that a comprehensive Central legislation would be brought in to deal with the menace of illicit deposit taking schemes.
- This was because in the recent past, there have been rising instances fraud by illicit deposit taking schemes across India. The worst victims of these schemes are the poor and the financially illiterate, and the operations of such schemes are often spread over many States.

The Unregulated Deposit Schemes Ordinance 2019 – Important features

- The ordinance aims to provide for a comprehensive mechanism to ban unregulated deposits schemes and thereby protect the interests of depositors.
- The Ordinance bans Deposit Takers from promoting, operating, issuing advertisements or accepting deposits in any Unregulated Deposit Scheme.
- A prize chit or money circulation scheme banned under the provisions of The Prize Chits and Money Circulation Scheme (Banning) Act, 1978 shall also be considered an unregulated deposit and has been banned accordingly.
- The Ordinance enables creation of an online central database, for collection and sharing of information on deposit-taking activities in the country. The law also makes it incumbent upon newspapers to verify the advertisements placed in them to ensure that none of them is for unregulated deposit schemes.

The Bill creates three different types of offences:

1. Running of Unregulated Deposit Schemes,
2. Fraudulent default in Regulated Deposit Schemes, and
3. Wrongful inducement in relation to Unregulated Deposit Schemes.

[Jobless growth becomes more systemic](#)

Jobless economic growth was a phenomenon that was earlier seen mainly in the organised sector. However, according to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (2017-18), this jobless economic growth has spread to other sectors of the economy mainly the unorganised sector.

Varous statistics about unemployment

Labour force participation

- The two biggest issues shown in the Periodic Labour Force Survey is that there is a decrease in share of the labour force and that there is rising unemployment.
- The labour force participation rate (% of people working or seeking work in the above-15 years age category) in the earlier survey of 2012 was 55.5%. This has shrunk to 49.7% in 2018. There is an absolute decline in the number of workers from 467.7 million in 2012 to 461.5 million in 2018.
- The decline in women's labour force participation from 31% to 24% means that India is among the countries with the lowest participation of women in the labour force.
- Similarly, self-employment has also decreased.

Do you know?

Periodic Labour Force Survey:

- From 2017 onwards, a nationwide Labour Force Survey called Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) was launched by the NSSO.
- The PLFS has been launched with an objective of measuring quarterly changes of various labour market statistical indicators in urban areas as well as generating annual estimates of these indicators both for rural and urban areas, which can be used for policy making.

Urban vs rural and men vs women unemployment

- The highest unemployment rate of a severe nature was among the urban women at 10.8%; followed by urban men at 7.1%; rural men at 5.8%; and rural women at 3.8%.
- Severe unemployment among men at 6.2% was higher than among women at 5.7%.

Unemployed youth

- Youth unemployment rate (unemployment among those in the 15-29 years age category) has reached a high 17.8%.

Educated unemployed

- Educated unemployment Defined as unemployment among those with at least a secondary school certificate.
- The unemployment rates go up as levels of education go up.
- Compared to the earlier 2012 survey, unemployment of educated men has more than doubled in both rural and urban areas.
- Unemployment among those with at least a secondary school certificate, it is at 11.4% compared to the previous survey's figure of 4.9%.
- Unemployment rates have gone up in basic educated youths. Among those with secondary school education, it is 5.7% but jumps to 10.3% when those with higher secondary-level education are considered.
- The highest rate is among the diploma and certificate holders (19.8%); followed by graduates (17.2), and postgraduates (14.6%).

Burden on women

- Highest burden of unemployment is on women.
- The highest unemployment rate of a severe nature was among the urban women at 10.8%; followed by urban men at 7.1%.
- In educated unemployment, urban women (19.8%) followed by rural women (17.3%), rural men (10.5%) and urban men (9.2%).
- Among the educated, women face a more unfavourable situation than men despite a low labour force participation rate.
- In youth unemployment, women unemployment rate of 27.2% is more than double the 2012 figure of 13.1%. The rate for urban men is at 18.7%.

Conclusion

The overall conclusion here is that the trend of 'jobless growth' that was till recently confined largely to the organised sector has now spread to other sectors of the economy, making it more generalised. This calls for a thorough re-examination of the missing linkages between growth and employment.

Connecting the dots

- The nature of economic growth in India in recent times often projects jobless growth. Critically comment.

Centre had announced hike in surcharges paid by high net worth individuals

Part of: GS Mains Paper III – Government Budgeting

In News

- Centre had announced hike in surcharges paid by high net worth individuals.
- The increase in surcharges effectively increases the combined tax rate by 2% for those earning between Rs.2 crore and 5 crore and by 7% for those earning more than Rs 5 crore annually.
- The higher tax will only apply to individuals and FPIs registered as trusts, which are also treated as individuals.
- However, the FPIs that are registered as companies will not be affected.
- The decision to increase rates drew criticism that it **would lead to outflow of foreign funds from India** because there would be decreased income as they have to pay more taxes now.

Do you know?

- Surcharge is an additional charge or tax levied on an existing tax. For Example: A surcharge of 10% on a tax rate of 30% effectively raises the combined tax burden to 33%
- Cess is also tax on tax. However, the difference is that Cess is levied temporarily for a specific purpose. Once the purpose has been fulfilled, cess is no longer levied. However, surcharges are general and permanent in nature.
- The revenue earned via surcharge is solely retained by the Centre and, unlike other tax revenues, is not shared with States.
- The proceeds of surcharges flow into Consolidated Fund of India.

- Surcharges, in India, are used to make the taxation system more 'progressive' (average tax rate increases as the income increases) as they are generally levied on wealthy individuals and companies.
- Foreign Portfolio Investments are those investments which hold less than 10% in a company, beyond which it is regarded as FDI (Foreign Direct Investment).
- FPI hold a short term view on the company and generally participate through the stock markets and gets in and out of a particular stock at much faster frequencies. They are volatile in nature.
- The authority monitoring the guidelines for FPI regulation is the Securities and Exchange Board of India.

[Sugarcane Industry](#)

Part of: Mains GS-III - Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and MSP

In News

- Centre has decided to halt the trend of rising MSP for Sugarcane
- Centre also to expand the buffer stock of sugar

Why such decisions?

- **To correct the demand-supply imbalances** – estimated production of sugar this year is 32.95 million, whereas domestic demand is just 26 million tonnes.
- **To Stabilise retail prices** – bumper harvest combined with high rates of recovery of sugar from sugarcane leading to glut in supply leading to crash in prices
- **To Reduce payment arrears from mills to farmers** - Centre announces the minimum price that mills must pay to sugar cane cultivators (large vote bank- hence subject to populism leading to loss for mill owners)

[India rises in global innovation ranking](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains GS-III - Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development.

- India has improved from its previous year rank of 57 to 52 in the Global Innovation Index 2019
- There has been consistent improvement in past few years - 81 in 2015, which rose to 66 in 2016, 60 in 2017 and 57 in 2018.
- Major innovation drivers are ICT services exports, graduates in science and engineering, the quality of universities, gross capital formation and creative goods exports
- The report is brought out by the UN World Intellectual Property Organisation, INSEAD and CII

Overseas Sovereign bonds

Part of: Mains GS-II - Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources

In News

- PMO has asked the Finance Ministry to conduct a detailed survey on the issuance of overseas sovereign bonds in light of criticism raised by experts
- The government had announced in the 2019-20 budget to raise a portion of gross borrowing by issuing overseas sovereign bond

What is Overseas foreign bond?

- A sovereign bond is a specific **debt instrument** issued by the government.
- It promises to pay the buyer a certain amount of interest for a stipulated number of years and repay the face value on maturity.
- When sovereign bonds are **denominated in foreign currency** and can be settled in foreign markets, it is generally referred to as Foreign sovereign bonds

Criticism of Foreign Sovereign bonds

- A government bond issued in foreign currency (mostly in US dollars) shifts the **currency risk** (exchange rate risk) from investor to issuer (in this case, the government)
- It makes the nation **reliant on foreign inflows** and **vulnerable** to global uncertainties

Merits of Foreign Sovereign Bonds

- Indian government's debt to GDP ratio (~68%) is not very high, the exchange rate is stable, and foreign exchange reserves are high – Thus, there is **Macro-economic stability** to absorb any global shocks
- Also, foreign investors' holdings in Indian debt has been low (3.6% of outstanding government securities) – thus scope for expansion of foreign debt
- Indian government's domestic borrowing is crowding out private investment, thus tapping into foreign funds **frees up credit space for domestic private investors**
- It may facilitate the **inclusion of India's government bonds in the global debt indices** which would also improve the attractiveness of rupee-denominated sovereign bonds.
- The rates at which the government borrows overseas will act as a **yardstick for pricing of other corporate bonds**, helping India Inc to raise money overseas

Geographical-Indication Tag (GI Tag)

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains GS- III - Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources.

In News

- After West Bengal(2017), Odisha gets GI tag for its version of Rasgulla
- The GI tag for the same product to both the neighbouring states recognizes the two distinct varieties of Rasgullas in taste and texture

Do you know?

- A GI is a distinctive sign used to differentiate goods on the basis of its unique characteristics
- A GI tag helps in the branding and marketing of a local product
- It attracts penalties if copied by anybody outside that geographical region.GI enjoys legal protection under **GI of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999**
- While Bengalis claim the sweet was invented by Nabin Chandra Das (Birth: 1845) at his residence in Kolkata, Odias cite the tradition dating back to 12th century of rasgulla being offered at the Puri Jagannath Temple

Economic Census

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains GS III- Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources

In News

- The government started off the 7th Economic Census (EC) from Tripura. It will be launched in other states and UT in August and September
- EC is the complete count of all establishments/units located within the geographical boundaries of India
- Agriculture is not covered in Economic Census
- It is being conducted by Ministry of Statistics and Program implementation (MoSPI)
- MoSPI has partnered with Common Service Centres, CSC e-Governance Service India Ltd (SPV of Ministry of Electronics & IT) as the implementing agency for EC
- The data will be collected through door to door survey of each household and commercial establishment under the provisions of Collection of Statistics Act, 2008

Do You know?

- Six Economic Censuses have been conducted till date: 1977,1980,1990,1998,2005 and 2013
- The EC is the only source of information on the significantly large unorganized sector in the economy
- As per the last EC conducted in 2013, there were 58.5 million establishments employing around 131 million workers

[First CAG report on GST](#)

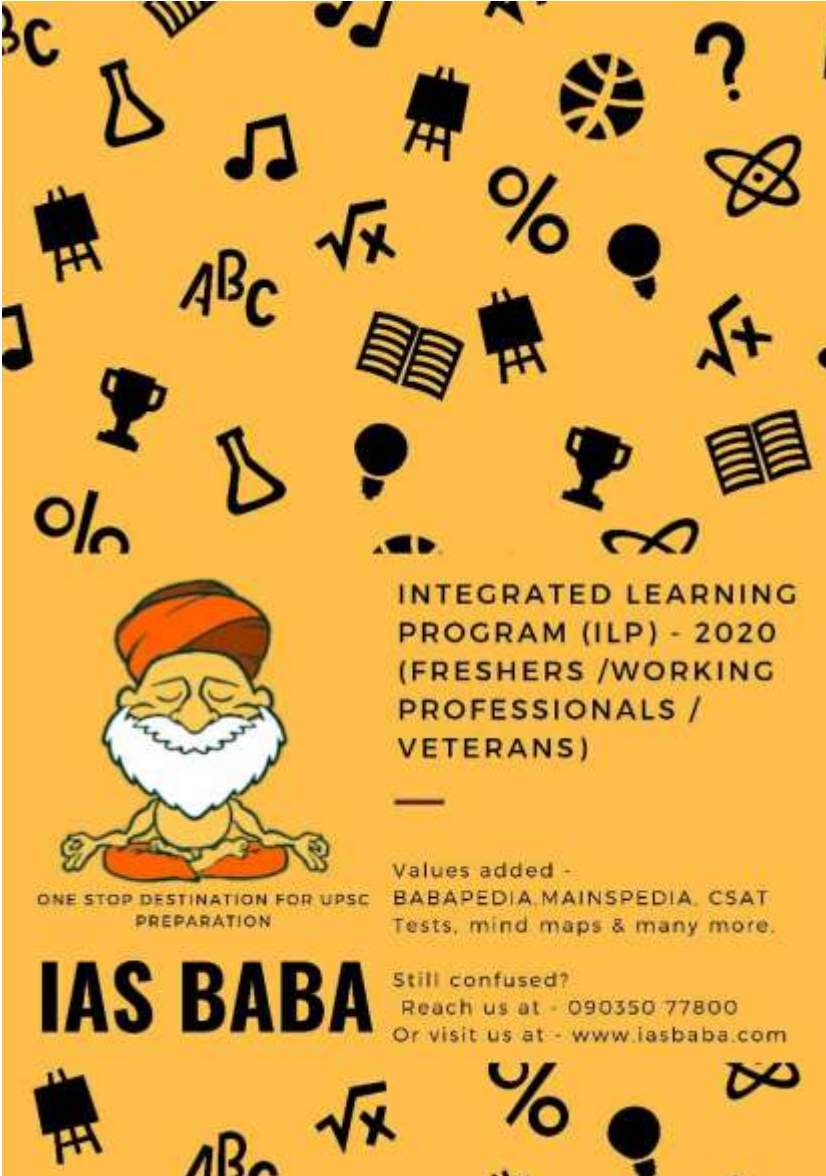
Part of: GS Prelims and Mains GS- III - Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources.

Some of the findings of the report are:

- Government had **failed to try out the system before its rollout**, leading to inadequate compliance mechanisms, and lower tax revenues
- Even after two years of rollout of GST, system validated Input Tax Credit through **'invoice matching' is not in place.**
- The **complexity of the return mechanism** and the technical glitches resulted in rollback of invoice-matching, rendering the system prone to Input Tax Credit frauds
- Without invoice matching and auto generation of refunds, assessments, etc, the envisaged **GST tax compliance system is non-functional** (resulting in falling number of returns filed month after month)
- The government had not been following the rules set out regarding **the transfer of revenue to the States.**
- There has been **lack of coordination** between the Department of Revenue, the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs and the GST Network

Do you know?

- The new indirect tax regime – GST - had kicked in July 2017.
- The transformation tax structure is aimed at reducing tax cascading, ushering in a common market for goods and services and bringing in a simplified, self-regulating and non-intrusive tax compliance regime.
- CAG is a Constitutional body constituted under Article 148 appointed by the President by warrant under his hand and seal.



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[Panel of CMs to suggest agriculture reforms](#)

Part of: Main GS Paper III – Government Policies & Interventions; Agriculture

In News:

- The Centre has set up a high powered committee of seven chief ministers, led by Maharashtra's CM as its convenor, to suggest measures to transform Indian agriculture and raise farmers' income.

Terms of reference (ToR) of the panel

- The panel will suggest on modalities for adoption and time-bound implementation of two key model Acts (a) agriculture market reforms act and (b) contract farming act by the states.
- The panel will also examine various provisions of Essential Commodity Act (ECA),1955 and suggest a mechanism for linking of market reforms with e-NAM, GRAM and other relevant centrally sponsored schemes.
- The panel will also recommend policy measures to boost agricultural exports, raise growth in food processing and attract investments in modern market infrastructure, value chains and logistics.
- The panel will also suggest measures to upgrade agri-technology to global standards and improve access of farmers to quality seed and proposing any other relevant reforms for transformation of agriculture sector and raising farmers income.
- The panel will also study various proposals of the inter-ministerial committee on Doubling Farmers' Income (DFI) which had suggested specific action points for reforms in the farm and allied sector.

[Road to agricultural and rural prosperity](#)

Part of Prelims and mains GS III Indian Economy

In news

A truly agriculture and rural development-focussed Budget, it has adequately met the twin objectives of growth and inclusiveness. The crux of the Budget is 'sustainability' in every aspect, be it agriculture practices or economic viability.

Farmer producer organisation

- An announcement of formation of 10,000 new FPOs over the next five years is a step towards the same.
- With this, the economies of scale can be harnessed to achieve the goal of doubling farmer's income by reduction in input costs and assuring better price realisations by the farmers for their output.

Women SHGs

- The incentives proposed for women SHGs will not only lead to livelihood generation and women empowerment, but also nurture first-generation entrepreneurs through the MUDRA loans of ₹1 lakh.
- With the proposed interventions, not only farmers, but also rural entrepreneurship will get the necessary boost.

Fisheries

A new scheme “**Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana**” will give enough confidence to those who are in fisheries sector, to enhance their income with better fisheries management, infrastructure creation, increasing production and productivity, improved post-harvest management bringing economic viability of the sector.

Artisans and agripreneurs

- The government has shown that every person having potential to bring economic revolution will be given an equal opportunity. SFURTI is an attempt in this direction.
- Rural artisans have received a holding hand from the government in a cluster-based development approach that will upgrade regional and traditional industries, benefiting about 50,000 artisans.
- Enhancing the prospects of agripreneurs, the ASPIRE scheme will create 50,000 skilled rural entrepreneurs, especially in the rural agriculture sector.

Power generation

- To expand the income sources of our farmers, there is a proposal to enable them to take up power generation activities on their field to transform the ‘Annadata’ to an ‘Urjadata’.

