



# IASBABA'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE

SEPTEMBER 2019



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Strengthening Local Democracy

Right to Internet access as a fundamental right

India-Pak and Kashmir Issue

Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF)

New IPCC report and Climate Change Action

ALL INDIA SURVEY ON HIGHER EDUCATION (AISHE) 2018-19

India would be a \$5-trillion economy in 2024

## 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](http://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 **52<sup>nd</sup> edition** of IASbaba's Monthly Magazine. This edition covers all important issues that were in news in the month of **SEPTEMBER 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

### Dadabhai Naoroji

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-I – Modern Indian History

#### **In News**

- September 4, 2019 was the 194th birth anniversary of Dadabhai Naoroji, the “Grand Old Man of India”
- He was among the first leaders who stirred national consciousness in the country.
- Naoroji was a **professor of Gujarati, mathematics, and natural philosophy**, and also worked as a businessman.
- Naoroji began rousing public opinion in England on Indian issues in 1855, after he moved from India to Liverpool for business
- During this period, **Naoroji worked closely with Irish leaders in England**, who found common cause with the Indian nationalist movement.
- In 1865 and 1866, Naoroji helped found **the London Indian Society** and the **East India Association** respectively.
- **First Indian member of the British parliament** : Naoroji first ran for the British Parliament in 1886, but did not get elected. His second bid in 1892 was successful, when he won the Central Finsbury seat on a Liberal Party ticket.
- In 1893, he helped form an **Indian parliamentary committee** to attend to Indian interests. The membership of the committee significantly grew in numbers in the coming years, becoming an important lobbying force.
- Dadabhai Naoroji was among the key proponents of the ‘Drain Theory’, disseminating it in his **1901 book ‘Poverty and Un-British Rule in India’**

### Ek Bharat, Vijayi Bharat

**Part of:** GS Prelims and GS Mains I - Society

#### **In News**

- Kanyakumari-based **Vivekanand Kendra** and its state units will launch a **year-long nation-wide contact programme** to spread the messages of Swami Vivekananda
- The mass contact programme, titled “Ek Bharat Vijayi Bharat”, coincides with the 50th foundation year of **Vivekanand Rock Memorial in Kanyakumari**
- The programme will focus on spreading the messages of Swami Vivekananda, making people aware of the inspiring story of Vivekanand Rock Memorial and the activities of Vivekanand Kendra.



- **Vivekananda Rock Memorial** is a monument in **Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu** at the Tri-junction of Indian ocean, Bay of Bengal and Arabian sea.
- It was built in 1970 in honour of Swami Vivekananda who is said to have attained enlightenment at this place in 1892, prior to his famous Chicago trip
- The memorial consists of two main structures, the Vivekananda Mandapam and the Shripada Mandapam. The design of the mandapa incorporates different styles of temple architecture from all over India.
- Vivekananda Kendra works in the field of yoga, education, rural development, youth motivation, natural resource development, cultural research among other areas.

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### [Rakhigarhi: Indus Valley Civilization site](#)

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-II – Ancient History

#### **In News**

- Study of DNA from skeletal remains excavated from the Harappan cemetery at **Rakhigarhi** has provided new insights into Indian history
- The study shows that **hunter-gatherers of South Asia** (who later formed Harappa Civilization) have an independent origin and are **not descendent of Eurasian farmers**.
- The theory of the Harappans having ancient Iranian farmer ancestry thus stands refuted.
- The study done through DNA analysis of Rakhigarhi thus challenges Aryan Invasion theory

#### **Do You Know?**

- **In Europe**, ancient-DNA studies have shown that agriculture tended to spread through an influx of people with **ancestry in Anatolia**, in modern day Turkey.
- **In South Asia**, however, the story appears quite different. The researchers found an **absence of Anatolian-related ancestry**.
- Rakhigarhi in Haryana State, situated 150 km to the northwest of Delhi, is the site of a pre-Indus Valley Civilisation settlement going back to about 6500 BCE
- In January 2014, the discovery of additional mounds at **Rakhigarhi** resulted in it becoming the **largest Indus Valley Civilization site**, overtaking Mohenjodaro (300 Hectares) by almost 50 hectares.

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### [Nuakhai](#)

**Part of:** GS Prelims – Indian Art and Culture; Festivals

## In News

- Nuakhai is an important social **festival of Western Odisha** and adjoining areas of Simdega in Jharkhand
- It is observed on the fifth day of the lunar fortnight of the month of Bhadrapada (August–September), the day after the Ganesh Chaturthi festival.
- It is an **agricultural festival** which is observed **to welcome the new rice of the season**. The word nua means new and khai means food.
- During this festival people offer the newly harvested crop called Nabanha to their respective presiding deities and relish different types of delicacies prepared from the newly harvested crop.
- The Nuakhai Juhar is a major ritual of the festival. It is an exchange of greetings with friends, relatives and well-wishers.
- Women folk leave bed early to perform the Nukhai rituals with decorating the house with **colourful rangoli**.

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## [Shondol](#)

**Part of:** GS Prelims

## In News

- Shondol is famous dance, which used to be performed by artists for King of **Ladakh** on special occasions.
- Shondol dance has created history by entering into the Guinness Book of World Records as the **largest Ladakhi dance**, which involved 408 women
- It was held on the concluding day of the ongoing Buddhist carnival **Naropa festival** near the 11th-century world-famous **Hemis Monastery**.
- The monastery is close to the Hemis National Park, an area that is home to the endangered snow leopard.
- During the festival, it was not only focused on **Zero usage of Plastic** but also sensitise the religious and community leaders on plastic waste management and recycling.

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## [PLACE IN NEWS: Mamallapuram](#)

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS I and II- Indian Art and Culture; International Relations

## In News

- The historic coastal town of Mamallapuram in Tamil Nadu will be the venue for the **second India-China informal summit** between PM Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping, scheduled in October this year.
- The first informal summit between them was held in Wuhan in China in April 2018.
- Mamallapuram also hosted the Defence Expo 2018 or known as Defexpo, the Union Defence Ministry's annual event with international participation.

### Do You Know?

- Mamallapuram was one of two major **port cities** by the 7th century within the **Pallava** kingdom.
- The town has a collection of 7th and 8th century religious monuments that has been declared as a UNESCO World Heritage site.
- Some important structures include: Thirukadalmallai, **Descent of the Ganges or Arjuna's Penance**, Varaha Cave Temple and **Pancha Rathas (Five Chariots)**.

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## PLACE IN NEWS: KALIMANTAN

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-I - Geography

### In News

- Indonesian President Joko Widodo announced that the nation's capital will be moved from **Jakarta on the island of Java** to a yet-to-be-built city in East **Kalimantan on the island of Borneo**.
- The main reason to move the capital **is to ease congestion**
- Kalimantan is the Indonesian part of **Borneo, an island** shared with Malaysia and Brunei.
- Jakarta is **crowded** with home to more than 10 million people – and has some of the world's worst air **pollution** and **traffic congestion**- estimated to cost 100 trillion rupiah (\$9.73 billion) a year due to **lost productivity**
- **Poor urban planning in Jakarta**, as well as unregulated draining of aquifers, has left 40% of the city below sea level.
- The move is part of a broader strategy to **decentralise Indonesia's economic growth** – Jakarta is home to 60% of the country's population and accounts for over half of its economic activity.



Pic: <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/image/11669408/0x0/1600/900/8672b8af994452f5a57e4617d6f09ec/jf/indonesia-explores-new-capital.png>

### Do You Know?

- In 2005, **Myanmar moved its capital** from Yangon to Naypyidaw, which was also purpose built as a new capital.
- In 1960, **Brazil moved its capital** from Rio de Janeiro to Brasília, another planned city.
- **Malaysia** has also moved its administrative centre to Putrajaya, south of the capital Kuala Lumpur

## Uranium Corporation of India limited (UCIL)

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-I - Geography

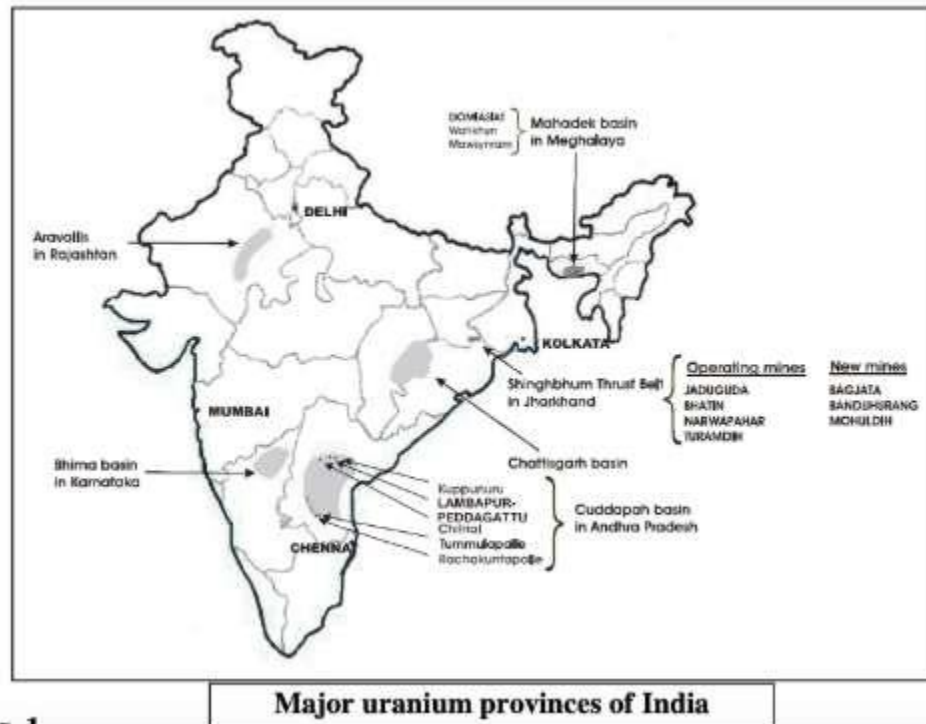
### In News

- The **Andhra Pradesh government** has ordered an inquiry into a number of complaints about **groundwater pollution caused by the uranium mining** and processing project of UCIL in **Kadapa district** of AP
- UCIL was incorporated in 1967 as a Public Sector Enterprise under the **Department of Atomic Energy**, for uranium mining and uranium processing.

### Do You Know?

- Jaduguda in Singhbhum Thrust Belt (in the state of Jharkhand) is the first uranium deposit to be discovered in India in 1951.

- Only 3% of power in India is provided by Uranium.
- Largest viable deposits of Uranium are found in **Australia, Kazakhstan, and Canada.**



<http://www.ucil.gov.in/pdf/myth/Emerging%20trend%20in%20U%20mining.pdf>

## Atlantic Meridional Overturning Current (AMOC)

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains GS-I- Geography

### In News

- AMOC is a large system of ocean currents operating in the **Atlantic**, which circulates the waters between the north and the south.
- How it operates?
  - As warm water flows northwards in the Atlantic, it cools, while evaporation increases its salt content.
  - Low temperature and a high salt content raise the density of the water, causing it to sink deep into the ocean.
  - The cold, dense water deep below slowly spreads southward. Eventually, it gets pulled back to the surface and warms again, and the circulation is complete.
- AMOC ensures the oceans are continually mixed, and heat and energy are distributed around Earth.
- Scientists have been worried by signs that AMOC may be slowing, which could have drastic consequences on global climate.
- However, a new study now suggests that AMOC is getting help from the Indian Ocean

- As a result of climate change, the Indian Ocean warms faster and faster, generating additional precipitation.
  - This draws more air from other parts of the world to the Indian Ocean, including the Atlantic, causing a series of cascading effects that is providing AMOC a “jump start”
- 

## [GALO Community](#)

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-I- Society

### **In News**

- Members of the Galo community in Arunachal Pradesh can recall the name of their ancestor from 20 generations ago i.e. right up to the founder of their clan.
- This is made possible by their system of naming.

### **About Galos**

- The Galos belong to the Tani group inhabiting **Assam and Arunachal Pradesh**, besides Tibet.
  - Galos are one of the 26 major communities of Arunachal Pradesh.
  - They have a system of prefixing the second syllable of a father’s name to that of a son, who passes on the suffix in his name to his son. thus, they can trace the names of ancestors from the first syllable or prefix of our names.
  - The genealogy is patriarchal.
-

## POLITY/GOVERNANCE

### Strengthening Local Democracy

#### **Background:**

Democratic decentralisation is barely alive in India. Over 25 years after the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments (they mandated the establishment of panchayats and municipalities as elected local governments) devolved a range of powers and responsibilities and made them accountable to the people for their implementation, very little and actual progress has been made in this direction.

Local governments remain hamstrung and ineffective; mere agents to do the bidding of higher level governments.

#### **Devolution as per the Constitution:**

- It is not mere delegation.
- It implies that precisely defined governance functions are formally assigned by law to local governments, backed by adequate transfer of a basket of financial grants and tax handles, and they are given staff so that they have the necessary wherewithal to carry out their responsibilities.
- Yet, none of this has happened, by a long shot.

#### **Key issues:**

- The volume of money set local governments for them is inadequate to meet their basic requirements.
- Much of the money given is inflexible; even in the case of untied grants mandated by the Union and State Finance Commissions, their use is constrained through the imposition of several conditions.

There is little investment in enabling and strengthening local governments to raise their own taxes and user charges.

- Local governments do not have the staff to perform even basic tasks.
- Furthermore, as most staff are hired by higher level departments and placed with local governments on deputation, they do not feel responsible to the latter; they function as part of a vertically integrated departmental system.

- If these structural problems were not bad enough, in violation of the constitutional mandate of five yearly elections to local governments, States have often postponed them.

**Way forward:**

- Gram sabhas and wards committees in urban areas have to be revitalised. Consultations with the grama sabha should be organised through smaller discussions where everybody can really participate. Even new systems of Short Message Services, or social media groups could be used for facilitating discussions between members of a grama sabha.
- Local government organisational structures have to be strengthened. Panchayats are burdened with a huge amount of work that other departments thrust on them, without being compensated for the extra administrative costs.  
Local governments must be enabled to hold State departments accountable and to provide quality, corruption free service to them, through service-level agreements.
- We cannot have accountable Gram Panchayats, without local taxation.  
Local governments are happy to implement top-down programmes because they know that if they collect taxes, their voters will never forgive them for misusing their funds.

**Conclusion:**

India's efforts in decentralisation represent one of the largest experiments in deepening democracy. We have given ourselves a reasonably robust democratic structure for local governance over the last two decades and more. It is for us to give life to this structure, through the practice of a robust democratic culture.

**Connecting the dots:**

- Democracy has not been enhanced in spite of about 32 lakh peoples' representatives being elected to them every five years. Local governments remain hamstrung and ineffective. Comment.

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**[Sanjay Mitra Committee](#)**

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-II- Governance

**In News**



- Centre has set up a 3-member panel **to oversee the bifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir into two Union Territories.**
- On 5th of August, the Centre had announced the abrogation of the special status given to J&K under **Article 370** and bifurcation of the state into the two UTs.
- The committee will look into the **distribution of assets and liabilities** of Jammu and Kashmir between two successor Union territories, which will come into existence on 31st of October this year.
- The committee will be headed by Former Defence Secretary Sanjay Mitra. It will have Retired IAS officer Arun Goyal and Retired Indian Civil Accounts Service officer Giriraj Prasad Gupta as members.

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### Hindi as a national language

Home Minister Amit Shah recently asserted that the nationwide adoption of Hindi is the only way India can be united.

Why?

- It is important to have a language of the whole country which should become the identity of India globally. Hindi can unite the country since it is the most spoken language.
- There is a huge influence of English on the citizens of India.

**History:**

- The attempt to impose Hindi on the entire country by the Congress in 1965 had led to parts of the country literally burning, with instances of self-immolation in erstwhile Madras State.
- People of southern India saw this as an attempted cultural cleansing no less.

**Southern people's perspective:**

- The people of southern India hold strongly to the idea that they are Dravidian language speakers.
- Hindi belongs to the group of Indo-European languages and is no less foreign in their reckoning than English is to them.
- Giving a reason that Hindi is spoken by the largest number is no more than crass majoritarianism.
- Uttar Pradesh is perceived as an area of backwardness with mob lynching erupting on the watch of a complicit state.

**Recent study:**

- Study shows 'knowledge of English' and 'Internet access' turned out to be the most significant. Gender, caste and knowledge of Hindi did not matter.

**Crux:**

- The ruler Ashoka of the Maurya dynasty trying to unify the peoples of his far-flung kingdom through ideals not through linguistic nationalism.(Asoka's edicts in different languages is the proof)
- It is a fallacy to imagine that we need a common language to feel connected. Indians already feel connected due to a shared history of several millennia.

*Constitutionality:*

- According to Article-343, Hindi (in Devanagari script) is the official language of the Union.
- Under Article-351, it is the duty of the Union to encourage the spread of the Hindi language so that it may serve as a medium of communication.

**Conclusion:**

For Hindi to be adopted by the people of southern India today they must hold a similar view of the society of their northern cousins. There may have been some of this during the national movement, as its pre-eminent leaders came from the north, there is little to commend the region to them today.

**Connecting the dots:**

- People of India can be unified through ideals not through linguistic nationalism . justify?

[Habeas corpus judgement – Its impact on the civil society](#)

**What is Habeas corpus judgment?**

- Habeas corpus judgment is a court verdict which defines detaining the liberty of civil society and locking them from the fundamental rights.
- This is based on the principle of Supreme Court verdict which suspended the fundamental rights to life and liberty of the civil society during the 'times of peril'.

**Note:**

- The 'times of peril' will be decided from the government about what and whose rights will be suspended? When it will be suspended? and when it will be restored etc?
- Habeas corpus judgment came into light after Indira Gandhi's Emergency. As there was absolute power in the beginning which caused torture and murder of the innocents, the

Supreme Court made a checks and balances for the government, to be accountable for all their actions through habeas corpus judgment.

Based on the statement from H R Khanna who opined that 'the greatest danger to liberty lies in insidious encroachment by men of zeal, well-meaning but lacking in due deference for the rule of law'. According to which if the state government decides to infringe people's right with respect to a larger goal, then it must prove a rational relationship for the goal and measure the adoption demonstration. The decision to implement or to take off entirely depends on the Supreme Court in synchrony with the state government. This also gives the right to court to decide when to detain, how long to detain, whom to detain depending on local conditions at state.

### **Example of Habeas corpus judgment in 2019**

The state of Jammu & Kashmir was kept under communication breakdown/lockdown starting from 5<sup>th</sup> of August 2019. Based on which many political leaders along with common man were detained from their fundamental rights. This was followed by downgrading Article 370 in the state which converted these two states into union territories.

### **Effects of Habeas corpus judgment and communication lockdown:**

- Both these moves have damaged the fundamental rights. Right to speak and right to express has been violated.
- Prevented the people outside the state to be in touch with their family members.
- Caused damage to the entire infrastructure of health, transport and food.
- Causes suffering to the individual liberty.

### **Views about communication lockdown:**

- Our national security Advisor Mr. Ajit Doval justified detention and said that the political leaders will remain in custody till the environment is safe for them to function at the democratic level but did not confirm how long this would last.
- According to few experts from United Nations, they called the communication lockdown as a "Collective punishment" where the entire community is punished due to the action of few. This will affect the civil people to use their fundamental rights.

Even though there are arguments regarding the detention of communication lockdown in the public, newspapers, interviews etc, the court have not given any explanation about this matter. Delhi High Court is continuously adjourning the petition of a political leader Shah Faesal who challenged about his detention in the state. The same case is the Supreme Court which is repeatedly adjourning the petitions with respect to the detention.

### **Conclusion:**

No civilian need a permission from the court to travel within India. Even though the court have granted liberty to travel anywhere in India, it failed to give the validity of detention by itself.

Habeas corpus judgment or communication lockdown in India does not always end in violence. It is simply to take off the fundamental rights from the people for time being until the law is back in place. Even the individuals are adjusting and abide to the court rules and regulation without raising their voice for their fundamental rights. So this shows the complete executive supremacy from the government bodies to bring in law and order in place which is making the people of Jammu and Kashmir to remain silent.

### Connecting the dots:

- Is Habeas corpus judgment is beneficial for the public in J&K?
- Why the courts are not answering the petitions about the detentions?
- Whether the courts must support the government or the people voice regarding communication lockdown?

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## SURVEY OF INDIA (SoI)

**Part of:** GS Prelims and GS-II – Governance

### In News

- SoI to deploy **300 drones** for mapping country
- Currently the best SoI maps have a resolution of 1:250000, meaning a 1 cm on the map represents 2500 cm on the ground.
- The new maps being prepared will be of 1:500 resolutions, meaning 1 cm will represent 500 cm.
- The aim is to map 75% of India's geography— about 2.4 million sq km of the 3.2 million sq km — within the next two years.
- Other than unprecedented detail, creation of High-resolution maps will **facilitate digitisation of land titles in villages.**
- Based on the availability of accurate maps, residents will finally be able to **get property cards as well as proper legal titles to their lands**

### Do You Know?

- Survey of India is the National Survey and Mapping Organization of the country
- It is the oldest scientific department of the Govt. of India. It was set up in **1767** with its **headquarters at Dehradun, Uttarakhand.**
- It is under the **Department of Science & Technology**
- It has the responsibility to ensure that the country's domain is explored and mapped suitably. It also provides base maps for expeditious and integrated development.

## [Jan Sookhna Portal and National Judicial Data Grid: remarkable achievement in advancing RTI](#)

### **About Jan Sookhna Portal (JSP)**

- It was launched by the government of Rajasthan
- Associated with right to information (RTI)
- JSP makes State government accountable to everyone
- People will have access to welfare schemes, revenue activities such as mining, and other service delivery issues such as health and education.
- Information kiosks in village panchayats and self-service e-Mitra centres in the towns will be established to enable the people to access the information.
- Department of Information Technology will serve as the nodal department for the development, operationalisation and maintenance of the JSP.

### **National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG)**

- By: The e-Committee of the Supreme Court
- Aim: To provide data on cases pending in the district courts across the country
- It is a part of the on-going e-Courts Integrated Mission Mode Project, and the NJDG works as a monitoring tool to identify, manage and reduce pendency of cases

### **Do you know?**

- Section 4 of the RTI Act — deals with proactive disclosure of information
- More than 70,000 cases were pending for over 30 years (according to NJDG)

### **Need of the hour: Transparency should be accompanied by accountability**

One can cite examples of JSP or NJDG as a proof to support that availability of information (transparency) has led to accountability.

### **Case 1: National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG)**

- NJDG had revealed number of pending cases across the country and it held justice delivery system (Chief Justices and Registrars) accountable to such enormous delays.
- Outcome – Many courts have begun to concentrate on the disposal of old cases with considerable success.

### **Case 2: Jan Sookhna Portal (JSP) and associated Janta Information System**

- JSP provides details of every activity of the government such as availability of food grains and ration shops and their distribution, implementation of various schemes and their beneficiaries and a variety of other information.
- Since the information is available on the Internet, every citizen has access to the information and hence the State government is accountable to everyone.
- Information available on portal ranges from waived farmers' loans, mining leases, pollution and environment clearances, production and royalties and taxes paid etc.
- This kind of information can facilitate a progressive partnership between government and citizens for a cleaner society.

**Crux:**

- Significance of technology and digitalization: With the use of technology and digitisation of records and information, range of information is made freely available on the JSP or NJDG.
- Information at free of cost: There is no need for anyone to take recourse to the RTI Act and await a response. All information can be accessed immediately, free of cost.
- Advances RTI: The launch of such portals are in accordance with the true spirit of the Right to Information (RTI) Act and ensures compliance with Section 4(2) of the RTI Act that mandates the public authorities to proactively disclose information in the public domain.

Jan Sookna Portal (JSP) or the National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) is remarkable achievement in advancing the Right to Information (RTI).

**Conclusion:**

Digital divide is indeed a serious problem in India. To bridge this, care should be taken to ensure that access points are open and free. Also steps should be taken to train citizens and make them aware of the facilities available.

It would be wonderful if all other State governments follow the Rajasthan government's initiative (JSP), which aims to make people, including the marginalised sections, a part of the governance process.

**Connecting the dots:**

- Transparency accompanied by accountability can bring transformation in any system. Substantiate.

- Do you think citizen participation contribute to good governance? Illustrate with examples or recent initiatives how people can be made a part of the governance process.
- Citizen's right to information is increasingly being seen as an important instrument to promote openness, transparency and accountability. Why? Examine.

### Reasonable restriction on Freedom of speech

#### **Context:**

- The Bombay High Court rejected the plea of Gautam Navlakha, an accused in the Bhima Koregaon case, for quashing the criminal proceedings against him, observing that there was some material to indicate that the accused was in contact with Naxalites. But being in contact with a militant organisation cannot by itself be a crime, as it does not result in any imminent lawless act.

#### **Freedom of speech :**

- Freedom of speech and individual liberty are enshrined in Articles 19(1)(a) and 21 of the Constitution. However, these rights are not absolute but subject to reasonable restrictions.

#### **What would be a reasonable restriction?**

- The U.S. Supreme Court tests to determine whether the restriction is reasonable or not
- **'bad tendency' test** : free speech or acts could be prohibited if they were likely to adversely affect the welfare of the public
- **'clear and present danger' test** : restriction would be reasonable only if the speech or action constitutes a clear and present (and not remote) danger to state security or public order.
- **'imminent lawless action' test** : The constitutional guarantees of free speech and free press do not permit the state to forbid or proscribe advocacy of the use of force or of law violation, except where such advocacy is directed to inciting or producing imminent lawless action
- The word 'imminent' means 'likely to happen very soon,' 'at hand,' or 'fast approaching.'

#### **In India:**

- The 'clear and present danger' test is followed (Indra Das v. State of Assam (2011) and Arup Bhuyan v. State of Assam (2011))
- Being in contact with a militant organisation cannot by itself be a crime, as it does not result in any imminent lawless act. One could be a writer who contacts Naxalites for doing research about them, or a social activist, or even a sympathiser. That would be legal, being within the ambit of the 'clear and present danger' test.

### Conclusion :

It is the higher judiciary which must do its duty as guardians of the citizens' constitutional rights. The court must not succumb as it did during the Emergency.

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## [Right to Information Act](#)

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-II - Governance

### In News

- The Supreme Court has held that Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) "substantially" financed by the government fall within the ambit of RTI
- **Case: D.A.V. College Trust And Management Society vs. Director Of Public Instructions**
- This means that **they have to disclose vital information**, ranging from finances to hierarchy to decisions to functioning, to citizens who apply under RTI.
- An NGO may also include societies which are neither owned or controlled by the government, but if they are significantly funded by the government, directly or indirectly, they come under the RTI Act.
- The court defined "substantial" as a "large portion."
  - It does not necessarily have to mean a major portion or more than 50%. Substantial financing can be both direct or indirect.
  - If government gives land in a city free of cost or on heavy discount to hospitals, educational institutions or any such body, this could also be substantial financing.

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## [Right to access internet](#)

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-II -Governance

### In News



- The Kerala High Court held that the right to have access to the Internet is part of the **fundamental right to education** as well as the **right to privacy under Article 21** of the Constitution.
- HC made the observation while ordering the Principal of Sree Narayanaguru College, Kozhikode, to re-admit a student who had been expelled from the college hostel for using her mobile phone beyond the restricted hours
- The following observations were made by the court
  - **The Human Rights Council of the United Nations** has found that the right of access to Internet is a fundamental freedom and a tool to ensure right to education.
  - Mobile phones, once a luxury, have now become "part and parcel of the day to day life and even to a stage that it is unavoidable to survive with dignity and freedom"
  - Enforcement of discipline by hostel authorities shall not be by blocking the **ways and means of the students to acquire knowledge**.

#### Do You know?

- In **K.S.Puttaswamy Vs Union of India case**, nine judge Supreme Court bench upheld that the right to privacy is protected as a fundamental constitutional right under Articles 14, 19 and 21 of the Constitution of India
- In **2016, the United Nations Human Rights Council released a non-binding resolution** condemning intentional disruption of internet access by governments.
- The resolution reaffirmed that "the same rights people have offline must also be protected online"

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### Parliamentary Budget Office a need for an hour

#### Parliamentary Budget Office:

- A PBO is an independent and impartial body linked directly to Parliament.
- It provides technical and objective analysis of Budgets and public finance to the House and its committees.
- It can generate quality public debate on Budget policy and public finance, enabling parliamentarians to engage meaningfully in the Budget process.
- Traditionally, independent budgetary units are more common in developed countries.

#### Need for PBO:

- Executive-led budgetary governance has not been successful in India.
- To carry out the functions effectively, Parliament requires institutional, analytical and technical competence.

- There is a growing trend among legislatures, particularly within the OECD countries to establish specialised Budget research units.