Connectivity and marketing

- Now, under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, a road network of 1.25 lakh km will bring more villages to rural markets.
- For relieving farmers from uncertain prospects, the States will be forced to implement e-NAM mechanism for better operations under the APMC Act.

Zero budger farming

- The concept of zero-budget farming, which some farmers have exemplarily proved to be viable, will boost the confidence of farmers.
- With conventional means, the farmers will be able to enhance their income levels by keeping the input costs under control.

Jal shakti Abhiyan

- Integration of funds from various Ministries to fund the Jal Shakti Abhiyan may see critical water blocks being regained.

[Income inequality among farmers](#)

Part of Prelims and mains GS III Indian Economy: Agriculture

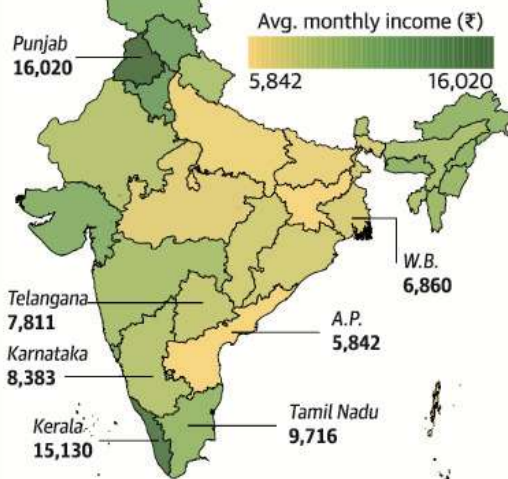
In news

Income inequality among farmers

The Centre aims to double farmers' income by 2022. A 2017 NABARD survey shows high levels of inter-State income inequality among agricultural households. By **Vignesh Radhakrishnan & Sumant Sen**

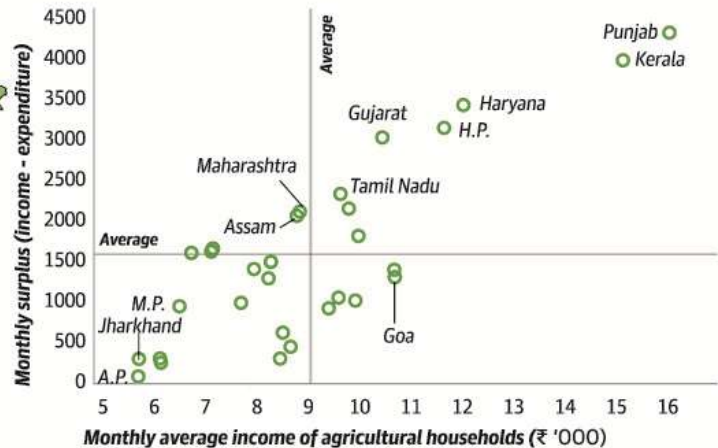
Income inequality

The map depicts the average monthly income of agricultural households in 2017. Households in Punjab earned more than ₹16,000, the highest among States. Those in A.P. earned the least – ₹5,842 on an average



What remains in the purse?

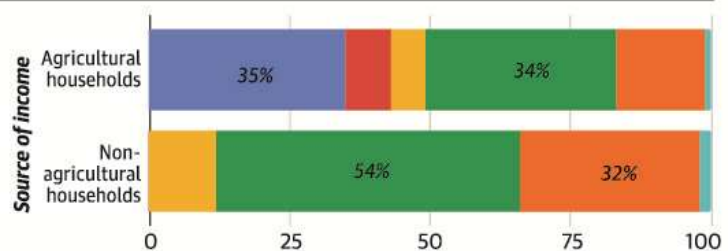
The graph plots the monthly average income of agricultural households against the surplus that remained after consumption expenditure in 2017. Consumption expenditure is measured because it is less volatile over time. Agricultural households in Andhra Pradesh ended up with a surplus of ₹95 on an average in 2017, which was the lowest among States, while households in Punjab had the highest: ₹4,314



Sources of income

Among the Centre's plans to improve farmers' income was to shift farmers to non-farm jobs. The graph splits rural households across India by income sources. Cultivation, for instance, was the source of income for 35% of the agricultural households in rural India

■ Cultivation ■ Livestock rearing ■ Other enterprises
■ Wage labour ■ Govt./Pvt service ■ Other sources



<https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/ShareImage?Pictureid=GRV64CPCV.1>

[All India Kisan Sabha \(AKS\) demanded that the Centre scrap the Manual for Drought Management, 2016](#)

Part of : Mains GS paper III - Agricultural produce and issues

In news :

- Manual for Drought Management, 2016, had changed the way that droughts are declared and the circumstances under which Central help can be sought by affected States.

Data:

- Data from the India Meteorological Department show over half the country's land area still faces rainfall deficits of more than 20% this monsoon season.
- Saurashtra and Kutch are the worst affected region, with a 60% deficit

Before 2016, it was considered a drought year in a particular area if there was deficient rainfall and the crop yield was less than 50% of the average of the previous 10 years.

Manual for Drought Management, 2016 parameter

- States are required to assess conditions using five indicators: rainfall, agriculture, soil moisture, hydrology and crop health.
- The Manual allows States to request for support from the National Disaster Response Fund if a drought is declared as "severe". This can only happen if three impact indicators (apart from rainfall) fall into the "severe" category,

These conditions are so stringent that an area may not be officially declared as facing a severe drought even while its farmers are suffering.

[Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan \(KUSUM\)](#)

Introduction:

- Earlier this year, the Cabinet approved the Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan (KUSUM).
- With a Budget allocation of Rs. 34,000 crore, and a similar contribution expected from the States, KUSUM aims to provide energy sufficiency and sustainable irrigation access to farmers. It is also essential to achieve the country's 100 GW solar target by 2022.

Present situation:

- At present, despite burgeoning farm power subsidies, nearly 30 million farmers, especially marginal landholders, use expensive diesel for their irrigation needs as they have no access to electricity.
- More than half of India's net sown-area remains unirrigated.

Three components of the scheme:

- 10,000 MW of de-centralised ground- mounted grid-connected renewable power plants.
- Installation of 17.50 lakh standalone solar powered agricultural pumps.
- Solarisation of 10 lakh grid-connected solar-powered agricultural pumps

Way ahead:

Addressing inequity between States:

- KUSUM should aim to reduce the existing disparity among States with regard to solar pumps deployment and irrigation access.
- Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan together account for about half of the two lakh solar pumps currently deployed in the country. On the other hand, States such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, where penetration of diesel pumps is among the highest, have not managed to deploy any significant number of solar pumps.
- This disparity highlights poor State budget allocation towards solar pumps and the lack of initiative by State nodal agencies.
- To encourage more equitable deployment of 17.5 lakh off-grid pumps by 2022, the Centre should incentivise States through target-linked financial assistance, and create avenues for peer learning.

Addressing inequity within a State:

- 90% of Bihar's farmers are small and marginal. Yet, they have received only 50% of government subsidies on solar pumps. On the other hand, in Chhattisgarh, about 95% of beneficiaries are from socially disadvantaged groups due to the mandate of the State. Learning from these contrasting examples, a share of central financial assistance under KUSUM should be appropriated for farmers with small landholdings and belonging to socially disadvantaged groups.

Addressing inequity between farmers:

- Instead of a one-size-fits-all approach, KUSUM should provide greater financial assistance to smaller farmers.
- KUSUM proposes a 60% subsidy for the pumps, borne equally by the Centre and the States, and the remaining 40% will be the farmer's contribution — 10% as down payment and 30% through loans.
- This unilateral financing approach will exacerbate the inter-farmer disparity given the inequity in access to credit and repayment capacity between small and large farmers.
- A higher capital subsidy support to small and marginal farmers and long-term loans with interest subsidies for large and medium farmers would be a more economical and equitable alternative.
- KUSUM should not woo a certain section of farmers with short-sighted objectives.
- Solarising existing grid-connected pumps, as proposed under the scheme, needs a complete rethink.
- Existing grid-connected farmers, who have enjoyed power subsidies for decades, would receive the same financial support as that received by an off-grid farmer. In addition, they would earn regular income from the DISCOM on feeding surplus electricity, furthering the inequitable distribution of taxpayers' resources.

- Solarising grid-connected pumps must include replacement of the pump. Poor efficiency levels of the existing pumps would mean unnecessary oversizing of the solar panels and lesser available energy to feed into the grid.
- It is also essential that distribution companies pay fair rates to farmers for the electricity they purchase from their solar arrays.
- The scheme holds the potential of enabling farmers to become exporters of clean solar energy from importers of subsidized energy.

Conclusion:

If designed better and implemented effectively, KUSUM holds the potential to catapult the Indian irrigation economy from an era mired in perpetual subsidy, unreliable supply, and inequitable distribution of resources to a regime of affordable, reliable, and equitable access to energy and water.

Connecting the dots:

- KUSUM could radically transform the irrigation economy if the government chooses an approach of equity by design and prudence over populism. Analyze.

Structural reforms in Agriculture

Part of: Main GS Paper III – transport and marketing of agricultural produce and issues and related constraints; e-technology in the aid of farmers

In news:

CM's panel tasked with recommending sweeping reforms in the agriculture sector has suggested the following measures at the recently held NITI Aayog meet:

- **Scrapping of the Essential Commodities Act** for the food sector
- **Review of agricultural subsidies** (The total outlay on fertilizer subsidy alone is around 70,000 crore rupees in 2018-19)
- **Dismantling of market monopolies** (which ensures that farmer's bargaining power increases fetching him more price for his produce)
- Steps to **increase private investment** and investment credit in the sector (through tax benefits and subsidised credit). This will enhance private sector's participation in supply chain infrastructure thereby reducing wastages and leakages in the process.
- Obstacles to the **implementation of the digital e-NAM system** to be removed.

Do you know?

- National Agriculture Market (eNAM) is a pan-India electronic trading portal which networks the existing APMC mandis to create a unified national market for agricultural commodities.

More Information about Essential Commodities Act

- The ECA was enacted way back in 1955.
- It has since been used by the Government to regulate the production, supply and distribution of a whole host of commodities it declares 'essential' in order to make them available to consumers at fair prices.
- The list of items under the Act include drugs, fertilisers, pulses and edible oils, and petroleum and petroleum products.

Here's how it works:

- If the Centre finds that a certain commodity is in short supply and its price is spiking, it can notify stock-holding limits on it for a specified period.
- Anybody trading or dealing in a commodity, be it wholesalers, retailers or even importers are prevented from stockpiling it beyond a certain quantity. It thus empowers authorities to crack down on hoarders and black-marketeers of such commodities during crisis period.
- The ECA gives consumers protection against irrational spikes in prices of essential commodities.

[A Sign of economic growth and Improvement:](#)

Context:

- The growth of key sectors by shifting gears as the current economic conditions are smooth in terms of macroeconomic stability to expand growth.
- The adequate investment reforms in primary sectors.
- There by, accomplishing the vision of a \$5-trillion economy by 2024.

Concerns:

- Adequate Investment in primary sector is the need of hour.
- Insufficient investment in the agriculture sector in most developing countries over the past 30 years has resulted in low productivity and stagnant production as per FAO.
- Agriculture remains the most trusted sector in helping alleviate poverty, hunger and malnutrition and ensuring better income distribution.

Food and Agriculture organisation:

- It is a UN body
- It leads international efforts to defeat hunger
- Established in 1945 and its headquarters is in Rome, Italy.
- FAO is also a source of knowledge and information, and helps developing countries and countries in transition modernize and improve agriculture, forestry and fisheries practices, ensuring good nutrition and food security for all.
- There are a total of 197 members comprising 194 member nations, 1 member organization and 2 associate members.
- India is a member of FAO

Key areas of investment

- Investment is the key to unlocking the potential of a developing economy
- Investment in Agro-processing, Agro-startups and Agri-tourism

Outcomes:

- Boosts Agri-tourism by attracting tourists towards farm staff and farm operations
- Generates in-situ employment.

Investment in Agri-education and research

Outcomes:

- It would also serve as a stage to demonstrate resource conservation and sustainable use through organic, natural and green methods, and also zero budget natural farming.

Investment in livestock technology

Outcomes:

- Productivity enhancement
- Conservation of indigenous germplasm, disease surveillance, quality control, waste utilisation and value addition.

Investment in renewable energy generation

Outcomes:

- It would help reduce the burden of debt-ridden electricity distribution companies and State governments,
- Enables energy security in rural areas.

Private investment to agriculture

Outcomes:

- Linking Farm business organisations with commodity exchanges would provide agriculture commodities more space on international trading platforms .
- It reduces the burden of markets in a glut season, with certain policy/procedural modifications

Barriers for the Investments:

- Issues of enumeration, maintenance and accessibility to help maintain agri-data on various fronts.
- There also needs to be a centralised institutional mechanism to help maintain farm level-data available for real time (virtual) assessment, while also helping plug the loopholes in subsidy distribution, funding and unrealistic assumption in production estimation.
- It needs dedicated investment in behavioural farm research sets
- There is a need to converge fragmented investments (public, private and foreign) to address the structural weaknesses in the agriculture sector.

Conclusion:

- Agriculture and its allied sectors are believed to be one of the most fertile grounds to help achieve the ambitious Sustainable Developmental Goals (SDGs).
- However, with the current pace of agriculture growth, India requires 'patient capital', as financial returns to investment are unlikely to materialise in the initial years.
- An inclusive business model facilitating strong investor-farmer relations should be created, with a legal and institutional framework for governance.
- Expanding institutions is essential to accommodate the developmental impacts of foreign agricultural investment.

Connecting the dots:

- Investment is the key to unlocking the potential of a developing economy. Elucidate.

Hurdles in Colistin ban

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains GS III- Economics of animal-rearing.

In News

- Kerala is gearing to implement the Union Ministry's ban on **Colistin and its formulations**, for food producing animals, poultry, aqua farming and animal feed supplements.
- However, the actual implementation of the ban is fraught with challenges due to lack of any control on the imports of Colistin from China

Do you know?

- **Colistin** is a valuable, last-resort **antibiotic** that saves lives in critical care units.
- Off-late there has been rise in patients who have exhibited resistance to this drug (ineffective against pathogens)

- Colistin is highly misused in poultry industry as a growth promoter which is one of reason for increasing **antibiotic resistance** in India
- The poultry market in increasing in India due to **poultry integration**, a kind of contract farming wherein integrators supply chicks, feed, veterinary aid, medication and other inputs to farmers and then buy back the birds after five weeks.

INTEGRATED LEARNING PROGRAM (ILP) - 2020
(FRESHERS /WORKING PROFESSIONALS / VETERANS)

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ENVIRONMENT/POLLUTION

Things to do to avoid another water crisis

Introduction

- Chennai has been reeling under its worst water crisis in decades with its four main reservoirs nearly empty.
- Groundwater too has been over extracted.

Background

Rainwater harvesting is mandatory in Tamil Nadu since 2003. This meant that building approval for new apartments and dwellings were not to be granted by the Chennai City Corporation unless the building plan included a RWH component. The order also mandated that all existing buildings in Tamil Nadu install RWH structures.

Sixteen years later, an audit by the non-governmental organisation Rain Centre has shown that most government buildings in Chennai do not have a functioning RWH structure; these include several police stations and municipality buildings.

Do you know?

Rain Water Harvesting

Rain water harvesting is collection and storage of rain water that runs off from roof tops, parks, roads, open grounds, etc. This water run-off can be either stored or recharged into the ground water.

Suggestions to solve water crisis

Need for water governance

- According to a recent NITI Aayog report, 21 Indian cities will run out of groundwater by 2020 if usage continues at the current rate. Water governance in cities across India has been ad hoc.
- Learning their lessons from the Chennai crisis, other metropolitan cities should now set up urban water planning and management boards, a permanent body similar to urban development authorities, that regulate the supply, demand and maintenance of water services and structures.
- The authorities shall monitor and regulate groundwater supply in these metropolitan areas.

- Desalination plants must also be set up especially in coastal cities to increase drinkable supply of water for citizens.
- Increased supply of drinking water will reduce the dependency on water tankers which in times of crisis charge exorbitant prices.
- Considering opinion of experts, beds of existing lakes can be deepened for greater water storage and better water percolation.
- The urban water management board should also oversee the desilting of lakes in the city on a regular basis.

Water Tariff

- Government can apply water tariff on the line of electricity supply especially in areas where there is extreme water crisis.
- Government can apply differential pricing and cross-subsidise households based on per capita income and water usage.

Practices adopted across the world

We can benefit from best practices adopted in cities across the world facing severe water crisis. For eg. Cape Town introduced the idea of Day Zero to reduce water usage and manage water consumption as per need. Day Zero refers to when most of the city's tap will be switched off.

Nal se Jal Scheme

Providing drinking water to all households including rural areas is an important mission for the new government and in this regard Nal se Jal scheme aims to provide piped drinking water to every rural home by 2024.