**Function of PBOs across the world:**

- **Independent and objective economic forecast.**
- **Baseline estimate survey.**
- **Analysing the executive's Budget proposal.**
- **Providing medium- to long-term analysis**

**What is to be done?**

- The body needs to be appointed not based on political allegiance or expediency, but on its expertise in budgetary, fiscal and economic matters.
- This body must serve parliamentarians equally and without prejudice.
- These bodies must help shape the debate and discourse around the state of the nation's finances and the fiscal implications of significant proposals.

**Crux:**

- What is gravely in danger is evidence-based discussion around important policies that affect the trajectory of our Republic, discussions which can quickly blur the line between fact and fiction.

Example: The Rafale deal with Dassault Aviation. Part of the controversy resulted from uncertainty regarding the true lifecycle costs of the aircraft bought. In 2011, the Canadian PBO released a cost estimate for Canada's purchase of F-35 jets. This estimate far exceeded the one presented by the Department of National Defence.

**Working of PBOs:**

- It is often the case that economic and fiscal projections of a PBO and the Ministry of Finance are similar. This is unsurprising as data sources and economic methodologies for such projections are well established and uniform.
- without the existence of another data point | generated by an independent, non-partisan office, (PBO)it is difficult for parliamentarians to ensure that these projections and estimates continue to be reliable enough for them to make decisions on.
- When these projections come into question, the Cabinet can tap the civil service for further research and analysis.
- Most parliamentarians do not have this luxury and may have to rely on poor quality third-party data and analysis, done without relevant expertise. This is a situation that must be avoided

**AG vs PBO :**

- Auditor general performs, which is to provide retrospective audits and analysis of the financial accounts and performance of government operations.
- A PBO provides prospective, forward-looking economic and fiscal projections, as well as policy costings.

**International examples:**

- Congressional Budget Office in the United States ,Offices in the Netherlands, Korea, Australia and the United Kingdom.
- In some of these countries PBOs provide independent cost estimates of electoral platform measures to political parties.

**Conclusions:**

- The amount of information parliamentarians need to scrutinise in Budget documents has exponentially increased and a PBO would assist parliamentarians in this process of scrutiny.
- India's Parliament and government need to work quickly and energetically to establish such an office; it is in everyone's interests to do so.
- As the process toward the Union Budget 2020 has already kicked off, it would be prudent for parliamentarians to examine the case for a PBO more deeply.

**Connecting the dots:**

- Legislatures across the world have witnessed an increasingly stronger executive try to wrest away its rightful power of the purse. A PBO would help resuscitate these powers that have fallen into disuse.

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**[Right to Internet access as a fundamental right](#)****Context:**

- In **Faheema Shirin v. State of Kerala**, the Kerala High Court declared the right to Internet access as a fundamental right forming a part of the right to privacy and the right to education under **Article 21** of the Constitution
- This judgment acknowledges the role of the right to access Internet in accessing other fundamental rights

**Digital literacy:**

- Digital literacy refers to the wide range of skills, which are necessary to emerge successful and adapt to the digital world.
- skill set which is essential for access and gaining information.

**Factors leading to digital inequality:**

- In recent times, several government and private sector services have become digital. Some of them are only available online
- social and economic backwardness is exacerbated due to information poverty, lack of infrastructure, and lack of digital literacy
- in mid-2016, digital literacy in India was less than 10%
- in the absence of Internet access and digital literacy enabling that access, there will be further exclusion of large parts of the population

**Importance of digital literacy:**

- We are moving to a global economy where knowledge of digital processes will transform the way in which people work, collaborate, consume information, and entertain themselves.
- Offering services online has cost and efficiency benefits for the government and also allows citizens to bypass lower-level government bureaucracy.
- Digital literacy allows people to access information and services, collaborate, and navigate socio-cultural networks.
- Recognising the right to internet access and digital literacy will also make it easier to demand accountability from the state, as well as encourage the legislature and the executive to take a more proactive role in furthering this right.

**Measures taken by govt:**

- The Bharat Net programme, aiming to have an optical fibre network in all gram panchayats, is to act as the infrastructural backbone for having Internet access all across the country.
- The Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (DISHA) or National Digital Literacy Mission (NDLM) Scheme has been formulated to impart IT training .

**Criticism:**

- Moving governance and service delivery online without the requisite progress in Internet access and digital literacy also does not make economic sense

Ex: Common Service Centres, which operate in rural and remote locations, are physical facilities which help in delivering digital government services and informing communities about

government initiatives. a large chunk of citizens cannot access these services since lack of resources.

- The Bharat Net project has consistently missed all its deadlines while the costs involved have doubled.
- the National Digital Literacy Mission has barely touched 1.67% of the population and has been struggling for funds.

### Conclusion:

- Internet access and digital literacy are dependent on each other, and creation of digital infrastructure must go hand in hand with the creation of digital skills.
- It is important to recognise the right to Internet access and digital literacy to alleviate this situation, and allow citizens increased access to information, services, and the creation of better livelihood opportunities.

### Connecting the dots:

- We are living in an 'information society'. Unequal access to the Internet creates and reproduces socio-economic exclusions. Justify

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## Impeachment

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-II - Polity

### In News

- Impeachment is the levelling of charges against an elected official by a legislative body. If the charges are proved right, it leads to removal of official from the post.
- Formal impeachment inquiry has been launched against US President Donald Trump for his **alleged abuse of Presidential powers**

### US impeachment process

- The **US House of representative** (435 members) needs to pass the impeachment motion by a **simple majority**, after investigation by judiciary committee
- The motion of Impeachment then goes to the Senate (Upper House consisting of 100 members), where a trial presided by Chief Justice takes place with representative from House acting as prosecutors and the President & his attorneys presenting his defence
- A **two-third majority in Senate** is necessary to convict and remove the President.
- If the President is convicted, the **Vice-President takes over the White House** for remaining period of tenure.

### Indian Impeachment process

- In India, President can be impeached for violation of the Constitution (**Article 61**)

- The motion for impeaching President can be **introduced in any House of Parliament**.
  - After the investigation, the motion of impeachment must be passed by a majority of not less than **two-thirds of the total membership of the House by both Houses of the Parliament**.
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## [ECI cell to monitor Social Media](#)

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-II – Model Code of Conduct

### **In News**

- Election Commission of India (ECI) is setting up a dedicated cell to monitor activities on social media platforms ahead of the assembly polls in Maharashtra
- The cell will mainly be keeping an eye out for three kinds of violations.
  - The first kind is any content being shared that might amount **to defamation, rumour-mongering or fake news**, and such instances will be forwarded to the concerned police units for further action.
  - The second is violation of the **model code of conduct(MCC)**, which will be reported to the ECI. Example holding live events on Facebook or Instagram when campaigning is forbidden.
  - The third category is of posts that might give rise to **law and order problems**, in which case they will be removed from the internet.

### **Do You Know?**

- As per Article 324 of the Indian Constitution, ECI has the supervisory and directional control of the **complete process** of election to Parliament and Legislature of every State and to the office of the President and the Vice-President of India.
  - MCC lays down the **minimum standards of behaviour** for political parties and their candidates contesting elections.
  - The MCC comes into effect as soon as the EC announces the election schedule.
  - **MCC doesn't have statutory backing** in the form of legislation but has acquired significance in the past decade, because of its strict enforcement by the EC.
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## [Citizenship Bill](#)

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-II – Federalism

### **In News**

- NGOs across the northeastern States have lined up protests against the Union government's bid to reintroduce the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill.

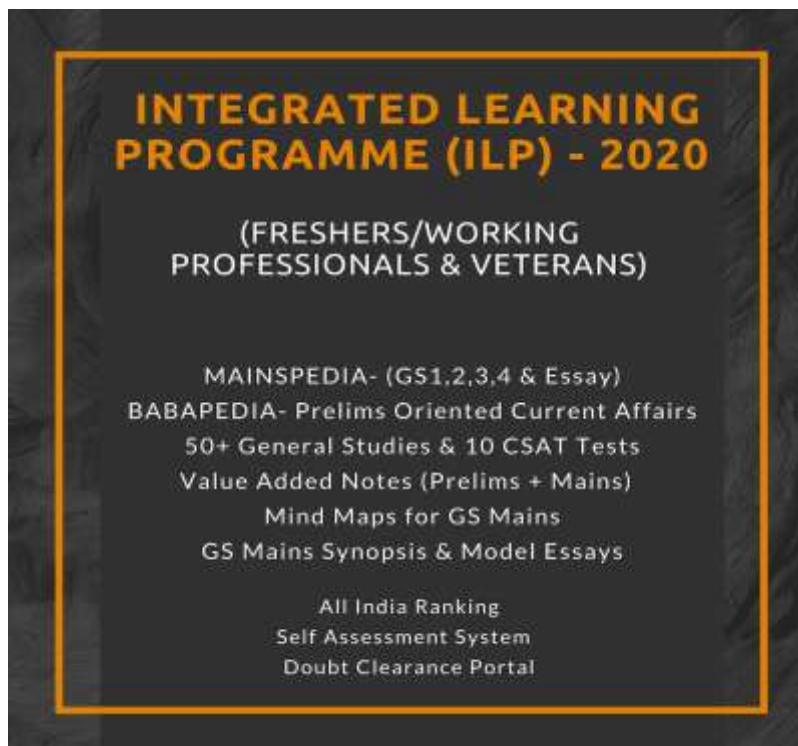
- Groups in **Assam feel the bill goes against the NRC and the Assam Accord**, groups in Mizoram fears a higher influx of Chakmas while other Northeastern states fear influx of outsiders may lead to changes in demography of their states

#### **About Citizenship(Amendment) Bill**

- The Bill seeks to amend the Citizenship Act of 1955 and grant citizenship to people from minority communities — Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians — from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan **after six years of stay in India** even if they do not possess any proper document.
- The **current requirement is 12 years of stay**.
- The proposed legislation was cleared by the Lok Sabha in January but not tabled in the Rajya Sabha.

#### **Other Criticism of the bill**

- The bill has no provision for Shias or Ahmadiyas in Pakistan who are persecuted minorities there. By allowing non-Muslim migrants to claim citizenship, the bill goes against to Article 14 of the Constitution that guarantees right to equality.



## SOCIAL ISSUE/WELFARE

### Tabrez Ansari case

#### **Context:**

- Lynching has assumed a rising trend in recent times – Dadri lynching case of cow slaughtering, Jharkhand Lynching case and recent Tabrez Ansari case.
- Recent Police decision of dropping charges against those accused of lynching Tabrez Ansari is a cause of concern.
- Lynching is one of the ways used by majority to intimidate the minority sections of the society.

#### **Contemporary issues**

- There have been many incidences of Mob Lynching
- Incidents of gang-rapes (especially Dalits)
- Freedom and Fundamental Rights of J&K people were suppressed
- Inefficient NRC process
- Atrocities towards minorities

#### **Major Concerns:**

- Lynching is not defined in the Indian legal system and there are no punishments with regards to lynching thus giving a free way to hate crime perpetrators
- India's criminal justice system has always been biased against disadvantaged castes, women and Muslims
- There is open bias of the criminal justice system (as visible in recent mob lynching case of Tabrez Ansari)
- Tolerance of the open and profound injustice done to "other people"
- Increasingly dominant behavioural and socio-psychological trends
- Violation of right to equality and the right to freedom; Right to life
- The judiciary—the bulwark of a liberal democratic state—has not always played its role adequately
- Weak response by the state

#### **Conclusion:**

- Lynching is an egregious manifestation of prejudice, intolerance, and contempt towards the rule of law.
- The strategic silence of the State and the ineffective law and order machinery has further given legitimacy to mob lynching.



- It is high time that the States and the Centre show some urgency so that creeping threats are prevented from metastasizing into an out-of-control monster.
- The biased outcome of the lynching case must concern us all.
- As Martin Luther King quoted – “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

**Quote from the article:**

*“Freedom is indivisible; the chains on any one of my people were the chains on all of them, the chains on all of my people were the chains on me.”* – **Nelson Mandela**

**Note:** We can use above quote in essays or while answering questions related to Freedom, Minority rights/issues and Oppression.

**Value Addition:**

- Nelson Mandela in his speech on freedom said above words, "freedom is indivisible".
- According to him, 'Freedom' is an abstract idea, which is unable to be divided or separated.
- Mandela as a child used to believe he is always free and in everywhere. But as grew up, he felt the chains of oppression.
- Freedom can't be seen rather it is felt. It is like the air. Mandela realized not only he was suppressed, barred but also his people were too. Even the oppressor and oppressed both were suffering from the lack of freedom, according to him.

**Connecting the dots:**

- Lynching by mobs has become a recurring phenomenon in India. What can be the possible factors behind this trend? Examine. Also suggest ways to address it.

**Mochi Swabhimaan Initiative**

**Part of:** GS Prelims and GS-II – Role of NGOs/CSOs

**In News**

- Mochi Swabhimaan Initiative is a nationwide effort in which Leather Sector Skill Council (LSSC) will support the **cobbler community** who provide leather-based services, with **CSR funds**.
- This will ensure that they work in a dignified manner by bringing respect to their skills by giving them **better working environment in the form of kiosks/umbrellas**.
- **Union Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship** has launched this initiative.
- LSSC is an NSDC approved **non-profit organization set up in 2012** dedicated to meet the demand for skilled workforce in the leather industry.

## CENSUS 2021

**Part of:** GS Prelims and GS-I – Society/Population

### **In News**

- The decennial census exercise will be undertaken in 2021 and, for the first time, move from paper to **digital format**.
- The 2011 Census pegged India's population at 1.21 billion—a 17.6% rise from that of 2001.
- Union Home Minister suggested (no formal proposal) one card for all utilities in future where by Aadhaar, passport, bank account, and driving licence are brought under one platform.
- ₹12,000 crore would be spent on census and preparation of **the National Population Register (NPR)**.
- The NPR exercise is different from the census and is not linked to the National Register of Citizens (NRC).
- For the purpose of the NPR, an ordinary resident is defined as a person who has **resided in a local area for the past six months** or more or a person who intends to reside in that area for the next six months or more.
- The **NPR links biometric and demographic details** of any ordinary resident, thus making it a comprehensive database of residents.
- A Census helps us plan our social welfare and entitlement schemes better", through NPR India would have a "multipurpose identity document that will have all details like Aadhaar and PAN card".



## WOMEN ISSUE

### Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-I - Women

#### **In News**

- PMMVY has achieved a significant milestone by **crossing one crore beneficiaries**.
- The total amount disbursed to the beneficiaries under the scheme has crossed Rs. 4,000 crores.
- **It is a direct benefit transfer (DBT) scheme** under which cash benefits are provided to pregnant women in their bank account directly to meet enhanced nutritional needs and partially **compensate for wage loss**
- Under the 'Scheme', Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers (PW&LM) **receive a cash benefit of Rs. 5,000 in three instalments** on fulfilling the respective conditionality, viz. early registration of pregnancy, ante-natal check-up and registration of the birth of the child and completion of first cycle of vaccination for the first living child of the family.
- The scheme was launched in 2017 **as Centrally Sponsored Scheme** and implemented by **Ministry of Women and Child Development**
- Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Rajasthan are the top five States & UT in the country in implementation of the scheme. Odisha and Telangana are yet to start implementation of the scheme.



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## HEALTH ISSUE

### UMMID

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-II - Health

#### In News

- In India's urban areas, congenital malformations and genetic disorders are the third most common cause of mortality in newborns.
- Union government has launched UMMID (Unique Methods of Management and treatment of Inherited Disorders) initiative to tackle inherited genetic diseases of newborn babies.
- The initiative aims at creating awareness about genetic disorders amongst clinicians and establish molecular diagnostics in hospitals so that the benefits of developments in medical genetics could reach patients
- UMMID initiative involves
  - to establish **NIDAN((National Inherited Diseases Administration) Kendras** to provide counselling, prenatal testing and diagnosis, management, and multidisciplinary care in Government Hospitals
  - to **produce skilled clinicians** in Human Genetics, and
  - to undertake **screening of pregnant women** and new born babies for inherited genetic diseases in hospitals at aspirational districts.
- The program implemented (by **Department of Biotechnology**) at government hospitals will benefit people who cannot afford expensive care for genetic disorders

### Screening for communicable diseases

#### Context:

- In India, screening for disease is usually associated with non-communicable rather than communicable diseases. However, Since August 2019, India has embarked on a large-scale plan to screen all children for leprosy and tuberculosis.

#### Concerns:

- Both diseases are infectious and India has a substantial burden — its tuberculosis burden is the highest in the world.
- Children tend to be more prone to catching infectious diseases from their peers because of long hours in confined spaces and more bodily contact than in adults.

#### Why screening of the two diseases is necessary?

Leprosy is a chronic infectious disease caused by Mycobacterium leprae. It usually affects the skin and peripheral nerves, but has a wide range of clinical manifestations. The disease is

characterised by a long incubation period that is generally 5-7 years. It is a leading cause of permanent physical disability. Timely diagnosis and treatment of cases, before nerve damage has occurred, is the most effective way of preventing disability due to leprosy.

Tuberculosis infection, caused by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, is one of the most common communicable diseases in India, its transmission fuelled by unhygienic, crowded living conditions. It is said that most Indians carry the bacterium and the infection flares up when their immunity levels are low, like when they are malnourished or suffering from conditions like AIDS in which the body's immune system is compromised.

#### **Statistics in India:**

- India eliminated leprosy in 2005 — WHO defines elimination as an incidence rate of less than one case per 10,000 population.
- All states except Chhattisgarh and the Union Territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli have eliminated leprosy. However, 1.15 lakh to 1.2 lakh new leprosy cases are still detected every year, Health Ministry officials said.
- TB kills an estimated 4,80,000 Indians every year — an average over 1,300 every day.

#### **Why the disease prevalence is more?**

- India also has more than a million “missing” cases every year that are not notified.
- Most remain either undiagnosed or unaccountably and inadequately diagnosed and treated in the private sector.
- The problem in the latter case is that many of these patients do not complete the full course of the antibiotic, thus exposing the bacterium to the medicine without fully killing it.
- This is trigger enough for the bacterium to evolve into a version of itself that is resistant to that particular drug.

#### **Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram**

- Launched in 2013 under the National Health Mission (NHM), is focused on preventing disease and disability in children.
- This initiative is aimed at screening children from 0 to 18 years for 4Ds - Defects at birth, Diseases, Deficiencies and Development Delays including Disabilities.
- Children diagnosed with illnesses shall receive follow up including surgeries at tertiary level, free of cost under NHM.

#### **Conclusion:**

- Until now, neither leprosy nor TB were a part of the programme. In 2017, India had set a target of elimination of leprosy by 2018, going by the Budget speech that year. The

deadline has passed but leprosy remains a challenge in a country that launched the National Leprosy Eradication Programme way back in 1955.

- For tuberculosis, the global Sustainable Development Goal target is to end the disease by 2030. However, there is a new urgency in India's TB control efforts since last year, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi suo motu advanced the deadline for India to end TB to 2025.

### Connecting the dots:

- Discuss the measures taken by Government of India to control communicable diseases?

## Eat Right India Movement

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-II – Issues relating to Health

### In News

- **What is Eat Right India movement?** It is a crucial preventive healthcare measure to trigger social and behavioural change
- **Approach:** Through judicious mix of regulatory measures, combined with soft interventions for ensuring awareness and capacity building of food businesses and citizens alike.
- **Why it is needed?** - Due to increasing burden of non-communicable diseases including diabetes, hypertension and heart diseases, widespread deficiencies of vitamins and minerals and rampant food-borne illnesses
- This movement is aligned with the government's flagship public health programmes such as **POSHAN Abhiyaan**, Anemia Mukta Bharat, Ayushman Bharat Yojana and Swachh Bharat Mission.
- As part of campaign, the central food regulator - **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)** has trained over 1.7 lakh food safety supervisors who will spread awareness and sensitise people and food vendors on food safety
- FSSAI has also put in place **robust regulatory measures** under three major pillars: Eat Safe, Eat Health and Eat Sustainably for the programme.
- **For example:** FSSAI has prescribed a limit for Total Polar Compounds (TPC) at 25% in cooking oil to avoid the harmful effects of reused cooking oil.

### Do You Know?

- Under the **Re-Purposed Used Cooking Oil (RUCO)** initiative that FSSAI has undertaken with the ministry of petroleum and natural gas, used cooking oil is being converted to bio-diesel.
- India has set a **target of 2022 to be free of industrial trans-fats**, a year ahead of the global target set by the WHO
- POSHAN stands for **Prime Minister's Overreaching Scheme for Holistic Nourishment** - is India's flagship programme to improve nutritional outcomes for children, adolescents, pregnant women and lactating mothers by leveraging technology, a targeted approach and convergence.
- Union Government is celebrating the **entire month of September as "Rashtriya Poshan Maah" (National Nutrition Month)** to emphasise the need for healthy nutrition. The theme is **Complementary feeding**.

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### [Controlling the hepatitis B virus calls for universal vaccination of new borns](#)

#### **Context:**

- On September 3, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Thailand became the first four countries in the World Health Organization's southeast Asia region to have successfully controlled hepatitis B.

#### **Concerns:**

- Despite the introduction of hepatitis B vaccine in the Universal Immunisation Programme in 2002 and scaling-up nationwide in 2011, about one million people in India become chronically infected with the virus every year.
- According to the Health Ministry, as on February 2019, an estimated 40 million people in India were infected.

#### **About hepatitis:**

- Hepatitis is a medical condition in which there occurs inflammation of liver cells and its complications vary with type of infection.
- There are 5 types of hepatitis viz. A, B, C, D and E. Each type is caused by a different hepatitis virus.
- Hepatitis viruses is one of the common cause of liver damage.
- Hepatitis B and C are the most deadly. These two types are mostly responsible for liver damage.
- Hepatitis viruses B, C and D spread by contact with contaminated blood or body fluids.
- Hepatitis A and E spreads through unsafe food and drink.
- Symptoms include yellowing of the skin and eyes, abdominal pain and swelling, yellow urine, pale or dark stools, chronic fatigue, nausea and loss of appetite.



- WHO has appointed Amitabh Bachchan as its goodwill Ambassador for Hepatitis in South East Asia Region.

**Prevalence of the disease;**

- Hepatitis B infection at a young age turns chronic, causing over 1,00,000 premature deaths annually from liver cirrhosis or liver cancer.
- A study published in 2013 found lower coverage of hepatitis B vaccine in eight of the 10 districts surveyed.
- According to the WHO, the coverage of hepatitis B third dose had reached 86% in 2015.
- However, despite the high vaccination coverage, disease prevalence in children aged less than five years has not dropped below 1%.

**Reasons for increasing numbers:**

- One of the reasons for this is the sub-optimal coverage of birth dose in all infants within 24 hours of birth.
- The compulsion to increase birth dose to cut vertical transmission arises from two important reasons — about 70-90% newborns infected this way become chronic carriers of hepatitis B, and about 20-30% carriers in India are due to vertical transmission.
- But even seven years after the Health Ministry approved the birth dose in 2008, its coverage remained low — 45% in 2015 and 60% in 2016
- In the case of institutional delivery, the birth dose vaccine coverage is low — 76.36% in 2017. One of the reasons for the low coverage is the fear of wastage of vaccine when a 10-dose vial is used.
- Unfortunately, health-care workers are very often unaware of the WHO recommendation that allows hepatitis B open-vial policy.( Opened vials of hepatitis B vaccine can be kept for a maximum duration of 28 days for use in other children if the vaccine meets certain conditions)

**National Viral Hepatitis Control Program**

- The National Action Plan was developed by experts from across the country, in line with India's commitment and keeping the global perspective in mind.
- The Plan provides a strategic framework, based on which National Viral Hepatitis Control Program was framed and launched in July, 2018 under National Health Mission by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.
- This program is also in line with our global commitment towards achieving Sustainable development Goal (SDG) 3.3. India has affirmed this commitment at the 69th World Health Assembly.
- The aim of the program is to combat hepatitis and achieve countrywide elimination of Hepatitis C by 2030, achieve significant reduction in the infected population, morbidity

and mortality associated with Hepatitis B and C viz. Cirrhosis and Hepato-cellular carcinoma (liver cancer) and Hepatitis A and E.

- A National Steering Committee was formed to formulate the National Action Plan for Viral Hepatitis in January 2017. Various working groups were formed which looked at various thematic areas. The Plan was formed in consultation with nearly 110 experts, program managers, state officials and community members.
- The Technical Guidelines is intended to serve as a reference document for practising physicians and provide standardized testing and treatment protocols to ensure consistency in diagnosing and treatment of the disease, in the scientifically most appropriate and cost-effective manner. This will be taken down to the lowest level of health care through the Ayushman Bharat programme
- The preventive, promotive and curative interventions need to come together, especially since symptoms for Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C often remain dormant for long.
- Vaccination against Hepatitis B to the health care workers and high-risk population will also be initiated under this program. No child should suffer from Hepatitis B.
- Use of social media and field outreach through mobile vans of the Ministry of I&B to improve public awareness on the disease.

**Conclusion:**

- India is one of the few countries in the world to roll out management of Hepatitis B and hepatitis C in a public health approach and offer free diagnostics and drugs lifelong to its beneficiaries.
- Integrating the interventions within the existing health systems framework under National Health Mission are further complementing the efforts of increasing access to testing and management of viral hepatitis.
- Coordination and collaboration with other national programs and schemes to provide a promotive, preventive and curative package of services will further augment the government of India's determined efforts towards achieving the goal.

**Connecting the dots:**

1. "Only healthy people can build a strong and prosperous nation". Comment.
2. Can Ayushman Bharat prove to be a game changer? Discuss.

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**MEASLES, RUBELLA**

**Part of:** GS Prelims and GS Mains II – Issues relating to Health

### In News

- Member-countries of the World Health Organisation (WHO) South-East Asia Region have resolved to eliminate measles and rubella by 2023.
- Measles and rubella are **contagious viral infections preventable by vaccine** and best known by its distinctive red rash.
- Eliminating measles will prevent 500,000 deaths a year in the region, while eliminating rubella/ congenital rubella syndrome (CRS) would avert about 55,000 cases of rubella.
- **Bhutan, North Korea, the Maldives, Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste have eliminated measles.**
- Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste have controlled rubella.

### About Measles

- Measles is a deadly disease which can lead to –Pneumonia, Diarrhoea and other deadly threats
- The respiratory disease measles remains a leading cause of death among young children, despite the fact that a safe and effective vaccine has been available for 40 years. Measles is an acute illness caused by a **virus** of the **paramyxovirus family**.
- It is one of the most **contagious diseases** and many children who do not have sufficient immunity contract measles if exposed.
- During the first few weeks after contracting measles, a child's immune system becomes weakened, and a normal cold or diarrhoea can become a life-threatening illness.

### About Rubella

- Rubella infection during pregnancy can cause congenital deformities in newborn baby, such as Blindness, Deafness, Mental Retardation & Congenital heart disease
- Rubella is an **acute, contagious viral infection**. While rubella virus infection usually causes a mild fever and rash illness in children and adults, infection during pregnancy, especially during the first trimester, can result in miscarriage, fetal death, stillbirth, or infants with congenital malformations, known as congenital rubella syndrome (CRS).
- The rubella virus is **transmitted by airborne droplets** when infected people sneeze or a cough. **Humans are the only known host.**
- **There is no specific treatment**, but the disease can be prevented by vaccination.

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## [Salmonella](#)

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-II- Health

### In News

- MDH sambar masala were recalled from retail stores in California after tests by the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) showed positive for salmonella.
- Salmonella is a group of **bacteria** that can cause **food-borne illnesses** known as salmonellosis
- Individuals who develop salmonellosis may show symptoms such as nausea, diarrhoea, fever, and abdominal cramps 12-72 hours after contracting the infection.
- In some cases the **diarrhoea** is severe, and there is risk of it spreading from the intestines to the bloodstream and to other parts of the body. In such cases, the infection (enteric fever) may result in death if the infected individual is not treated with antibiotics on time.
- According to estimates by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Salmonella causes 1.2 million illnesses, 23,000 hospitalisations and about 450 deaths in the United States every year.
- WHO identifies Salmonella as **one of four key global causes of diarrhoeal diseases**.
- Salmonellosis in humans is generally contracted through the consumption of contaminated food of animal origin (mainly eggs, meat, poultry, and milk), although other foods, including green vegetables contaminated by manure, have been implicated in its transmission.

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### [National Genomic Grid \(cancer\)](#)

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-II – Issues relating to Health

#### **In News**

- Government plans to set up a National Genomic Grid, so as to take cancer research to the next level and make treatment viable for people of different economic classes.
- The National Genomic Grid for **India-specific cancer research** will collect **samples from cancer patients to study genomic factors** influencing cancer and identifying the right treatment modalities for the Indian population.
- The grid to be formed will be in line with the National Cancer Tissue Biobank (NCTB) set up at the IIT Madras, which is functioning in close association with the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR)
- The grid will have four parts, with the country divided into east, west, north and south
- The first set of 350 genomic data of stomach and breast cancer patients developed from the 3,000 samples at NCTB will be released by the end of October

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### [National anti-microbial resistance hub](#)

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-II – Health

## In News

- The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) inaugurated India's first National Anti-microbial Resistance Hub in Kolkata
- The Hub has been developed by the ICMR in association with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- It will aim to identify antibiotics that work best for diseases and frame a policy for antibiotic use that will prevent resistance.
- It will carry out basic research and have a repository of viral strains that are being collected from all over the country.
- The Kolkata centre would be the hub for research on antibiotic resistance not only for the country but for the entire South Asia.