Jal Shakti Abhiyan

- The Centre is set to initiate the Jal Shakti Abhiyan to ramp up rainwater harvesting and conservation efforts in 255 water-stressed districts from July 1, in line with the government's promise to focus on water.
- Though water is a State issue, the campaign will be coordinated by 255 central IAS officers of Joint or Additional Secretary-rank, drawn from ministries as varied as Space, Petroleum and Defence, according to a notification issued by the Department of Personnel and Training.
- The campaign will run from July 1 to September 15 in States receiving rainfall during the south-west monsoon, while States receiving rainfall in the retreating or north-east monsoon will be covered from October 1 to November 30.
- It would aim to accelerate water harvesting, conservation and borewell recharge activities along with existing water body restoration and afforestation schemes.

- Progress would be monitored in real time through mobile applications and an online dashboard at indiawater.gov.in
- A major communications campaign on TV, radio, print, local and social media will be carried out, with celebrities mobilized to generate awareness for the campaign.

Conclusion

- The issue with any crisis in India is the fire-fighting strategy that we adopt in response as opposed to systematised solutions. These stop-gap arrangements are soon forgotten when things temporarily go back to normal instead of making an attempt to deeply ingrain these practices in the system.
- The scarcity of essential resources not only leads to economic losses but also social unrest.
- A sustainable governance solution to this problem along with public participation is essential to ensure that our future generations do not suffer as a result of our failures.

Connecting the dots:

- Comment on the need of Water governance in India.

Ecological perils of discounting the future

Background

- In a report last year, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) called the Chennai floods of 2015 a “manmade disaster”, a pointer to how the encroachment of lakes and river floodplains has driven India’s sixth largest city to this ineluctable situation.
- The Chennai floods are a symbol of consistent human failings and poor urban design which are common to most urban centres in India if not urban centres across the world.
- Now, Chennai is in the midst of another crisis — one of water scarcity.

Visibility of environmental degradation

- Unlike issues such as traffic congestion or crime which are visible, environmental degradation is not what most people can easily see or feel in their every day lives.
- Therefore, when the consequences of such degradation begin to wreak havoc, it becomes difficult to draw the correlation between nature’s revenge with human failings.

Causes of Water crisis throughout India

- In Chennai, more than 30 waterbodies of significance have disappeared in the past century.
- Concretisation or the increase in paved surfaces has affected the percolation of rainwater into the soil, thereby depleting groundwater levels to a point of no return.
- Urbanisation without vision; Urbanisation at the cost of reclaiming water bodies is a pan-India phenomenon.
- In Bengaluru, 15 lakes have lost their ecological character in less than five years according to a High Court notice.
- The lakes, which are now encroached areas, find use as a bus stand, a stadium and, quite ironically, as an office of the Pollution Control Board.
- In Telangana, the byzantine network of tanks and lakes built by the Kakatiya dynasty has disappeared over the years.

Some of the successful case studies

Mission Kakatiya

- In Telangana, tanks have been the lifeline of the State because of its geographical positioning.
- The State's topography and rainfall pattern have made tank irrigation an ideal type of irrigation by storing and regulating water flow for agricultural use.
- The Chief Minister of Telangana launched a massive rejuvenation movement in form of "Mission Kakatiya" which involves the restoration of irrigation tanks and lakes/minor irrigation sources built by the Kakatiya dynasty.
- From the perspective of inter-generational justice, this is a move towards giving future generations in the State their rightful share of water and, therefore, a life of dignity.

Sustainable hydraulic model

- The city of Hyderabad is now moving towards a sustainable hydraulic model with some of the best minds in the country working on it.
- This model integrates six sources of water in a way that even the most underdeveloped areas of the city can have equitable access to water resources and the groundwater levels restored in order to avoid a calamity of the kind that has gripped Chennai now.
- Hyderabad and the larger state of Telangana rebuild its resilience through a combination of political will and well-designed policies such as the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Scheme and Mission.

Corporate social responsibility and PPP

- Bengaluru reclaimed Kundalahalli lake (once a landfill) through corporate social responsibility funds in a Public Private Partnership model.

Way forward

- Other urban centres should not shy away from adopting, remodelling and implementing some of the best water management practices to avoid disaster.
- There is a tendency of policymakers to discount the future and they are obsessed of focussing on the here and now.
- It is estimated that in just 30 years from now, half of India will be living in cities therefore long term vision is necessary.

Conclusion

- If we truly envision a great future for this country, we must not risk the lives of half of our people and the next generations who could be facing a life in cities parched by drought, stranded by floods, mortified by earthquakes or torn by wars over fresh water.
- What has happened in Chennai now or what happened in Kerala last year in the form of floods are not a case of setting alarm bells ringing, but one of explosions.
- If we do not wake up now, we have to be prepared to face the consequences of nature wreaking great havoc on humanity. We would not need nuclear bombs for our extermination.

Connecting the dots:

- Water crisis in major Indian cities is a wake-up call for policy makers. What are examples of sustainable steps being taken to contain the future crisis?

[Water-grid project in Maratwada](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains I and III – Geography; Water conservation



<https://www.skymetweather.com/content/weather-news-and-analysis/why-marathwada-is-the-most-drought-affected-region/>

Context:

- Marathwada, has traditionally been a low-rainfall area primarily due because of its geography – lies in **rain shadow region of western ghats**
- The grid project aims to create an **integrated piped network** to supply water for drinking, industrial and agricultural purposes all through the year.
- The work would be taken up on **hybrid annuity model**, which involves an investment by private players also.

Do you know ?

- During **2016 drought**, a **train** named **Jaldhoot** supplied more than 70 lakh litres of water to **Latur** in Marathwada region
- **Hybrid annuity** means that the government makes an upfront of 40% of the project cost and pays a fixed annual instalment(annuity) for certain years for operation and maintenance (reduces traffic risk), while 60% of project cost is borne private player.

[CPCB pulls up 52 firms over handling of waste](#)

Part of Prelims and mains GS III Environment and ecology

In news

The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has pulled up 52 companies, including Amazon, Flipkart, Danone Foods and Beverages and PatanjaliAyurved Limited, for not specifying a time line or a plan to collect the plastic waste that results from their business activities.

Do you know?

Facts:

- According to CPCB estimates in 2015, Indian cities generate about 15,000 tonnes of plastic waste per day and about 70% of the plastic produced in the country ends up as waste.
- Nearly 40% of the plastic waste is neither collected nor recycled and ends up polluting the land and water.

The Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016, (which was amended in 2018)

- Rural areas have been brought in ambit of these Rules since plastic has reached to rural areas also. Responsibility for implementation of the rules is given to Gram Panchayat.
- First time, responsibility of waste generators is being introduced. Individual and bulk generators like offices, commercial establishments, industries are to segregate the plastic waste at source, handover segregated waste, pay user fee as per bye-laws of the local bodies.
- Plastic products are left littered after the public events (marriage functions, religious gatherings, public meetings etc) held in open spaces. First time, persons organising such events have been made responsible for management of waste generated from these events.
- Extended Producer Responsibility: Earlier, EPR was left to the discretion of the local bodies. First time, the producers and brand owners have been made responsible for collecting waste generated from their products. They have to approach local bodies for formulation of plan/system for the plastic waste management within the prescribed timeframe.

[Picking out plastic: on recycling and waste management](#)

Background

The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has put 52 producers, brand owners and importers, including big online retailers such as Amazon and Flipkart, and companies such as Patanjali Ayurveda and Britannia, on notice, for failing to take responsibility for their plastic waste.

Issue –

- The retail sector expects e-commerce to grow from about \$38.5 billion-equivalent in 2017 to \$200 billion by 2026. Given the role played by packaging, the waste management problem is likely to become alarming.
- Plastics are less expensive than other inputs in manufacturing, but recycling them into new products extends their life and provides a substitute for virgin material.
- In spite of legal requirements, municipal and pollution control authorities fail to see this and mostly pursue business-as-usual waste management methods.
- Recyclable waste is rendered useless when it gets mixed with other articles.
- Online retailers have not felt compelled to take back the thousands of polybags, plastic envelopes and air pillows used to cushion articles inside cardboard boxes.
- This is in contrast to more developed markets where they are trying out labels on packages with clear recycling instructions.

Extended producer responsibility –

- The concept of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) was incorporated into the Plastic Waste Management Rules, but municipal and pollution control authorities have failed to persuade commercial giants to put in place a system to collect and process the waste.

What is EPR?

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is a policy approach under which producers are given a significant responsibility – financial and/or physical – for the treatment or disposal of post-consumer products. Assigning such responsibility could in principle provide incentives to prevent wastes at the source, promote product design for the environment and support the achievement of public recycling and materials management goals.

Do you know?

PLASTIC WASTE MANAGEMENT RULES, 2016: SALIENT FEATURES –

- Increase minimum thickness of plastic carry bags from 40 to 50 microns and stipulate minimum thickness of 50 micron for plastic sheets also to facilitate collection and recycle of plastic waste;
- Expand the jurisdiction of applicability from the municipal area to rural areas, because plastic has reached rural areas also;

- To bring in the responsibilities of producers and generators, both in plastic waste management system and to introduce collect back system of plastic waste by the producers/brand owners, as per extended producer's responsibility;
- To introduce collection of plastic waste management fee through pre-registration of the producers, importers of plastic carry bags/multi-layered packaging and vendors selling the same for establishing the waste management system;
- To promote use of plastic waste for road construction as per Indian Road Congress guidelines or energy recovery, or waste to oil etc. for gainful utilization of waste and address the waste disposal issue;
- To entrust more responsibility on waste generators, namely payment of user charge as prescribed by local authority, collection and handing over of waste by the institutional generator, event organizers.

Solutions:

- The two prongs of the solution are packaging innovation that reduces its use by using alternatives, and up scaling waste segregation, collection and transmission.
- These companies can form waste cooperatives in India, employing informal waste-pickers.
- In such a model, consumers will respond readily if they are incentivised to return segregated plastic waste.
- Making municipal and pollution control authorities accountable is also equally important.

Connecting the dots

- Plastic pollution is a pressing environmental concern that requires our collective action. Do you think implementation of PLASTIC WASTE MANAGEMENT RULES, 2016 failed to achieve its objectives? Critically comment.

[Bengal port records country's highest sea level rise in 50 years](#)

Part of Prelims and mains GS III Global warming and climate change

In news

- According to the data from the Ministry of Earth Sciences, four ports- Diamond Harbour (5.16 mm per year), Kandla (3.18 mm), Haldia (2.89 mm) and Port Blair (2.20 mm)- recorded a higher sea level rise than the global average.
- Chennai and Mumbai recorded a sea level rise far below the global and the national averages at 0.33 mm per year (1916-2005) and 0.74 mm (1878-2005) respectively.

- While recent studies reveal that sea level rise in the country has been estimated to be 1.3 mm per year along India's coasts during the last 40-50 years.

Cause and effects

- Sea level rise is said to be linked with global warming and as per the fifth assessment report of the International Panel on Climate Change, the global sea level was rising at an average rate of 1.8 mm per year over the last century.
- Rising sea levels can exacerbate the impacts of coastal hazards such as storm surge, tsunami, coastal floods, high waves and coastal erosion in the low lying coastal areas in addition to causing gradual loss of coastal land to sea.
- The sea level rise is higher in West Bengal, particularly in the Sunderbans delta because of the deltaic sediment deposition as a result of the mixing of fresh water and saline water.
- Global warming not only causes melting of ice and glaciers, but also leads to internal expansion of water in oceans and thus a rise in the sea level.

[Warming threatens Greenland's archaeological sites, says study](#)

Part of Prelims and mains GS III Climate change

In news

- In Greenland, climate change is not just a danger to ecosystems but also a threat to history, as global warming is affecting archaeological remains, says a study.
- There are more than 1,80,000 archaeological sites across the Arctic, some dating back thousands of years, and previously these were protected by the characteristics of the soil.
- Because the degradation rate is controlled by the soil temperature and moisture content, rising air temperatures and changes in precipitation during the frost-free season may lead to a loss of organic key elements such as archaeological wood, bone and ancient DNA.
- In addition to organic elements, such as hair, feathers, shells and traces of flesh, some of the sites contain the ruins of Viking settlements.
- The remains, some of which provide a glimpse into the lives of the first inhabitants of Greenland from around 2,500 BC, are at risk.
- Study predict that average temperature could increase by up to 2.6 degrees Celsius, leading to higher soil temperatures, a longer thaw season, and increased microbial activity within the organic layers.

[National Green Tribunal \(NGT\) constituted a committee on illegal construction on the floodplains](#)

Part of Prelims and mains GS III Environment and ecology

In news

National Green Tribunal (NGT) has constituted a committee to look into a plea alleging illegal construction on the floodplains of river Kosi in Rampur, Uttar Pradesh, by a private university

Do you know?

National Green Tribunal is a **statutory body** established by a Government Notification using the powers of Section 3 of the NGT Act 2010.

Objective

- To provide effective and expeditious disposal of cases relating to environmental protection and conservation of forests and other natural resources including enforcement of any legal right relating to environment.
- Giving relief and compensation for damages to persons and property Other Related Matters.

River kosi

- Kosi River is known as the "Sorrow of Bihar"
- These include the Tamor River originating from the Kanchenjunga area in the east and Arun River and Sun Koshi from Tibet
- The Kosi is 720 km long and drains in Tibet (China), Nepal and Bihar (India).

[NGT directs Army to shift ammunition dump](#)

Part of Prelims and mains GS III Environment and ecology

In news

- National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed the Army to shift its ammunition dump in Raiwala, Uttarakhand to ensure restoration of the Chilla-Motichur Elephant Corridor.
- The ammunition dump was a threat to the wildlife and ecology of the Chilla-Motichur corridor.

Do you know?

Chilla-Motichur corridor

- It is a part of Rajaji national park
- Located in Uttarakhand
- It is an elephant corridor, declared free of human habitation

'Blue Flag' challenge for Indian oceans

Part of Prelims and Mains GS III Environment and ecology

In news

- Union Environment Ministry has selected 12 beaches in India for a 'Blue Flag' certification, an international recognition conferred on beaches that meet certain criteria of cleanliness and environmental propriety

About Blue Flag

- The Blue Flag programme for beaches and marinas is run by the international, non-governmental, non-profit organisation FEE (the Foundation for Environmental Education).
- It started in France in 1985 and has been implemented in Europe since 1987
- Spain tops the list with 566 such beaches; Greece and France follow with 515 and 395, respectively

What is the criteria to achieve this Blue Flag certification

- Nearly 33 criteria that must be met to qualify for a Blue Flag certification
- Such as the water meeting certain standards such as waste disposal facilities, disabled-friendly facilities, first aid equipment and no access to pets in the main areas of the beach. Some criteria are voluntary and some compulsory

To help Indian beaches meet these criteria

- The Union Ministry has allowed structures such as container toilet blocks, change rooms, shower panels, mini greywater treatment plants in an enclosed structure, mini solid waste recycling plants and off-grid solar photovoltaic panels to come up, provided they are a minimum 10 metres from the high tide line.

Close polluting units in critical areas: NGT

Part of: Prelims and Mains GS paper III - Environmental pollution and degradation

In news:

- National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) to shut down all polluting industries in “critically polluted” and “severely polluted” areas within three months.
- It also directed all States and Union Territories to furnish a report on the amount of biomedical waste generated and asked them to set up common treatment and disposal facilities, if not done yet.

Do you know?

- National Green Tribunal was established in 2010 under National Green Tribunal Act, 2010 to dispose of cases having environmental ramification.
- Its headed by retired judge of supreme court or being chief justice of high court and almost 20 experts and 20 judicial members.

Mandate of NGT

- To dispose of cases dealing with any environment law violation, conservation of forests and natural resources.

Eg:

- The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974
- The Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974
- The Environmental Protection Act ,1986
- The Biological Diversity Act, 2002 etc.
- Indian forest act, 1927 and wildlife protection act, 1972 are out of purview from this jurisdiction.

Powers:

- Recommend penalties and fine
- Recommend policies for environment protection
- Disposal of cases within 6 months
- Enforcement of any legal right relating to environment
- Giving relief and compensation for damages
- Has power of civil courts

Significance

- Helps reduce burden on higher courts
- Faster resolution of cases
- Specialised member brings efficiency to justice
- Less expensive than courts

Fulfils constitutional provision like article 21 i.e. right to clean environment and article 48(a) i.e. protection of environment and safeguarding of forests

The rapid pace of development is harming the environment. The NGT provides a check and balance for this.

It takes suo – moto cases like banning the crackers, directing states to speed up action to clean Ganga.

[Reducing Carbon emissions from road transport](#)

Introduction:

- Congested streets and polluted air are common experiences in India's metropolises.
- Delhi tops the charts and emissions are more than twice as high as other Indian megacities, such as Mumbai, Bengaluru or Ahmedabad.
- India's road transport emissions are small in global comparison but is increasing exponentially.
- The Global Carbon Project reports that India's carbon emissions are rising more than two times as fast as the global rise in 2018.
- Reducing CO2 emissions of road transport leverages multiple co-benefits, for example, improving air quality and increasing physical activity, which are critical for well-being, particularly in urban areas.

Factors:

- Climate action requires an understanding of how emissions vary with spatial context. Income and urbanisation are the key determinants of travel distance and travel mode choice and, therefore, commuting emissions.
- The way cities are built and the design of public transit are critical for low-carbon mobility systems.
- Average per capita commuting emissions are highest for the most affluent districts, which are predominantly urban, and that heavily use four-wheelers for commuting. In

contrast, average per capita commuting emissions are lowest for Indian districts that are poor, and commuting distances are short and rarely use three-wheelers.