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## [e-cigarettes](#)

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-II – Health

## In News

- **Government bans e-cigarettes** citing health risk to youth.
- Union Cabinet had approved an ordinance banning production, import, distribution and sale of electronic cigarettes.
- The draft ordinance provides for a maximum imprisonment of up to one year along with a penalty of Rs 1 lakh against first-time violators. This can go up to three years of jail and a penalty of Rs 5 lakh for repeat offenders.
- E-cigarettes do not burn tobacco, but use a heating element to vaporize liquid nicotine, which the user inhales.
- These are **not licensed in India** and are often marketed as products to help smokers quit, and harmless than cigarettes.
- A typical cartridge contains about as much nicotine as a pack of 20 regular cigarettes and can act as **a potential source for nicotine addiction**

## Do You Know?

- Some states, including Punjab, Karnataka, Kerala, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Rajasthan and Mizoram, have already banned use and sale of e-cigarettes, vape and e-hookah

- New York and Michigan have also banned e-cigarettes recently this year.
- More than 9,00,000 people die each year in the country due to tobacco-related illnesses. But India has 106 million adult smokers, second only to China in the world

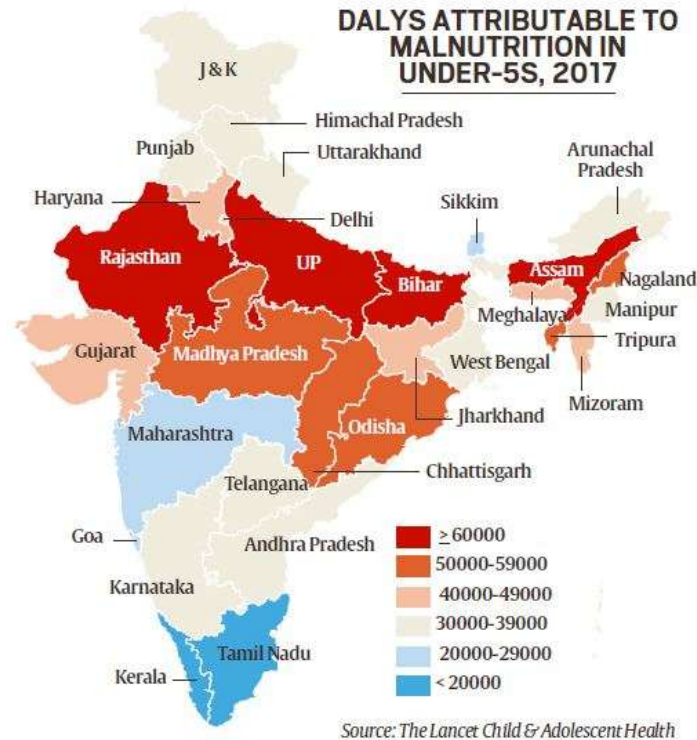
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## Malnutrition

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-II - Health

### In News

- Two-thirds of the 1.04 million deaths in children under five years in India are still attributable to malnutrition,
- This was revealed in the state-wide data on malnutrition presented by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI) and National Institute of Nutrition (NIN).
- The Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALY) rate attributable to malnutrition in children varies 7-fold among the states — a gap between a high of 74,782 in Uttar Pradesh and a low of 11,002 in Kerala.
- Other findings of the report were:
  - **low birthweight** was 21.4 % ranging from 9 % in Mizoram to 24 % in UP.
  - **child stunting** (low height-for-age) 39.3 % ranging from 21 % in Goa to 49 % in UP
  - **child wasting** (low weight for height) 15.7 %
  - **child underweight** 32.7 % ranging from 16% in Manipur to 42 % in Jharkhand.
  - **anaemia** in children 59.7 % ranging from 21 % in Mizoram to 74 % in Haryana
  - anaemia in women 15–49 years of age 54.4 %
  - exclusive breastfeeding 53.3 % and
  - **overweight child** 11.5 %
- Schemes to tackle malnutrition in India are: Integrated Child Development Scheme launched in 1975, the National Nutrition Policy 1993, the Mid Day Meal Scheme for school children 1995, and the National Food Security Act 2013, POSHAN Abhiyan
- In order to reduce malnutrition, focus will be needed on major determinants like provision of clean drinking water, reducing rates of open defecation, improving women's educational status, and food and nutrition security for the most vulnerable families.



<https://images.indianexpress.com/2019/09/malnutrition-1.jpg>

## The ban on e-cigarettes

### Context:

- The Union Cabinet had approved an ordinance banning production, import, distribution and sale of electronic cigarettes.
- Any production, import, export, sale (including online), distribution or advertisement, and storage of e-cigarettes is a cognisable offence punishable with imprisonment or fine, or both.

### e-cigarettes:

An electronic cigarette (or e-cig) is a battery-powered vaporizer that mimics tobacco smoking. It works by heating up a nicotine liquid, called "juice."

- Nicotine juice (or e-juice) comes in various flavors and nicotine levels.
- e-liquid is composed of five ingredients: vegetable glycerin (a material used in all types of food and personal care products, like toothpaste) and propylene glycol (a solvent most commonly used in fog machines.)
- propylene glycol is the ingredient that produces thicker clouds of vapor.

- E-cigarettes, do not burn tobacco leaves. Instead these battery-operated devices produce aerosol by heating a solution containing among other things, nicotine.

Proponents of e-cigs argue that the practice is healthier than traditional cigarettes because users are only inhaling water vapor and nicotine.

#### Why ban?

- The Centre claims the decision to ban e-cigarettes was taken as they were a health risk to the youth.
- Seven deaths have been recorded in the U.S. — the largest consumer of e-cigarettes in the world — where, New York recently banned the sale of flavoured e-cigarettes.
- the risk of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, lung cancer, and possibly cardiovascular disease and other diseases also associated with smoking.
- some compounds in the aerosol are toxic substances that have known deleterious effects, and might just be less harmful than cigarettes, not harmless.

#### WHO's stand:

- WHO's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) outlines, these devices can only be believed to succeed if smokers have moved on to an alternative nicotine source, and then stopped using that too
- There is evidence now that vaping, dangled as a cool, fun, activity, lures youngsters, and ironically, serves to introduce them to smoking

#### Conclusion:

- The Centre's move to ban these products shows a welcome intolerance of anything that impacts negatively on the health and wellness of the people of the country
- The government, already on the right path, must go all out to ensure that its ban is implemented earnestly in letter and spirit, unlike the patchy execution of the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act.

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### [One year of Ayushman Bharat — the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana \(PM-JAY\)](#)

#### Context:

- Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme having central sector component under Ayushman Bharat Mission anchored in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW).
- It is an umbrella of two major health initiatives, **namely Health and wellness Centres and National Health Protection Scheme.**



- The journey of Ayushman Bharat started in Jangla in Chhattisgarh.

### 1. Health and Wellness Centres

- Under this 1.5 lakh existing sub centres will bring health care system closer to the homes of people in the form of Health and wellness centres.
- These centres will provide comprehensive health care, including for non-communicable diseases and maternal and child health services.

### 2. National Health Protection Mission (AB-PMJAY)

- AB-PMJAY provides a defined benefit cover of Rs. 5 lakh per family per year. This cover will take care of almost all secondary care and most of tertiary care procedures.
- The benefit cover will also include pre and post-hospitalisation expenses.
- PM-JAY has sought to cover a population larger than that of Canada, United States and Mexico put together.

### Implementation

- At the national level to manage, a National Health Agency has been set up. States/ UTs are advised to implement the scheme by a dedicated entity called State Health Agency (SHA).
- Several states have merged their many ongoing schemes with PMJAY to make implementation simpler for both beneficiaries and participating hospitals.

Ex: Karnataka has merged seven different existing schemes into one, while Kerala has merged three different schemes.

### Impacts:

Ayushman Bharat has been designed on the fundamental precepts that prevention is better than cure, and that no one should fall into poverty because of expenditure on healthcare, or die, because they cannot afford treatment.

- In-patient hospitalization expenditure in India has increased nearly 300% during last ten year.
- More than 80% of the expenditure are met by out of pocket (OOP).
- Nearly 6 million families getting into poverty due to catastrophic health expenditures
- AB-PMJAY will have major impact on reduction of Out Of Pocket (OOP)
- This will lead to increased access to quality health and medication.
- timely treatments, improvements in health outcomes, patient satisfaction, improvement in productivity and efficiency, job creation thus leading to improvement in quality of life.

**Present scenario:**

- More than 20,000 HWCs have been made operational.
- More than five crore people have been screened for a whole range of common non-communicable diseases.
- more than 45 lakh hospital admissions have taken place for cashless treatment in more than 18,000 empaneled hospitals across the country, resulting in savings of more than Rs 13,000 crore for the beneficiary families.
- Every three seconds, a beneficiary is being treated, and the numbers continue to rise.

**Role of private sector:**

- More than half of the empaneled hospitals are private.
- Over 62 per cent of the treatments have been done by private hospitals.
- PM-JAY has created a massive demand for private (and public) sector services by making hospital facilities accessible to 55 crore people.
- In tier II and tier III cities, private sector hospitals are already witnessing an almost 20 per cent increase in footfall.
- Public sector facilities have streamlined their processes so as to improve service quality and amenities with funds from PMJAY.

**Employment generation:**

- Ayushman Bharat is set to become one of the largest drivers of jobs in the country.
- With the setting up of 1.5 lakh HWCs by 2022, an expected 1.5 lakh jobs will be created for community health officers, including 50,000 multi-purpose health workers.
- It has generated an estimated 50,000-60,000 jobs in the first year itself and is expected to add over 12.5 lakh jobs in both public and private sectors over the next three to five years.
- as more people seek in-patient care, 1.5 lakh beds will be added in existing and new hospitals. This, in turn, will lead to the creation of around 7.5 lakh new opportunities for doctors, nurses, technicians, pharmacists and frontline healthcare workers such as **Pradhan Mantri Arogya Mitras** (functionaries who are the key interface between beneficiaries and the scheme)

**Use of technology:**

- A live dashboard helps in monitoring and improving performance, based on real-time data and regular analysis.
- This platform also helps states to compare their performance.
- A strong and sophisticated fraud prevention, detection and control system at the national and state level has proved to be critical for PM-JAY to ensure that frauds are largely prevented.

**Conclusion:**

- Ayushman Bharat has provided a platform and framework for the country to accelerate its progress towards comprehensive universal healthcare.
- “Green field” states with no past experience of implementing healthcare schemes have to work harder to scale up their progress. All states will need to make sincere efforts towards providing seamless health services to the last mile.
- As the Ayushman Bharat revolution unfolds, we are optimistic that India will make sure healthcare is no longer a privilege and is available to every Indian.

**Connecting the dots:**

- Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY) is the most ambitious health sector scheme since Independence. Analyze

PM-JAY

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-II - Health

**In News**

- Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY) has completed one year and has recorded 46.4 lakh hospital treatments worth ₹7,500 crore
- **60% of the amount** under the scheme is being spent on **tertiary care**.
- PM-JAY is the flagship scheme of the government with an aim to bring quality healthcare to around 50 crore poor and vulnerable Indians.
- The scheme gives annual healthcare benefits of up to **₹5 lakh for every entitled family**.
- The scheme has resulted in **saving of over ₹12,000 crore to the beneficiary families**.
- Currently, 32 States and Union Territories are implementing the scheme and more than 10 crore beneficiary cards have been issued.
- PM-JAY aims to ensure improved healthcare delivery, through a combination of government hospitals and strategic purchasing of services from private hospitals, in health care deficit areas

Ayushman Bharat**Introduction:**

- Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme having central sector component under Ayushman Bharat Mission anchored in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW).
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- AB-PMJAY provides a defined benefit cover of Rs. 5 lakh per family per year. This cover will take care of almost all secondary care and most of tertiary care procedures.
- The benefit cover will also include pre and post-hospitalisation expenses.
- PM-JAY has sought to cover a population larger than that of Canada, United States and Mexico put together.

### Implementation

- At the national level to manage, a National Health Agency has been set up. States/ UTs are advised to implement the scheme by a dedicated entity called State Health Agency (SHA).
- Several states have merged their many ongoing schemes with PMJAY to make implementation simpler for both beneficiaries and participating hospitals.

Ex: Karnataka has merged seven different existing schemes into one, while Kerala has merged three different schemes.

### Criticisms:

- India has made solid progress in reducing deaths from common non-communicable diseases, such as cancer, and heart and lung diseases, but not enough to meet international targets, like the Sustainable Development Goals.
- India is also falling behind on maternal and child mortality measures, number of doctors, and hospital beds.
- Although India is the third largest producer, by volume, of generic medicines, there are problems with their accessibility.
- Even with the introduction of AB, 70% of healthcare expense are out of pocket (due to cost of medicines)
- Due to delays and backlogs at the Indian Patent Office, it takes between five and seven years for a patent to be examined, meaning patients will not access a new medicine until many years after its global launch. In India, bureaucracy and red tape adds further delays of around 400-500 days

### Data:

- Access to medicines stands at less than 35% in many Indian states
- India spends far too little, overall, on healthcare—3.66% of GDP (Centre and states combined) compared to the minimum of 6% of GDP recommended by the World Health Organisation.

**Way forward:**

- There are several low-cost steps the government could take immediately to improve and accelerate access to medicines to reduce non-communicable disease mortality. These involve cutting red tape, taxes, and barriers to trade.
- There is GST of 5% on most medicines and a 12% GST on a wide range of other important medical supplies, including bandages and sterile gauze, diabetic monitoring equipment, photographic plates used in x-rays, and so on. Which must be dealt with.
- It would be an easy win for the government to abolish GST, and tariffs on medicines and medical supplies. (Many countries have done it)
- The government, should look to eliminate as many of superfluous regulations as possible. Such as Non-Tariff Measures (NTMs) include inefficient customs procedures, red-tape, and hidden taxes and also burdensome labelling and packaging requirements.
- Patent related red tapes must be reduced

**Example :**

Mexico and a number of Gulf states have taken steps to reduce drug registration backlogs by entering into cooperation agreements with other mature drug regulatory authorities. India must do so

**Conclusion:**

- Ayushman Bharat has provided a platform and framework for the country to accelerate its progress towards comprehensive universal healthcare.
- As the Ayushman Bharat revolution unfolds, we are optimistic that India will make sure healthcare is no longer a privilege and is available to every Indian.

**Connecting the dots:**

- Although India is the third largest producer, by volume, of generic medicines, there are problems with their accessibility. Critically analyze

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## [Tobacco Quitline](#)

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-II - Health

- Launched in 2018, QuitLine is a dedicated toll-free number that helps tobacco users to receive free support and guidance to subdue their addiction.
- The quit-line number must also be printed on all tobacco products manufactured

- India is the fourth country in Asia after Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore to have this government helpline for those looking at quitting tobacco.
- Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) -Tobacco use has gone down by 6% from 34.6 per cent of the country's adult population in 2009-10 to 28.6 per cent in 2016-17.
- The 85% pictorial warnings on all cigarettes, bidis and chewing tobacco packages manufactured and sold in India have resulted in 92% of adults [surveyed under GATS 2016-2017] believing that smoking caused serious illness, and 96% saying that use of smokeless tobacco causes serious illness

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## [Madhya Pradesh miners demand treatment for Silicosis](#)

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-II- Health

### **About Silicosis**

- Silicosis is a **lung disease** caused by breathing in tiny bits of silica, a mineral that is part of sand, rock, and mineral ores such as quartz.
- It mostly affects workers exposed to silica dust in occupations such **mining, glass manufacturing, foundry and building construction industries.**
- Over time, exposure to silica particles causes scarring in the lungs, which causes bloody coughing and breathlessness.
- **Silicosis is incurable**, and so clinical management includes removing the worker from the industry and giving symptomatic treatment

### **Do You Know?**

- **Jodhpur's Raju Devi**, who, after her husband's death due to silicosis, **organised around 25,000 miners and secured their rights** with regard to working conditions and adequate health insurance benefits to deal with Silicosis.
- **Factory Act of India (1948)** mandates a well ventilated working environment, provisions for protection from dust, reduction of overcrowding and provision of basic occupational health care.
- The main challenge of eliminating silicosis in India is in the **informal, unregulated sectors of industry** which do not fall under the control of the Factory Act of India.

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## [Air Pollution and health risks](#)

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-II - Health

### **In News**

- Previously, air pollution was exclusively linked only to respiratory diseases.

- But in recent times, multiple clinical studies have proved the **role of air pollution in causing cardiovascular diseases**
- The study says that out of one lakh Indians, about 200 people are prone to heart diseases due to air pollution.
- A study also found that approximately 35% of patients with no conventional risk factors suffered from cardiovascular diseases (CAD) due to air pollution.
- Institutes involved in study: Sri Jayadeva Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences and Research, & NIMHANS Bengaluru.

### **National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS)**

- Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act empowers Central Pollution Control Board to set standards for the quality of air.
- Current NAAQS were notified by CPCB in the year 2009.
- Pollutants covered under NAAQS are Sulphur Dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), Particulate Matter (PM 10, PM 2.5), Ozone (O<sub>3</sub>), Lead (Pb), Carbon Monoxide (CO), Ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>), Benzene (C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>6</sub>), Benzo(a)Pyrene (BaP), Arsenic(As), Nickel (Ni).

### **National Air Quality Index**

- NAQI, launched by CPCB, is a number used to communicate to the public how polluted the air currently is or how polluted it is forecasted to become.
- The classifications of air quality are part of a 6 grade, colour coded taking into account 8 pollutant levels.
- These pollutants measured in this index are: Ground-level Ozone (O<sub>3</sub>), Particulate Matter (soot and dust) - PM 2.5 and PM 10, Carbon Monoxide (CO), Sulphur Dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and Ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>)

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## [10-year sanitation plan](#)

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-II – Health and Sanitation

### **In News**

- With India set to be completely open defecation free (ODF) by 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2019, the Centre has launched a 10-year sanitation strategy to maintain these gains
- The focus would now shift to **solid and liquid waste management** in rural areas of the country.
- Nevertheless, the first priority is to sustain the gains of ODF, to prevent slipbacks and **continue behaviour change**

### **About Swachh Bharat Abhiyan**

- Launched in 2014, it aims to accelerate the efforts to achieve universal sanitation coverage in the country.
- About 110 million toilets have been built in past five years.
- At present, 98% of Indian villages have rural sanitation coverage instead of 38% four years ago.
- Swachh Bharat (rural) is implemented by Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation; and Swachh Bharat (urban) by Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs

### [National nutrition survey](#)

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-II - Health

#### **In News**

- The Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey was conducted by the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and UNICEF** between February 2016 and October 2018
- It is the **first study** undertaken **to measure malnutrition**, including micronutrient deficiencies through biochemical measures such as blood and urine samples, anthropometric data as well as details of **non-communicable diseases** such as diabetes, hypertension, cholesterol and kidney function in **children and adolescents**.
- Some of the key findings of the report (yet to be released) are
  - 10% of children and adolescents are pre-diabetic
  - 4% adolescents have high cholesterol
  - 7% children and adolescents have high risk of chronic kidney disease
  - 5% adolescents were found to have high blood pressure

#### **Difference with National Family Health Survey (NFHS)**

- The NFHS, collects anthropometric data (weight for age, height for age, weight for height, mid-upper arm circumference) to measure prevalence of stunting, wasting and underweight and household dietary intake to measure deficiencies.
- Moreover, these are collected for children in the age group of 1-5 years and adults, but not for school going children between the age of 5 and 19 years.
- NFHS were carried out in 1992-93 (NFHS-1), 1998-99 (NFHS-2), 2005-06 (NFHS-3) and 2015-16 (NFHS-4)
- All NFHS have been conducted under the stewardship of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, with the **International Institute for Population Sciences, Mumbai, serving as the nodal agency**.

### [Plogging](#)

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-II - Health

#### **In News**



- PM in his Mann Ki Baat radio address highlighted the efforts of RipudamanBelvi who has started the movement of plogging
- Plogging is a combination of **jogging with picking up litter**.eworkout combined with an activity to keep the environment clean
- The picking-up-litter part can be seen as a cooling-down exercise after the exhausting cardio.
- It started as an organised activity in Sweden in 2016 and started spreading to other countries
- Plogging encapsulate the government's two initiatives together — Fit India Movement and Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan.
- Sports Ministry has organised “Fit India Plogging” run on October 2<sup>nd</sup> in which participants from across India would plog for 2 kms

## GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

### Indian Skill Development Service (ISDS)

#### In News

- The first batch of the Indian Skill Development Services (ISDS) commenced their training program at the Administrative Training Institute (ATI), Mysuru
- This is the first batch which is joining the ISDS cadre from the **Indian Engineering Service Examination** conducted by **UPSC**.
- ISDS is the newest **central government services**, which presently has 263 all India posts.
- This service has been specially created for the Training Directorate of the **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship** (MSDE) and is a **Group 'A' service**.
- The induction of young talent as ISDS officers is one of the special initiatives taken by the MSDE to attract young and talented administrators towards institutionalizing the Skill Development environment in the country

### Language Subtitling – Remarkable benchmark for the TV channels

#### Introduction:

Starting from August 15th 2019, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) made it mandatory to all 800 Indian TV channels to start language based sub titling.

Their target is to grow 10% every year so that they can achieve 50% of the channels having sub titles by the end of 2025.

#### Do you know?

- India has taken this approach from USA who started sub titling in their channels to help the deaf and aurally challenged population.
- The policy has come from Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 which made captioning (Sub-titling) is a mandatory for all TV channels.
- Now the major challenge with the ministry is to ensure that all the state and private channels are bound to this and abide the same rule.

Even though USA has started captioning well ahead of India, our country has two significant reasons behind sub-titling –

- Apart from Brazil, India is one of the major countries in Global South to start sub-titling for the media coverage.

- India is the first country to establish Same Language Subtitling (SLS) for mass reading education.

**Key features:**

- SLS in India will play a crucial role in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which in turn will contribute to providing quality education thereby improving good reading skills among the viewers.
- According to 2019 FICCI-EY Media and Entertainment report, Film and general Entertainment contribute to 24% and 53% of viewers respectively and now it is mandatory to have SLS in regional languages for all these contents.

**SLS in India is going to serve these major goals:**

- Providing daily reading practices for over a billion viewers.
- Benefiting 500 million weak readers to improve their reading skills.
- Providing media access to 65 million deaf and aurally challenged population.
- Improving the local/regional language proficiency among the viewers.

**Advantages of Sub-titling:**

- According to a recent study, English sub-titling has proved to improve English literacy skills among the viewers compared to dubbing.
- English channels in India has started adding English sub-titles which has increased the viewership by making ear to grasp unfamiliar English accent.
- Continuous exposure to SLS among the viewers has proved to improve their English reading skills that were barely able to understand few letters.
- Continuous and frequent exposures to SLS content to people will eventually increase the readability and understanding of the regional language.

United Kingdom has started Turn-On-The-Sub titles (TOTS) program to all the child programs inspired by our country. While we are following US model of sub titling to increase the media access, UK is using our footprints to increase the reading skills among people. India on the contrary is trying to focus on both the aspects – media access along with reading literacy.

In India, according to Annual Status of Education Reports (ASER), the standard 5th grade children in rural areas fail to read even 2nd grade texts. So, India must focus on improving the quality education at grass root level with the collective efforts from government, civil population, education institutions and industries.

**Conclusion:**

The ministry of Information and Broadcasting along with Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology has to mandate SLS in all the digital Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms.

Although there is English sub-titling in many of the channels, the regional language sub-titling has to be made mandatory like Kannada sub-titles for Kannada channels and so on. Academic institutions have showed strong evidences how SLS can be used and implemented to achieve media access, reading literacy and language learning. Now the entertainment industries must play a crucial role in adapting SLS for all the audio-visual contents in all Indian regional languages.

### **Connecting the dots:**

- Recently, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) made it mandatory to all 800 Indian TV channels to start language based sub titling. Discuss the benefits of sub-titling especially for India.

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### **Fundamental Learning skills – Focus for the students/children**

Indian government announced to attain \$10trillion economic growth by the end of 2030. Government made this announcement keeping in focus of 12 million Indian youth who will attain employable age of 29 by 2030. Even though our youth contribute for the growth of Indian economy, they fail at international level due to lack of fundamental learning skills.

#### **Need for Fundamental learning skills:**

- The schools have achieved increase in the enrolment of students from past 10 yrs.
- Only about 1/3<sup>rd</sup> proportion of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students are able to read and learn 2<sup>nd</sup> grade texts.
- According to National Achievement Survey (NAS), only a little portion of students have achieved critical learning skills and majority fail.
- Lack of a strong learning foundation at the primary level.

#### **Drawbacks of current school learning system:**

- Even though majority of our children pass out of schools, they lack in basic fundamental skills.
- Students pick advance skills much faster without paying attention for the basic fundamental learning skills.
- In turn, students fail to cope up with the current global knowledge economic scenarios.

#### **Prerequisites of Learning:**

- According to National Education Policy (NEP), the ability to read, write and perform basic calculation is a necessity/prerequisite for quality learning.
- Children are expected to read simple texts and do simple maths by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and are said to be normal. Those who lack this ability are going to fall behind from this learning curve.

**Challenges in delivering fundamental learning skills:**

- Children from poor family backgrounds and less exposure to external influences find it difficult to understand the gateway skills.
- Most of the teachers have fixed curriculum and time limit to complete their curriculum, so they focus on the bright students and in the meanwhile, the skill lacking students fall behind.
- Lack of multiple skill development institutes in India which fail to deliver basic fundamental learning skills to students, due to which our students fail to showcase their skills at international level.

**Actions to be taken:**

- Government must focus on fundamental learning skills by goal based literary and numeracy skill development programs with the active involvement of the parents and stake holders.
- Changing the teaching methodology with the help of teaching-learning aids, audio visual aids etc.
- Training and developing teachers for new methodologies about fundamental learning skills and continuous upgrading the same.

**Conclusion:**

Fundamental learning skill is a new requirement of modern India. It gives confidence and skill sets for the students to show case themselves at international levels. This will help India to achieve more success and be in the top of the ladder with international standards.

**Connecting the dots:**

- How our education system can contribute to achieve to our country in achieving global success?
- Why there is a need of fundamental learning skills in India?

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[ALL INDIA SURVEY ON HIGHER EDUCATION \(AISHE\) 2018-19](#)

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-II - Education

### In News

- Union Minister for HRD released the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2018-19.
- The survey has listed a total of 993 universities as operational HEI's in India. A total of 39,931 colleges and 10,725 standalone institutions are dedicated to higher education in the country
- The **Gross Enrolment Ratio** increased from 25.8% in 2017-18 to **26.3% in 2018-19**. The total enrolment in higher education has been estimated to be 3.74 crore, as opposed to 3.66 crore the year before.
- The report also found that GER among male population is 26.3% and for females, it is 26.4%. GER for Reserved Categories i.e. SC and ST categories stands below the national average at 23% and 17.2% respectively.
- The **Gender Parity Index (GPI)** has shown consistent growth over the period of last five years from 0.5 in 2014-15 to **1 in 2018-19**. The Gender Parity Index suggests that of the total 3.74 crore students, 1.92 crore are men, and 1.82 crore are women.
- Only 2.5% colleges offer PhD or doctoral programmes to the students
- The total number of students enrolled for the Doctoral Programme stands at 1,69,170, which is below 0.5% of the total number of students enrolled for higher education.
- As per report, the number of students enrolled in the B.Tech and M.Tech programme has fallen by nearly 50% in last five years.
- On the other hand professional programmes like MBA, B.Ed and LLB have registered significant jump in the students' enrolment. For instance, MBA enrolment rose from 4,09,432 in 2014-15 to 4,62,853 in 2018-19.

### [Jan Soochna Portal](#)

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-II - RTI

### In News

- The first-ever public information portal was launched in Rajasthan – named Jan Soochna Portal - to provide information about government authorities and departments **suo motu** to the public
- This is in lines with true spirit of the Right To Information Act, which calls for **voluntary disclosure of information** by government authorities
- The portal initially gives information pertaining to 13 departments - such as the number of beneficiaries of schemes, works undertaken in different areas, land records and social security pensions — will be available on the portal
- With different sections divided into districts, blocks and panchayats, the portal empowers the common people with access to useful information, without the need to file RTI application.
- The portal would eventually turn out to be an effective medium for **“digital dialogue”** with the people as well as a strong instrument for ensuring transparency in governance
- The portal has brought yet another distinction to Rajasthan, where the RTI movement had started in 1990s.