Way ahead:**Focusing on well-being:**

- Mayors and town planners should organise cities around public transport and cycling, thereby improving mobility for many, while limiting car use. Uptake of non-motorised transport emerges as a sweet spot of sustainable development, resulting in both lower emissions and better public health in cities.
- According to the recent National Family Health Survey (2015-16), nearly 30% of all men are overweight or obese in southwest Delhi, but only 25% in Thiruvananthapuram and 13% in Allahabad. These data correlate with high reliance of car use in Delhi and low demand for walking.
- Increase in cycling will lower chronic diseases such as diabetes and cardiovascular diseases, while also abating emissions. Car use, in contrast, correlates with higher rates of diabetes.
- Fuel price increases, congestion charges or parking management could be a strategy that improves the well-being of individuals living in urban areas.

Technology transition:

- India should double down in its strategy to transition to electric two and three-wheelers.
- India is the third-largest market for automobiles and is one of the world's largest producers and consumers in two- and three- wheelers and Indian companies can take a leading role in switching to electric vehicles. This will also help in transforming India's vision of 'Make in India'.

City planning:

- Compact cities improve accessibility and reduce emissions from transport and even the building sector. Most Indian cities are already very dense, with few benefits expected by further high-rise.
- City managers should ensure that existing urban areas provide short routes and fast access to schools, hospitals and jobs, otherwise, residents would be required to travel long distances.

Conclusion:

Providing access to public service, choosing rapid transit over car driving in cities and

supporting the rise of electric two and three-wheelers will help drive India to a modern and low-carbon transport system fit for the 21st century.

Connecting the dots:

- Reducing CO2 emissions of road transport leverages multiple co-benefits, for example, improving air quality and increasing physical activity, which are critical for well-being, particularly in urban areas. Comment.

INTEGRATED LEARNING PROGRAMME (ILP) - 2020

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All India Ranking
Self Assessment System
Doubt Clearance Portal

ANIMALS/NATIONAL PARKS IN NEWS

[International Whaling Commission \(IWC\)](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains Paper III – Coastal Security; Environment and Biodiversity; Conservation of biodiversity

In News:

- Japan has resumed commercial whale hunts after more than three decades.
- This came after Japan has withdrawn from the International Whaling Commission in 2018.

About International Whaling Commission (IWC)

- IWC is an international body set up under the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW).
- It aims to provide for the proper conservation of whale stocks and thus make possible the orderly development of the whaling industry.
- The main duty of the IWC is to keep under review and revise as necessary the measures laid down in the Schedule to the Convention which govern the conduct of whaling throughout the world.
- The commercial whaling was banned by the IWC in 1986 after some species were almost driven to extinction.
- IWC consists of 89 countries and all the member countries are signatories to this convention. India is a member of the IWC.

[Honour for 'Plan Bee' that helped save jumbos](#)

Part of Prelims and mains GS III Environment and ecology

In news

Plan Bee, earned the Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) the best innovation award in Indian Railways for the 2018-19 fiscal.

Need of Plan

- There are 29 earmarked elephant corridors with the operating zone of NFR spread across the north-eastern states and parts of Bihar and West Bengal. Trains are required to slow down at these corridors and adhere to speed specified on signs.

- But elephants have ventured into the path of trains even in non-corridor areas, often leading to accidents resulting in elephant deaths.

Plan Bee

- Under this plan, a device was designed to generate the amplified sound of honey bees audible from 700-800 metres.
- It is an amplifying system imitating the buzz of a swarm of honey bees to keep wild elephants away from railway tracks.
- NFR now has 46 such devices installed at vulnerable points.

[Speed restrictions and sound alerts mooted for protection of dolphins](#)

Part of Prelims and mains GS III Environment and ecology

In news

- Restricting the speeds of vessels and blowing sirens and horns is how the Ministry of Shipping plans to safeguard the population of the Ganges River Dolphin, in the country's one dolphin reserve through which National Waterway-1 connecting Haldia to Varanasi passes.
- The other mitigation measures, according to the Ministry, include fitting vessels with propeller guards and dolphin deflectors to minimise dolphin accidents and using non-toxic paints for painting vessels.

The Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary (VGDS)

- The Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary (VGDS), from Sultanganj to Kahalganj on the Ganga in Bihar is the only dolphin sanctuary in the country.
- Experts have pegged the population of the Ganges dolphin in VGDS from 150 to 200.
- The habitat of the Ganges dolphin is not limited to the sanctuary.

Criticism

Dolphins are difficult to spot and even after they are spotted if sirens are sounded it will not only disturb them more but also a number of other migratory birds and aquatic fauna.

Do you know?

About Gangetic Dolphin

- Ganges River Dolphin is placed under "Endangered Category" in the IUCN Red List.
- The Ganges River dolphin, or susu, inhabits the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna and Karnaphuli-Sangu river systems of Nepal, India, and Bangladesh.

- It is threatened by removal of river water and siltation arising from deforestation, pollution and entanglement in fisheries nets, etc.

[Man-made highlands come to rescue of animals during floods](#)

Part of: Main GS Paper III - Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment; Disaster management

In News:

- During monsoon season, Brahmaputra rivers overflows and floods the adjacent regions including the Kaziranga National Park. As a result, most of the animals seek safe places during these floods.
- In order to keep animals above the water level, forest department has constructed highlands which were designed scientifically with provision of adequate grass and plants yielding fruits.
- These islands have turned into islands of relative safety whereby animals move to such highlands during floods. This has prevented huge loss to wildlife and sustenance of Kaziranga ecosystem.

Do you know?

- Floods are considered as necessary evil in Kaziranga, which comprises mix of wetlands, grasslands and forests. The flood water flushes out the aquatic plants and weeds that choke its ecosystem.
- Kaziranga National Park is known for being the residence of 'Big Five' animals, ie, Great Indian One horned Rhinoceros, Indian Elephant, Royal Bengal Tiger, Eastern Swamp Deer and Wild Water Buffalo.

[National Parks in news: Pench National Park in Madhya Pradesh and Bandipur wildlife sanctuary in Karnataka](#)

- India is spending 1300 Crore rupees to build 9 kilometres underpass on National Highway passing through Pench National Park in Madhya Pradesh to provide safe passage for wildlife (especially Tigers) in the region.
- Similar demand is being made to build underpass on the National Highway between Mysuru and Waynad to protect tigers in Bandipur wildlife sanctuary.

Concerns

- In a developing country like India with limited resources and nearly 23% of our population living below poverty line, we need to balance our developmental needs with our responsibility to protect the ecology.

Conservation efforts to revive gharial population

Part of: GS Prelims and Main GS Paper III- Environment and Conservation

In news:

- Five gharials, were bred at the Nandankanan Zoological Park, Odisha and released into into the Satkosia gorge of Mahanadi.
- The gharials are individually marked and fitted with radio transmitters for future identification and tracking of their migration route
- Gharials are “**critically endangered**” species of crocodile.
- Odisha is the only State in India having all three species — gharial, mugger and saltwater crocodile.

Tiger census

Part of: Mains GS III- Conservation of Environment


In News

- Tiger count rises by 33% in India with 2,967 tigers in the wild (2014 census-2226)
- However, the rise is uneven across states.
- MP had the highest rise of 218 tigers, reaching an estimated 526, while Chhattisgarh saw drastic fall in its count from 46 to 19
- No tigers were found in Buxa (West Bengal), Dampa (Mizoram) and Palamau (Jharkhand), reserves that had very low numbers in earlier assessments
- Poaching(accounting for 24% of Tiger mortality), lack of protection and management measures, pressure on forests for expansion of human settlements are some of the hurdles in Tiger conservation

Do You know?

- Tiger Census of India is considered to be the world’s largest wildlife survey, covering 381,000 sq. km

- India along with 12 other tiger range countries had committed to doubling the population of tigers in their respective countries by 2022, as part of the WWF programme Tx2
- India completed its Tx2 target 4 years earlier
- India with 50 tiger reserves in 18 states has over 80% of the global tiger population which stands at 3,159
- International Tiger Day is celebrated on 29 July annually to raise awareness about Tiger conservation

The advertisement features a background image of a laptop keyboard and a smartphone. The text is arranged in a grid-like fashion. At the top, the main title 'IASBABA'S OPTIONAL SUBJECT COURSES' is written in large, bold, orange letters. Below this, there are two columns of text. The left column lists 'OPTIONALS CLASSROOM PROGRAMME' and 'TLP OPTIONALS TEST SERIES' in bold black font. The right column lists 'GEOGRAPHY', 'SOCIOLOGY', 'ANTHROPOLOGY', 'POLITICAL SCIENCE', and 'KANNADA LIT.' in bold black font. Below the right column, the same subjects are listed again: 'GEOGRAPHY', 'SOCIOLOGY', 'ANTHROPOLOGY', 'POLITICAL SCIENCE', and 'PUBLIC ADMIN' in bold black font. The entire advertisement is set against a light beige background with a subtle keyboard pattern.

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ANTHROPOLOGY
POLITICAL SCIENCE
PUBLIC ADMIN**

INFRASTRUCTURE/ENERGY

[Improper planning, lack of monitoring defeating aim of green power, says CAG](#)

Part of: Prelims and Mains GS III - Infrastructure: Renewable energy

In news

- An audit report by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) on setting up small hydro projects on public-private partnership (PPP) basis said due to improper planning and inadequate monitoring, the objective of harnessing the green power with the help of private sector was largely defeated.
- According to report against the estimated installed capacity of 417.85 MW, only 36.85 MW installed capacity was achieved.
- There was time overrun ranging from 39 to 53 months in respect of two ongoing projects

The CAG's recommendations

- The feasibility study in respect of listed projects be completed in a time-bound manner.
- The government may address the issue of less release of water so as to have fair terms for PPP projects.
- There is a need to focus on the issues at hand and work out a solution to take the project forward or short-close the same if a feasible solution is possible.

[Going electric](#)

Background

- The Union Budget has announced a bold move to make a transition to electric vehicles, and offered a tax incentive for the early adopters.
- Its stated vision to leapfrog into an era of electric mobility and domestic vehicle manufacturing, led by public transport and commercial vehicles, is forward-looking.
- It is also inevitable because poor air quality and noise pollution have sharply affected the quality of life, and pose a serious public health challenge.

Deadline

As the NITI Aayog has stated, the goal of shifting to electric vehicles cannot make progress without deadlines, and a market-driven approach sought by some sections of the automotive

industry will leave India's capabilities and infrastructure for e-mobility trailing others, notably China.

With 2030 as the outer limit, the imperative is to fix a realistic time-frame by which scooters, motorcycles, three-wheel carriages and, later, all new vehicles will be battery powered.

Incentives

An additional income tax deduction of ₹1.5 lakh is now offered on interest paid on loans to purchase electric vehicles, and the GST Council has been moved to cut the tax on e-vehicles to 5% from 12%. Both demands were made by the industry earlier.

Budgetary allocation

There is a significant outlay under the second iteration of the Faster Adoption and Manufacturing (of Hybrid and) Electric Vehicles (FAME) plan of ₹10,000 crore, to give a fillip to commercial vehicles and to set up charging stations.

Way ahead

Affordable charging will make these vehicles and commercial three-wheelers attractive because operating costs are a fraction of petrol and diesel equivalents.

Swapping the battery at convenient locations with one that is pre-charged, especially for commercial vehicles that run longer and need a quick turnaround, is worth considering.

A longer-term policy priority has to be the setting up of lithium battery production and solar charging infrastructure of a scale that matches the ambition.

Connecting the dots:

- India is moving ahead to become a world leader in electric vehicles industry. Critically analyse the issues and challenges in front of Indian automobile industry to shift to electric vehicles.

Electric Buses

Part of: Mains GS III- Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.

In News

- Niti Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant announced that an inter-ministerial panel has sanctioned 5,645 electric buses for operations in 65 cities and for intercity operations to 8 state transport undertakings.
- This will give huge impetus to automobile sector, clean up our cities & drive Make in India.
- Some of the measures taken to popularise environment-friendly electric vehicles are:
 - GST Council headed by Finance Minister decided to **cut the tax rates on e-vehicles** from 12 per cent to 5 per cent with effect from August 1, 2019
 - In the Union Budget 2019-20, the government proposed additional **income tax deduction** of Rs 1.5 lakh on the interest paid on loans taken to purchase electric vehicles
 - Certain parts of EVs have been **exempted from customs duty**
 - The Centre has also approved **Rs 10,000 crore under the FAME II scheme**, which aims to encourage faster adoption of such vehicles by right incentives and charging infrastructure

Do you know?

- EVs are considered as sunrise opportunity as India has over 72% two-wheelers.
- Niti Aayog has proposed that two-wheelers below the capacity of 150cc sold in the country after March 31, 2025, should be electric ones only.
- It also proposed that three-wheelers sold in the country after March 31, 2023 should be electric ones.

Railway reforms

Part of: Mains GS III- Infrastructure: Railways

In News

- Government is contemplating to start import of complete train sets from foreign suppliers if they agreed to establish the coach manufacturing facility in India.
- Railways would evolve standard eligibility criteria for propulsion systems as was done by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs that operates the Metro Railway.

Do You Know?

- Centre plans to corporatize production units of Indian railways like - Integral Coach Factory in Chennai (Largest such facility in the world) , Modern Coach Factory in Rae Bareli, and Rail Coach Factory in Kapurthala.
- **Corporatization** is the process of transforming government assets into corporations.

- In this case, the production units of Indian Railways will be converted into government-owned company
- **Advantages of corporatization:** Managerial autonomy, superior operational efficiency, attract investments, bring in start-of-the-art technology and export capability
- **Opposition to Corporatization:** Opposition by trade unions due to increased vulnerability of their jobs, considered as **first step of privatization** which would increase cost for consumers

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**GEOGRAPHY
SOCIOLOGY
ANTHROPOLOGY
POLITICAL SCIENCE
PUBLIC ADMIN**

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

[Lithium-ion giga units mooted](#)

Part of Prelims and mains GS III Science and Tech, Industry

In news

- To push the adoption of electric mobility in the country, government think-tank NITI Aayog has proposed the establishment of giga factories in India for the manufacture of lithium-ion batteries in the next couple of years.
- The recommendation is part of the Aayog's much debated proposal that only electric (lithium-ion or other advanced battery chemistry only) three-wheelers would be sold in the country after March 31, 2023, and all new sales of two-wheelers below 150cc would be electric post March 31, 2025.
- It is a sunrise industry and India needed to start building capabilities to become a globally competitive player in this area.

[NASA tests launch-abort system for its moon mission](#)

Part of: Prelims and Mains GS III – Science and Technology; Space

In news

- NASA carried out a successful test of a launch-abort system for the Orion capsule designed to take U.S. astronauts to the Moon.
- The three-minute exercise at Cape Canaveral in Florida aimed to test in almost real-life conditions the evacuation of astronauts from the capsule in the event of an explosion or rocket booster failure.
- In real-life conditions, parachutes would open to ease the manned capsule's fall toward the Atlantic Ocean.

[Expanding India's share in global space economy](#)

Introduction

From a modest beginning in the 1960s, India's space programme has grown steadily, achieving significant milestones. These include fabrication of satellites, space-launch vehicles, and a range of associated capabilities.

ISRO's thrust areas

Since its establishment in 1969, ISRO has been guided by a set of mission and vision statements covering both the societal objectives and the thrust areas.

First Thrust Area: Satellite communication

- It is to address the national needs for telecommunication, broadcasting and broadband infrastructure.
- INSAT and GSAT are the backbones of India's satellite communication.
- Gradually, bigger satellites have been built carrying a larger array of transponders to provide services linked to areas like telecommunication, telemedicine, television, broadband, radio, disaster management and search and rescue services.

Second Thrust Area: Earth Observation

- It is to use space-based imagery for a slew of national demands, ranging from weather forecasting, disaster management and national resource mapping and planning.
- These resources cover agriculture and watershed, land resource, and forestry managements.
- With higher resolution and precise positioning, Geographical Information Systems' applications today cover all aspects of rural and urban development and planning.
- Beginning with the Indian Remote Sensing (IRS) series in the 1980s, today the RISAT, Cartosat and Resourcesat series provide wide-field and multi-spectral high resolution data for land, ocean and atmospheric observations.

Third Thrust Area: satellite-aided navigation

- The GPS-aided GEO augmented navigation (GAGAN) is a joint project between ISRO and Airports Authority of India.
- It augmented the GPS coverage of the region, improving the accuracy and integrity, primarily for civil aviation applications and better air traffic management over Indian airspace.
- This was followed up with the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS), a system based on seven satellites in geostationary and geosynchronous orbits.
- IRNSS is also named as NavIC (Navigation with Indian Constellation).

Fourth Thrust Area: space science and exploration missions

- It includes the Chandrayaan and the Mangalyaan missions, with a manned space mission, Gaganyaan, planned for its first test flight in 2021.
- These missions are not just for technology demonstration but also for expanding the frontiers of knowledge in space sciences.

Launch Vehicle Technology

- Beginning with the Satellite Launch Vehicle (SLV) and the Augmented Satellite Launch Vehicle (ASLV), ISRO has developed and refined the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) as its workhorse for placing satellites in low earth and sun synchronous orbits.
- The Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) programme is still developing with its MkIII variant, having undertaken three missions, and is capable of carrying a 3.5 MT payload into a geostationary orbit.

ISRO and Industry

- Over the years, ISRO built a strong association with the industry, particularly with Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) like Hindustan Aeronautics Limited and Bharat Electronics Limited, etc. and large private sector entities like Larsen and Toubro, Godrej and Walchandnagar Industries.
- However, most of the private sector players are Tier-2/Tier-3 vendors, providing components and services. The Assembly, Integration and Testing (AIT) role is restricted to ISRO.
- ISRO set up Antrix, a private limited company, in 1992 as its commercial arm to market its products and services and interface with the private sector in transfer of technology partnerships.
- Today, the value of the global space industry is estimated to be \$350 billion and is likely to exceed \$550 billion by 2025.
- Despite ISRO's impressive capabilities, India's share is estimated at \$7 billion (just 2% of the global market).

New Space and New developments

- Developments in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and big data analytics has led to the emergence of 'New Space' — a disruptive dynamic based on using end-to-end efficiency concepts.
- A parallel is how the independent app developers, given access to the Android and Apple platforms, revolutionised smartphone usage.
- The New Space start-ups discern a synergy with government's flagship programmes like Digital India, Start-Up India, Skill India and schemes like Smart Cities Mission.
- They need an enabling ecosystem, a culture of accelerators, incubators, Venture Capitalists and mentors.
- Another revolution under way is the small satellite revolution. Globally, 17,000 small satellites are expected to be launched between now and 2030.
- ISRO is developing a small satellite launch vehicle (SSLV) expected to be ready in 2019.
- Ministry of Defence now setting up a Defence Space Agency and a Defence Space Research Organisation, ISRO should actively embrace an exclusively civilian identity.

Conclusion

A new Space law for India should aim at facilitating growing India's share of global space economy to 10% within a decade which requires a new kind of partnership between ISRO, the established private sector and the New Space entrepreneurs.

Connecting the dots:

- ISRO has completed 50 years of its journey in India's space research and explorations. Explain briefly its achievements. Suggest some measures for its way ahead.

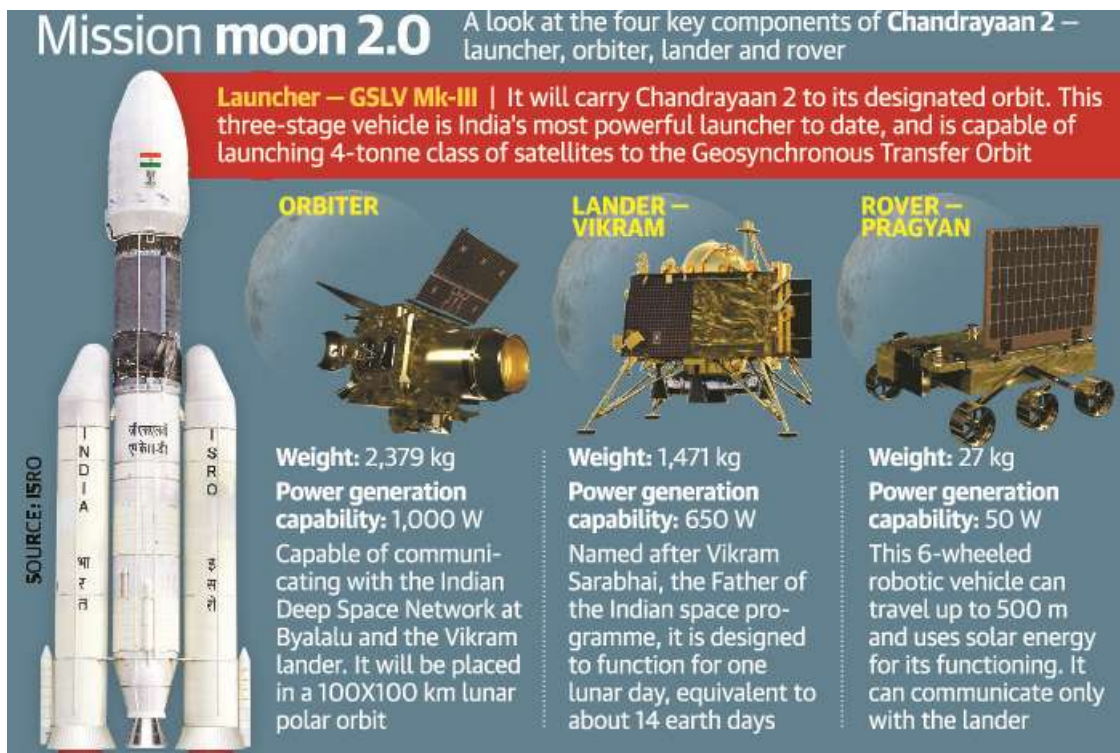
ISRO's lunar touchdown has dry run on soil fetched from Tamil Nadu

Part of Prelims and mains GS III: Science and Technology

Background

- More than a decade ago, even as the Chandrayaan-1 orbiter mission of 2008 was being readied, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) created a proto-Lunar Terrain Test Facility (LTF) at its advanced satellite testing unit, ISITE, in Bengaluru.
- This, it did, by modifying a balloon research lab, about 30-40 m high, long and wide.

Mission moon 2.0 A look at the four key components of Chandrayaan 2 – launcher, orbiter, lander and rover



Launcher – GSVL Mk-III | It will carry Chandrayaan 2 to its designated orbit. This three-stage vehicle is India's most powerful launcher to date, and is capable of launching 4-tonne class of satellites to the Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit

ORBITER

Weight: 2,379 kg
Power generation capability: 1,000 W
Capable of communicating with the Indian Deep Space Network at Bhalalu and the Vikram lander. It will be placed in a 100X100 km lunar polar orbit

LANDER – VIKRAM

Weight: 1,471 kg
Power generation capability: 650 W
Named after Vikram Sarabhai, the Father of the Indian space programme, it is designed to function for one lunar day, equivalent to about 14 earth days

ROVER – PRAGYAN

Weight: 27 kg
Power generation capability: 50 W
This 6-wheeled robotic vehicle can travel up to 500 m and uses solar energy for its functioning. It can communicate only with the lander

Image:

https://d39gegkjaqduz9.cloudfront.net/TH/2019/07/13/CNI/Chennai/TH/5_01/51062d03_3066909_101_mr.jpg

Lunar Terrain Test Facility (LTTF) and need of lunar soil

- Equipping the LTTF and making it look and feel like being on the moon was the first challenge.
- It needed lunar 'soil' with almost all its features and texture, lunar temperatures, low gravity and the same amount of sunlight as on the moon.
- On the Moon, the metre-long rover, weighing 27 kg, must move for about 500 metres during its expected life of 14 Earth days (one lunar day).

Lunar soil

- For recreating the terrain, an option was to import simulated lunar soil from the U.S. at an exorbitant price.
- ISRO decided to find its own solution at a lower cost.
- Geologists of various national agencies had found that a few sites near Salem in Tamil Nadu had the 'anorthosite' rock that somewhat matches lunar soil in composition and features.
- To simulate the lunar surface at the Bengaluru test facility, professional crushers broke down the rocks brought from around Salem in Tamil Nadu to the micro grain sizes.

[India set for new lunar trophy hunt](#)

Part of Prelims and mains GS III Science and Tech

In news

- Indian mission takes its first step towards touching the moon, with a leggy lander and a six-wheeled rover.
- The mission will hunt for minerals and water ice deposits that Chandrayaan-1 confirmed.
- Chandrayaan-2's journey, beginning at 2.51 a.m. on Monday, will last about 52 days.
- When it lands on the moon, Chandrayaan-2 will make India the fourth country to safely land on lunar terrain.
- No space agency has landed on the south pole of the moon to date, making the landing spot also historic.

About Chandrayaan-2

- Chandrayaan-2 Called to be the most complex mission from India so far.
- Chandrayaan-2 will have two modules stacked together inside a launch vehicle — an orbiter and a lander. It will have a third module, the lunar rover.
- ISRO has named the lander 'Vikram', after India's space pioneer Vikram Sarabhai and rover 'Pragyan', which in Sanskrit means wisdom.
- The heavy-lift rocket Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle - Mark III (GSLV Mk III), which will carry Chandrayaan-2 to the Moon, is nicknamed as 'Baahubali'.
- The first Indian lunar mission to land on Moon is being headed by two women — mission director RituKaridhal and the project director MuthayyaVanitha.
- Chandrayaan-2 Moon mission will explore for signs of water and helium-3 on the lunar surface and analyze crust samples. The rover will send pictures of the lunar surface within 20 minutes of landing.

[IAF to adopt ASRAAM missile for fighter fleet](#)

Part of: Prelims and Mains GS III - Science & Technology

In news:

- The Indian Air Force's (IAF) move to integrate British Advanced Short Range Air-to-Air missile (ASRAAM) to Russian-origin Sukhoi Su-30 MKI fighter jets. IAF is looking to replace the Russian-made Vympel R-73 missile with the ASRAAM in phases.

Do you know?

About ASRAAM

- ASRAAM is widely used as a Within Visual Range (WVR) air dominance missile with a range of over 25km (Short range).
- It is air-to-air missile.
- It is an imaging infrared homing ("heat seeking") missile.

[Chandrayana-2](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and Main GS Paper III- Science and Technology

Key PT Pointers:

- Chandrayaan-1 (only Orbiter) launched in 2008 was ISRO's first mission to the moon

- Chandrayaan-2 consists of an **Orbiter, Lander (named as Vikram) and Rover (named as Pragyan)**, all equipped with scientific instruments to study the moon
- The lander and rover are designed to work for only 14 days(1 lunar day), while orbiter will remain in orbit for a year
- With Chandrayaan-2, India will become only the **fourth country** in the world **to land a spacecraft on the moon.**
- Chandrayaan-2 will make a **landing** at a site near the **South pole of the moon**, where no earlier mission has gone,
- The south pole of the moon
 - holds the possibility of the presence of water
 - It is also supposed to have ancient rocks and craters that can offer indications of history of moon, and also contain clues to the fossil records of early solar system.

[Cryptocurrencies to be banned](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and Main GS Paper III- Science and Technology

Key Pointers:

- **Subhash Chandra Garg Committee** was constituted on November 2, 2017 to look into the legality of cryptocurrencies and blockchain.
- The report says cryptocurrencies **do not have any intrinsic value of their own** and lack any of the attributes of a currency. They neither act as a store of value nor are they a medium of exchange in themselves
- The committee thus recommended that **private cryptocurrencies be banned** in India.
- It has, however, said the government should keep an open mind on the potential issuance of cryptocurrencies by the Reserve Bank of India.

[Ban or regulate crypto currency?](#)

Context

- An inter-ministerial committee (IMC) that was set up to assess the viability of virtual currencies has recommended that India should ban private crypto currencies such as Bitcoin.

Concerns:

- Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said the government doesn't consider them legal tender.

- The Reserve Bank of India has repeatedly warned the public of the risks associated with dealing with cryptocurrencies.
- There have been cases of consumers being defrauded, including in India.

What are virtual currencies?

- A virtual currency is a digital representation of value that can be digitally traded and functions as
 - a medium of exchange, and/ or
 - a unit of account, and/or
 - a store of value,
- But, unlike fiat currency like the rupee, it is not legal tender and does not have the backing of a government.
- A cryptocurrency is a subset of virtual currencies, and is decentralised, and protected by cryptography.
- There are block chains which are online registers and through these online registers, people can actually buy these currencies and mine the currencies and use them as instrument of exchange. There are about 9-10 crypto currencies in the world right now.
- Bitcoins is the largest cryptocurrency in the world because they are computer generated currencies and the codes are completely secret, so nobody masters it.
- Bitcoin, Litecoin, Ripple, Ethereum, PPcoin, Dogecoin, Coinye, Namecoin etc. are some of the examples of cryptocurrencies.

Important terms related to cryptocurrency:

Distributed Ledger Technologies

- DLT refers to technologies that involve the use of independent computers (also referred to as nodes) to record, share, and synchronise transactions in their respective electronic ledgers. All virtual currencies use DLT.

Blockchain technology

- It is a specific kind of DLT that came to prominence after Bitcoin, a cryptocurrency that used it, became popular.
- Cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin use codes to encrypt transactions and stack them up in blocks, creating Blockchains.
- It is the use of codes that differentiates cryptocurrencies from other virtual currencies

Transactions

- A transfer of funds between two digital wallets is called a transaction. That transaction gets submitted to a public ledger and awaits confirmation.

Mining

- In simple terms, mining is the process of confirming transactions and adding them to a public ledger. In order to add a transaction to the ledger, the “miner” must solve an increasingly-complex computational problem (like a mathematical puzzle).

Benefits of cryptocurrencies

- **Ownership:** Cryptocurrencies hold the promise of making it easier to transfer funds directly between two parties in a transaction, without the need for a trusted third party such as a bank or credit card company
- **Low transaction fee:** Fund transfers are done with minimal processing fees, allowing users to avoid the steep fees charged by most banks and financial institutions for wire transfers.
- **Identity Protection:** Paying with credit/debit cards requires submitting sensitive banking information that could be stolen or compromised. Cryptocurrency can be sent directly to a recipient without any information other than total amount you want to send.
- **Risk-free for sellers:** Payments using Cryptocurrency can't be reversed, which means merchants don't have to worry about stopped payments. The blockchain makes it difficult for you to be defrauded.

Demerits of Cryptocurrency

- **Accessibility:** Since cryptocurrency mining and transactions can only happen on network, illiterate people will find it difficult to understand the working mechanism. Also rural areas that do not have access to internet will not be able to perform cryptocurrency transactions.
- **Threat of hacking:** using bitcoins, providing a data structure for this ledger that is exposed to a limited threat from hackers and can be copied across all computers running Bitcoin software
- **Volatility:** Cryptocurrency exchange rates can vary greatly, which means the amount you pay or receive one day could be wildly different next day.

What is the IMC's view on DLT and cryptocurrencies?

The first thing to understand is that the IMC recognises the potential of DLT and Blockchain.

- The IMC accepts that internationally, the application of DLT is being explored in the areas of trade finance, mortgage loan applications, digital identity management or KYC requirements, cross-border fund transfers and clearing and settlement systems.
- To that extent, it recommends the Department of Economic Affairs (within the Finance Ministry) to take necessary measures to facilitate the use of DLT in the entire financial field after identifying its uses.

- The IMC also recommends that regulators — RBI, SEBI, IRDA, PFRDA, and IBBI — explore evolving appropriate regulations for development of DLT in their respective areas.
- The IMC's view is that it "would be advisable to have an open mind regarding the introduction of an official digital currency in India".
- It noted that the RBI Act has the enabling provisions to permit the central government to approve a "Central Bank Digital Currency" (CBDC) as legal tender in India.

Second, scaling up such a currency system over a large population would require crippling levels of energy resources. Currencies such as Bitcoin require humongous processing power.

- According to a report by the Bank of International Settlement, Bitcoin processing already uses as much energy as is used by Switzerland; it called this an environmental disaster.

Third, the IMC is worried that if private cryptocurrencies are allowed to function as legal tender, the RBI would lose control over the monetary policy and financial stability, as it would not be able to keep a tab on the money supply in the economy

Fourth, the anonymity of private digital currencies make them vulnerable to money laundering and use in terrorist financing activities while making law enforcement difficult.

Fifth, there is no grievance redressal mechanism in such a system, as all transactions are irreversible.

The inter-ministerial committee believes it is, going so far as to draft a law that mandates a fine and imprisonment of up to 10 years for the offences of mining, generating, holding, selling, dealing in, transferring, disposing of, or issuing cryptocurrencies.

Conclusion:

- An outright ban on cryptocurrency may not be a good idea. If new currency is popular, it would be wise to take note of it, accept the advent of technology, recognize the rise in popularity of cryptocurrency and then introduce safeguard, measures and regulatory structure by which people do not feel that they should have something to fall back on.
- The government will see opportunities for revenues as large number of people have made gains through cryptocurrency.

Connecting the dots:

1. Cryptocurrencies are bound to fail as a medium of exchange for its speculative nature and digital existence. Comment.
2. What are cryptocurrencies? what are the risks associated with cryptocurrency? Discuss India's stand on cryptocurrencies.

[Cyber security - Agent Smith](#)

Part of: Mains GS III- Challenges to internal security through communication networks

In News:

- Agent Smith is the latest **malware** to creep into android phones.
- This malware can replace apps on android phones with malicious versions without the user's knowledge.
- As of now Agent Smith is only infiltrating mobile phones with the intention of throwing up advertisements (sudden rise) for other apps.
- However, once the malware has control over a cell phone, it can do anything, including stealing banking details or other sensitive data, liable to its misuse.
- It is estimated to have already impacted 25 million devices, Indian constituting nearly 60% of them.
- Users are thus advised against downloading third party apps and keep their operating system updated.