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## [NEAT Scheme](#)

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-II - Education

### **In News**

- Ministry of HRD has announced a new **PPP Scheme, National Educational Alliance for Technology (NEAT)** for using technology for better learning outcomes in **Higher Education**
- The objective is to **use Artificial Intelligence** to make learning more personalized and customised as per the requirements of the learner.
- MHRD would create and maintain a National NEAT platform that would provide one-stop access to these technological solutions.
- **AICTE** would be the **implementing agency** for NEAT programme.
- **EdTech companies** would be responsible for developing solutions and managing registration of learners through the NEAT portal.
- EdTech companies would also have to offer free coupons to the extent of 25% of their total registrations. MHRD would distribute these free coupons to the most socially/economically backward students

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## [NIRVIK scheme](#)

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-III – Indian Economy

### **In News**

- Export Credit Guarantee Corporation of India (ECGC) has introduced 'NIRVIK' scheme to **ease the lending process** and **enhance loan availability** for exporters.
- **Export credit insurance (ECI)** protects an exporter of products and services against the risk of non-payment by a foreign buyer
- The ECI significantly **reduces the payment risks** associated with doing international business by giving the exporter conditional assurance that payment will be made if the foreign buyer is unable to pay
- At present ECGC provides a cover of 60% of the loss to banks.
- The new NIRVIK scheme will provide 90% coverage of the principal and interest of the loan for pre- and post-shipment credit, and half of this will be provided in 30 days
- The existing premium rate would also be lowered under the new scheme
- The scheme is thus expected to **bring down the cost of credit** due to capital relief, less provision requirement and **liquidity** due to quick settlement of claims.

- ECGC is a fully government-owned company that was established in 1957 to promote exports by providing credit insurance services.
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## National Recruitment Agency

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-II -Governance

### **In News**

- Finance Ministry has approved the proposal for creation of a **NRA to streamline recruitment process** of Group-B (non-gazetted), Group-C (non-technical) and clerical posts in the government along with various equivalent recruitment in PSB.
  - It will be set up to conduct the Common Eligibility Test (CET) for all these competitive examinations, in which an estimated 2.5 crore candidates appear annually.
  - NRA will conduct **preliminary examinations for all these recruitment**, which are at present conducted by the Staff Selection Commission (SSC) and the Institute of Banking Personnel Selection (IBPS)
  - The SSC and IBPS will not be disbanded for now and will conduct the mains examinations as usual.
  - NRA is thus expected to reduce the burden on SSC & IBPS whereby NRA will work as a preliminary single-window agency to shortlist qualifying candidates
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## Higher Education Bill

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-III – Education and governance

### **In News**

- A bill that aims to create a single regulator for higher education, replacing UGC and AICTE, is likely to be introduced in winter session of Parliament
- The bill proposes to bring **all areas of higher education** – including technical, architectural and legal courses- under the **ambit of Single Umbrella body HECI (Higher Education Commission of India)**
- Medical education, however, will not come under HECI according to draft bill

### **About UGS & AICTE**

- UGC and AICTE are autonomous bodies which oversee the accreditation, regulation and maintenance of teaching, examination and research standards for Universities & technical education institutions across the country
- These academic functions will now be moved to the new HECI



### Issues with fund devolution

- Earlier, AICTE and UGC were also responsible for disbursing public funds to Universities and colleges.
  - There was proposal to bring **these fund devolution powers directly under the HRD Minister** but due to opposition on the fear of misuse, this provision was **dropped in recent draft of the bill**.
  - Instead, a new autonomous body will be created to supervise the doling out of funds to higher education institutions.
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## INTERNATIONAL

### Arctic Region: Recent developments & India's position

#### **Introduction: Recent developments**

- US President Donald Trump's recent offer to buy Greenland is an indicative of the emerging geopolitics of the Arctic region, where climate change and China are fast destabilizing the status quo, throwing up political, security, legal, and environmental challenges.
- Rising global temperatures are causing the frozen Arctic ocean to melt, opening up new sea routes and opportunities to extract hydrocarbons and minerals from the seabed and the newly exposed land surfaces.
- Countries of the Arctic are jockeying to take advantage of these opportunities. At the same time, China declared itself a "near Arctic" country and is making determined efforts to extend its footprint in the polar region.
- Chinese firms have tried to purchase large tracts of land in Iceland, Norway and Denmark. Chinese investments in Greenland's natural resource economy might persuade the local population to secede from Denmark, creating a Laos-like Chinese satellite state between North America and Europe.

Taking into account emerging technology—where autonomous vehicles and robots can populate uninhabitable regions—the next few decades could see the Arctic emerge as a hotspot of great power competition.

As the Arctic region witnesses an unprecedented rate of ice-melt because of global warming, new routes are being opened, paving the way for untapped hydrocarbon and mineral resources to be exploited.

Unlike the Antarctic, however, the Arctic is not considered a 'global commons' and the principle of sovereignty prevents external players from exacting significant gains in the region.

#### **About Arctic Council:**

- The Arctic Council is a high-level intergovernmental body set up in 1996 by the Ottawa declaration to promote cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic States together with the indigenous communities and other Arctic inhabitants.
- The Council has the eight circumpolar countries (Norway, Sweden, Finland, Iceland, Denmark (Greenland and Faroe Islands), Canada, US and Russia) as member states.
- Observer status is open to Non-governmental organizations, Non-littoral states as well as to Intergovernmental and Inter-Parliamentary organizations.

- India has an observer status in the council.

**Two issues underlying Arctic politics:**

- How should the region be shared among the eight Arctic countries (Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the US), as there are overlapping territorial claims among them.
- Should these countries be allowed to assert territorial claims at all? They have formed the Arctic Council to institutionalize their self-assigned rights, but many in China, the European Union, India and elsewhere are against conceding sovereignty to the Arctic countries.

**Arctic Council members:**

- Russia—the most important Arctic country—is both building up its military capabilities in the region and promoting the Northern Sea Route (NSR) as a new artery of global shipping.
- Moscow recently announced that it will impose rules on commercial and naval vessels using the route.
- China has declared that it wants to be a polar great power.

**India's position:**

- India is one of the very few countries to set up a permanent station (named Himadri) in the Arctic for the purposes of scientific research. The station has been used to carry out a variety of biological, glaciological and atmospheric and climate sciences research projects in the last one decade.
- So far, Indian involvement in the Arctic has centered around scientific and environmental studies, mostly in partnership with Norway. Indian and Russian energy companies have signed agreements worth billions of dollars on exploration and joint production.

**Way ahead:**

- India must ensure that the environment is strongly considered at the center of all debates at the Arctic Council.
- India can take the lead in pursuing scientific research in the region, to understand in particular the correlation between the Arctic ice-melt and Indian monsoons.
- The Russians are well aware of the Chinese risk and is therefore keen for India to get involved in the Russian Far East and the Arctic. Recent developments include liberalizing visa procedures for India to enter Vladivostok. India must explore this opportunity.

- Conditions are favorable for private Indian investors to explore fresh pastures in the Siberia and further North.

**Conclusion:**

While India has been active in the Arctic for over ten years, it has not fully made use of its Observer status, and it must give new energy to its activities in the region.

**Connecting the dots:**

- While India has been active in the Arctic for over ten years, it has not fully made use of its Observer status, and it must give new energy to its activities in the region. Comment.

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**ASEAN-US Maritime Exercise (AUMX)**

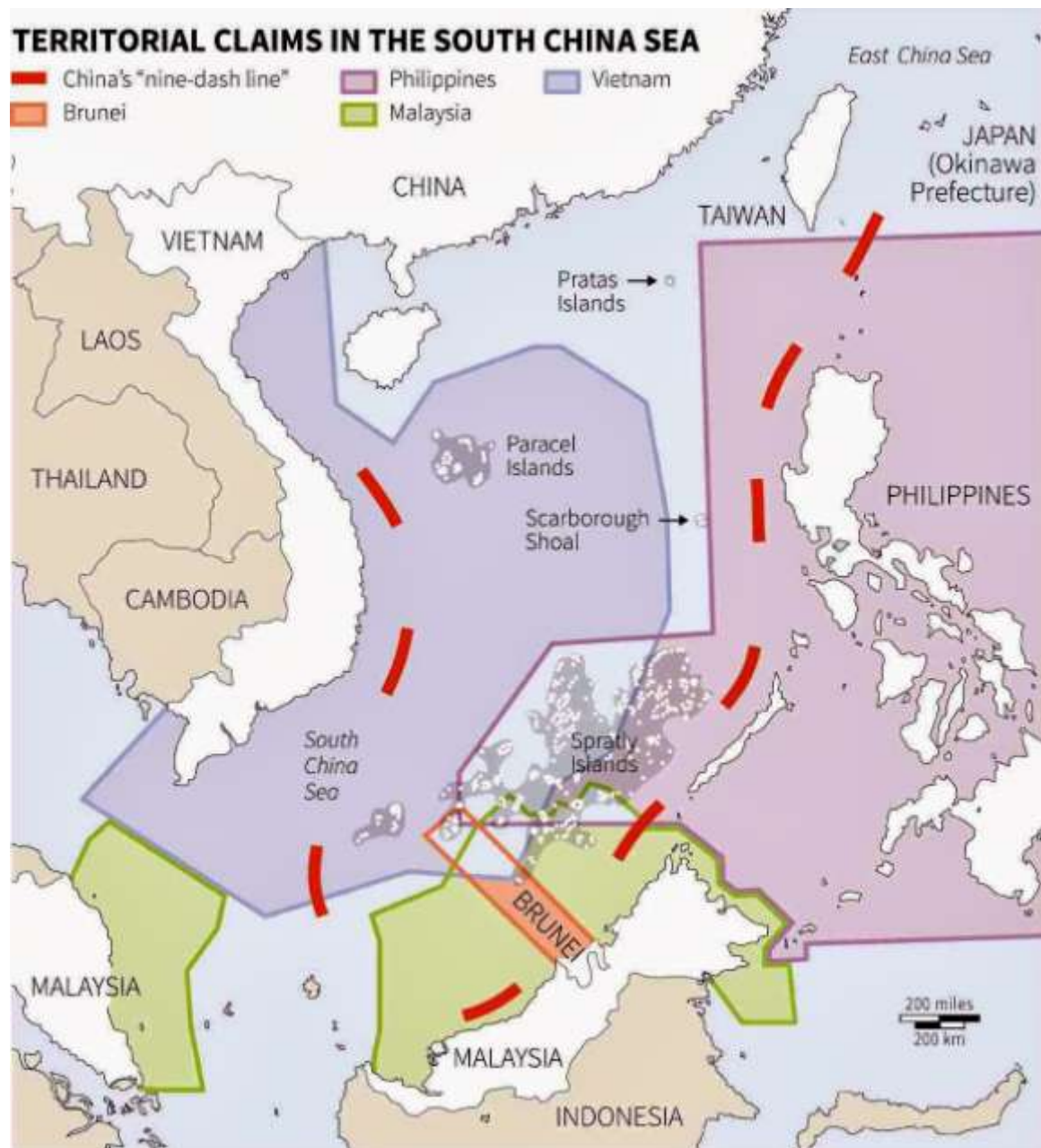
**Part of:** GS Prelims and GS Mains II – International Affairs

**In News**

- The first AUMX between the **ASEAN** regional bloc and **U.S.** kicked off at the Sattahip Naval Base in Thailand.
- It will see participation of navies of USA and all 10 members of ASEAN - Thailand, Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore and Vietnam
- Navies of these countries will take part in the naval exercises which include boarding of target vessels to **simulate search and seizure**.
- The exercise will stretch into international waters in Southeast Asia, including Gulf of Thailand and **South China Sea** and conclude in Singapore.
- This mega maritime exercise comes at a time of stepped-up US engagement in region and tensions between China, US and Southeast Asian nations over South China Sea (SCS).

**Do You Know?**

- China is claiming its sovereignty over much of SCS by invoking its so-called **nine-dash line** as supposed historical justification to the waters, which are key global shipping route.
- Its claim is overlapping parts of SCS are claimed by **Brunei, Malaysia, Vietnam and Philippines**.



<https://en.reseauinternational.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2016/07/nine-dash-line-china.jpg>

## [Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership \(RCEP\)](#)

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

In News

- Australia's lead negotiator for RCEP says all countries have "committed" to completing talks before the RCEP summit on November 1.
- RCEP is a proposed free trade agreement (FTA) between **ASEAN** and its six FTA partners -**China, Japan, India, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand.**
- Ten member states of ASEAN are Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam
- RCEP negotiations were formally launched in November 2012 at the ASEAN Summit in Cambodia
- Once implemented, the **RCEP will be the largest free trading bloc** accounting for 45 per cent of the world's population, about a third of the global GDP and 40 per cent of global trade.
- **India is seeking a mechanism to 'cap' imports as a safeguard measure** in case its withdrawal of tariffs under RCEP leads to a sudden surge in goods flooding the Indian market.
- India wants **dual tariff mechanism** – one tariff system with those countries with which it already has an FTA and a different tariff mechanism with those countries that India doesn't have FTA
  - India already has bilateral free trade agreements (FTAs) with ASEAN, Japan and South Korea
  - India doesn't have FTA with China, Australia and New Zealand
- **With China**, India is attempting to limit elimination of tariffs up to about 70 per cent of traded items which is to be **spread over thirty years.**
- With Australia and New Zealand in particular, India has been negotiating on agricultural and dairy imports.
- The need for India is for **freedom of movement for services** from India to the other countries to be included in RCEP negotiations itself.

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## Israeli and Pakistan relations

### **Context:**

Recently, Israeli and Pakistani scholars and opinion-makers appear to have speculated about the possibility of the two states establishing diplomatic ties.



Image: [https://www.lonelyplanet.com/maps/middle-east/israel/map\\_of\\_israel.jpg](https://www.lonelyplanet.com/maps/middle-east/israel/map_of_israel.jpg)

- In 1947, the United Nations (UN) adopted a Partition Plan for Palestine recommending the creation of independent Arab and Jewish states and an internationalized Jerusalem. The plan was accepted by the Jewish Agency, and rejected by Arab leaders
- Israel has since fought several wars with Arab countries
- Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories is the world's longest military occupation in modern times. Efforts to resolve the Israeli–Palestinian conflict have not resulted in a final peace agreement.
- Israel's economic and technological center is Tel Aviv, while its seat of government and proclaimed capital is Jerusalem, although the state's sovereignty over Jerusalem has only partial recognition
- Apart from Turkey (1949), Egypt (1979) and Jordan (1994), none of the states in the region have recognised Israel.
- The **Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)** routinely pillories Israel for its “occupation” of Palestinian lands.
- Israel has been successful in gradually expanding its diplomatic profile beyond its immediate neighbourhood. Israel has established diplomatic relations with a large majority of the 193 UN member states.

#### **Pakistan and Israel relations:**

#### **History:**

- An attempt to establish diplomatic relations with Pakistan and Israel was made in 1947, when Israel's first Prime minister David Ben-Gurion sent a telegram to Jinnah—Pakistan's main founding father—but Jinnah gave no particular response.
- The Pakistani government was asked to issue passage permits to India for a few hundred Jews who wanted to leave Afghanistan and wished to emigrate to Israel (1950)
- In 1952, Sir Zafarullah Khan, Pakistan's foreign minister promoted his hardline policies toward Israel, and pressed his policies toward the unity of Arab states.
- Pakistan religious political parties such as the Jamaat-e-Islami, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam and militant groups such as Lashkar-e-Taiba fiercely oppose any relationship with Israel, and have repeatedly called Israel as the enemy of Islam
- Israel and Pakistan were both allied to the United States and the western bloc during the Cold War, while India was allied to the Soviet Union's bloc.

#### **Why now?**

- A key factor in Pakistan's rethink has been its difficulty in mobilising international support against India's policies towards Pakistan and Kashmir.
- It is keen to correct the emerging international tilt in favour of India.

#### **Advantages for Pakistan:**

- Pakistan's national interests would better be served by having ties with Israel, particularly since Israel carries weight in Washington and could perhaps mediate on recurring U.S.-Pakistan tensions.
- It would help to deal with India's influence in U.S. and disrupt its partnership with the influential Jewish community in America.

#### **Demerits for Pakistan:**

- Pakistan has used the platform provided by the OIC to drum up support for its stand on Kashmir, just as the OIC has done for the Palestinian issue.
- If Pakistan were to establish diplomatic ties with Israel, it would dilute its Islamic credentials and lead to a weakened support base within the OIC on Kashmir.
- Iran is recognised as a potent threat by Israel and the Shia-Sunni divide in Pakistan is frequently a point of friction between Iran and Pakistan. However Israel cannot expect Pakistan to be used against neighbouring Iran and risk the dangers of escalation in sectarian conflict, given that more than 20% of its population is Shia. Pakistan is unlikely to take any steps that could rock its relations with Iran.

#### **What is Israel looking for ?**

- Israel is also looking at increasing its diplomatic footprint in South Asia and beyond.



- Forging closer ties with populous Asian Muslim countries such as Bangladesh and Indonesia would help it to gain greater legitimacy in the Islamic world.

#### **India-Israel links**

- India is the largest buyer of Israeli military equipment and Israel is the second-largest defence supplier to India after Russia
- with India abstaining from voting against Israel in the United Nations in several resolutions the relation further developed
- As of 2015, the two nations are negotiating an extensive bilateral free trade agreement, focusing on areas such as information technology, biotechnology, and agriculture
- In July 2017, Narendra Modi became the first ever Indian Prime Minister to visit Israel.

Both Israel and India have been victims of asymmetric warfare such as terrorism, which they continue to tackle with resolve.

#### **Do you know?**

- The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation is an international organization founded in 1969
- The organisation states that it is "the collective voice of the Muslim world" and works to "safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony
- The OIC supports a two-state solution to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict.
- The OIC has called for boycott of Israeli products in effort to pressure Israel into ending the occupation of the Palestinian territories
- The OIC lately condemned Benjamin Netanyahu's plans to annex the eastern portion of the occupied West Bank known as the Jordan Valley.

#### **Conclusion:**

- India has successfully walked a tightrope between Israel and Palestine, and Israel may well hope to do so between Pakistan and India. However, it is not in Israel's interest to seek diplomatic ties with a state that sponsors terrorism.

#### **Connecting the dots:**

- India has successfully walked a tightrope between Israel and Palestine. Justify

## Trade tensions between the US and China

### Context:

- The unending escalation of trade tensions between the US and China has led to a disruption of long established supply chains between the two countries
- Firms exporting from China, both domestic and foreign, have begun to move to other countries in Asia.

### Origin of the US-China dispute

- The US and China have been slugging it out since Trump slapped heavy tariffs on imported steel and aluminium items from China last year, and China responded by imposing tit-for-tat tariffs on billions of dollars worth of American imports.
- The dispute escalated after Washington demanded that China reduce its \$375 billion trade deficit with the US, and introduce “verifiable measures” for protection of Intellectual Property Rights, technology transfer, and more access to American goods in Chinese markets.

## US TRADE IN GOODS WITH CHINA

Year	Exports	Imports	Balance
2019*	25,994.4	105,973.9	-79,979.5
2018	120,341.4	539,503.4	-419,162.0
2017	129,893.6	505,470.0	-375,576.4
2016	115,545.5	462,542.0	-346,996.5
2015	115,873.4	483,201.7	-367,328.3

\*January-March

Source: US Census Bureau. All figures are in millions of US dollars on a nominal basis, not seasonally adjusted unless otherwise specified

Image link: <https://images.indianexpress.com/2019/05/box-1.jpg>

### What is there in for India?

- opportunity for India to expand trade with the US and China—by filling in supply gaps.
- India might attract firms exiting China to use India as an exporting base, thereby improving India’s manufacturing base, creating jobs and further expanding its trade—especially with the US.
- the scale of Chinese exports (roughly ten times India’s exports) implies that even small changes to some of China’s less significant exports may create opportunities of significant scale for countries such as India.

For instance,

- Chinese textiles account for nearly 20% of US textile imports while Indian exports account for only a little over 5%.
- Chinese global machinery exports amount to nearly \$1.2 trillion, while India exports are a paltry \$27 billion.
- Indian machinery exports would increase by over 40%, were India to take over a mere 1% of Chinese machinery exports.

### **Challenges in India**

- India the acquisition of land to set up large manufacturing operations remains hugely problematic and where infrastructure support remains less than ideal
- competitive labour costs, a tax and regulatory environment hospitable to business, and easy and hassle-free access to all of the factors of production—land, labour, capital and other inputs, such as raw materials and intermediate inputs.(need to be checked)
- an inadequate road, rail, and seaport network,
- increasing costs of getting goods to market
- the investments that are likely to flow to India, exiting China, will be characterized by low fixed costs and relative capital non-intensity—that is, relatively “footloose” investments.
- The danger with footloose capital, is that it may leave just as easily as it had arrived with even a small change in incentives either in India or abroad.

### **Footloose industry**

- Footloose industry is a general term for an industry that can be placed and located at any location without effect from factors of production such as resources, land, labour, and capital.
- These industries often have spatially fixed costs, which means that the costs of the products do not change despite where the product is assembled. Diamonds, computer chips, and mobile manufacturing are some examples of footloose industries.

### **Did you know?**

- Vietnam, have been far more successful than India in attracting firms exiting China. Indeed, Vietnam’s exports to the US last year have risen by more than 40%

### **Conclusion**

- India has enjoyed an improvement in its “investment climate” and the “ease of doing business” rankings over the years, and while it has implemented significant liberalization of its foreign domestic investment (FDI) rules, setting up manufacturing operations in India remains a daunting challenge for many would-be investors.

- Major capital-intensive manufacturing activities move to India permanently, requires a very substantial improvement in the basic factors that drive FDI.
- Now is not the time for tinkering at the margins but for bold moves to make India a serious player in global value chains.

### Connecting the dots:

- Govt's recent announcements offering improved trade facilitation—especially in dealing with paperwork relating to taxes, trade credits and so forth—are welcome improvements . Justify?

## US- TALIBAN PEACE TALKS

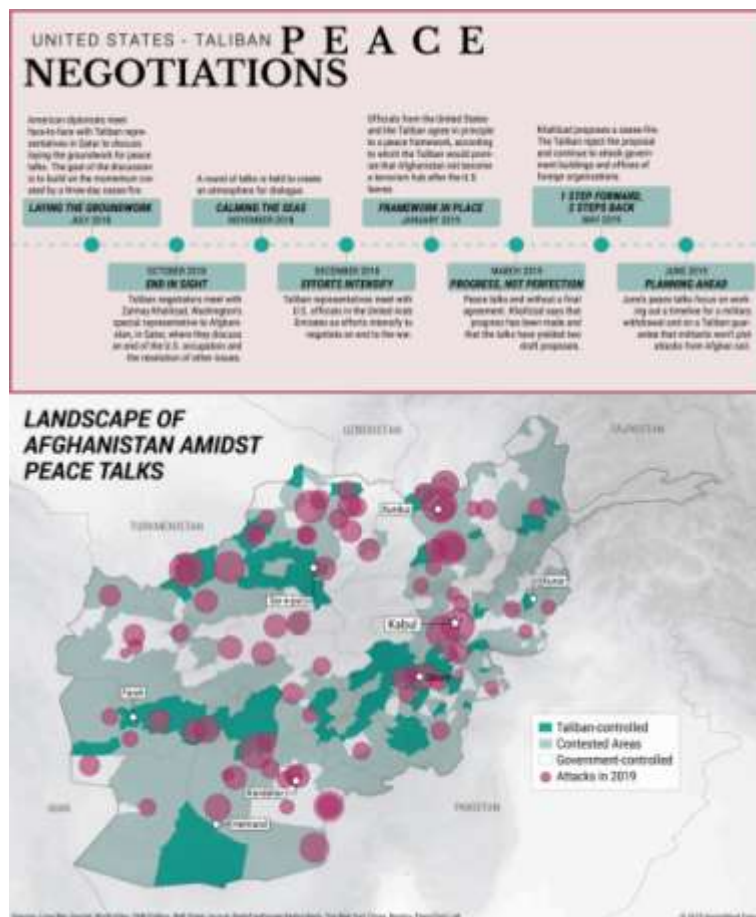


Image : [https://geopoliticalfutures.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/WG\\_Afghanistan-talks-2019.jpg](https://geopoliticalfutures.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/WG_Afghanistan-talks-2019.jpg)

Context:

- US President Donald Trump recently said that the talks with the Taliban aimed at ending the 18-year war in Afghanistan are "dead".

#### **Background:**

- The Taliban refer to themselves as the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA), are a Sunni Islamic fundamentalist political movement and military organization in Afghanistan currently waging war (an insurgency, or jihad) within that country.
- From 1996 to 2001, the Taliban held power over roughly three quarters of Afghanistan, and enforced there a strict interpretation of Sharia, or Islamic law.
- It held control of most of the country until being overthrown after the American-led invasion of Afghanistan in December 2001 following the September 11 attacks.
- The Taliban have been condemned internationally for the harsh enforcement of their interpretation of Islamic Sharia law, which has resulted in the brutal treatment of many Afghans, especially women.
- According to the United Nations, the Taliban and their allies were responsible for 76% of Afghan civilian casualties
- The Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence and military are widely alleged by the international community and the Afghan government to have provided support to the Taliban

#### **Implications after the talk ended:**

- The Taliban has started carrying out major attacks with the American troops fighting back.
- Mr. Ghani has a chance to continue as President without having to share power with the Taliban(Which would have happened if the deal were successful )
- The Ghani government will be pleased with the fact that U.S. troops are likely to continue in the country, for if left alone the government will not survive long.
- Even with a properly negotiated deal, the ascent of the Taliban in Afghanistan would have meant a certain amount of regional uncertainty and geopolitical recalibration.
- Now that there is no deal between the Taliban and the U.S., there is likely to be more violence internally within Afghanistan while the external implications would be more or less contained.

#### **What it meant for India:**

- Pakistan, has been counting on the return of the Taliban in Afghanistan which it deeply believes gives it strategic depth vis-à-vis India.
- A non-negotiated withdrawal of U.S. forces would be the worst-case scenario for India .It will enhance Pakistan's ability to control elements of the Taliban for tactical or strategic anti-Indian uses.
- Once the Taliban returns to power in Afghanistan, on its own or as part of a power-sharing arrangement, Indian civilian assets and interests in Afghanistan could come under increased pressure.
- Kashmir in many ways will continue to be at the centre of how the emerging geopolitical situation in Afghanistan will impact India.*(1980s unemployed Afghan fighters turned up in Kashmir at the behest of the Pakistani agencies)*

- The breakdown of the Trump-Taliban talks is advantage India since the negotiation would have led to negative consequences for India.

**Did you know:**

“If a superpower like the U.S. can be pushed out of Afghanistan by the Taliban with help from Pakistan, would it be too difficult to beat India?” is the argument doing the rounds among sections of aggrieved Kashmiri youth.

**Way forward:**

- The U.S. and the international community, while picking up the threads of negotiations in the days ahead, will need to ensure that there are enough guarantees built into a deal to disincentivise undesirable external behaviour by the Taliban.
- India, on its part, needs to reach out to the Taliban, not to recognise it but to engage with it, in its own national interest. such an outreach will need to be carefully calibrated and discreetly executed without making the incumbent govt unhappy.

**Conclusion:**

It is perhaps for the best that the U.S.-Taliban talks were called off . It would have led to a slew of significant geopolitical changes with implications for the region and beyond.

**Connecting the dots:**

- What implications does the cancellation of U.S.-Afghan talks have for the volatile South Asian region in general and for India in particular?

## INDIA AND THE WORLD

### India-Pak: Putting the skids under border trade

#### **Context:**

- The India-Pakistan face-off is having more repercussions than intended, with border economies the worst hit

#### **Concerns:**

- In February 2019, in the wake of the Pulwama attack, India decided to withdraw the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status to Pakistan; subsequently, it imposed 200% customs duty on all Pakistani goods coming into India
- In April, India suspended trade across the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir citing misuse of the trade route by Pakistan-based elements
- More recently, post the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Bill, Pakistan cut off diplomatic and economic ties with India — expelling the Indian envoy, partially shutting airspace and suspending bilateral trade.

#### **The impact :**

- In 2018-19, bilateral trade between India and Pakistan was valued at \$2.5 billion — India's exports to Pakistan accounted for \$2.06 billion and India's imports from Pakistan were at \$495 million.
- India's decision vis-à-vis withdrawal of MFN status and imposition of 200% duty has hurt Pakistan's exports to India, falling from an average of \$45 million per month in 2018 to \$2.5 million per month in the last four months.
- The quantum of loss that has been incurred by traders in both India and Pakistan has varied according to the nature of trade and the trade route

Example: Amritsar is land-locked, is not a metropolis and traditionally has no significant industry. Hence, any decision on India-Pakistan trade has a direct impact on the local economy and the people of Amritsar. Since February, according to estimates on ground, 5,000 families have been directly affected in Amritsar because of breadwinner dependence on bilateral trade. Traders and their staff members, customs house agents (CHAs), freight forwarders, labour force, truck operators, dhaba owners, fuel stations, and other service providers are closing shop and going out of business.

- With Pakistan deciding to completely suspend bilateral trade, exports of cotton from India to Pakistan are expected to be affected the most, eventually hurting Pakistan's textiles;
- The lawn industry which will now have to source pricier cotton from alternative markets in the United States, Australia, Egypt or Central Asia
- There is a high possibility that Indian cotton, along with other products, will be routed through third countries such as the United Arab Emirates and Singapore, thereby increasing the share of indirect trade which is estimated to be more than double the direct trade between India and Pakistan.

**Conclusion:**

- While the overall economies of the two countries may very well manage to stay afloat despite the suspension of economic ties, it is the local economies that will suffer the most and are already perishing. In this connection, there has been a loss in business, rise in prices, lack of alternative sources of livelihood, as well as an expected increase in bank defaults.
- In the spirit of nationalism, the trade fraternity on both sides, by and large, has stood by their respective governments. But locals in border economies on both sides have mouths to feed, which calls for a solution.

**Connecting the dots:**

- Discuss the impact of recent bilateral suspension of trade ties between India and Pakistan?
- What is the 'Most Favoured Nation' status? Should India revoke the MFN status given to Pakistan? Critically examine.

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**Act Far East**

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-II – International Affairs

**In News**

- PM Modi unveiled the 'Act Far East' policy for Russia and announced that India will give a **line of credit worth USD 1 billion** for the resource-rich region of Russia's far east.
- PM Modi is on a two-day visit to **attended the Eastern Economic Forum (EEF) at Vladivostok - the first by an Indian prime minister.**
- Among the participants in the Summit are India, Malaysia, Japan, Australia, and South Korea.



- EEF was established by decree of the President Putin in **2015** to support the economic development of **Russia's Far East** and to expand international cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region.
- **Vladivostok** is the largest **port on Russia's Pacific coast**, and home to the Pacific Fleet of the Russian Navy.
- India is the first country that opened its consulate in Vladivostok
- MoU was signed between India and Russia to open a **full-fledged maritime route** between Russia's eastern port city **Vladivostok** and **Chennai** which will help in the upscaling of trade relations between the two nations.
- Both sides signed various other agreements in the fields of military and technical cooperation, energy and science, LNG Business and LNG supplies, and natural gas



[https://eurogeologists.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Arkhipova\\_Figure1-610x330.jpg](https://eurogeologists.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Arkhipova_Figure1-610x330.jpg)

## India-Russia bilateral ties

### Context:

- Unveiling the Russian edition of India's 'Look East, Act East' policy, Prime Minister Narendra Modi pledged on Thursday to extend a \$1 billion Line of Credit to Russia's Far East region (RFE)
- Finance Indian business projects in the region, will be the "take-off point for Act Far East", and will further strengthen bilateral ties.

### What is the EEF?

- According to its website, the EEF was established by a decree of the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, in 2015, with the aim of supporting the economic development of Russia's Far East, and to expand international cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region.
- The ongoing EEF Summit at the Far Eastern Federal University is the fifth in its history.
- Among the participants in the Summit are India, Malaysia, Japan, Australia, and South Korea.
- According to the EEF website, the 2018 Summit was attended by more than 6,000 participants from over 60 countries, and over 220 agreements worth over RUB 3.1 trillion were signed. (Each Russian ruble is almost exactly worth 1 Indian rupee.)
- The Summits have roundtable conferences, panel sessions, business breakfasts, besides business dialogues and bilateral talks and agreements.

Mr. Modi's visit saw several initiatives being launched towards increasing the value of economic ties between the two countries, which, at approximately \$10 billion in terms of bilateral trade, lags far behind their strategic partnership and defence relationship

#### **India-Russia relations:**

##### **Bilateral trades:**

- India's economic ties with Russia have been struggling with bilateral trade hovering around \$10 billion mark. Energy is one area which has the potential to provide stimulus to their ties.
- On 20th India—Russia Annual Summit India,
- Russia agree to step up trade to \$30 bn by 2025.
- They also agreed to speed up preparations for signing of the India-Russia Intergovernmental Agreement on Promotion and Mutual Protection of Investments.
- It was also agreed to intensify work for eliminating trade barriers. Which would be facilitated by the proposed Trading Agreement between the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and the Republic of India

##### **Defence:**

- India has contracted defence deals worth about \$14.5 billion from Russia.
- New Delhi's decision to go ahead with the purchase of S-400 missile defence system, worth over \$5 billion, despite the threat of US sanctions, underscores the importance India continues to attach to its defence engagement with Russia.

##### **Energy sector:**

- Chief among the 50 agreements signed this week were those on energy exploration and procurement, including a specific MoU on cooperation on LNG supplies to India, and a maritime route from Vladivostok to Chennai which will be used for energy trade as well.
- The two sides also agreed on a five-year 'roadmap' for cooperation on prospecting for hydrocarbons and LNG in the Far East and the Arctic, building on a history of Indian investment in oilfields in the region.
- The emphasis on energy from this region is as much a bid to benefit from explorations and trade routes in the Arctic that are becoming accessible due to global warming, as it is reflective of India's desire to diversify its energy sources away from an unstable West Asia
- The investment in the Far East, which is often neglected given that Russia is seen as a European power in the post-Soviet era, also underlines India's desire to draw Russia into its strategic forays in the Indo-Pacific.
- Russia and India are also becoming more ambitious by pursuing projects in third countries such as the Rooppur nuclear power project of Bangladesh.

The push to 'Act Far East' allows India to demonstrate its commitment to an area of concern for Moscow, thus reassuring its traditional partner that in an increasingly polarised world, India is confident of working with multiple alignments, even if they are at cross purposes with each other.

### **Conclusion:**

The challenge in front of India and Russia is that they need to transform a 20th century partnership and make it fit for the 21st century. Global trends are evolving rapidly and major powers are re-defining their ties with each other to match their contemporary requirements.

### **Connecting the dots:**

- India and Russia have been strategic partners even before cold war era. Critically analyse the defence relation between two countries and what can be possible way forward.

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## **India and South Korea**

**Part of:** GS Prelims and GS Mains II – International Affairs

### **In News**

- India and South Korea concluded a military logistics agreement to extend logistical support to each other's Navies, during the ongoing visit of Defence Minister to Seoul.
- India will be able to get assured logistic support when it operates in the Indo-Pacific in the ports of South Korea
- The two countries also formulated a forward-looking road map to take bilateral defence industry cooperation to the next level. It includes proposed areas of cooperation in land, aero and naval systems, R&D cooperation and coproduction of defence equipment.
- India stressed that **South Korea's 'New Southern Policy'** and **India's 'Act East Policy'** will provide a strong framework for future engagement and consolidation of Special Strategic Partnership between the two countries.

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### [Motihari-Amlekhganj Pipeline](#)

**Part of:** GS Prelims and GS-II – India and its neighbourhood

#### **In News**

- PM Modi and his Nepalese counterpart K P Sharma Oli inaugurated the Motihari-Amalekhgunj petroleum pipeline through video conferencing.
- The Motihari-Amlekhganj petroleum product pipeline is the **first ever cross-border petroleum products pipeline in South Asia**.
- The 69-km pipeline will transport fuel from Barauni refinery in Bihar's Begusarai district to Amalekhgunj in southeastern Nepal, situated across the border from Raxaul in East Champaran district.
- The project was first proposed in 1996, but progress was slow.
- The pipeline will **help in tackling the oil storage problem** in Nepal. The Amalekhgunj fuel depot will have the capacity to store up to 16,000 kilolitres of petroleum products.
- It will drastically **reduce the cost of transporting fuel** to landlocked Nepal from India by doing away with transportation of petroleum products through tankers (as part of an arrangement which is in place since 1973).
- In 2017, Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) signed a petroleum trade agreement to supply about 1.3 million tonnes of fuel annually to Nepal with a promise to double the volume by 2020.

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### [Indian Diaspora](#)

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-II – Indian Diaspora

### In News

- At 17.5 million, Indian diaspora largest in the world says the UN report.
- Report: The International Migrant Stock 2019, a dataset released by the Population Division of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)
- It provides the latest estimates of the number of international migrants by age, sex and origin for all countries and areas of the world.
- **In 2019, the number of migrants globally reached an estimated 272 million.**
- Migrants from Mexico constituted the second largest diaspora with 11.8 million people followed by China (10.7 million), Russia (10.5 million) and Syria (8.2 million).
- **Regionally, Europe** hosted the largest number of international migrants (82 million), followed by Northern America (59 million) and Northern Africa and Western Asia (49 million).
- **At the country level, United States of America** hosting the largest number of international migrants (51 million), with Germany and Saudi Arabia hosting the second and third largest numbers of migrants (13 million each).
- India hosted 5.1 million international migrants in 2019. The highest number of international migrants came from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal.
- The global number of **refugees and asylum seekers** increased by 13 million between 2010 and 2017. Northern Africa and Western Asia hosted around 46% of the global number of refugees and asylum seekers.
- **The share of women and girls in the global number of international migrants** fell slightly, from 49% in 2000 to 48% in 2019.

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### [India-Mongolia](#)

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Main GS-II- International Relations

### In News

- PM Modi and President of Mongolia H.E. Mr Khaltmaagiin Battulga, jointly unveiled a statue of Lord Buddha and his two disciples, installed at historic **Gandan Tegchenling Monastery in Ulaanbaatar** (Mongolia's Capital) via videoconferencing from Delhi.
  - The Statue symbolizes the shared respect of our two countries for universal message of Lord Buddha.
  - Statue depicts Lord Buddha in a sitting posture along with his two disciples conveying the message of compassion as well as peace and co-existence
  - **Gandan Tegchenling Monastery** -prominent centre of Mongolian Buddhists - hosted 11th General Assembly of Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace (from 21-23 June 2019)
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## India-Pacific Islands

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-II – International Affairs

### **In News**

- India announced USD 150 million line of credit to the group of Pacific Island Nations for solar, renewable energy and climate related projects during the India-Pacific Islands Developing States (PSIDS) Leaders' Meeting
- India also announced allocation of **12 million dollars grant** (1 million dollar to each PSIDS) towards implementation of high impact developmental project in the area of their choice.
- India's relationship with Pacific Island nations has deepened with the evolution of Act East Policy, resulting in the setting up of the action-oriented **Forum for India-Pacific Island Cooperation (FIPIC)**.
- The first and second editions of the FIPIC took place in Fiji (2015) and Jaipur (2016), 3rd FIPIC Summit to be held in Port Moresby in first half of 2020.

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## Nuclear Supplier Group (NSG)

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-II- International relations – India & World

### **In News**

- PM Modi pitches for India's entry to NSG during his address in the Bloomberg Global Business Forum

### **About NSG**

- NSG is a **multilateral export control regime** and a group of nuclear supplier countries that seek to prevent **nuclear proliferation** by controlling the export of materials, equipment, and technology that can be used to manufacture nuclear weapons.
- **NSG controls most of the world's nuclear trade**
- NSG formed in 1974 consists of 48 members which include the five nuclear weapon states US, UK, France, China, and Russia.
- It is **not a formal organization** (but an informal grouping), and its guidelines are not binding. Decisions, including on membership, are made by consensus
- While US and other countries support India's entry into NSG, China has opposed it saying India has not signed Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty

### **About NPT**

- **Non-proliferation Treaty** is an international treaty, which came into force in 1970 with the objective of preventing the spread of nuclear technology and nuclear weapons
  - India refused to sign NPT because
    - The NPT defines “nuclear weapons states” as those that tested devices before 1967, which means India cannot ever be one.
    - No fixed timelines have been mentioned for disarmament
    - NPT is unfair treaty as nuclear weapon states have no obligation to give them up while non-nuclear states are not allowed to have them.
  - The nuclear powers were convinced that NPT alone would not halt the spread of nuclear weapons. Consequently, NSG was formed in 1974 to control supply of nuclear fuel and technology.
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### [OIC asks India to revoke actions on Kashmir](#)

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-II –India and world

#### **In News**

- India had revoked Article 370 in Jammu & Kashmir which provided the state with special status and bifurcated the state into two Union Territories in August 2019
- OIC asks India to revoke these actions and provide assurances that it will not change the occupied **territory’s demographic composition** and not allow non-Kashmiris to acquire property or residency in J&K
- India position has been that it is an internal matter of India and no need of any international interference in the issue

#### **About OIC**

- The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is the **second largest inter-governmental organisation** after the UN, with the **membership of 57 states**, covering four continents.
  - India overcame a five-decade-old hurdle when it was invited to OIC meet earlier in March 2019 based on India’s ‘global stature’ , ‘islamic component’ and support from UAE, Bangladesh etc
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### [India discusses Chabahar with Iran](#)

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-II- International relations – India & World

#### **In News**

- PM Modi met Iranian President on the sidelines of UNGA meet and discussed about Chahbahar port of Iran, which India is helping to develop

- Iran's Chabahar port is a strategic project that would connect India, Afghanistan and Iran to Central Asia, while **circumventing Pakistan**
- **Iran is facing sanctions** from USA after Washington pulled out of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) impacting the progress on port project.

**About JCPOA**

- It an international deal to limit Iran's nuclear program in return for lifting economic sanctions imposed on Iran by West
- It was signed by **Iran and the P5+1** (China France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) on July 14, 2015

**Do You know?**

- India, the world's third biggest oil consumer, meets more than 80 per cent of its oil needs through imports.
- Iran was its third largest supplier after Iraq and Saudi Arabia till recently when US sanctions has stopped India's oil trade with Iran

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## **INDIA'S FOREIGN RELATIONS PART I**

**TOPIC:****General Studies 2 :**

- **India and its neighbourhood- relations.**

**Context:**

- Memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed by the NCP(Nepal communist party) with the Communist Party of China .
- President Xi Jinping is visiting Nepal in October 2019

**Background about Nepal:**





<https://www.mapsofindia.com/neighbouring-countries-maps/maps/india-nepal.jpg>

- Nepal is a landlocked country in South Asia.
- It borders China in the north and India in the south, east
- Hinduism is the predominant religion of the country
- The Constitution of Nepal, adopted in 2015, affirms Nepal as a secular federal parliamentary republic divided into seven provinces.
- Friendship treaties were signed with India in 1950 and the People's Republic of China in 1960.
- Member of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Non Aligned Movement(NAM) and the Bay of Bengal Initiative.

#### India – Nepal relations:

- The 1950 Indo-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship
- treaty provides Nepalese, the same economic and educational opportunities as Indian citizens in India, while accounting for preferential treatment to Indian citizens and businesses compared to other nationalities in Nepal

- The Indo-Nepal border is open; Nepalese and Indian nationals may move freely across the border without passports or visas and may live and work in either country
- since late 2015, political issues and border disputes have strained relations between the two countries with anti-Indian sentiment growing amongst the government and people of Nepal
- No border agreement between two countries

**Recent developments in India – Nepal relations:**

- In August 2014, when the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi had visited and number of sops were announced.
- When a big earthquake struck Nepal, India was quick to respond with help and relief materials.
- India's failure to complete past projects on time has created frustrations.
- In 2015 India objected to Nepal's constitution and exerted pressure for Nepal to accommodate the voices of Madhesi people led to blockade this infringed the relations

**China- Nepal relations:**

- The Sino-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship signed in 1960.
- From 1975 onward, Nepal has maintained a policy of balancing the competing influence of China and India
- China has been making an effort to gain entry into SAARC, and, Nepal has continuously backed and supported the proposal to include China as a member in the regional grouping
- China being the largest source of FDI, (while India still remains one of the major source of remittance to Nepal)
- The Nepal and China ratified the border agreement treaty 1960.

**Recent development in China – Nepal relations:**

- Nepali leaders played the nationalism card to reach out to China (after blocked).
- With the announcement of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), exchanges and interactions between the two countries grew.
- Nepal signed agreements with China to ensure it was not "India locked", in turn opening transit and trade opportunities through its northern border.

**Problems with the Nepal:**

- Nepal's engagements with the outside world have been more of theatrics, speeches and little action.
- Nepal has never been about seeking investments and get into a partnership model such as what Bangladesh has been able to do successfully with both China and India.
- With a strong patriarchal and feudal culture embedded in Hinduism, rituals dominate Nepali life, there is much emphasis on rituals rather than an understanding of the deeper issues.

### **Communism in Nepal Vs China:**

The recent rise of the Nepali communist has been due to the empathy of and support from the Communist parties of India that were part of the United Progressive Alliance(UPA). The Maoists, while underground, received tacit support. With the communist parties in India in disarray now, the Nepali communist leaders are looking for options.

- Communism to Nepal came through Calcutta and not straight from China. Therefore, what we see in Nepal is the West Bengal version of communism rather than a Chinese one.
- The communist movement in both India and Nepal has been about rent-seeking on positions and selling rhetoric and hypocrisy. In contrast to the Chinese societal model of hard work and encouraging entrepreneurial pursuits.
- Nepali communists, especially the former insurgents, still talk about Mao and the Maoist ideology. In China, Mao is a word best avoided and is jarring for the current key leadership.
- In China, over the years, when a majority group within the party decides on an issue, people with opposing views accept the decision and do not challenge them in the future. Nepali communism has been about continuous infighting and creating fiefdoms rather than accepting an individual's leadership.

### **China- India-Nepal Trilateral:**

- China wants to invest in big connectivity projects in Nepal but prefers to bring India, on board. But India have not shown much interest.
- Chinese engagement in Nepal is sharply increasing, making India uncomfortable. India views Nepal as its traditional sphere of influence, and wants to contain Chinese influence. Thus India is rejecting the proposal for trilateral cooperation
- Nepal wants to change the old pattern of a heavy economic dependence on India by expanding large-scale ties with China.
- China, meanwhile, is keen to increase its economic, military, and strategic influence in Nepal without direct confrontation with India.

- Ongoing Trade and transit agreement of Chinese and Nepal governments. Once it is finalized, Nepal, a land-locked country, could use Chinese ports and seas for the export and imports of goods .Currently, Nepal uses Indian ports and cities for exports and imports.( **The border blockade of 2015 taught Nepal the lesson**)
- China is perceived as a trusted neighbor, agreements, treaties, and conventions. India is greeted with suspicion..
- China’s noninterference policy seems to have played a vital role in creating positive public opinion toward China.
- By contrast, there are widespread perceptions that India interferes in Nepal’s politics.

Ex : In 2015, India objected to Nepal’s constitution and exerted pressure for Nepal to accommodate the voices of Madhesi people, China welcomed the promulgation of the constitution in Nepal, lauding it as a historic progress.

#### **How far is the progress of China – Nepal relation?**

- China-funded projects such as constructing Pokhara International Airport and the Kathmandu Ring Road expansion are underway.
- Chinese investment in various sectors is increasing.
- Chinese tourists have also noticeably increased in fact surpassed Indian tourists in 2018
- Nepal Army and People’s Liberation Army of China is on the rise, after their first joint military exercise last year
- Nepal and China signed a framework agreement on the BRI and now the onus lies on Nepal to select the projects under the BRI framework(2017)
- Nepal is asking China to open more border crossings. Though both countries are talking about broader connectivity, China has opened very few border points.
- China and Nepal are also exploring the possibility of a **free trade agreement (FTA)**.

#### **Way forward:**

- Longstanding people-to-people ties and cultural connect.
- India should focus on fructifying the potential of hydropower cooperation, which has remained untapped largely due to differing perceptions.
- Timely completion of projects
- India should maintain the policy of keeping away from internal affairs of Nepal

#### **Conclusion:**

- President Xi’s visit will be once again be one made by a “friendly neighbour or cousin”, who brings some gifts, exchanges pleasantries and then moves on.
- With its immense strategic relevance in the Indian context as Indian security concern, stable and secure Nepal is one requisite which India can’t afford to overlook.

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## **INDIA'S FOREIGN RELATIONS PART II**

### **TOPIC:**

### **General Studies 2 :**

- **India and its neighbourhood- relations.**

### **Context :**

- The imposing Lotus Tower in Colombo, which was opened to the public recently, is considered to be the latest symbol of Sri Lanka-China ties.

### **Srilanka:**

- Island country in South Asia, located in the Indian Ocean to the southwest of the Bay of Bengal and to the southeast of the Arabian Sea.
- The island is geographically separated from the Indian subcontinent by the Gulf of Mannar and the Palk Strait.
- Its geographic location and deep harbours made it of great strategic importance from the time of the ancient Silk Road through to the modern Maritime Silk Road
- a 26-year civil war, which ended decisively when the Sri Lanka Armed Forces defeated the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in 2009
- founding member of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), and a member of the United Nations, the Commonwealth of Nations, the G77, and the Non-Aligned Movement



Image: [https://www.worldatlas.com/img/areamap/continent/asia\\_map.gif](https://www.worldatlas.com/img/areamap/continent/asia_map.gif)

### China – Sri-lanka relations:

- 1957, China and Sri Lanka established diplomatic relations
- Relations between both countries during the rule of Sri Lankan president, Mahinda Rajapaksa, saw closer relations due to Rajapaksa's pro-China stance
- Under current Sri Lankan president, Maithripala Sirisena, relations remain strong with Sirisena interested in balancing both Chinese and Indian influence in the country.
- recent developments have shown a pro-China tilt in Sri Lanka's current foreign policy
- support of China's position in the South China Sea dispute
- Sri Lanka is a major country on the **String of Pearls** (Chinese strategic initiative in the Indian Ocean,)
- Sri Lanka is part of the **Belt and road initiative(BRI)** of china
- Though economic ties with China are driving Sri Lanka into a “debt trap”, the bilateral relationship on the economic front is only becoming stronger. Ex : (Hambantota )

### Did you know:

- Back in 1952, Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) and China signed a barter trade pact under which the two countries agreed to exchange Sri Lanka’s natural rubber for Chinese rice. With the international market for its natural rubber much reduced, Sri Lanka’s economy slumped. China’s purchase of Sri Lanka’s natural rubber helped ease the crisis.

### Hambantota port:

- The Hambantota Port is a maritime port in Hambantota, Sri Lanka

- Total estimated construction cost of the Phase 1 of the project is US\$361 million, out of which 85% was funded by China
- As the port incurred heavy losses, making debt repayment difficult, in 2016 it was proposed to lease 80% of the port in a debt-for-equity swap to China Merchants Ports holding company (CMPort)(Signed ) for 99 years
- In July 2018, it was announced that Sri Lanka would relocate its naval base at Galle to Hambantota.

#### **India sri- lanka relations:**

- Srilanka was before part of various Indian kingdoms.
- India is the island's largest trading partner
- India is the only neighbour of Sri Lanka, separated by the Palk Strait
- India and Sri Lanka are republics within the Commonwealth of Nations.
- India has signed a nuclear energy deal to improve relations
- the Rajiv Gandhi-Jayawardene Accord of 1987 and the 13th Amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution, envisaging devolution of powers for provinces, still provide a solid framework to address the ethnic question
- India's assistance during the 2004 tsunami and Mr. Modi's visit to Colombo in June (the first foreign dignitary to do so) in the aftermath of the Easter Sunday attacks show India's sincerity of approach

#### **Low time in India – srilanka relations:**

- The anti-Tamil program of 1983 dragged India into the Sri Lankan Tamil question.
- withdrawal of the Indian Peace Keeping Force in March 1990 a
- the assassination of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in May 1991 made New Delhi adopt a "hands-off approach" towards Colombo till the final phase of the civil war.

#### **Recent development:**

- India cannot claim to have accomplished much in the Sirisena years, despite its "neighbourhood first" policy since May 2014. India cannot boast of having taken up any major infrastructure project in Sri Lanka.
- the Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement, an improved version of the existing bilateral Free Trade Agreement, has been shelved.
- In recent years, only a couple of social sector projects of the Indian government—gathered momentum.( — building 60,000 homes for Tamils and ambulance services)
- concern over delays in projects proposed by India. The joint development of an oil storage facility in Trincomalee is one such project

**India – Srilanka – China:**

- China's footprint in Sri Lanka is expanding into the island's Tamil-dominated areas where India's influence in the island has been the strongest, is worrying" as its role here could grow at India's cost.
- According to the 2018 annual report of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka, imports from China accounted for 18.5%, just a little less than the 19% from India.

**Way forward:**

- India must sit with that leader not just to get expeditious approvals for all the pending infrastructure projects but also contribute to a holistic development of Sri Lanka's youth.
- India must encourage the voluntary repatriation of nearly 95,000 refugees who live in Tamil Nadu back to Sri Lanka.

**Conclusion:**

- China-funded infrastructure projects in Sri Lanka may look great, but India-Sri Lanka ties are deeper and more complex.
- A benign and comprehensive approach, backed by the sincerity of purpose, will earn India greater respect of Sri Lankans, and also send a message to the world about the strength of its ties with Sri Lanka.

**Connecting the dots:**

- Unlike China, India has not accomplished much in Sri Lanka. Critically analyze.

---

**Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)****Context:****The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)**

- Voiced concern over the human rights situation in Kashmir.
- Discussed the communication restrictions put in place in Kashmir.
- The group demanded that India "rescind" its actions in Kashmir and reiterate its commitment to abide by the relevant UN Security Council resolutions.
- It said India should allow access to Jammu and Kashmir to human rights organisations and international media to ascertain and report on the situation there.

India replied that the abrogation of Article 370 is its "internal matter".



**Background:**

- Founded in 1969, 57 member states, 53 countries being Muslim-majority countries.
- The organisation states that it is "the collective voice of the Muslim world" and works to "safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony".
- The Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States (PUOICM) was established in Iran in 1999,. Only OIC members are entitled to membership in the union
- The OIC supports a two-state solution to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict.
- The OIC has called for boycott of Israeli products in effort to pressure Israel into ending the occupation of the Palestinian territories.
- condemned the human rights violations against the Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar.
- raised the issue of China's Xinjiang re-education camps and human rights abuses against the Uyghur Muslim minority in 2018

**India – OIC Relation:**

- India's relationship with Pakistan has always been tense and has a direct impact on India-OIC relations, with Pakistan being a founding member of the OIC. India has pushed for the OIC to accept India as a member, Pakistan opposes India's entry into the OIC
- For the first time in five decades, the United Arab Emirates invited foreign minister of India Sushma Swaraj to attend the inaugural plenary 46th meeting of OIC foreign ministers. (Pakistan boycotted the meet)
- From the mid-1990s, when this Contact Group was formed, it has issued several statements on behalf of Pakistan (on Kashmir issue)
- The United Arab Emirates, for instance, conferred the Order of "Zayed", its highest civilian award on Prime Minister Narendra Modi, more than a week after New Delhi's moves on Article 370, and declared that Kashmir was India's internal matter.

**Way forward:**

- Asking Pakistan to change its state policy on terrorism.
- Imran Khan ensure that Pakistan abjures support to Kashmir-centric groups such as the Jaish-e-Mohammed and the Lashkar-e-Taiba
- The OIC would do a lot better if it did something useful to better the lot of its members or mediate between warring Saudi Arabia and Yemen, for instance.

**Conclusion:**

- The organisation, constituted on religious lines, but seeking to fulfil geopolitical interests, needs reforms from within.

- The OIC's record of conflict resolution when it comes to issues between OIC member states is poor and must be improved



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## ECONOMY

### India's growth figures are off the mark

#### **Context**

- The economic growth rate (quarterly) for the last five quarters 8% to 7% to 6.6% to 5.8% and now to 5%.(much less than 5%)
- Experts like IMF , RBI , ADB have been indicating a 7% annual rate of growth
- Data shows that investment proposals are at a 14-year low.

#### **Origin of the slowdown:**

- Unorganised sector producing 45% of the output and employing 94% of the workforce, has been in decline since demonetisation and the Goods and Services Tax , which is pulling down the rate of growth of the economy.
- The decline in the workforce, the rise in the demand for work under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, etc. suggests that the unorganised sector has declined by 10%.

#### **Why the difference between experts and the actual growth rate?**

- Because these agencies are not independent data gathering agencies and depend on official data.
- The over-reliance on the organised sector for official GDP data is causing a gross miscalculation

#### **The official data only represents the organised sector like:**

- For estimating quarterly growth govt uses ,estimates of Agricultural Production, Index of Industrial Production (IIP) and performance of key sectors like, Railways, Transport other than Railways, Communication, Banking, Insurance and Government Revenue Expenditure.(Except for agriculture, these belong to the organised sector of the economy)
- For the annual estimates govt uses mining, banking, hotels and restaurants, and transport. For construction, steel, glass, etc are used which are also derived from the organised sector production.

The assumption is that the organised sector data represents for the unorganised sector. But with the economy suffering over the last three years which adversely impacted the unorganised sector, this assumption does not hold true.