[Hyperloop](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains GS III- Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways

In News

- The **Mumbai-Pune Hyperloop project** received a push with the Maharashtra Cabinet approving to appoint a consortium of DP World and Hyperloop Technologies as its Original Project Proponent (OPP).
- With Hyperloop travel the 150-km journey between Mumbai and Pune will be cut down to just 23 minutes, turning the **region into one megacity**.
- Project is given a 'public infrastructure' status, which will enable it an easier access to funds and concessions.
- The project will improve connectivity for the 2.6 crore residents of both cities, and expect 15 crore people to use the service annually.
- If all goes well India could be the first country in the world to officially commission a hyperloop.
- The project is being carried out by the Pune Metropolitan Regional Development Authority (PMRDA) and is said to have a total investment of Rs 70,000 crore.
- Hyperloop is a high-speed mode of transportation, where a pod-like vehicle travels through a sealed tube at near the speed of an airline.

DISASTER MANAGEMENT

[Big boost for disaster management](#)

Part of Prelims and mains GS III Security and disaster management

In news

- Budgetary allocation for Home Ministry up by 5%, special focus on disaster management, cybercrime infrastructure and freedom fighters' pension.
- An amount of ₹100 crore has been allocated for the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre, compared to ₹6 crore in the last fiscal.
- Total funds for disaster management have been earmarked at ₹577.93 crore, a jump from ₹284.82 crore last year. Of this, the component for National Cyclone Risk Mitigation has been increased from ₹3.03 crore to ₹296.19 crore.

[Dam Safety Bill](#)

Part of: GS Mains II and III – Government schemes and policies; Disaster Management

In news:

- The Centre is set to introduce the Dam Safety Bill, 2019.
- The Bill aims to put in place a systematic procedure to ensure that India's 5,600 dams are made and maintained safely.
- The Bill provides for establishment of a National Dam Safety Authority as a regulatory body to implement the policy.
- The Bill lays the onus of the dam safety on the dam owner and provides for penal provisions for wilful "commission and omission of certain acts."

DEFENCE/INTERNAL SECURITY/SECURITY

AFSPA in Nagaland extended

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains Paper II and III – Polity, Governance issues and Internal Security

In News:

- The Ministry of Home Affairs has extended the operation Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act in Nagaland for another six months.
- The Centre had declared the state a “disturbed area” to extend the Act.

Important Value Additions:

About Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA)

- AFSPA was enacted in 1958 to bring under control what the government of India considered ‘disturbed’ areas.
- The state or central government considers those areas as ‘disturbed’ by reason of differences or disputes between members of different religious, racial, language or regional groups or castes or communities.
- Section (3) of AFSPA empowers the governor of the state/Union territory to issue an official notification declaring the state or a region within as a “disturbed area”, after which the centre can decide whether to send in armed forces.

Do you know?

- The AFSPA offers powers to the Army and Central forces deployed in disturbed areas to kill anyone acting in contravention of law, arrest and search any premises without a warrant.
- These armed forces are immune from prosecution unless Union Government provides sanction to the prosecuting agencies.
- Currently, AFSPA Act, 1958 is operational in the whole of Nagaland, Assam, Manipur (excluding seven assembly constituencies of Imphal) and parts of Arunachal Pradesh.

National Investigation Agency (NIA) (Amendment) Bill, 2019

Part of Prelims and Mains GSIII security issues

In news

- The Lok Sabha on July 15, 2019 passes The National Investigative Agency (Amendment) Bill, 2019. This Bill gives NIA officers power to investigate offences committed outside India too, and mandates the setting up of Special Courts.

- During the debate over the bill, erstwhile Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) was also became part of the political discussion.

Do you know?

“Prevention of Terrorism Act” (POTA), 2002

- Came after the IC-814 hijack and 2001 Parliament attack.
- A **suspect could be detained** for up to 180 days by a special court.
- A separate chapter to deal with terrorist organisations was included.
- Union government was **mandated to maintain a list** of organised that would fall under the act’s radar and had full authority to make additions or removals.

National Investigation Agency (Amendment) Bill, 2019 provides for the following:

- "In order to facilitate the speedy investigation
- prosecution of Scheduled Offences, including those committed outside India against the Indian citizens or affecting the interest of India
- To insert certain new offences in the Schedule to the Act as Scheduled Offences which adversely affect the national security, it has become necessary to amend certain provisions of the Act."

[Not a bloodless option for India \(Cyber Attacks\)](#)

Introduction

- Recently, USA resorted to Cyber strikes on Iran and avoided military response when its drone was grounded by IRAN’s Army.
- Such usage of Cyber strikes has been termed as Bloodless War. It is speculated that the strikes targeted Iran’s military command and systems such as those that control Iran’s missile and rocket launchers.
- Whether India can adopt a similar strategy against Terror attacks?

India’s strategy for response against terror attacks by Pakistan

- In recent responses by India against terror strikes by Pakistan an implicit criteria of India’s approach has been observed. The criteria are: pre-emption, non-military nature, and deterrence.

Justifications of these criteria

- Pre - emption - It allows India to justify any operation on International Forums. It is an exception of Article 2(4) of the UN Charter and is related to Self-defence.

- Non - military - the operational aim has never been to target the Pakistani people or even the Pakistani military
- Deterrence - Any operation should lead to substantial damage on the enemy so as to create deterrence.

Can India conduct retaliatory Cyber strikes like USA? How would India Justify such an act on International Forums?

- The conduct of U.S. cyber command was aimed at the Iranian establishment, specifically targeting its military installations.
- If India conducts a cyber-strike against Pakistan's military command or systems, it will be termed as one against Pakistan and not the terrorists. This will not be in line with the criteria of Pre-emption and non-military response.
- Further, a cyber-strike against Pakistan will call for counter-cyber strikes.
- Instead of the intended deterrence, it will likely lead to an escalation. Thus it has been argued that a cyber-attack is not an option for India as of now.

Conclusion

- Most of the terror groups depend upon computers, networks and the Internet.
- Terrorist groups use the Internet for propaganda. Thus India's Cyber-attacks should be targeted against them.
- Further the ability of Indian armed forces in conducting such an operation is still not Known. However this secrecy will create an element of surprise if India chooses such retaliatory option.

Connecting the dots:

- Cyber attacks, a new way of warfare. Analyse the costs and opportunities for India.

[The growing power of the lumpen](#)

Introduction

- Increasing cases of mob violence in the society based on discrimination on different fronts have raised concerns on law and order situation in the country including safety of the vulnerable sections of the society.

A rising graph

Studies of hate crimes in India show that they have steadily risen over the past five years.

- Amnesty International India documented 721 such incidents between 2015 and 2018.

- Last year alone, it tracked 218 hate crimes, 142 of which were against Dalits, 50 against Muslims, 40 against women, and eight each against Christians, Adivasis, and transgenders.
- The more common hate crimes, they found, were honour killings and 'cow-related violence', that was rare earlier but has become more frequent over the past five years.

One of the causes and solution

- Worldwide data show that hate speech encourages or legitimises acts of violence and a climate of impunity.
- France has a draft Bill to prohibit hate speech, and Germany has already enacted one.

Supreme Court direction

- Supreme Court in the case of **Tehseen Poonawala v Union of India**, has provided a 11-point prescription for preventive, remedial and punitive measures and has asked Parliament to legislate a separate offence for lynching and provide adequate punishment for the same.

Do you know?

Separate law on mob lynching by Manipur

- On the lines of Supreme Court judgment, State Government of Manipur has legislated a separate law to make lynching a criminal offence.
- Definition of Mob as per Manipur law - The Act has defined lynching in a comprehensive way and covers many forms of hate crimes. It covers any act or series of acts of violence or aiding, abetting such act/acts whether spontaneous or planned, by a mob on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth, language, dietary practices, sexual orientation, political affiliation, ethnicity or any other related grounds.
- As per the law, mob means a group of two or more individuals, assembled with a common intention of lynching. However, the law does not cover solitary hate crimes carried out by one individual.

Punishments Provided under the Manipur Law

- Victim suffering from hurt: For a term which may extend to 7 years + fine, which may extend upto Rs. 1 lakh
- Victim suffering from grievous hurt: For a term which may extend to 10 years + fine, which may extend upto Rs. 3 lakhs
- Death of the victim: Rigorous imprisonment for life + fine upto Rs. 10 lakhs

Committee headed by Home Secretary on Mob Lynching

- Four Member Committee of secretaries headed by Home Secretary was formed in July 2018 to look into the incidents of mob violence and lynchings and submit recommendations on ways to tackle the challenge.
- The committee has submitted its report to the Group of Ministers (GoM), headed by Home Minister who will now examine the recommendations of this panel.
- The Committee was constituted in wake of Supreme Court judgment where the Court directed the Centre to draft strong legislation to make lynching a separate offence and also to take preventive measures to control the spread of fake messages on social media platforms, after a series of mob lynching incidents took place.

Responsibility of states

As per the Constitutional scheme, 'Police' and 'Public Order' are State subjects. State Governments are responsible for controlling crime, maintaining law and order, and protecting the life and property of the citizens. They are empowered to enact and enforce laws to curb crime in their jurisdiction.

Conclusion

- For a demographically diverse country such as India, hate crimes, including crimes of contempt, are a disaster.
- Each of our religious and caste communities number in the millions, and crimes that are directed against any of these groups could result in a magnitude of disaffection that impels violence, even terrorism.
- Far less diverse countries than India are already suffering the result of hate 'moving into the mainstream', as UN Secretary General António Guterres recently highlighted.

Connecting the dots:

For a demographically diverse country such as India, hate crimes are a disaster. Discuss.

Bills to curb Mob lynching

Part of: Mains GS I- Social empowerment, communalism, regionalism & secularism.

In News

- **Rajasthan State Assembly** has tabled Bill against mob lynching, making them cognizable, non-bailable and non-compoundable offences with life imprisonment and fine up to Rs 5 lakh.
- The Bill defines a "mob" as a group of two or more individuals.
- "Lynching" is described as an act or series of acts of violence, whether spontaneous or planned, by a mob on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth, language, dietary practices, sexual orientation, political affiliation and ethnicity

- The statement of objects and reasons of the Bill mentions the **Supreme Court's recommendation** to enact legislation against the mob lynching.
- In recent past there has been spurt in mob lynching resulting in loss of livelihood, injuries and death of persons at the hands of mob
- A dedicated legislation along with provisions of India Penal Code will help nip the evil in bud and provide support for victims of such cases

The terrorist tag

Context:

- India needs tough laws to combat terror, but the proposed amendments could be misused

Concerns:

- The idea of designating an individual as a terrorist, as the latest amendments to the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act propose to do, may appear offensive.
- However, designating an individual as a terrorist raises serious constitutional questions and has the potential for misuse.
- There is no set procedure for designating an individual a terrorist

What is terrorism?

Terrorism is the systematic use of violence to create a general climate of fear in a population and thereby to bring about a particular political or social objective.

Adverse consequences of a terrorist tag:

- Terrorist tag may be worse for individuals than for organisations.
- Individuals may be subjected to arrest and detention; even after obtaining bail from the courts,
- They may have their travel and movements restricted, besides carrying the taint.
- A wrongful designation will cause irreparable damage to a person's reputation, career and livelihood.

The Lok Sabha has passed the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Bill, 2019.

- The Bill amends the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, providing special procedures to deal with terrorist activities, individuals and groups that foster terrorism in India.
- The Bill is yet to be tabled in the Rajya Sabha.

Key Features of the Bill

- It empowers the government to designate individuals as terrorists if the person

- commits or participates in acts of terrorism,
 - prepares for terrorism,
 - Promotes terrorism or is otherwise involved in terrorism.
-
- This has been done as it is seen that when a terrorist organization is banned, its members form a new organization to spread terrorism.
 - The law allows the National Investigation Agency (NIA) to go to any state without taking permission from state police concerned for checking anti-terror activities.
 - Under the Act, an investigating officer is required to obtain the prior approval of the Director General of Police to seize properties that may be connected with terrorism.
 - The Bill adds that if the investigation is conducted by an officer of the National Investigation Agency (NIA), the approval of the Director General of NIA would be required for seizure of such property.
 - Under the Act, investigation of cases may be conducted by officers of the rank of Deputy Superintendent or Assistant Commissioner of Police or above.
 - The Bill additionally empowers the officers of the NIA, of the rank of Inspector or above, to investigate cases.
 - The Bill adds another treaty to the list. This is the International Convention for Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (2005).
 - Opposition has said that the bill provisions were against the federal structure of the country
 - Under the Congress government led by former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) was originally passed in 1967. Eventually, amendments were brought in 2004, 2008, 2013

Conclusion

- While none will question the need for stringent laws that show 'zero tolerance' towards terrorism, the government should be mindful of its obligations to preserve fundamental rights while enacting legislation on the subject.
- States must ensure that any measure taken to combat terrorism must comply with all obligations under international human rights, refugee and humanitarian law.

Connecting the dots

1. Do you think terrorism poses a great threat to globalisation? Critically examine
2. Is terrorism a feature of democratic society or consequence of governmental use of terror as a political weapon? critically analyse

Army's first Integrated Battle Groups

Context:

- The new concept of Integrated Battle Groups (IBGs) which the Army plans to create as part of overall force transformation is close to implementation,

More about Integrated Battle Groups (IBGs):

- IBGs are brigade-sized, agile, self-sufficient combat formations, which can swiftly launch strikes against adversary in case of hostilities.
- IBG would be tailor-made based on **Threat, Terrain and Task** and resources will be allotted based on the three T s.
- The IBGs will also be defensive and offensive.
 - While the **offensive IBGs** would quickly mobilise and make thrust into enemy territory for strikes
 - **Defensive IBGs** would hold ground at vulnerable points or where enemy action is expected.
- The concept of IBGs has already been test-bedded by 9 Corps.
- They will be able to mobilise within 12-48 hrs based on the location
- They need to be light so they will be low on logistics,
- A command is the largest static formation of the Army spread across a defined **geography, a corps is the largest mobile formation**. Typically each corps has about three brigades.
- The idea is to reorganise them into IBGs which are brigade-sized units but have all the essential elements like infantry, armoured, artillery and air defence embedded together based on the three Ts
- An IBG operating in a desert needs to be constituted differently from an IBG operating in the mountains.

Army Chief Gen Bipin Rawat has initiated four major studies to undertake overall transformation of the force.

Aim: The aim is holistic integration to enhance the operational and functional efficiency, optimise budget expenditure, facilitate force modernisation and address aspirations.

1. Restructuring of Army Headquarters
2. Force restructuring which includes creation of Integrated Battle Groups (IBG)
3. The cadre review of officers and
4. Review of the terms and conditions of Junior Commissioned Officers and Other Ranks

CONCLUSION

- The overall transformation will also see a reduction in the size of the 1.3 million Army

- After the Parliament attack, the Indian military undertook massive mobilisation but the formations which were deep inside took weeks to mobilise losing the element of surprise.
- IBG Groups to be structured by end of next month

Connecting the dots:

1. What in your opinion should be the selection principle in critical organisations like defence? Critically evaluate.
2. Do you think that the Integrated battle groups serves the purpose in overall transformation of the force. Critically analyse.

[DRDO gets clearance for missile test facility in A.P.](#)

Part of Prelims and mains GS III Science and tech, GS II Defence and security

In news

- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has granted environment and Coastal Regulatory Zone clearances for setting up Missile Testing Launch Facility on the Bay of Bengal coast and Technical Facility at Gullalamoda village in Krishna district.
- Krishna Wildlife Sanctuary is in Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh

[Opposition to privatization of Ordnance Factory](#)

Part of: GS Mains II and III – Government schemes and policies; Defence

In News:

- West Bengal CM has written to PM opposing government's initiative to privatise Indian Ordnance Factory

Pros of Privatization

- Privatisation will lead to increase in **efficiency** of the operations of factories
- It will help **modernise** the domestic weapon and ammunition manufacturing process
- This will encourage private sector participation in Defence industry (**Make in India** scheme) and helps spur **jobs & investment**
- Disinvestment in these firms will lead to **revenue earnings for government**

Issues with Privatization

- **Strategic sector** such as defence equipment manufacturing should remain under the control of government in the interest of **National Security and defence** of country
- Ordnance Factory Board, with its 41 factories across India **employs around 1.6 lakh officers**. Their employment and pension aspects needs to be taken care of

Do you know?

- Ordnance Factory board was founded in 1775 with its HQ in Kolkatta to make military weapons and ammunition
- It is under Ministry of Defence
- It is considered to be the world's largest government set-up for manufacturing arms and ammunition.