#### **Measures taken and their impacts :**

- Recently announced Bank mergers further disturb a major chunk of the banking system in the coming year.
- Recently announced package for the automobile sector or making banks pass on interest rate cuts to businesses have little impact
- The announcement of a transfer of Rs 1.76 lakh crore from the RBI to the government will allow the government to maintain the fiscal deficit target at 3.3%. But, this will not provide the needed stimulus.( fiscal deficit today is 9%)

**Conclusion:**

- The investment rate has hovered at around 30% for the last several years because the capacity utilisation in the economy has been around 75%. Unless this rises, fresh investment will mean even lower capacity utilisation and lower profitability since capital will be underutilised.
- The official data only represents the organised sector. To incorporate the unorganised sector, data from alternative sources need to be used.
- Govt must reveal the rate of growth of the unorganised sector that it is using in its estimates and which is not based on using the organised sector as a proxy.

**Connecting the dots:**

- Do you think over-reliance on the organised sector for official GDP data is causing a gross miscalculation?

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**India would be a \$5-trillion economy in 2024**

On Independence Day, the Prime Minister expressed confidence that India would be a \$5-trillion economy in 2024

**Adverse impact of economic growth on different sectors:**

The economic growth experience in India in recent decades has shown that growth has had an adverse impact on developmental goals such as education, health and overall human development/human capital formation, employment for all and environmentally sustainable development.

For example, 1% of the wealthiest in India increased their share in wealth from 40% in 2010 to more than 60% in the last five years. If we proceed on the same growth path, the top 10% will take away the lion's share of the \$5-trillion incomes when we reach the target of \$5-trillion economy.

**Education**

- The literacy rate has grown very slowly and according to the United Nations, India's literacy was 71.1% in 2015. India is now far behind many African countries such as Rwanda, Morocco and Congo in terms of literacy.
- The quality of education is far from satisfactory
- Against the norm of 6% of GDP, the government spend is around 4% of GDP on education.

**Employment:**

- The rate of growth of employment has declined with increasing economic growth causing jobless growth
- With rising labour force, India will soon experience demographic disaster rather than demographic dividend.

**Health:**

- Decline in malnutrition, particularly among women and children is very slow;
- against the norm of 3% of GDP, the government spends around 1.5% of GDP on health

**Industries:**

- industries are declining rapidly — examples are automobile ,diamond cutting and polishing, textiles and garments, and several Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME).

**Agriculture:**

- Agriculture is in crisis on account of rising costs of inputs and low prices of produces, and low public investments in this sector.

As a consequence of all these developments, there is a crash in the aggregate demand in the economy.

**Need for hour:**

- There is an urgent need for a quantum jump in public expenditure on education in order to fill wide gaps in infrastructure, training and retraining of teachers and to ensure a strong follow up on the quality of education
- it would be very difficult to raise the rate of growth to reach \$5 trillion in 2024 unless we focus on human capital formation and address the real reasons for the recent slowdown.
- Government must increase public expenditure in investing in agriculture — in infrastructure, inputs, extension, marketing and storage and training — and in providing profitable prices to farmers.

- It should also raise funds for the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
- It should raise public employment by filling all vacant sanctioned posts in the Central and State governments, which would be around 2.5 million jobs.
- The government should also regularise contract, casual and “honorary” jobs and make them regular jobs
- The government should focus on promoting labour intensive sectors such as gems and jewellery, textiles and garments and leather goods.

#### Did you know?

- Demographic dividend, as defined by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) means, "the economic growth potential that can result from shifts in a population's age structure, mainly when the share of the working-age population (15 to 64) is larger than the non-working-age share of the population (14 and younger, and 65 and older)".
- In other words, it is “a boost in economic productivity that occurs when there are growing numbers of people in the workforce relative to the number of dependents.

#### Connecting the dots:

- NITI Aayog has observed recently, the present crisis is the worst crisis India is facing since the Independence. Analyse
- The impact of economic growth on major development goals depends on the nature and composition of growth. Substantiate

---

### [PSB Bank merger – an idea for better policy governance](#)

#### Introduction:

On 30th August 2019, finance minister Mrs. Nirmala Sitaraman announced the merging of 10 public sector banks into 4 major banks. The following are the details of the bank mergers.

- Punjab National Bank + Oriental Bank of Commerce + United Bank of India
- Canara Bank + Syndicate Bank
- Union Bank + Andhra Bank + Corporation Bank
- Indian Bank + Allahabad Bank

These banks are merged based on the operating efficiencies, better usage of equity and their technological platforms. The bank merger aims at improving the financial health and increasing their lending capacity to support the economic growth.

There are two kinds of mergers – Merging larger banks together and merging smaller regional banks with their regional banks.

Merging of banks has been under discussion from past decade but now the decision was taken and implemented to focus more on improving economic stability and growth of our country.

**Benefits of bank merging:**

- Although our Indian banks are economically small compared to the international banks, merging banks can create risk diversification and creates competitiveness among the banks.
- Combining weaker banks (based on their balance sheets) with the stronger ones helps to reduce the risk that weak ones are going through.
- Merging with the strong banks will help to transfer better management practices with the weak banks so that these banks run successfully.

Although the merging of the banks have positive impact on the economy, care must be taken that the weak banks does not drag the stronger ones. Also care has to be taken that the weaker banks are able to cope up with the acquiring management practices as they are already facing problem dealing with under performing loans.

But this can be overcome by hiring management experts to implement the merger which requires merging all kinds of organizational structure and technical systems to run the banks smoother.

**Do you know?**

- In India, private sector banks like ICICI, HDFC etc., run successfully compared to public sector banks.
- The fact being, the public sector banks are operating more in the favor of politicians and financially sound people.
- On the contrary, private sector banks choose their customers wisely and make different lending strategies to maximize their profit margins.
- Even the private sector banks are influenced by political and familial connections, they run successfully compared the public sector banks.
- So in order maximize the profits in public sector banks, they must get less distorted from political pressures and familial connections.

**What needs to be done?**

- Implementation of the bank merger should constantly work on fixing the problems of nonperforming loans in the weaker ones along with fixing their organizational lacuna in loan recovery at first step.
- Another problem that needs attention among the traditional banking is the lack of digitalization.
- Government and RBI must focus on bringing digital modification in financial implementation, savings and investment needs.
- The digital modification/regulation must be well designed and properly implemented which reduces any moral hazards at work space.

**Conclusion:**

Although the bank mergers have taken a huge attention from the media, policy makers and economists, continuous analysis has to be done after implementation. The issues for non performing loans has to be addressed at the grass root level and work together to achieve overall economic growth.

**Connecting the dots**

- What are the major benefits of bank merger? Discuss.
- Examine what changes are to be brought in the banks to achieve maximum economic success after merger?

---

**10 public sector banks to be merged into four****Context**

- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced consolidation of public sector banks: 10 public sector banks to be merged into four.
- Under the scheme of amalgamation, Indian Bank will be merged with Allahabad Bank (anchor bank - Indian Bank); PNB, OBC and United Bank to be merged (PNB will be the anchor bank); Union Bank of India, Andhra Bank and Corporation Bank to be merged (anchor bank - Union Bank of India); and Canara Bank and Syndicate Bank to be merged (anchor bank - Canara Bank).
- In place of 27 public sector banks in 2017, now there will be 12 public sector banks after the latest round of consolidation of PSU banks.

**Benefits of Merger**



- The consolidation of PSBs helps in strengthening its presence globally, nationally and regionally.
- Gives capital but also give good governance.
- It has the potential to reduce operational costs due to the presence of shared overlapping networks. And this enhanced operational efficiency will reduce the lending costs of the banks.
- All merged banks in a particular bucket share common Core Banking Solutions (CBS) platform synergizing them technologically.

**Core Banking Solutions (CBS)** can be defined as a solution that enables banks to offer a multitude of customer-centric services on a 24x7 basis from a single location, supporting retail as well as corporate banking activities.(UPSC prelims )

- Larger banks have a better ability to raise resources from the market rather than relying on State exchequer.
- The loan tracking mechanism in PSU banks is being improved for the benefit of customers.
- Monitoring would become easier for the government.
- The burden on the central government to recapitalize the public sector banks again and again will come down substantially.

**Criticism:**

- the potential benefits would take several years to show up and, meanwhile, the turbulence in the banks could take a toll on the real economy.
- The merger move demonstrates once again the lackadaisical approach of policy planners in implementing sensible banking reforms in Public Sector Banks (PSBs), first mooted **by the Narasimham Committee**
- **Narasimham** committee had cautioned against merging weak banks, the government has ended doing precisely that.
- The consolidation should have been a gradual and calibrated exercise resulting in a smaller number of well-capitalised and professionally managed PSBs with a sound governance structure..

Ex: SBI had managed the ABs over the years with its own senior team, and all associates had already been functioning on common technology platform

- A key concern about merging the ten PSBs into four in one stroke is a lack of clear articulation of the rationale behind bringing disparate and weak banks together, some of whom were still under the Reserve Bank of India's **Prompt Corrective Action (PCA)**.
- Merger announcements generally trigger confusion, anxiety and insecurity in staff, leading to a slowdown in business.

- The post-merger scale economies that large international banks seek to achieve with ruthless measures are not feasible in India.

**Did you know:**

- Prompt Corrective Action or PCA is a framework under which banks with weak financial metrics are put under watch by the RBI. The PCA framework deems banks as risky if they slip below certain norms on three parameters — capital ratios, asset quality and profitability.

**What should have been done?**

- reverse the decline in the PSBs' Return on Equity (RoE) after investing considerable sums in bringing them on a common technology platform
- introducing better risk management measures.
- The merged entities should become agile and capable of meeting the challenges in retail and mass market segments from private players and open banking sources.

**Measures to smoothen the mergers:**

- it needs to be ensured that there is no leadership vacuum in the anchor banks.
- The technical skills needed for integration planning, transforming business support functions and value build-up have to be cultivated.
- culturally integrate the expanded workforce through sustained training initiatives.
- The practice over the years of shuffling senior executives from one PSB to another has done more harm than good.(which must be stopped)
- Recruit professionals from the market in key areas of technology, HR and risk management, in all of which PSBs are grossly under-equipped.
- A buoyant exercise of recruitment and training is vital.
- the government should actively plan steps to offset a possible slow expansion in bank credit in the near term.
- Non-Banking Financial Institutions (NBFCs), which have a better understanding of the market needs, need to be tapped to ensure better credit flow
- the government should resolve the tangles in the ownership of the merging PSBs in insurance, asset management and other ventures.
- the government should consider converting a few 'weak' PSBs outside the merger into regional banks.(one of the recommendation of narasimham committee)

**Committees:**

- **Narasimham committee (1991 and 1998)** suggested merger of strong banks both in public sector and even with the developmental financial institutions and NBFCs.

- **Khan committee** in 1997 stressed the need for harmonization of roles of commercial banks and the financial institutions.

**Conclusion:.**

- While such consolidation can result in handsome productivity gains, what matters is the quality of execution by a stable and committed leadership, aided by a shrewd and benign ownership.
- Mergers should be carried out with right banks for the right reasons since the bad loan problem has plunged many public sector banks in an unprecedented crisis.

**Connecting the dots:**

- Along with merger the focus should be on adequate reforms in governance and management of these banks.

---

## Secondary market for corporate loans

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-II - Economy

**In News**

- A **task force** set up by RBI and headed by Canara Bank chairman **T.N. Manoharan** submitted its report on the development of a secondary market for corporate loans
- The committee noted that **factors that impeded development of this market** were absence of a systematic loan sales platform, lack of standardisation in documentation and legal factors and lack of active participants.
- Some of the suggestions made by task force are:
  - Setting up of a **self-regulatory body (SRB)**, which will **oversee the proposed secondary market**.
  - SRB's role will be to standardize loan documentation and covenants, **standardization of practices**, and **promote growth, liquidity, efficiency and transparency** of the proposed secondary market
  - The SRB may be set up as an association of market participants, and may be incorporated as a Section 8 company under the Companies Act, 2013.
  - Setting up a central loan contract registry
  - Setting up of an **online loan sales platform** to conduct auctions of secondary market loans.
  - Amendments in regulations issued by SEBI, IRDA and PFRDA to enable participation of non-banking entities such as mutual funds, insurance companies and pension fund.

### Do You Know?

- **Section 8 Company** is a company registered under the Companies Act, 2013 for charitable or **not-for-profit purposes**.
- In India, banks sell their stressed loans to the asset reconstruction companies, and has practically no other alternatives.
- However, globally, there is a healthy secondary market for corporate loans where banks can offload their loans to a willing investor at appropriate price.

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## Nirmala Sitharaman cuts corporate taxes

### Context:

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman cuts corporate taxes for domestic, new manufacturing companies

### How much?

- Corporate tax rate has been cut to 22% from 30% for companies that do not avail exemptions — this means that the effective tax rate for such companies will fall from 34.94% presently to 25.17%
- companies opting for 22 per cent income tax slab would not have to pay minimum alternative tax (MAT).
- The government has also decided to not levy enhanced surcharge introduced in Budget on capital gain arising from the sale of equity shares in a company liable for securities transaction tax (STT).
- Auto firms looking to make in India will have to pay an even lower tax rate of 15%, provided they start by 31 March 2023

### Why?

- The idea behind this move is obviously to generate private investment which is now at a low ebb, and also be to attract foreign investors looking for alternative sites for their global value chains disrupted now by the tariff war between China and the U.S. With these cuts, the government has delivered on a long-standing demand of Corporate India.

### Positive impacts:

- Tax concessions will bring investments in Make in India, boost employment and economic activity, leading to more revenue

- The new corporate tax cuts are expected to boost economic growth, which slipped to a six-year low of 5% in the April-June quarter.
- Vehicle prices may come down significantly following cut in corporate tax

**Negative impacts:**

- Revenue foregone on reduction in corporate tax and other relief measures will be Rs 1.45 lakh crore annually.
- This is very significant, especially in the context of the over-estimation of revenues in the Budget and the under-performance in terms of tax collections so far this year
- The deficit target of 3.3% for this fiscal is unattainable, as things stand

**Minimum alternative tax (MAT):**

- Companies try to minimise giving taxes by taking advantage of depreciation, deductions, exemptions, etc from the government. So the government imposes a Minimum Alternate Tax or MAT as an advance tax on these companies. This makes the companies give at least a minimum amount of tax.
- In India MAT is levied under Section 115JB of the Income Tax Act, 1961

**Conclusion:**

- The onus is now in passing on the benefit of lower taxes down the chain to consumers and investors.
- The one route open to the government is to go big on disinvestment where it has already budgeted Rs 1,05,000 crore for this year
- The corporate tax cuts are certainly good for the economy in the medium term but in the short term, until revenues bounce back, the government has a fiscal problem on its hands.

**Connecting the dots:**

- Tax cuts have enthused Corporate India, but there is the fiscal problem to deal with. Elucidate.

---

**Ethanol**

**Part of:** GS Prelims and GS Mains III - Economy

**In News**

- The CCEA, chaired by PM, has given its approval for “fixing **higher ethanol price** derived from different raw materials” under the **ethanol blended petrol (EBP) programme** for the forthcoming sugar season 2019-20
- The price of ethanol from C heavy molasses route be increased from Rs.43.46 per lit to Rs.43.75 per litre
- The price of ethanol from sugarcane juice/sugar/sugar syrup route be fixed at Rs.59.48 per litre,
- Remunerative price to ethanol suppliers will help in **reduction of cane farmer’s arrears**, in the process contributing to minimizing difficulty of sugarcane farmers.
- Increased ethanol blending in petrol has many benefits **including reduction in import dependency**, support to agricultural sector, more environmental friendly fuel, lesser pollution and additional income to farmers.

### Do You Know?

- Differential price of ethanol based on raw material (started in 2018) has significantly improved the **supply of ethanol** to Public Sector OMCs – from **38 crore litre** in 2013-14 to over **200 crore litre in 2018-19**.
- India, the **world’s third-largest oil importer**, witnessed a 25% year-on-year increase in its **oil import bill in FY18 to \$109 billion**.
- In March 2015, India has set a target of lowering import dependence in oil by 10 percentage points to 67% by 2022.
- In July, the Union cabinet had approved the creation of a buffer stock of 4 million tonnes sugar at an estimated cost of ₹1,674 crore.
- This was aimed at increasing the wholesale prices of sugar and improving cash flow to sugar mills, which in turn would help mill owners to clear the dues of farmers.

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### Mega shopping festivals

**Part of:** GS Prelims and GS-III - Economy

#### In News

- Finance Minister announced an annual “mega shopping festival” in four cities by March 2020 as a measure **to reverse a deepening economic downturn**.
- The festival is expected to follow the **model of Dubai’s annual shopping festival**, which is famous for the heavy discounts offered by retailers in the city on popular brands across sectors.
- India’s own mega shopping festival will have **different themes in each of the four cities** (to be decided) and is expected to focus on sectors like gems and jewellery, yoga, tourism and textiles and leather.

- The government plans to give a booster **shot to exports of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs)** through this festival,
- While enterprises are optimistic about such festival, India will have to ensure it is **able to compete** with the likes of Dubai, Singapore and Hong Kong if it plans to become the preferred shopping destination of tourists

This can be done if the festival offers a mix of global and indigenous products, instead of sticking solely to products made in India.

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## MGNREGA

**Part of:** GS Prelims and GS-III - Economy

### **In News**

- Government to **peg MGNREGA wages to inflation** in bid to hike incomes thus increasing purchasing power and **reviving rural demand**.
- The consumption basket of CPI-AL [which determines MGNREGA wage revisions] has not been updated for more than three decades, and rural consumption patterns have changed drastically in that time,
- Food items make up more than two-thirds of the CPI-AL consumption basket, but rural workers today spend a much smaller percentage of their money on subsidised food, and an increasingly larger amount on health, education and transport costs.
- Government has now agreed to update the indices annually and link MGNREGA wages with it.
- The national average wage of an MGNREGA worker is ₹178.44 per day, less than half of the ₹375 per day minimum wage recommended by a Labour Ministry panel
- MGNREGA received a budgetary allocation of **₹60,000 crores in 2019-20**.

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## Social stock exchanges

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-II- Economy

### **In News**

- SEBI has constituted a working group on Social Stock Exchanges (SSE) under the chairmanship of **Ishaat Hussain**.

- The working group shall examine and make recommendations with respect to possible structures and mechanisms, within the securities market domain, **to facilitate the raising of funds by social enterprises** and voluntary organizations
- In 2019-20 Union Budget, Finance Minister had proposed a **social stock exchange** within the ambit of SEBI, for social enterprises and voluntary organisations working for social welfare to help them raise capital through debt, equity and mutual fund.
- A social stock exchange, broadly, is understood as a platform that allows investors to buy shares in a social enterprise that has been vetted by the exchange.
- In London, similar type of platform acts more as a directory connecting social enterprises with potential investors.
- While in **Canada the SVX is an online platform** where even retail investors can invest in funds or companies with social impact.

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## Rise in Mobile Phone Exports

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-III – Economy

### **In News**

- Mobile phone exports grew over eight-fold to Rs 11,200 crore in 2018-19 over 2017-18 figures though on a small base and has exceeded imports for first time
- Total number of handsets produced in India reached 29 crores units valued at 1.81 lakh crore rupees in 2018-19 which was earlier only 5.8 crore units in 2014-15 valued at 18,900 crore rupees

### **India's policy push for Electronics**

- India has set "Net Zero imports" in electronics by 2020 under Digital India roadmap released in 2014
  - For mobile handset segment alone, the government under the **National Policy on Electronics 2019** had set a target of making 100 crore mobile handsets indigenously by 2025 valued at about 13 lakh crore rupees.
  - Out of 100 mobile handset manufacturing target, 60 crore will be for exports valued at about 7 lakh crore rupees.
-



## AGRICULTURE

### Mega Food Parks

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-III –Food processing

**In News:**

- Minister of Food Processing Industries inaugurated Telangana’s first food park.
- It has been set up at a cost of ₹109 crores in Lakkampally of Nizamabad District.
- This smart agro Food park is estimated to provide direct and indirect employment opportunities to 50,000 youth and benefit one lakh farmers in the region.

**Do you know?**

- The **Mega Food Park Scheme** is based on “**Cluster**” **approach** and envisages creation of state of art support infrastructure in a well-defined agri / horticultural zone for setting up of modern food processing units along with well-established supply chain.
- Under the food park scheme, the **Centre provides financial assistance of up to ₹50 crore.**
- The main objective of the scheme is to give boost to the food processing sector by adding value and reducing food wastage at each stage of the supply chain with particular focus on perishables.

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### Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF) – Pro and Consequences

What is Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF)?

- ZBNF is a process of farming where the crops are grown using natural resources like cow dung, cow urine etc. This process ensures mitigating the use of chemical fertilizers and nutrients to the soil.
- It uses urine and dung from the desi cows, especially urine and the dung from black colored cows are proven to have more

**Is the ZBNF is useful for the farmers?**

- 2019 annual budget was stressed on ZBNF from prime minister, this will be an advantage for the farmers to reduce chemical residue in the soil.
- It will help the farmers to grow organic products without any chemicals which fetch more prices in the market than the chemically grown produce.
- Help the farmers to double their farm income.

- Reduces use of chemicals as there is enough nutrients available to plants by air, soil and water, helps to reduce carbon emission rates.

**Controversy about ZBNF:**

Panel of scientists from ICAR (Indian Council of Agricultural Research) and NAAS (National Academy of Agriculture Sciences) (NAAS) are against ZBNF and claiming that ZBNF alone cannot increase the farm income.

**The debate from the scientists:**

- There is no evidence of proof that ZBNF alone has increased the farm income.
- If there is 30-50% increase in yield by using the chemical inputs, then there must be 30-50% price advantage to the farmers by using ZBNF.
- The chemical inputs costs around 5-7% of the total production costs.
- Marketing of these organically grown market is less compared to the basic markets.

**Conclusion:**

- Practicing ZBNF consistently will take many years to see the results as the soil has to be completely amended free of harmful chemicals and fertilizers.
- Sudden shift from chemicals to natural products may reduce the yield.
- ZBNF if proved successful and advantageous, it will be accepted from the farmers immediately as in case of adaption of Bt cotton seeds.
- Successful marketing has to be created for these produce as of now the organic markets are in the niche areas only.
- If the government is prioritizing ZBNF, then extensive measures must be bought in the fertilizer subsidy pricing.

**Connecting the dots:**

- How ZBNF is going to help the farmers to increase their income levels?
- What steps government can take to prioritize ZBNF in India?

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**Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF)****Context:**

National Academy of Agricultural Sciences, based on a brainstorming session that included industry representatives, sent a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi opposing Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF). (one of the Agroecosystem)

**Agroecology:**

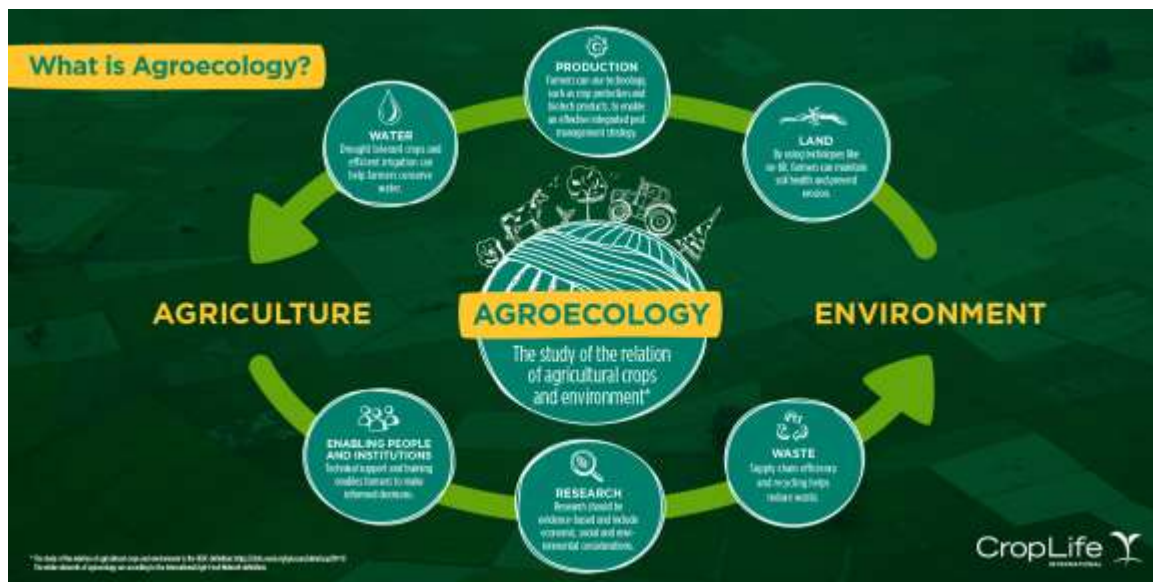
- Agroecology is the study of ecological processes applied to agricultural production systems.

- Agroecologists study a variety of agroecosystems recognised worldwide. The field of agroecology is not associated with any one particular method of farming. However, it has much more in common with organic and integrated farming

### Agroecology impacts:

- enhances fertile landscapes,
- increases yields,
- restores soil health and biodiversity,
- promotes climate resilience and
- Improves farmers' well-being.

Its practices are supported by many agricultural scientists, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), farmers' groups and several NGOs



Img : [https://croplife.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/CropLife-PSP-Infographic\\_1\\_v2.png](https://croplife.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/CropLife-PSP-Infographic_1_v2.png)

### Did you know:

- ZBNF, developed and publicised by agro-scientist **Subhash Palekar**, has been adopted by Andhra Pradesh.
- Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF) is a set of farming methods, and also a grassroots peasant movement, which has spread to various states in India. It has attained wide success in southern India.
- Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF) is a farming practice that believes in natural growth of crops without adding any fertilizers and pesticides or any other foreign elements.

- The word Zero Budget refers to the zero net cost of production of all crops (inter crops, border crops, multi crops).
- The inputs used for seed treatments and other inoculations are locally available in the form of cowdung and cow urine.

A ZBNF practicing farmer has lower cost of inputs and thus has better capacity to increase the incomes. At the same time, ZBNF crops helps in retaining soil fertilizing and is climate change resilient.



Image : <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/img/70463084/Master.jpg>

**Agroecology as a substantial threat to the Powerful lobbies' influence on farming systems .****Why?**

- Farming in India and across the world is largely under the control of powerful lobbies with vested interests and connections to deep pockets. These include fossil fuel, fertilizer and seed companies as well as scientists with funding connections to agribusiness
- We in India presently have a subsidy-based agricultural system where farm inputs are firmly in the hands of corporations and their elite networks.
- large-scale transitions to agroecology will be a substantial threat to their influence on farming system

**For instance:**

- In Britain, when public hearings were held in the early 2000s to discuss genetically modified (GM) crops, corporations threatened to pull grants from scientists on the committees if they voted against GM
- When individual scientists in Europe and the University of California published articles describing how GM foods and crops affected the health of human beings and insects adversely, they were personally attacked and vilified

The current battle on ZBNF is between those powerfully entrenched and new voices of state and civil society.

**Did you know:**

- As a result of industrial farming, friendly insects are no longer part of the agricultural landscape, water pollution is rampant, depleted soils are commonplace and plunging groundwater tables have become the norm.

**Conclusion:**

- Agroecology-based farming is not regressive, but rather a technology of the future with a traditional idiom.
- If policymakers ignore the posturing and stay focussed on improving soil health and quality of life for farmers, while observing and supporting successes, farmers may even double their incomes and India's food security could sow new beginnings.

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**[Agri Credit](#)**

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-III - Economy

**In News**

- The Internal Working Group (IWG) headed by M.K.Jain, constituted by the RBI to Review Agricultural Credit submitted its report.
- Some of the recommendations of the group are:
- Priority sector lending guidelines should have a **separate definition for lending to small and marginal farmers** based on their land-holding size.
- Banks should not insist on land records for borrower seeking credit of up to Rs 2 lakh
- **Digitise land records** so that banks can create charges against landholdings, which will reduce instances of double or multiple financing on the same piece of land.
- State governments should reform their legal framework on the basis of the **Model Land Leasing Act** proposed by NITI Aayog, which will make it easier for farmers to lease land for cultivation and therefore avail credit.
- A **federal institution, like that of the GST Council**, should be set up with members from the central and state governments to implement agricultural reforms.
- At present there is no database of the Indian agriculture sector. Thus, GoI with the help of state governments should **develop a centralised database for agriculture** capturing details related to crops cultivated, cropping pattern, output, sown/irrigated area, health of soil, natural calamity.
- Central and state governments should set up a **credit guarantee scheme** on the lines of credit guarantee schemes for MSME sector to cover the default risk of the borrowers.
- Interest subvention scheme should be replaced with **direct-benefit-transfers** to small and marginal farmers, tenant farmers, sharecroppers, oral lessees and landless labourers as individual borrowers or through self-help-group model up to a limit of Rs 3 lakh

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### [Participatory Guarantee Scheme \(PGS\)](#)

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Main GS-III – Food processing

#### **In News**

- PGS is a process of certifying organic products, which ensures that their production takes place in accordance with laid-down quality standards. The certification is in the form of a documented logo or a voluntary statement.
- PGS is a “**quality assurance initiative** that is locally relevant, emphasize the participation of stakeholders, including producers and consumers, and (which) operate **outside the framework of third-party certification**”.
- **Four pillars of PGS** :The government’s 2015 PGS manual underlines that the system in India is based on “participatory approach, a shared vision, transparency and trust”.
- The advantages of PGS over third-party certification
  - **Procedures are simple**, documents are basic, and farmers understand the local language used.
  - Because peer appraisers live in the same village, they have better access to surveillance; peer appraisal instead of third-party inspections **also reduces costs**

- Mutual recognition and support between regional PGS groups ensures **better networking for processing and marketing.**
- Unlike the grower group certification system, PGS offers every farmer individual certificates, and the **farmer is free to market his own produce independent of the group.**
- The limitations of PGS are:
  - Individual farmers or group **of farmers smaller than five members are not covered under PGS.** They either have to opt for third party certification or join the existing PGS local group.
  - PGS ensures traceability until the product is in the custody of the PGS group, which makes PGS **ideal for local direct sales** and direct trade between producers and consumers.

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## [The food industry's role in sustainable development](#)

### **Context:**

- Over 820 million people are chronically hungry.
- Over two billion suffer from micronutrient deficiencies,
- Around 650 million adults are obese, (due to ultra-processed foods that are stuffed with sugar, saturated fats and other chemical additives)

### **Problems with agro-industries:**

- agro-industrial practices are the main cause of deforestation, freshwater depletion and pollution, soil erosion, and the collapse of biodiversity.
- human-induced climate change is also caused by the food sector and affecting crop production.

### **Some facts about Food industry in India:**

- The Food & Grocery market in India is the sixth largest in the world.
- Food & Grocery retail market in India further constitutes almost 65% of the total retail market in India.
- The Government of India through the Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) is also taking all necessary steps to boost investments in the food processing industry.
- The government has sanctioned 42 Mega Food Parks (MFPs) to be set up in the country under the **Mega Food Park Scheme.**
- By 2024, the Food Processing industry will potentially attract \$ 33 bn investments and generate employment for 9 mn people
- **100% FDI** is permitted under the automatic route in Food processing industries.

**Remedies:**

- In 2015, all 193 members of the United Nations agreed unanimously to two vital agreements. The first, called Agenda 2030, adopts 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a roadmap to human well-being and planetary safety.
- The second, the Paris climate agreement, commits the world's governments to taking decisive action to keep global warming to less than 1.5<sup>0</sup> Celsius.

Both the SDGs and the Paris agreement require decisive changes in practices by the food industry.

**How SDG helps?**

- SDG tackles overconsumption and food waste is essential in ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns, (*The food wasted in Europe alone would be enough to feed all the hungry people in the world two times over*), Reducing food waste would also minimize environmental impacts generated by the agriculture.

**Present scenario:**

- Very few industries report on the healthfulness of their product lines or how their products contribute to healthy and sustainable dietary patterns.
- Very few industries recognize that they are part of the environmental crisis
- Industries don't report in detail on their tax practices.

**What must be done?**

All companies in the food sector to adopt clear guidelines, metrics and reporting standards to align with the global goals

- The industry has to change to promote healthy diets.
- the company's production practices must be sustainable

Ex: many companies are engaged in chemical pollution, massive waste from packaging, deforestation, excessive and poorly targeted fertilizer use, and other environmental ills.

- the company's upstream suppliers must be sustainable i.e No consumer food company should use products from farms that contribute to deforestation.
- aggressive tax practices that exploit legal loopholes should be avoided, as they deprive governments of the revenues needed to promote SDGs.

**Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

- The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a collection of 17 global goals set by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015 for the year 2030. (the 2030 Agenda)





Image : <https://i0.wp.com/www.globaleducationmagazine.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/sustainable-development-goals-global-goals-2030.png>

#### Conclusion:

- Feeding a planet of 7.7 billion people is no easy matter. Every person on the planet needs, expects, and has the right to a healthy diet. Every farmer needs, expects, and has the right to a decent livelihood. world leaders must keep in mind one crucial fact that the world's people are demanding change. We have the know-how and wealth to achieve a prosperous, inclusive, and sustainable world.

#### Connecting the dots:

- Decisive changes in today's agro-industrial practices are needed to ensure the environmental crisis does not get any worse. Analyse

### Government bans export of Onions

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-III- Economy

#### In News

- In the light of increasing prices, the GOI prohibited onion exports and imposed limits on the stocks that can be held to prevent hoarding

- The buffer stocks are maintained through National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED) and supplies are sent to states at regulated prices using these stocks

### About NAFED

- NAFED was set up in 1958 under the **Multi State Co-operative Societies Act**.
- Its objective is to promote Co-operative marketing of agricultural produce to benefit the farmers.
- Agricultural farmers are the main members of Nafed, who have the authority to say in the form of members of the General Body in the working of Nafed.



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## ENVIRONMENT/POLLUTION

### Climate Change and Nationalist Ideology

#### **In news:**

- Brazil's Amazon forests are ablaze with dozens of fires, most of them set intentionally by loggers and others seeking greater access to forest land. At this scale the fires are paving the way for a global climate catastrophe.
- Meanwhile, many cities in Europe and elsewhere have seen high temperatures never before experienced.
- Heat waves have also accelerated melting of glaciers in Greenland at a rate that was not anticipated.

#### **Nationalism and climate change:**

- The Brazilian President has stated that the Amazon forest fires is an internal matter.
- The American President Donald Trump has withdrawn from the Paris Climate Agreement stating that it is against the national interests of the U.S. across the Atlantic.
- British Prime Minister has received **funding from climate science denial groups while saying that he would lobby the U.S. to take climate change more seriously.**

The burning of the world's largest forest reserves, the withdrawal of the world's leading polluter from a major international treaty and the U.K.'s isolationist policies may appear to be the triumph of nationalist ideology.

But these actions have consequences that far transcend national boundaries and impact all creatures that share life on the planet.

#### **Way ahead:**

##### **Better land use:**

##### **Changes in land use pattern and climate change:**

- While energy and transport are mainly responsible for the accumulation of greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the atmosphere, changes in land use patterns too have made significant contributions.
- Deforestation, industrial agricultural systems and desertification are major drivers of climate change.
- Agriculture, forestry and other land use activities accounted for a little less than a quarter (23%) of the total net anthropogenic emissions of GHGs between 2007-2016.

A recent report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report makes it clear that unless land is managed in a sustainable manner, climate change can't be tackled.

**Solution:**

- Managing land better for farming would entail implementing more sustainable agricultural practices. It would mean, for instance, reducing chemical input drastically, and taking the practice of food production closer to natural methods of agroecology, as these would reduce emissions and enhance resilience to warming.
- The IPCC report calls for avoiding conversion of grassland to cropland, bringing in equitable management of water in agriculture, crop diversification, agroforestry and investment in local and indigenous seed varieties that can withstand higher temperatures.
- It also recommends practices that increase soil carbon and reduce salinisation.

**An inclusive land use policy:**

- To make these significant changes and reduce inequality and poverty, land use policy should incorporate better access to markets for small and marginal farmers, empower women farmers, expand agricultural services and strengthen land tenure systems.
- Sustainable land management can reduce multiple stressors on ecosystems and societies. It will also help societies adapt better to warmer climates and reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

**Establishing sustainable food systems:**

- Reducing food waste, which is estimated to be a quarter of the food produced.
- It also necessitates eating locally grown food and cutting meat consumption.

Alongside these changes, it is important to put an end to deforestation, while conserving mangroves, peatland and other wetlands.

**Addressing the transnational challenges of climate change and land:**

The narrow lens of nationalism is no longer serving us.

We need a new **planetary ethics** that supports alternative systems for the future, for a sustainable earth.

Focus has to be on the following:

- Growth of ecological sensibilities.
- Supporting pluralism.
- Enhancing quality of life.

- Shifting values away from consumerism.
- Creating new identities and cultures that transcend conventional boundaries.

**Conclusion:**

Viewing the transnational challenge of climate change through the narrow lens of nationalism will only spell disaster. A sense of solidarity across boundaries needs to be created, instead of building fortress worlds, will contribute to the path we build.

**Connecting the dots:**

- Viewing the transnational challenge of climate change through the narrow lens of nationalism will only spell disaster. Comment.

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**India: Building resilience against climate change****Background:**

Against scientific warnings, carbon emissions continue to rise in China, the U.S. and India, three of the biggest emitters. Brazil is encouraging — under the false pretext of promoting economic growth — unprecedented deforestation of the Amazon rainforest.

Amidst this dangerous setting, global leadership must act with far greater urgency, and countries, including India, ought to switch rapidly from polluting fossil fuels to cleaner renewable energy, while building much stronger coastal and inland defences against climatic damage.

**In Indian context:**

India is one of the most vulnerable country to climate change as per HSBC's 2018 assessment.

As global warming worsens, the hardest hit by the resulting floods, storms, heatwaves and droughts will be in India.

Measures relating to the climate risk consider the exposure or sensitivity of countries to climate impacts on the one side, and their ability to cope on the other.

- A number of Indian States have experienced extreme heatwaves in the past three years, and the nation's capital recently recorded a temperature of 48°C, its hottest day in 21 years.
- India's exposure to climate hazards is heightened by the location of its vast coastline in the eye of the storm, across the Indian Ocean, Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea.

- Increasing temperatures and changing seasonal rainfall patterns are aggravating droughts and hurting agriculture across the country. Extreme storms like the one that hit Odisha this year and the floods that swept Chennai in 2015 are the new normal.

#### **Way ahead: Building resilience**

- India is not doing enough to boost its coastal and inland defences.
- It also needs to do more to build resilience in the sectors of agriculture, fisheries, manufacturing, energy, transport, health, and education.
- The priority for spending at the national and State levels for disaster management needs to rise. Adequate resources must also be allocated for implementing climate action plans that most States have now prepared.

#### **Conclusion:**

As the country that is most at risk for climate damage, India should lead in pressing the global community to take sweeping climate action. Meanwhile, the nation must reinforce its infrastructure and adapt its agriculture and industry. Equally, India also needs to replace urgently its fossil fuels with renewable energy.

#### **Connecting the dots:**

- India is one of the most vulnerable country to climate change as per HSBC's 2018 assessment. In this light discuss the urgency for India to build resilience.

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## **DESERTIFICATION**

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-III- Environmental Conservation

#### **In News**

- PM Modi addressed the High Level Segment of the 14th Conference of Parties (COP14) of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, held at **New Delhi**
- India has raised the **target of restoring land** with degraded status from 21 million hectares to **26 million hectares** (27% of total degraded land) by 2030.
- Area of India undergoing the process of land degradation, as of 2011-13 is 96.5 million hectares of land – 29% of total geographical area
- India called upon the leadership of UNCCD to conceive a **“Global Water Action Agenda”** which is central to the Land Degradation Neutrality strategy.

- To further develop a scientific approach and facilitate induction of technology to land degradation issues, India has decided to set up a **centre for excellence in India at the Indian Council for Forest Research and Education.**
- India became part of the “**Bonn Challenge**”, a global effort to bring 150 million hectares of the world’s deforested and degraded land into restoration by 2020, and 350 million hectares by 2030

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## [REPLAN \(Reducing plastic in Nature\)](#)

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-III – Environmental Conservation

### **In News**

- **Khadi and Village Industries Commission’s (KVIC)** REPLAN project has completed one year.
- REPLAN project aims to **remove existing waste plastic material from nature.**
- In this project, the waste plastic is collected, chopped, cleaned, beaten and treated for softness. After that, it is mixed with paper raw material i.e. cotton rags pulp in ratio of 80 % (pulp) and 20% (plastic waste)
- The project was launched in September 2018 as part of KVIC’s commitment to Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan and has so far sold over 6 lakh handmade plastic mixed carry bags
- KVIC manufactures plastic-mixed handmade paper at its Kumarappa National Handmade Paper Institute (KNHPI) in **Jaipur, Rajasthan.**
- KVIC is **statutory body established** under the Khadi and Village Industries Commission Act of 1956.
- KVIC works under **Union Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises**

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## [The Amazon forest fire – Consequences from global warming and climatic change](#)

### **Context:**

Forest fire in the Amazon gave an indication for the human community about the devastating effects of deforestation, land-use change and rising fossil fuels emissions.

### **Climate change and its impacts**

- Many cities have seen high temperatures never before experienced
- Heat waves have accelerated
- Melting of glaciers (esp. in Greenland)
- Recent floods in Mumbai, Kerala and North Karnataka

Energy and transport are mainly responsible for the accumulation of greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the atmosphere.

Fossil fuel emissions and changes in land use patterns – deforestation, industrial agricultural systems and desertification – are major drivers of climate change.

### **IPCC Report**

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has recently brought out a **special report on Climate Change and Land**.

It covers desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems.

According to the **Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) of Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)** –

- Cumulative carbon emissions from land-use change since 1750 amounted to almost 180 Gigatonne (Gt), driven largely by the more than six-fold expansion of cropland.
- Fossil fuel use contributed 375 Gigatonne (Gt) since 1750, that is more than 12 times that of the net cumulative emissions from terrestrial ecosystems.

However, the **AR5 report** also points out that –

- The net carbon emission of terrestrial ecosystem from deforestation and land-use pattern remains neutral since 1750.
- Even though the cumulative land-use change increased the levels of carbon emission; it was absorbed from the existing vegetation, thus maintaining the carbon emission level at minimal.

According to **Global Carbon Project** reports –

- Fossil fuel emits about 9.9 Gt (Gigatonne) of carbon annually to the environment compared to 1.5Gt from land-use change. Terrestrial ecosystem absorbs ~3.8 Gt of carbon annually, indicating carbon emission from fossil fuels remain in the atmosphere compared to other sources.

### **About Global Carbon Project (GCP)**



- GCP is an organisation established in 2001, working on checking the quantity of global greenhouse gas emissions mainly carbon di oxide, methane and nitrous oxide and their causes.

**Concerns:**

From the literature in IPCC AR5, carbon emission from deforestation and logging was compensated to carbon absorption from the forest re-growth, thereby keeping the overall carbon emission at 0.11 Gt per year.

But the carbon emissions from fossil fuels are majorly leading to global warming and increases the summer temperature remarkably compared to deforestation and land-use change.

The emission effect from deforestation and land-use change can be reversed by planting more vegetation, carbon absorption from untouched forest areas and biomass, but the fossil fuel emission from coal, gas, oil cannot be reversed and even cannot be compensated from the existing vegetation.

**Conclusion:**

The forest fire in Amazon is not a first time case, but the fact is that the forest fire is increasing year after year devastating larger ecosystem every year. Similar forest fires are seen in Africa (Zambia, Angola, Democratic republic of Congo), Siberia and in Canada majorly due to increase in the summer temperatures.

The Amazon forest is a conservator of millions of species of vegetation, animals, birds, ecosystem and biodiversity but preventing deforestation is a real challenge.

Use of alternate source of energy in place of fossil fuels may minimize the effects of global warming and reduce carbon emission to the atmosphere.

The efforts from developed countries to minimize the use of fossil fuel has been less and according to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), they have achieved only 1.3% reduction in use of fossil fuels in 26 years from 1990. So if the countries join their hands to agree on Paris's Agreement on climate change which aims to keep the global temperature to 2% at industrial levels and 1.5% at non industrial areas may help to conserve our terrestrial ecosystems and mitigate global warming drastically.

**Connecting the dots:**

- Discuss the factors responsible for long term climate change. What evidences do we have that support current global warming. Explain.

- The fight against climate change is more effective at the household level than macro level policy formulations. Do you agree? Substantiate.
- Critically evaluate the emerging trends in global climate change negotiations. Is the world heading in the right direction in its fight against climate change? Critically examine.

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## Carbon Tax – New approach to mitigate global warming

### **Context:**

Global warming is a serious concern which needs to be addressed globally.

According to Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) report – Global carbon emissions have to fall by 45% from 2010 to 2030 and has to reach zero at the end of 2050.

So we are left with a decade to control global warming. If we do not meet these figures by the next 10 yrs, then the tropical regions of the World, mainly the global South will be impacted more because of their low altitudes and relatively high temperatures. The impact was already seen in Tamil Nadu crisis which had scarcity of water during 2019 summer.

Although the global South has impacted less for the global warming, it is acting as a receiver from the life style change towards the Global North.

Environment is becoming a casualty but a genuine global consensus to address the problem is yet to be found.

So both North and South parts of world must work collaboratively towards addressing the issue and plan measures to control it. But as the relationship between both is unequal, there is a call for a balanced approach to address global warming together.

### **What is Carbon Tax?**

- The carbon tax is a term used to represent the tax imposed to the countries based on the carbon content of the fuels (oil, petroleum, gas products) resources that they have.
- This has been the approach involved in sharing the responsibility towards global warming depending on their share in global carbon emissions.
- This is the most accepted model of mitigating the problem.

### **Just Energy Transition (JET)**

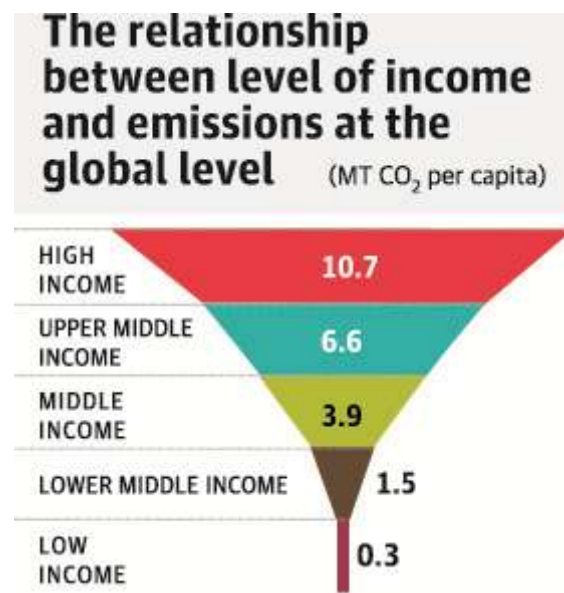
- On the other hand, Just Energy Transition (JET), approach gives global justice in terms of climatic changes and the contribution of global emissions from the countries.

- It will also help fuel poor countries to shift their fuel requirements to other energy sources without compensating their economic losses.

### Need for more green energy resources

- As the financially rich countries are concentrating on their own energy resources, priority must be given to shift their energy resources into green energy resources.
- This global green energy needs a massive infrastructure and investment. This can be achieved if the rich countries share the burden from the poor countries.
- In other words, instead of funding their own energy transition, they can share the burden with the poor nations so that the injustice funnel is inverted.
- To achieve this greener energy program, the countries may have to invest 1.5% of their GDP. This can be done by getting funds from global carbon tax which is \$46.1 per metric tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> emitted and the average global carbon emission is 36.1 billion metric tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> from these energy rich countries.

### Emission Ladder:



[https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/e7amvt/article29394219.ece/alternates/FREE\\_320/level-of-incomecol](https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/e7amvt/article29394219.ece/alternates/FREE_320/level-of-incomecol)

### What is Carbon tax sharing?

- This is a process of energy transition wherein the countries which are emitting more than average per capita carbon will fund a part of their energy transition with countries which are below average in carbon emission.
- This will compensate the energy transitions to greener environment from the receiving countries thereby compensating to the greener Earth.

- So the countries which are emitting high levels of carbon per capita will share their energy transitions with the beneficiary countries which are emitting below average carbon.

#### **How to calculate carbon tax?**

- The average carbon compensation from the donor nations is around \$570 billion. This amount is distributed among the donor countries depending on their distance from the global average (fixed for their population size).
- The same is the case for the receiving countries which receives the amount based on the carbon emission compared to the global average.
- So when we add the carbon compensation to each of these countries, we can generate the carbon tax for each of them.

USA and China ranked the top two payer nations list as their absolute amount of energy transfers is higher compared to the global averages.

India on the contrary comes in the compensated countries list because of its high population size and low global emission rates.

#### **Conclusion:**

The time has come for all of us to focus on mitigating the global carbon emission rate to the lower levels.

This can be achieved from combined efforts of payer nations and compensated nations by sharing their per capita carbon emission.

With this global policy approach, even the high income nations whose per capita emissions are lower will also be benefitted along with poor energy countries. All that needs is the countries to step down their emission ladders without compensating their standard of living there by achieving global green Robin Hood tax.

#### **Connecting the dots:**

- What is global carbon tax and how it is calculated?
- What are the measures to mitigate the global warming in terms of carbon emission?

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### [Afforestation – Step towards green initiative](#)

#### **Context:**

- India has committed to restoring 26 million hectares of degraded land by 2030.
- It proposes to create a carbon sink of close to three billion metric tonnes through additional tree cover.

- At UN Convention to Combat Climate Change, Prime Minister Narendra Modi committed to reduce carbon emission by planning afforestation programs in India.

**According to a recent study from Centre for Science and Environment –**

- Soil degradation causes more carbon emission compared to any other activity indicating the need to restore the soil.
- Soil stores three times more carbon than that of atmosphere.
- Focus should be on reducing carbon sink with intensive afforestation programs.
- Right tree species with better forestry measures is a centre point of focus.

**Concerns:**

**‘Carbon credit markets’ have failed to generate funds for the developing world**

- World countries have moved from regime of mandatory commitments (as part of 1997 Kyoto Protocol) to voluntary ones (under the 2015 Paris accord). This shift has negatively impacted carbon credit markets.
- Developing countries like India were issued carbon emission reduction certificates (which were bought by EU countries for funding clean projects). However, these certificates were often underpriced and were accorded to wrong projects, and hence failed to positively reduce carbon emission/carbon credits.
- Global funding for afforestation — Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation plus conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks (REDD+) — failed to provide accurate carbon pricing and negotiate rights of traditional communities.

**The way ahead:**

- A multilateral body just for funding green initiatives must be set up.
- Step towards green initiatives – such as policy push to solar power and the efforts to shift to EVs – should be accelerated.
- Policy focus should be mainly on afforestation (through effective implementation of CAMPA)

**Compensatory Afforestation Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA)**

- Started from Supreme Court of India in 2002.
- This is the amount paid by the developers who have utilized the forest lands for their construction work/projects.
- Ensures that the destroyed forest land is restored by regenerating the forest trees elsewhere in non-forest areas.

**Conclusion:**

- Last November UNEP released a report on ‘emissions gap’ which indicated the global carbon emission reached its highest in 2017 after 3 years of stagnation.
- As the soil emits more carbon than any other sources, steps has to be taken to reduce carbon emission from soil.
- Afforestation is a crucial measure to combat carbon emission there by helping green initiative movement.

### **Connecting the dots:**

- What do you mean by Emission Trading Scheme (ETS)? Does India need one? Discuss.
- What is the National REDD+ strategy? What are its objectives? Explain.

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## Degradation of plastics

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-III – Environmental Conservation

### **In News**

- The team at IIT Madras have demonstrated an environment-friendly strategy to degrade the chemically inert and physically stable **plastic fluoropolymer** — polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE) of which **Teflon is made**.
- All that is required to degrade the fluoropolymer into molecules is continuous stirring of it in water containing 1,000 ppm glucose and metal ions for about 15 days at 70 degree C.
- PTFE polymer was breaking down into smaller molecules through triboelectric degradation.
- **Triboelectricity** refers to the electrification of dissimilar objects or materials occurred due to the collision. The process of rubbing materials against each other increase the surface contact producing an electric charge which is termed as triboelectric effect.
- The team has tested polyethylene and polyethylene terephthalate (PET) using same methodology and got similar results.
- Scientists predict that similar chemistry can possibly **lead to micro and nanoplastics in food during cooking** as many modern cookware are coated with Teflon.
- Triboelectric degradation of plastic might be occurring in nature in large water bodies such as oceans where metal ions are found in abundance and waves provide constant agitation – may be one of the ways by which **microplastics get generated**

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## National Centre for Clean Coal Research and Development (NCCCR&D)

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-III – Environmental Conservation

### **In News**

- Government of India through Department of Science & Technology, has set up the NCCCR&D as a national level consortium on clean coal R&D, led by the Indian Institute of Science (IISc)-Bengaluru.
- The primary goal is to address several critical R&D challenges towards the development of clean coal technologies, in tandem with developing supercritical power plant technologies, both at the materials and system level.
- Clean coal technology is a collection of technologies being developed in attempts to **lessen the negative environmental impact of coal energy generation** and to mitigate worldwide climate change.
- The term "clean coal" has been applied to many technologies, ranging from wet scrubbers, which remove sulfur dioxide from coal-generated gas, to coal washing, which removes soil and rock from coal before it's sent to a factory.
- The research in clean coal domain could potentially be game changer for meeting the energy needs of the country in terms of **higher efficiency and capacity at lower operating costs and size.**

### [Green bonus- Integrating mountains with the mainstream](#)

#### **Context:**

- In the last week of July 2019, 11 Himalayan States of India met in Dehradun demanding a "green bonus".
- Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) promised in its general election manifesto to provide a financial package to address the special developmental needs of the Himalayan States

#### **What is Green bonus:**

11 Himalayan states gathered together and made the following demands to the centre

- A separate Union ministry to deal with problems endemic to them
- The States asked to develop hydropower resources, subsidies for their environmental protection measures which deny them normal 'development models', and recognition of their efforts to meet human development parameters.
- Bring political, social, or ecological-economical terms with the specificity of the Himalayan region.
- 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

#### **Scenarios in integrating mountain regions with the national mainstream:**

- The mountain zone starts from Balochistan, through Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, J&K, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Nepal, Sikkim and Gorkhaland, to Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and the Chittagong Hill Tracts.
- They have difficulty in integrating these hilly regions with these national states which are primarily anchored in the plains.
- Authors/writers have also opined about the structural, social, and economical differences of the mountain states from the rest of India in their writings:
- Integration problem' is not just a South Asian phenomenon — China is struggling to integrate its mountain people and their homelands with its national mainstream, as are Myanmar, Thailand, and other countries.

#### **Colonial era:**

- The establishment of Pax Britannica's border lines along India's northern mountain which was anchored in the society and political economy of the plains could for the first time could reach so deep into the Himalayas and control them which were historically unprecedented.
- In brief, the Himalayas successfully provided a barrier to Russian colonial expansion but were unsuccessful in providing a trade route into China.
- Keeping the mountains politically quiet and socially peaceful was both a desirable aim and a hopeful description by the end of the 19th century.
- The independent nation states of Asia like India, Pakistan, China or Myanmar have all imagined themselves to be the inheritors, in the high Himalayas, of the geopolitical stakes of their colonial predecessors.
- The happiness of the 'hill station' or the war-like strategies towards the northern tribesmen was both creations of this colonial policy.

#### **Norms of an Indian village:**

- The norms of an 'Indian village' depends on how its society is structured, how its economy is backward or in what ways does its political life work make no reference to the specificities of the mountain regions.



- This is not only a social-psychological feature but has direct practical consequences as policies and programmes are devised with the 'national norm' in mind, which almost always have unintended consequences on the hilly regions.

**Conclusion:**

- There is a direct, yet short, link between the demands of the Himalayan States seeking a special "green bonus" — which the BJP supports.
- The massive expansion of the national economy over the past three decades now allows for commodification of mountain resources (forests, water, labour, tourism, horticulture and even agriculture).
- It has led to changes in the class structure and the emergence of a new middle class with national aspirations that find the geographical specificity of the Himalayas.

**Connecting the dots:**

- How the secessionist movements in J&K and Nagaland and integrationist movements in Himachal Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur help the people to come to the national mainstream?
- What are the main reasons for the low focus on the Himalayan states with respect to social, economical and political measures?

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**Climate movements**

**Part of:** GS Prelims and GS-III – Environment Conservation

**In News**

- Students in more than 2,000 cities across the world are holding demonstrations under the **#FridaysforFuture movement**, protesting inaction towards climate change.
- Also known as the Youth Strike for Climate Movement, it started in August 2018 after **Greta Thunberg (16-year-old student)** sat outside the Swedish parliament for three weeks to protest against inaction towards climate change and called for concrete government action.
- Then in September 2018, Thunberg called for a **strike every Friday** until the Swedish parliament revised its policies towards climate change.
- The movement soon spread to other countries which turned into a global movement supported by Civil Society activists and Scientists.
- Students are protesting because they are the ones who are going to be **bearing the brunt of Climate change** in the coming decades and the governments continue to rely on fossil fuels.

- In the present phase of the strikes, students are demanding “urgent” and “decisive” action in order to keep global average temperatures from rising above 1.5 degree Celsius.
- Also, millions of adults will be joining them in the **Global #ClimateStrike movement**, which will commence just as the **UN Climate Action Summit 2019** is set to take place in New York on September 23

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## Climate change action an hour of need

### **Context:**

- Millions of people demonstrated across the world(185 countries) demanding urgent action to tackle global heating, as they united across timezones and cultures to take part in the biggest climate protest in history.
- The demonstrations took place on the eve of a UN climate summit, called by the secretary general, António Guterres, to inject urgency into government action to restrict the rise in global temperatures to 1.5C, as agreed under the 2015 Paris agreement.