INTEGRATED LEARNING PROGRAMME (ILP) - 2020

(FRESHERS/WORKING
PROFESSIONALS & VETERANS)

MAINSPEDIA- (GS1,2,3,4 & Essay)

BABAPEDIA- Prelims Oriented Current Affairs

50+ General Studies & 10 CSAT Tests

Value Added Notes (Prelims + Mains)

Mind Maps for GS Mains

GS Mains Synopsis & Model Essays

All India Ranking

Self Assessment System

Doubt Clearance Portal

PERSON IN NEWS

| Person in news | Description |
|-----------------------|---|
| 1. Soumya Swaminathan | <p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soumya Swaminathan is WHO chief scientist • She will head the division created to strengthen the organisation's core scientific work and ensure the quality and consistency of its norms and standards. • First Indian to hold the post. |
| 2. Hafiz Saeed | <p>In news:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pakistan recently arrested Hafiz Saeed, the alleged mastermind of the 2008 Mumbai terror attack that killed 166 people. • Hafiz Saeed has been declared a global terrorist by the U.S. and the UN • He is currently held in terror financing case. |
| 3. | |

MISCELLANEOUS

| In News | Description |
|--|--|
| 1. Body cameras for cops | <p>In news:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delhi High Court asked the Centre and the Delhi government to consider the suggestion of an advocate for providing body cameras to police officials to monitor their conduct as also of the public. (Example for Police Reforms) • Body cameras will help to monitor and ensure proper conduct, behaviour of officials as well as public and to ensure foolproof and transparent prosecution in case of any violation. <p>Do you know? 'Police brutality' is a civil rights violation that occurs when a police officer acts with excessive force by using an amount of force with regards to a civilian that is more than necessary.</p> |
| 2. App to track your carbon footprint to be launched | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maharashtra government to launch app that will track citizens' carbon footprint and reward those who achieve an emission neutral status. • The move aims to reduce pollution and carbon emission in Maharashtra. |

| | |
|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The idea of the app was initiated after Prime Minister Narendra Modi promised international organisations to bring India's pollution levels to 2005 levels by 2030. The footprints of an individual, as per the app, will include his use of electricity, air conditioning, kitchen activities among others. <p>Do you know?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> India has, as part of the Paris Summit, promised to reduce green house gas emission by 20% to 25%. |
| 3. Tirupati may run out of water in a month | <p>In news</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The temple city, which attracts thousands of pilgrims every day, will run out of water in a month, if the monsoon continues to remain elusive. At present, residents receive water in their taps once in three days. With Kalyani dam reaching the dead storage level. After, Bangluru, Chandigarh, and Chennai, Tirupati will be the next Indian city to face water crisis. |
| 4. Dibang Multipurpose Project in Arunachal Pradesh | <p>In news:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) approved the ₹1,600-crore pre-investment expenditure for the Dibang Multipurpose Project in Arunachal Pradesh, India's largest hydropower project. Dibang River is a tributary of the Brahmaputra that originated and flows through the Mishmi Hills & northeast India from the state of Arunachal Pradesh. |
| 5. Gender Equality | <p>In News</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presently women officers cannot be posted immediately on board ships as there are no separate facilities. In order to induct more women into services, Navy has recently issued tender for cadet training ships which has facilities catered for women This initiative will go a long way in increasing women participation in Navy who presently constitute only 6.7% of the Navy officers |
| 6. Happiness Department of Madhya Pradesh | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It has always been felt that material prosperity alone can never be the yardstick of measuring happiness and wellbeing. For a holistic and happy human existence, inner wellbeing is of utmost significance along with our material advancement. People need to be exposed to well researched behavioural tools and time tested ethical practices, which would help them stay positive, sustain adversities and lead fulfilling balanced lives. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Madhya Pradesh has set a precedence in the country to have a government organization - Rajya Anand Sansthan (State Happiness Department) - dedicated towards the aforesaid purpose. |
| 7. Rajya Anand Sansthan (State Happiness Department) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAS came into existence for this purpose in August 2016 and has since been engaged in providing tools and techniques of incorporating positivity and joyful healthy habits for holistic growth and overall peace. Soothing the tempers of government officials since its inception, the Rajya Anand Sansthan has now opened its doors to the general public. |
| 8. Delhi takes major share in electoral bonds | <p>80.6% of the electoral bonds bought last year (₹5,851.41 crore) were redeemed in New Delhi, where the headquarters of major parties are located. This shows that the scheme is biased against regional parties.</p> <p>Additional concerns raised with respect to Electoral bonds scheme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non transparent - anonymity-based funding scheme as neither the donor discloses to which party it has donated nor the political party discloses the source of bond. It opens up the possibility of black money being and foreign capital donated to parties through shell companies. May lead to Corporate capture of Politics: scheme did away with the statutory limit on corporate donations to parties (7.5% of three years' net profits) Favours the ruling party: as it alone is in a position to identify the donors and, therefore, well placed to misuse such information. (Presently electoral Bonds are only available through Government owned SBI) May pose a formidable entry barrier to new contenders in the political arena as this scheme is available only to parties that won 1% of the votes in the preceding election <p>Do you know?</p> <p>The below reports have recommended State funding of elections to establish a fair playing field for parties with less money.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indrajit Gupta Committee on State Funding of Elections (1998) Law Commission Report on Reform of the Electoral Laws (1999) National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (2001) Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2008) |
| 9. DEFEXPO – India's mega Defence exhibition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11th Defexpo will be held in 2020 at Lucknow. It is held biennially, the previous two editions were held at Chennai (2018) and Goa(2016) |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It helps to showcase India's defence manufacturing capabilities, promote export of India's defence systems and attracts foreign players to invest in India. • India is developing two defence industrial production corridors to promote the defence sector. One is Tamil Nadu (linking Chennai and Bengaluru) and the other in Uttar Pradesh |
| 10. Revamp of Army Head Quarters (AHQ) | <p>Army has initiated the process of reforming its Head quarter structure, whose objective is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure holistic integration of all divisions of army • Enhance the operational and functional efficiency • Optimise budget expenditure, • Facilitate force modernisation and • Address aspirations of the army personnel. |
| 11. Growth Forecast reduced | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IMF cuts India's growth forecast for 2019-20 from 7.3% to 7% • The reduction is primarily due to weaker-than-expected outlook for domestic demand • The growth engine of an economy is said to run on four wheels – Private consumption expenditure (domestic demand), private investment, government expenditure and exports • World Economic Outlook report is released by IMF |
| 12. Milkyway's violent birth decoded | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our galaxy Milkyway merged with another small galaxy nearly 10 billion years ago, according to studies based on data from Gaia space observatory • This collision increased our galaxy's mass by about a quarter and triggered a period of accelerated star formation lasting about 2 to 4 billion years, • Galaxies of all types began to form soon after Big Bang explosion (marked the beginning of Universe some 13.8 billion years ago) • Gaia is a space observatory of the European Space Agency, launched in 2013 |
| 13. <i>Dracaena cambodiana</i> : India's first dragon blood-oozing tree | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researchers have discovered <i>Dracaena cambodiana</i>, a dragon tree species in West Karbi Anglong, Assam. • The plant yields dragon's blood — a bright red resin used since ancient times as medicine, body oil, varnish, incense and dye • Several antifungal and antibacterial compounds, antioxidants, flavonoids, etc., have been extracted from various parts of the plant. |

(TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE)

Model questions: (Answers are provided at the end)

Q.1) The Jal Shakti Abhiyan mission is related to,

- a. Water harvesting and conservation.
- b. It is a mission against agencies running illegal water tankers.
- a. Checking encroachment of water bodies.
- b. None of the above

Q.2) Consider the following statements about Nal se Jal scheme

1. It aims to provide piped drinking water to households in rural areas.
2. It aims to do so by 2024.

Select the Correct statements

- a. Only 1
- b. Only 2
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q.3) With reference to Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), which of the following statements is/are incorrect?

1. AFSPA is currently operational in Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir
2. Section (3) of the AFSPA empowers the governor of the state or Union Territory to declare a region 'disturbed'

Select the correct statements

- a) Only 1
- b) Only 2
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.4) Consider the following statements:

1. Index of Industrial Production (IIP) is released by the Central Statistics office.
2. The Eight Core Industries comprise more than 60% of the weight of items included in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP)

Select the correct statements

- a) Only 1
- b) Only 2
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.5) Consider the following statements about International Whaling Commission (IWC)

1. India is a member of the IWC
2. It is one of the United Nations Agencies
3. It acts under the Law of the Sea Convention

Select the INCORRECT statements

- a) 1 and 2
- b) 2 and 3
- c) 1 and 3
- d) All of the above

Q.6) “one country, two systems” formula recently seen in news is related to,

- a) North Korea and South Korea
- b) China and Tiwan
- c) China and Hong Kong
- d) None of the above

Q.7) Consider the following statements

1. Under Article 341 sub clause (2) of the Constitution, the power to make changes in the Scheduled castes’ list lay only with Parliament.
2. Any such changes require prior recommendations of state government

Select the *incorrect* statements

- a) Only 1
- b) Only 2
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.8) Ease of doing business Index is given by

- a) World economic forum
- b) World Bank
- c) International Monetary Fund
- d) World Trade Organization

Q.9) Consider the following statements

1. Government investment was a key driver for demand, capacity, labour productivity, new technology adoption, and for job creation.
2. Investment by the private sector cannot happen unless there is no crowding out because of the government.

Select the *incorrect* statements

- a) Only 1
- b) Only 2
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.10) Consider the following statements about total fertility rate in India,

1. The current TFR in 14 out of the 22 major States is already below the effective replacement level fertility.
2. At the State level, southern States as well as West Bengal, Punjab, Maharashtra and Himachal Pradesh have below replacement level fertility and will see TFR decline to 1.5-1.6 by 2021.
3. By 2031, all States are likely to see below replacement level fertility.

Select the *correct* statements

- a) 1 and 2 Only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) All of the above

Q.11) Consider the following statements

1. The minimum wage system in India is governed by the Minimum Wages Act, 1948,
2. Domestic workers are not covered under minimum wage laws in any of the States and Union Territories.

Select the *correct* statements

- a) Only 1
- b) Only 2
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.12) Consider the following statements regarding The Union Budget 2019-20

1. It has proposed to make Aadhaar interchangeable with PAN, thereby allowing people without PAN to file income tax returns using only their Aadhaar.
2. It has proposed to replace PAN with Aadhaar as the primary identity proof when it comes to income tax.

Select the correct statements

- a) Only 1
- b) Only 2
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.13) Consider the following statements about total fertility rate in India,

1. The government is estimating a fiscal deficit of 3.3% of GDP in financial year 2019-20.
2. For the year 2018-19, fiscal deficit target was 3.4%

Select the correct statements

- a) Only 1
- b) Only 2
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.14) Consider the following statements

1. India's satellite launching vehicle GSLV MK III is in developmental stage.
2. GAGAN and NavIC are the satellite systems related to navigation system in India.

Select the correct statements

- a) Only 1
- b) Only 2
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.15) Consider the following statements,

1. SFURTI Scheme launched for making Traditional Industries more productive and competitive by organizing the Traditional Industries and artisans into clusters has been revamped.
2. The Scheme for Promotion of Innovation, Rural Industry and Entrepreneurship' (ASPIRE) has been consolidated for setting up of Livelihood Business Incubators (LBIs) and Technology Business Incubators (TBIs).

Select the correct statements

- a) Only 1
- b) Only 2
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.16) Consider the following statements about total fertility rate in India,

1. Health-related financial allocation in budget 2019-20 as a share of the child health budget has shown a decline.
2. The Anganwadi services and the Poshan Abhiyan (Nutrition Mission) are among the most important government programmes aimed at reducing stunting, anaemia, low weight and low birth weight.

Select the incorrect statements

- a) Only 1
- b) Only 2
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.17) India is procuring 'Spike' anti-tank missiles from,

- a) United states
- b) France
- c) Israel
- e) Russia

Q.18) With respect to defence of India, "Phalcon" is

- a) Anti tank guided missile
- b) Airborne Warning and Control System
- c) Both a and b
- d) Neither a nor b

Q.19) "Utkarsh 2022" recently seen in news is,

- a) Mid term strategy to reduce malnutrition in India
- b) A three year roadmap of Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to improve regulation and supervision
- c) Program of ISRO to launch small satellites by 2022.
- d) None of the above

Q.20) Consider the following statements about The Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016, (which was amended in 2018),

1. Rural areas have been brought in ambit of these Rules
2. First time, responsibility of waste generators is being introduced.

Select the *correct* statements

- a) Only 1
- b) Only 2
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.21) Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code frequently seen in news is related to,

- a) Cyber crime
- b) Sedition
- c) Child labour
- d) None of the above

Q.22) "Plan Bee" recently seen in news is,

- a) Bee keeping plan to enable natural pollination
- b) It is an amplifying system imitating the buzz of a swarm of honey bees to keep wild elephants away from railway tracks.
- c) Beekeeping or apiculture to produce honey.
- d) None of the above

Q.23) Consider the following statements about Inter State River Water Disputes Act, 1956,

1. It provides for single tribunal to hear water disputes
2. Tribunal is to be headed by technical expert.

Select the *incorrect* statements

- a) Only 1
- b) Only 2
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.24) Consider the following statements about labour reforms in India,

1. Four proposed codes aims to merge 44 labour laws.
2. The code will be applicable to all trades, including IT establishments and service sector, where more than 10 workers are employed.

Select the *correct* statements

- a) Only 1
- b) Only 2
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.25) Consider the following statements about The POCSO Act, 2012,

1. The Act defines a child as any person below sixteen years of age.
2. The act is gender neutral.

Select the *incorrect* statements

- a) Only 1
- b) Only 2
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.26) Consider the following statements about Ponzi schemes in India,

1. Ponzi schemes are legal in India.
2. Ponzi schemes are regulated by SEBI.

Select the *correct* statements

- a) Only 1
- b) Only 2
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.27) Consider the following statements about Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY),

1. PMGSY is being implemented by Ministry of road transport
2. PMGSY was launched in December, 2014 with an objective to provide single all-weather road connectivity to eligible unconnected habitation of designated population size

Select the *correct* statements

- a) Only 1
- b) Only 2
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.28) Article 190 of the Indian Constitution is related to,

- a) Vacation of seats in both the houses of parliament
- b) Vacation of seats in both the houses of State legislature
- c) Vacation of seats in Lok sabha
- d) None of the above

Q.29) Viking settlements are found in,

- a) Australia
- b) Green Land
- c) Madagascar
- d) None of the above

Q.30) Anthrax disease is

- a) A viral disease
- b) A bacterial disease
- c) Disease caused by protozoa
- d) A fungal disease

Q.31) "Anorthosite" rock is recently seen in news because of,

- a) Its uranium content
- b) Its similarity with lunar soil
- c) Its fossil content

d) None of the above

Q.32) Consider the following statements about The Kartarpur corridor,

1. The Kartarpur Corridor is a proposed border corridor connecting the Sikh shrines of Dera Baba Nanak Sahib and Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur.
2. The Sikh shrine of Dera Baba Nanak Sahib is located in Punjab, Pakistan and Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur in Punjab, India.

Select the correct statements

- a) Only 1
- b) Only 2
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.33) Consider the following statements about 'Gangetic Dolphin'

1. Its IUCN status is "Critically endangered".
2. It is found only in Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary (VGDS)

Select the correct statements

- a) Only 1
- b) Only 2
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.34) The Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary (VGDS) is located in,

- a) Uttar Pradesh
- b) Bihar
- c) Jharkhand
- d) None of the above

Q.35) River kosi flows through?

- a) India, China and Nepal
- b) India and Nepal
- c) India, Nepal and Bhutan
- d) Only in India

Q.36) Chilla-Motichurelephant corridor is located in

- a) Bihar
- b) Uttarakhand
- c) Uttar Pradesh
- d) Assam

Q.37) National Green Tribunal (NGT) objectives

1. provide effective and expeditious disposal of cases relating to environmental protection
2. conservation of forests and other natural resources including enforcement of any legal right relating to environment
3. protecting the tiger and elephant corridors

Select the wrong statement from above

- a) only III
- b) both I and II
- c) all of the above
- d) none of the above

Q.38) Bacille Calmette-Guerin (BCG) is a vaccine related to

- a) Leprosy
- b) Tuberculosis
- c) Hepatitis B
- d) Measles

Q.39) 'Blue Flag' certification is for

- a) Peace agreement between blue water nations
- b) An international recognition conferred on beaches that meet

certain criteria of cleanliness and environmental propriety

- c) Cleaning up of oil spills in oceans
- d) Naval exercise between India and Singapore

Q.40) Consider the following statements about 'Kaziranga National Park'

1. It has the largest population of the Wild water buffalo
2. It has been identified as an Important Bird Area by Birdlife International
3. It is a World Heritage Site

Select the correct statements

- a) 1 and 2
- b) 2 and 3
- c) 1 and 3
- d) All of the above

Q.41) Which of the following statements is/are correct about National Green Tribunal (NGT)?

1. Establishment of NGT made National Environment Appellate Authority defunct.
2. Mumbai is one of the place of sitting of Tribunal.

Code:

- a) Only 1
- b) Only 2
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) None of the above

Q.42) Which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. All India Kisan Sabha (All India Peasants Union) was the name of the

peasants front of the undivided Communist Party of India

2. The Kisan Sabha movement started in Bihar

Choose correct code:

- a) Only 1
- b) Only 2
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) None of the above

Q.43) Consider the following statements about 'International Court of Justice (ICJ)'

1. Statute of the International Court of Justice, which is an integral part of the United Nations Charter established the ICJ
2. It is composed of fifteen judges elected to nine-year terms by Permanent members of the UNSC

Select the correct statements

- a) 1 Only
- b) 2 Only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.44) The office of the 'Whip' is mentioned in:

- a) Constitution of India
- b) Rules of the House
- c) In a separate Parliamentary Statute
- d) None

Q.45) Based on the conventions of Parliamentary government, we have an office of 'Whip' in Indian parliament. Every political party has its own whip. What is the function of a 'whip'?

1. He is responsible for ensuring the attendance of his political party members.
2. He decides the agenda of his party on the floor of the parliament.
3. He ensures the support of his party members in favour or against a particular issue.

Select the code from following:

- a) 1 and 2
- b) 2 and 3
- c) 1 and 3
- d) All of the above

Q.46) Zoonoses are infectious diseases of animals (usually vertebrates) that can naturally be transmitted to humans. Which of the following are zoonoses?

1. Ebola virus disease
2. Bird flu
3. Swine influenza
4. Zika fever

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- a) 1, 2 and 3 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 2, 3 and 4 only
- d) All the above

Q.47) Consider the following statements about Foreign Portfolio Investment (FPI):

1. Returns in FPI are in the form of dividends and interest payments
2. Investment through FPI entails control of the management of the company

3. FPI is the passive holding of securities and other financial assets by a foreign firm

Which of the following statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) All of the above

Q.48) Consider the following statements:

1. Kaziranga National park is a Ramsar site.
2. Kaziranga National Park is a 117-year-old park and a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1985.

Which of the following statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.49) Rajya Sabha has equivalent powers as that of Lok Sabha with respect to which of the bills

1. Ordinary Bills
2. Money Bills
3. Financial Bills
4. Constitutional Amendment Bills

Select the correct answer using the codes given below :

- a) 1 and 3 only
- b) 1,3 and 4 only
- c) 1 and 4 only
- d) 1,2,3 and 4

Q.50) Consider the following statements

1. Proceeds from cess and surcharges form a divisible pool of Central resources.
2. Only Centre can levy cess

Which of the following statements is/are not correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.51) Consider the following statements about National Register of Citizens

1. Only once before has an NRC been prepared, in 1951.
2. However, NRC is now being updated in Assam
3. The process of updating NRC is being headed by Chief Secretary of Assam under the overall guidance from Union Home Ministry.

Which of the following statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Q.52) Consider the following statements about National Human Rights Commission

1. NHRC is a Constitutional body
2. It was established through 44th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1978 post emergency period which witnessed human rights abuses.
3. The chairperson of NHRC is appointed by President upon

recommendations of a committee consisting only of Prime Minister, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha and Speaker of Lok Sabha.

Which of the following statements is/are not correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Q.53) Consider the following statements about Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)

1. It is a statutory body
2. It was established in 1999 post Asian financial crisis for orderly development of securities market in India
3. The penalties levied by the SEBI already goes to general fund of SEBI

Which of the following statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 1 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Q.54) Which is the first state to establish Rajya Anand Santhan (State happiness Department)?

- a) Karnataka
- b) Gujarat
- c) Madhya Pradesh
- d) Delhi

Q.55) Consider the following statements about Mission Indradhanush

1. Its goal is to ensure full immunization with all available vaccines for children up to two years of age and pregnant women
2. It is being implemented by Ministry of Women and Child development

Which of the following statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.56) Consider the following statements about Electoral Bonds

1. It can be purchased only from Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs)
2. Interest will be given by the banks on these bonds.
3. Electoral bonds will be valid till next Lok Sabha elections from the date of purchase.

Which of the following statements is/are **not** correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1,2 and 3

Q.57) Indrajit Gupta committee has given its report regarding

- a) More devolution of powers to Panchayat Raj Institutions
- b) State funding of elections
- c) Army restructuring

- d) Financial Inclusion

Q.58) Department of Border Management comes under which ministry?

- a) Ministry of Defence
- b) Ministry of Home Affairs
- c) Prime Ministers office
- d) Ministry of External Affairs

Q.59) Defence Industrial Corridors are coming up at which state(s)?

1. Uttar Pradesh
2. Tamil Nadu
3. Gujarat
4. Andhra Pradesh

Select the correct answer from the code given below:

- a) 1 and 2 Only
- b) 1,2 and 3 Only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1,2,3 and 4

Q.60) Consider the following statements about Chandrayana -2

3. It is being launched from Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, Kerala
4. It is launched by GSLV MK-III, which is also its first operational flight
5. China's Chang'e 4 was the first space craft to achieve soft landing on the far side of the moon

Which of the following statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only

d) 1, 2 and 3

Q.61) Consider the following statements about Bhitarkanika National Park

1. It is a national park located in Kendrapara district of Odisha
2. The sanctuary is the second largest mangrove ecosystem in India.
3. It is said to house 70% of the country's estuarine or saltwater crocodiles

Which of the following statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Q.62) Consider the following statements about Cyptocurrency

1. Cryptocurrencies use decentralized technology to let users make secure payments and store money without the need to use their name or go through a bank.
2. They run on a distributed public ledger called blockchain, which is a record of all transactions updated and held by currency holders.
3. Google has unveiled its own cryptocurrency named "Libra"

Which of the following statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Q.63) Measles and Rubella diseases are caused due to

- a) Bacteria
- b) Virus
- c) Fungus
- d) Protozoan parasite Plasmodium.

Q.64) Ordnance Factory board comes under which ministry

- a) Ministry of Heavy industries
- b) Department of Border Management, Ministry of Home Affairs
- c) Ministry of Defence
- d) Prime Minister's Office

Q.65) Redline campaign is associated with

- a) Following of Traffic signals
- b) Railway crossing and signal
- c) Anti-microbial resistance
- d) HIV/Aids prevention and awareness

Q.66) World Economic Outlook report is released by

- a) IMF
- b) World Bank
- c) Federal Bank of USA
- d) World Economic Forum

Q.67) Hybrid Annuity Model is a mix of which of the PPP models

1. EPC – Engineering Procurement and Construction
2. BOT – Build Operate Transfer
3. DBFO – Design Build Finance Operate
4. BOO – Build Own Operate

Select the correct answer from codes given below.

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 1, 2 and 3 Only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1 and 4 only

Q.68) Prandhan Mantri Laghu Vyapari Maandhan Yojana is being implemented by which ministry?

- a) Ministry of Labour and employment
- b) Finance Ministry
- c) Ministry of Human Resource development
- d) Ministry of Skill development and entrepreneurship

Q.69) Global Innovation Index is brought out by

- a) IMF
- b) World Bank
- c) World Economic Forum
- d) UN World Intellectual Property Organisation

Q.70) Fair and remunerative Prices for sugarcane is approved by

- a) Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs
- b) Commission for agricultural costs and committee
- c) Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers welfare
- d) Prime Minister's Office

Q.71) Tarun Ramadorai Committee constituted by RBI dealt with which of the following issue?

- a) Household Finance
- b) Financial inclusion
- c) Cryptocurrency
- d) Impact of Demonetisation

Q.72) Gaia space observatory belongs to which space agency?

- a) China National Space Administration
- b) Indian Space Research Organisation
- c) NASA
- d) European Space Agency

Q.73) Golden crescent and Golden Triangle often seen in news is related to which context

- a) Astronomy and Constellations
- b) International geo-politics
- c) Quantum Physics
- d) Drug Menace

Q.74) Arrange the following international institutions/groupings in the chronological order of their founding year

1. SAARC
2. BRICS
3. BIMSTEC
4. ASEAN
5. IBSA

Select the correct answer from the codes given below

- a) 4-1-3-2-5
- b) 4-1-3-5-2
- c) 1-4-2-5-3
- d) 4-3-1-5-2

Q.75) Justice BN Srikrishna committee recently seen in news deals with which of the following?

- a) Data protection
- b) Surplus reserves of RBI
- c) Surplus reserves of SEBI
- d) Foreign Sovereign Bonds

Q.76) Consider the following with respect to Masala Bonds

1. Masala bonds are bonds issued outside India but denominated in Indian Rupees, rather than the local currency
2. The currency risk/exchange rate risk lies with the issuer of the bonds

Which of the following statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.77) Consider the following statements regarding Indira Gandhi Canal

1. It is the longest operating canal system in India
2. It passes through states of Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and Rajasthan
3. Previously it was named as Rajasthan canal

Which of the above statement(s) is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1,2 and 3

Q.78) Which of the following bills are considered as Private member bill?

1. Bill introduced by member of legislature belonging to opposition party
2. Bill introduced by member belonging to ruling party, not a part of government
3. Bill introduced by a Minister
4. Bill introduced by an Independent Member of Legislature

Select the correct answer from the codes given below

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 4 only
- c) 1,2 and 4 only
- d) 2 and 3 only

Q.79) Belt and Road initiative is associated with which country/grouping?

- a) China
- b) ASEAN
- c) SAARC
- d) USA

Q.80) Arrange the following seas from south to north

1. South China Sea
2. East China Sea
3. Sea of Japan
4. Yellow sea

Select the correct answer from the codes given below

- a) 1-2-3-4
- b) 1-2-4-3
- c) 2-1-3-4
- d) 2-1-4-3

Q.81) Which of the following countries are part to RCEP negotiations

Which of the above statement(s) is/are correct?

1. China
2. USA
3. Japan
4. Singapore
5. South Korea

Select the correct answer from the codes given below

- a) 1,2 and 3 only
- b) 1,2,3 and 4 only
- c) 1,3,4 and 5 only
- d) 1,3 and 4 only

Q.82) Agent Smith recently seen in news is related to which of the following?

- a) Espionage
- b) Humanoid robot
- c) Mobile malware
- d) AI application for Crime reporting

River development and Ganga rejuvenation and Ministry of Drinking water and sanitation

- 2. Water is under the concurrent list of Indian Constitution

Q.83) Which of the following statements is/are correct?

- 1. Integral Coach Factory in Chennai is the largest coach making facility in the world
- 2. Metro Railway comes under Ministry of Road Transport and Highways

Select the correct answer from the codes given below

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.84) Arrange the following cities from South to North?

- 1. Chennai
- 2. Rae Bareli
- 3. Varanasi
- 4. Kapurthala
- 5. Patiala

Select the correct answer from the codes given below

- a) 1-2-3-4-5
- b) 1-3-2-4-5
- c) 1-3-2-5-4
- d) 1-2-3-5-4

Q.85) Which of the following statements is/are correct?

- 1. Ministry of Jal Shakti was formed by merging Ministry of Water resources,

Select the correct answer from the codes given below

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.86) Consider the following statements

- 1. National Commission of Minorities is a Constitutional Body
- 2. National Commission of Minorities declares whether a Community is minority or not
- 3. Article-29 and 30 in Constitution has defined the meaning of Minority

Which of the above statements are **incorrect**?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1,2 and 3

Q.87) Consider the following statements about Economic Census

- 1. It is being conducted for first time in country to ascertain the size of informal sector
- 2. Ministry of Statistics & Program implementation is conducting this Census
- 3. All Farm and non-farm activities are considered in this census

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1,2 and 3

- 3. CAG holds office for a period of five years or upto the age of 65 years.

Which of the above statements is / are correct?

Q.88) Consider the following statements

- 1. National Tiger Conservation authority is a statutory body headed by Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
- 2. Dampa Tiger reserve is the largest wildlife sanctuary in Arunachal Pradesh

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1,2 and 3

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.91) Consider the following statements

- 1. GST Council headed by Prime Minister decided to cut the tax rates on e-vehicles from 12 % to 5% with effect from August 1, 2019
- 2. Department of Heavy Industry is implementing FAME-India Scheme

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.89) Which of the following duties is NOT performed by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India.

- a) To Audit and report on all expenditure from the consolidated fund of India.
- b) To Audit and report on all expenditure from the contingency funds and Public Accounts.
- c) To Audit the report on All Trading manufacturing, profit and loss accounts.
- d) To control the receipt and issue of Public Money, and to ensure that the public revenue is lodged in the exchequer.

Q.92) Consider the following statements

- 1. Hyperloop technology is system of magnetically levitating capsules (pods) that are sent at high speeds through low-pressure tubes
- 2. Mumbai-Pune Hyperloop project is being carried out by Ministry of Railway

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

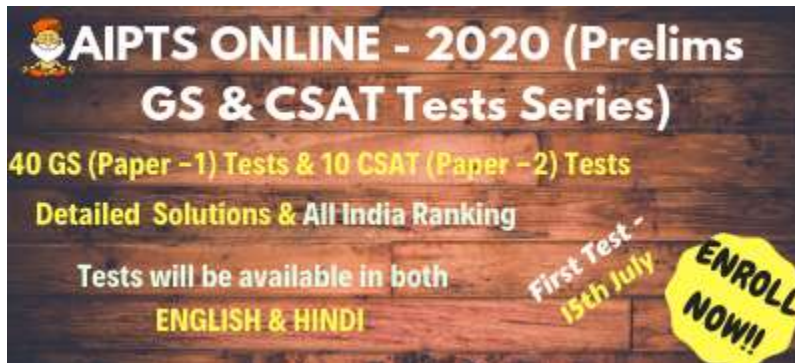
Q.90) Consider the following statements.

- 1. The CAG is an agent of the Parliament and conducts audit of expenditure on behalf of the Parliament.
- 2. CAG submits his audit reports relating to the accounts of state to the Governor of that state.

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

2019 JULY MONTH CURRENT AFFAIRS MCQs SOLUTIONS

| | | | |
|------|------|------|------|
| 1 a | 24 c | 47 c | 70 a |
| 2 c | 25 a | 48 b | 71 a |
| 3 c | 26 d | 49 b | 72 d |
| 4 a | 27 d | 50 c | 73 d |
| 5 b | 28 b | 51 a | 74 b |
| 6 c | 29 b | 52 d | 75 a |
| 7 b | 30 b | 53 b | 76 a |
| 8 b | 31 b | 54 c | 77 c |
| 9 a | 32 a | 55 a | 78 c |
| 10 d | 33 d | 56 d | 79 a |
| 11 a | 34 b | 57 b | 80 b |
| 12 a | 35 a | 58 b | 81 d |
| 13 c | 36 b | 59 a | 82 c |
| 14 c | 37 a | 60 b | 83 a |
| 15 c | 38 b | 61 d | 84 c |
| 16 d | 39 b | 62 a | 85 a |
| 17 c | 40 d | 63 b | 86 d |
| 18 b | 41 a | 64 c | 87 b |
| 19 b | 42 c | 65 c | 88 d |
| 20 c | 43 c | 66 a | 89 d |
| 21 c | 44 d | 67 a | 90 a |
| 22 b | 45 c | 68 a | 91 b |
| 23 d | 46 d | 69 d | 92 a |



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- Test schedule will be the same for both online and offline students

ABOUT THE MENTOR

- The classes will be taken by Dr. Vamshi Krishna Sir (a Topper himself in Sociology in UPSC 2014, 2015), BDS, M.A (Sociology)
Working as Assistant Administrative officer at CSIR NAL.
Associated with IASBABA since its inception. He has a teaching experience of 5 Years.
- Dr.Vamshi writes on social issues on blogs. Regular contributor to Research gate and Academia.edu on social issues useful for researchers and social scientists.

“The entire endeavour of our team is to impart sociological orientation along with multiple perspectives and most importantly confidence to tackle the Dynamicity of the paper in the examination hall. Sociology is not only interesting but also highly scoring if studied in a meticulous way...”

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Dr.Rakesh.E.S MSc, PhD.

(a Topper himself in Kannada Literature in UPSC 2008, 2010).
He has been guiding, teaching and mentoring students since 2010.

TEST SERIES HIGHLIGHTS

- Mixture of both sectional and full length tests which are harnessed to build confidence and improve content in answer writing.
- The tests shall be followed by detailed discussions and one on one sessions for feedback and comments.

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- The techniques of answer writing in the PAPER-2 by utilising the principles and ideologies mentioned in the PAPER-1 will be taught in the class room sessions.
- Class room teaching also involves discussions and debates. Study materials (Notes) issued in the class room includes the
 - Critical analysis of the best books
 - Notes of the Mysore University
 - Model answers of the selected candidates of UPSC
- Unit Tests will be conducted after completion of each unit of the syllabus (Total 8 tests from both the Paper's will be conducted).
- The Classes will start from 1st August 2019 (Thursday).
- ORIENTATION Class will be held in the month of July (2nd Week).

Political Science Test Series for IAS/CSE Exams

Under Personal Guidance of

Mr. Rahul Saigaonker

A topper himself in Political Science in UPSC 2016, MTech from NITK Surathkal, (MA Pol Sci).
He has keen interest in 21st century Public policy issues and has 5 years of teaching experience.

TEST SERIES HIGHLIGHTS

- 10 meticulously framed question papers (6 sectional+ 4 full length tests) mimicking UPSC pattern which are well spaced out along with well-designed and broad synopsis.
- Mixture of both sectional and full length tests which are harnessed to build confidence and improve content in answer writing.
- Timely and meticulous evaluation. (Within one week of uploading the answer sheet).
- Personalised feedback sessions and group discussions which will enhance your conceptual clarity and application.
- Aspirants will get one on one feedback and evaluation every week from the mentor.
1st Test is on 23rd June 2019 (Sunday)

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- ORIENTATION Class will be held in the month of July (2nd Week).
- There will be extraordinary attention on answer writing with continuous feedback and improvement.
- There will be weekly One on One discussion with mentor.
- Comprehensive study material will be provided through Class Notes & Printed Notes.
- The focus will be on bringing conceptual clarity and answer writing especially for first time aspirants so that they can compete with experienced candidates on equal footing in Mains 2020.

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