### **Why?**

- The growing evidence of climate change — scientific and experiential — has spurred an upwelling of social action, notably among the youth.
- Carbon emissions climbed to a record high last year, despite a warning from the UN-backed Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that there is little more than a decade left to act to slash emissions and stabilise the climate.

### **Evidences of climate change:**

- Sea level rise is accelerating, and oceans have become 26% more acidic since the dawn of the Industrial era.
- This summer saw Delhi-like temperatures across southern Europe;
- Hurricane Dorian rendered large parts of the Bahamas unliveable;
- simultaneous raging fires in the Amazon, central Africa and even Siberia.
- heat wave in France and Germany

Yet, concentrations of carbon dioxide continue to rise, and current country pledges would not stem this increase even by 2030.

### **Crux:**

A turn toward nationalism in multiple countries has created a short-term, look-out-for-our-own mentality that is inimical to the global collective action needed to address climate change.

Example:

- In United States, President Donald Trump not only refuses to enhance actions, he has actively rolled back measures in the electricity sector and actions to limit methane emissions in the name of competitiveness
- In Brazil, President Jair Bolsonaro has made it clear he sees environmental protections as limiting Brazilian business.

**What is done so far?**

Diplomatically:

- countries have been urged to enhance their pledges for action made as part of the Paris Agreement, committing to lower future emissions.
- the response is underwhelming. A number of small and mid-sized countries, have already committed to achieving the objective of making their economies net carbon neutral by 2050
- By contrast, several large countries, notably the United States, Brazil, Australia, Canada, Japan and Mexico are reportedly not even going to participate in the event at a high level
- China and India have issued statements hinting that they are doing quite enough

**Trough action port folio:**

- furthering and accelerating an energy transition toward low-carbon energy,
- making cities more climate friendly and more resilient to climate disruption,
- starting the process of turning energy intensive sectors such as steel and cement more carbon friendly.
- promoting solar energy for energy security reasons;
- making cities more liveable;
- making industries more efficient and therefore competitive

**Impact on India:**

- We are a deeply vulnerable country to climate impacts. It would behove India not to be a status quo player in this context, but to argue for enhanced global collective action.
- India has the potential to show the pathway to accelerating action on climate change even while pursuing its development interests.
- India is justifiably recognised for promoting renewable energy, yet also muddies the waters by sending mixed signals on future coal use.

**Conclusion:**

- India needs domestic energy policies that are more clearly and coherently tuned to a future low carbon world.

- India and China, jointly must help ensure that Africa's development is powered by renewable energy rather than fossil fuels
- the aim should be to make accelerated climate action congruent with an enlightened notion of national interest by focusing on key actions in rapidly changing areas such as energy and urbanisation.
- India Must build a diplomatic approach on a firm domestic foundation that takes seriously climate change as a factor in its future development pathway.

#### 2015 Paris agreement:

- **Paris Agreement** is an international agreement to **combat climate change**.
- Paris Agreement comes under the broad umbrella of **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**. UNFCCC is a convention held in 1992 to combat climate change.

#### Aim:

- Keep the global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial level.
- Pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius.
- Strengthen the ability of countries to deal with the impacts of climate change.

#### Connecting the dots:

- Backed by popular mobilisation and scientific evidence, can the UN swing the tide toward enhanced action?
- What does this canvas of global climate politics mean for India?
- Could an India, firmly committed to a low-carbon future that brings development benefits, strike common cause with other powers?

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### [New IPCC report warns of dire threat to oceans](#)

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-III – Environmental Conservation

#### In News

- According to its report, the ocean is projected to transition to unprecedented conditions **with increased temperatures, further ocean acidification, marine heatwaves and more frequent extreme El Niño and La Niña events**
- Global ocean has warmed unabated since 1970 and has taken up more than 90% of the excess heat in the climate system
- Since 1993, the rate of ocean warming has more than doubled. Marine heatwaves have very likely doubled in frequency since 1982 and are increasing in intensity.

### About IPCC

- IPCC was established in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to assess climate change based on the latest science.
- It acts as the apex referee for **scientific evidence on the impact of global warming**

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## Climate change action

### Context

The UN Climate Change Summit, 2019 was recently held in New York. The key focus of the summit is to accelerate the actions to implement Paris agreement.

#### Did you know:

- Climate change is a change in the usual weather found in a place. This could be a change in how much rain a place usually gets in a year. Or it could be a change in a place's usual temperature for a month or season.
- Climate change is also a change in Earth's climate. This could be a change in Earth's usual temperature. Or it could be a change in where rain and snow usually fall on Earth.

#### Evidences of climate change across the world:

- Sea level rise is accelerating, and oceans have become 26% more acidic since the dawn of the Industrial era.
- Europe saw the highest temperatures ever in recorded history. (Paris recorded its highest temperature of 42.6°C)
- Hurricane Dorian rendered large parts of the Bahamas unliveable;
- simultaneous raging fires in the Amazon, central Africa and even Siberia.
- heat wave in France and Germany
- Nearly 500 species have become extinct in just the last century.
- We are depleting 25% more natural resources than the planet can sustain right now.

#### Evidences of climate change across India:

- Cyclones such as Thane, Vardah, Ockhi and Gaja have affected Tamil Nadu
- Chennai floods in 2015.
- Floods in Assam, Himachal Pradesh and Bihar this year
- Mumbai received record monsoon rains.
- Kerala witnessed floods for the second consecutive year.
- Cyclone Fani devastated Odisha, Cyclone Vayu ravaged Gujarat this year.

**Causes:**

- indiscriminate use of fossil fuels.
- The increase in global temperatures started with the industrial revolution
- Industries, vehicles, burning of fossil fuels, thermal power plants and large-scale rearing of cattle are emitting heat-trapping greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide.
- The main cause of climate change is **global warming**, which has many negative consequences on physical, biological and human systems, as well as other effects.

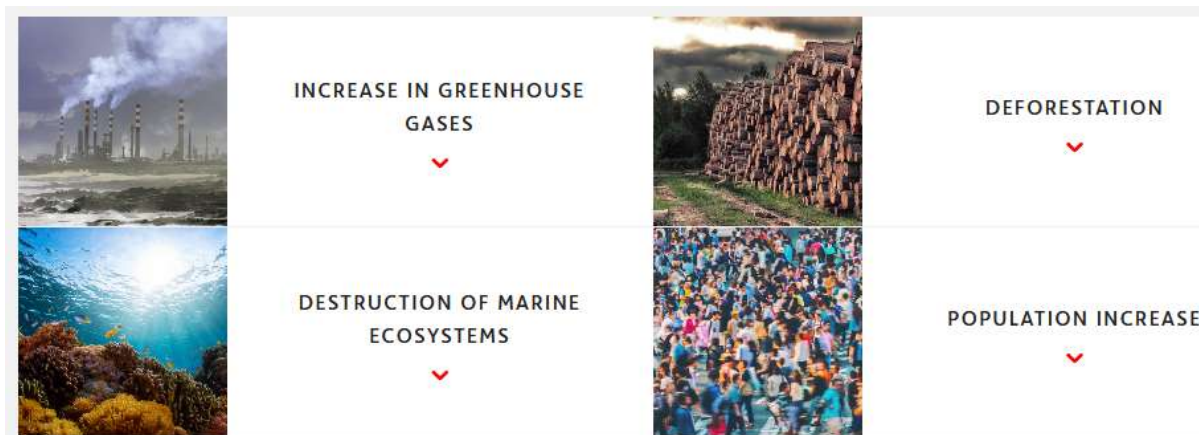
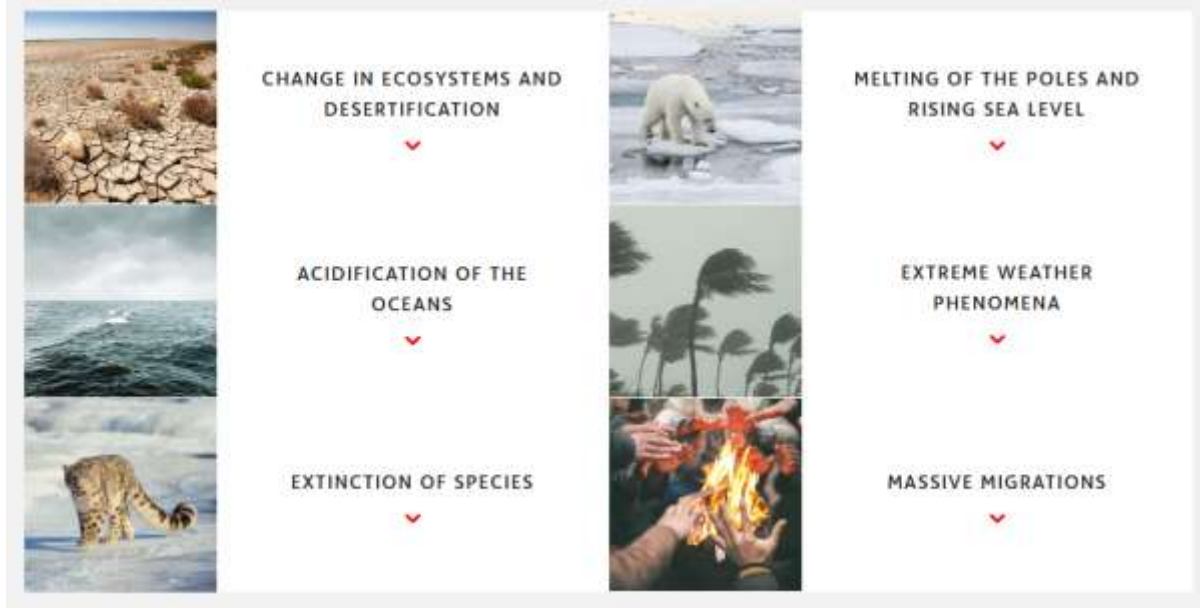
**Causes of global warming**

Image : <https://www.accionacom.com/climate-change/>

**Consequences of the climate change**

- drastically affect agriculture , the production of rice, wheat, maize and soya will decrease significantly
- give birth to newer infections and illness.
- This imbalance will in turn affect the economy which will lead to conflict, war and global unrest.
- sea levels will rise and submerge coastal cities



Imag : <https://www.accionacom/climate-change/>

### Way forward:

climate change cannot be avoided. We can mitigate its effects and adapt to its consequences. These actions are known as climate change mitigation and adaptation measures. Like

- launching actions to reduce and limit greenhouse gas emissions with the aim of preventing the global temperature
- improving infrastructure and making facilities safer and more resilient,
- reforestation and landscape restoration,
- water treatment and purification,
- flexible and varied farming to be prepared for natural catastrophes
- invest in research and development into the behavior of temperature or possible occurrence of atmospheric phenomena.
- Research and international collaboration are essential to combat climate change, like IPCC, Paris agreements, conference of the Parties (COP), the Montreal Protocol, The Paris Agreement.

### Immediate steps to be taken :

- The Indian government should declare a climate emergency immediately.
- Immediate policy changes should include reducing the usage of fossil fuels by half by 2030,
- encouraging the use of public transport,
- increasing forest area,

- promoting non-conventional energy,
- devising good water management policies,
- implementing the plastic ban stringently,
- banning the burning of waste,
- Promoting innovative urban planning policies and reducing mass rearing of cattle for human consumption.

**Conclusion:**

- It is the duty of every human and government to take steps to stop the climate crisis. Let us all join together to save the only planet we have.

**Connecting the dots:**

- The Indian government must take corrective measures immediately to combat climate change. Justify

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[SC order demolition of Maradu blocks violating CRZ regulations](#)

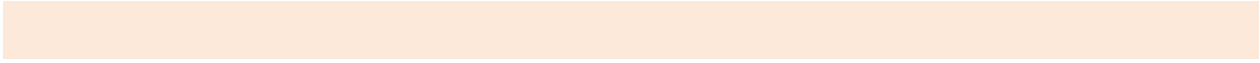
**Part of:** GS Prelim sand Mains GS-III – Environmental Conservation

**In News**

- The coastal land up to 500m from the High Tide Line (HTL) and a stage of 100m along banks of creeks, estuaries, backwater and rivers subject to tidal fluctuations, is called the Coastal Regulation Zone(CRZ).
- CRZ Notification 2018 is based on the recommendations of **Shailesh Nayak committee** and have been issued **under Section 3 of the Environment Protection Act, 1986.**
- CRZ along the country has been placed in four categories, which are as follows
- **CRZ I - Ecologically Sensitive Areas.**
  - They lie between low and high tide line.
  - Exploration of natural gas and extraction of salt are permitted
  - no construction is allowed except activities for atomic power plants, defense.
- **CRZ II - Shore Line Areas**
  - The areas that have been developed up to or close to the shoreline.
  - Unauthorized structures are not allowed to construct in this zone.
- **CRZ III - Undisturbed Area**
  - Rural (CRZ IIIA and CRZ IIIB) and Urban localities which fall outside I and II.
  - Only certain activities related to agriculture even some public facilities are allowed in this zone.
- **CRZ IV - Territorial Area**
  - An area covered between Low Tide Line and 12 Nautical Miles seaward.



- Fishing and allied activities are permitted in this zone.
- Solid waste should be let off in this zone.



## ANIMALS/NATIONAL PARKS IN NEWS

### Animal in news: Mussels

**Part of:** GS Prelims and GS-III – Environment Conservation

#### **In News**

- Mussels are a small, edible **sea animal** that has a **dark shell** with two parts that close tightly together
- As they pump and filter the water through their gills in order to feed and breathe, mussels **store almost everything** else that passes through.
- Mussels thus act as '**super-filters**', taking in phytoplankton for nourishment along with microplastics, pesticides and other pollutants
- Scientists are deploying mussels across the oceans **to absorb microplastics and other pollutants** in the fight against water pollution.
- Mussels have long been used as "**bio-indicators**" of the health of the seas, lakes and rivers they inhabit.
- A recent report by WWF said that humans ingest an average of five grams of microplastics a week, about the weight of a credit card.

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### Vulture Conservation

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-III – Environmental Conservation

#### **In News**

- The population of the vultures in the country declined sharply from 40 million in the 80s to a few thousand by 2009.
- The major reason behind the vulture population getting nearly wiped out was the drug **Diclofenac**, found in the carcass of cattle the vultures fed on.
- The drug, whose veterinary use was banned in 2008, was commonly administered to cattle to treat inflammation.
- To study the cause of deaths of vultures, a **Vulture Care Centre (VCC)** was set up at Pinjore, Haryana in 2004.
- At present there are **nine Vulture Conservation and Breeding Centres (VCBC)** in India, of which three are directly administered by Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS).
- The objective of the VCBCs is not only to look after the vultures and breed them in captivity, but also to release them into the wild.
- The total number of vultures in these VCBCs is now more than 700.

- These days the forest department burning or burying animal carcasses it to keep poachers away. But the practice is denying food to vultures. Thus, scientists at VCBCs have called for better management of carcass dumps.

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## Tiger Conservation

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-III – Environmental Conservation

### **In News**

- India, Nepal, Bhutan to count tigers in high altitudes
- Potential high altitude tiger landscapes include the
  - Valmiki-Chitwan-Annapurna (India-Nepal),
  - Manas-Royal Manas-Jigme Dorji (India-Bhutan);
  - Neora Valley-Torsa-Buxa-Phibsu (India-Bhutan);
  - Askot-Pithoragarh-Nandhaur-Suklaphanta (India-Nepal); and
  - Arunachal-Sikkim-bordering Bhutan (India-Bhutan).
- Recording the presence of tigers in high altitudes is important to judge the health of the species, as poaching and fragmented habitat are serious challenges to their population growth

### **Do You Know?**

- India is home to the most number of tigers in the world, most of them are focussed in Central India and the Western Ghats.
- The latest tiger survey, made public earlier this year estimated 2,967 tigers all over India.

## INFRASTRUCTURE/ENERGY

### Gandhi Solar Park

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-II –International affairs

#### **In News**

- PM Modi along with others world leaders inaugurated the Gandhi Solar Park **at the UN headquarters** on the occasion of Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary.
- The 50 kWh roof-top solar park having 195 solar panels—each representing a member of the multilateral body – was built by India at a cost of US \$1 million
- The leaders also launched a **UN postage stamp of Mahatma Gandhi**, at the programme 'Relevance of Mahatma Gandhi in the Contemporary World' at the UN headquarters.

#### **Do you know?**

- India is the third largest emitter of greenhouse gases, after China and the US.
- Coal power, cattle and paddy are major sources of emission, though per capita emissions (1.8 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>) are roughly a seventh of the US and less than half the world average (4.2 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>)
- India has pledged for a **33-35% reduction in emission intensity** (emissions associated with each unit of economic output) by 2030, compared to 2005 levels.
- India has set the target of installing **175 GW of renewable energy** by the year 2022, which includes 100 GW from solar, 60 from wind and the rest from small hydro, etc.

### Petronet – Tellurian deal

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-II – International Affairs

#### **In News**

- During Indian PM visit to the USA, a MoU instead of an actual agreement, was signed for the \$2.5 billion investment planned by Indian PSU Petronet in American LNG company Tellurian's Driftwood LNG terminal

#### **Reasons for delay in reaching agreement:**

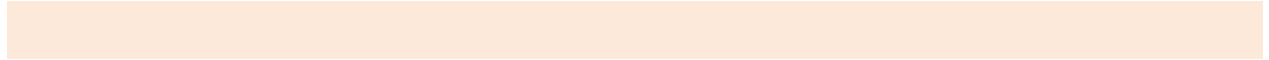
- Price drops in LNG
- India's demand shortfall given the recent downturn in manufacturing
- Expected LNG supply from Indian market and
- Negative experience with locking in contracts for along period

#### **About Petronet**

- It was formed as a Joint Venture by the Government of India to import LNG and set up LNG terminals in the country.

- It involves India's leading oil and natural gas industry players with its promoters being GAIL, ONGC, IOCL and BPCL.

**It has set up the country's first LNG receiving and regasification terminal at Dahej, Gujarat,** and another terminal at Kochi, Kerala



## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

### Water on Exoplanet

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-III -Space

#### **In News**

- Astronomers have for the first time **discovered water in the atmosphere of exoplanet - K2-18b**, along with Earth-like temperatures that could support life.
- An exoplanet or extrasolar planet **is a planet outside the Solar System**
- The **K2-18b** planet orbits the cool dwarf star K2-18, which is about 110 light years from Earth in the **Leo constellation of the milkyway galaxy**
- Scientists used archive data from 2016 and 2017 captured by the ESA/NASA **Hubble Space Telescope** and developed open-source algorithms to analyse the starlight filtered through K2-18b's atmosphere.
- The results revealed the **molecular signature of water vapour**, also indicating the presence of hydrogen and helium in the planet's atmosphere
- Scientists concluded further studies are required to estimate cloud coverage and the percentage of atmospheric water present.

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### BIO-TECHNOLOGY IN INDIA

#### **Context:**

- India is among the first countries to set up a specialised agency for the development of research and human resources in the biotechnology sector.
- Modern biotechnological research is expensive.
- It requires a highly trained and skilled workforce and access to expensive instruments.

#### **What is Biotechnology?**

- **Biotechnology** is the broad area of biology involving living systems and organisms to develop or make products, or "any technological application that uses biological systems, living organisms
- it often overlaps with the (related) fields of molecular biology, bio-engineering, biomedical engineering, bio manufacturing, molecular engineering, etc
- biotechnology has expanded to include new and diverse sciences such as genomics, recombinant gene techniques, applied immunology, and development of pharmaceutical therapies and diagnostic tests

**Did you know:**

**Genomics** is an interdisciplinary field of biology focusing on the structure, function, evolution, mapping, and editing of genomes. A genome is an organism's complete set of DNA, including all of its genes. (PREVIOUS UPSC PRELIMS QUESTION )

**Did you know:**

Most of the high-quality research output has come from a handful of institutions with better scientific infrastructure. why?

- due to a “publish or perish” culture that incentivises numbers over quality.
- Over the years, the focus of research has slowly shifted from fundamental to applied research and asking for quick returns.
- Compared to the developed economies (the United States), biotechnology research in India is mainly funded by the public exchequer.

**Employment :**

In India, unlike the IT sector no creation of jobs in biotechnology.

- low wages of scientists (compared to the developed economies)
- research often requires access to laboratories with high-end scientific infrastructure,
- the supply of expensive chemicals and reagents with minimum shipping time between the supplier and the user
- disciplined work culture and documentation practice due to regulatory and intellectual property filing requirement
- Biotechnology products and solutions often require ethical and regulatory clearance, making the process long, expensive and cumbersome.
- nature of the work in the biotechnology sector is specialised, hence most jobs are filled with experienced and skilled scientists leaving the demand for young and inexperienced ones low.

**Chinese example:**

- Unlike India, China has many more labs with the best of scientific infrastructure;
- Chinese students and scientists outnumber Indians nearly 5:1 in most American universities in the life sciences/biology-related disciplines.
- A booming economy and a higher science budget coupled with a flexible hiring system have made Chinese universities and research labs attract many overseas Chinese scientists.

**Boston and Silicon Valley in the U.S example :**

- The availability of funding, infrastructure and skilled workforce,

- the presence of top-notch research institutions and universities in the vicinity

make these two places among the most attractive locations for biotech startup companies anywhere.

**Innovation, entrepreneurship, and technology creation:**

- The government has been supporting biotech entrepreneurs. Initiatives through the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) of the Department of Biotechnology
- The government is very encouraging and promoting entrepreneurship, but the culture of institutions and scientists to be entrepreneurial will take time.

**Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC)**

- is a not-for-profit Enterprise, set up by Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Government of India
- Interface Agency to strengthen and empower the emerging Biotech enterprise to undertake strategic research and innovation, addressing nationally relevant product development needs.
- BIRAC's aim is to play a transformative and catalytic role in building a US\$ 100 billion Indian bioeconomy.

**Way forward:**

- The fruits of applied research will only come when we start investing in basic research without asking for quick returns.
- The government should encourage and incentivise the private sector to invest substantially in applied research
- Our government needs to make the process of hiring in our universities and national labs simpler and flexible, not necessarily provide more salary, to attract the bright overseas Indian scientists.
- academia-industry linkage will do the much-required communication and understanding of the problems at both ends.

**What has to be done:**

- Flexible policy in the institutes to allow scientists incubate startup companies in their labs while retaining their positions.
- The government should let scientists from research institutions and universities take unpaid leave to join the industry for a fixed period.



- The government should relax rules to appoint researchers from industry in faculty positions with the freedom to teach, participate, and take students.
- A sustained effort in encouraging and promoting science-driven innovation in our academic institutions
- A robust academia-industry collaboration, biotechnology-led innovation

**Conclusion:**

- One needs to go beyond the traditional indicators such as the numbers of institutions formed, students and scientists trained, and the number of patents filed to judge the sector's performance, and its impact on the economy and society as a whole.
- unlike the IT sector, a sustained innovation and product development model in the biotechnology field without enriching the academic institutions is not possible.

**Connecting the dots:**

- Has the biotechnology sector lived up to its promise? Or was it all faux optimism? Analyze
  - Why has India not produced another Jagadish Chandra Bose or G.N. Ramachandran despite the biotechnology research budget growing several folds?
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## DISASTER MANAGEMENT

### Drought toolbox

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-III –Disaster Management

#### **In News**

- Drought Toolbox was officially launched during the 14th Conference of Parties (COP14) to United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) held at Greater Noida, India.
- The Drought Toolbox can be used by countries **to assess drought risks in their regions much in advance and prepare to deal with the water scarcity.**
- The toolbox uses 30 parameters, including soil moisture, rainfall data and temperature data and can accurately evaluate the vulnerability of different geographic regions to drought.
- It will also suggest **means to mitigate the adverse impact of acute water scarcity.**
- The framework for the toolkit includes three key aspects: (1) 'Monitoring and Early Warning' system, (2) 'Vulnerability and Risk Assessment' and (3) 'Risk Mitigation Measures'.
- Droughts, which are normally difficult to foresee are **four times costlier than floods.**
- **Impact of global warming on Drought** : 2 degree Celsius increase in global temperatures will put an additional 441 million people at the risk of facing drought globally.
- In India, the **Ministry of Agriculture** is the nodal ministry in respect of monitoring and managing drought conditions
- Droughts are classified into meteorological droughts, hydrological droughts and agricultural droughts.

## DEFENCE/INTERNAL SECURITY/SECURITY

### Chief of Defence Staff: Going forward

#### **In news:**

- The recent decision to appoint a Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), or Permanent Chief of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, satisfies a long-standing demand of the strategic community in India.
- Post the announcement of the decision, a high-powered panel has been set up by the government under the National Security Advisor (NSA) to draw up the charter of duties of the CDS and to implement the decision.
- The blueprint for its operationalisation would require intensive deliberation to make sure that no aspect of its implementation is left unaddressed.

#### **Structure:**

- The three service chiefs are expected to retain the operational role, but they would be answerable to the CDS, who is most likely to have direct control over the tri-services strategic, space, cyber and special forces commands.
- He is also expected to spearhead military diplomacy. In a nutshell, he would be responsible for overall defence preparedness and function as the single-point military advisor to the government.

#### **Way forward:**

- For CDS to be able to discharge all, or even some of, these functions, several structural and functional changes will have to be made. To begin with, he will need an organisational set up. A lean and thin organisation, with officer-oriented work culture, is needed as it will be less prone to bureaucratic lethargy.
- The functions to be carried out by the CDS will need to be specified unambiguously. It will be a challenge to strike the right balance between empowering the CDS sufficiently enough to discharge the functions assigned to him and overloading him with an unmanageable charter. Depending on what roles are finally assigned, a number of functions presently being performed by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) will have to be transferred to his jurisdiction. The modality of their transfer will need to be worked out to prevent disruption in work.
- The question whether the manpower handling such functions in the MoD should also be transferred will need careful consideration. It may not be desirable to transfer en masse the civilian staff and officers – some of

them on deputation from various civil services – who for long have been accused of lack of professional knowledge, expertise and empathy required for carrying out the functions assigned to them. This is not going to change merely by bringing them under the administrative control of the CDS.

- The CDS would require to interact not only with MoD but also with several other ministries, including External Affairs and Finance, and also with functionaries like the Cabinet Secretary, Defence Secretary, and the National Security Advisor. It would be desirable to lay down protocols and standard operating procedures for such interactions to ensure smooth functioning of the new dispensation under a non-obtrusive system of checks and balances, and to pre-empt contretemps over status, authority and responsibility of various functionaries and organisations.
- Since one of the most important functions of the CDS would be to build up the capability of the armed forces, the existing capital procurement system will need to be re-engineered.
- CDS would undoubtedly require financial powers for carrying out whatever other functions are assigned to him. The present system of stratified delegation of financial powers under the revenue segment to the armed forces down the line, while retaining some powers in the MoD, is flawed. Full financial powers must be delegated to the CDS and other functionaries in the armed forces.
- The CDS is likely to face severe constraints in resource allocation as the need for funds projected by the armed forces has routinely been far higher than the budgetary allocations.

The scheme for implementation must require the Ministry of Finance to indicate long-term availability of funds and the CDS to draw up defence plans within the indicated financial parameters. This could well be the biggest challenge for the CDS as he will have to withstand the pressure from the Service Chiefs, as operational commanders, for higher allocation to meet their service-specific requirement.

### **Conclusion:**

The CDS cannot be a panacea for all problems faced by the defence establishment. However, an effective implementation of the blueprint of the plan by the panel will help Indian defence system to undergo much needed and long-awaited reform.

### **Connecting the dots:**

- The recent decision to appoint a Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) satisfies a long-standing demand of the strategic community in India. Critically analyze.

## INTERPOL'S RED NOTICES

### **Context:**

- Home Minister Amit Shah has conveyed to Interpol Secretary-General Jurgen Stock that India would like the international police agency to expedite its process of publishing Red Notices

### **Concern:**

- As many as 18 requests for RNs from India are pending with Interpol.

### **What is an RED NOTICE?**

- Criminals or suspects often flee to other countries to evade facing justice. An RN alerts police forces across the world about fugitives who are wanted internationally.
- Interpol describes an RN as “a request to law enforcement worldwide to locate and provisionally arrest a person pending extradition, surrender, or similar legal action”.
- RNs contain information that helps identify wanted persons, such as their names, dates of birth, nationality, and physical attributes such as the colour of their hair and eyes, as well as pictures and biometric data such as fingerprints, if they are available. RNs also mention the crime(s) they are wanted for.
- An RN is published by Interpol at the request of a member country. The fugitives may be wanted for prosecution or to serve a sentence. The country issuing the request need not be the home country of the fugitive; Interpol acts on the request of a country where the alleged crime has been committed.

### **Number of Red Notices**

- The Interpol says some 58,000 RNs are currently valid, of which around 7,000 are public. Most RNs are restricted to law enforcement use only.
- In cases where the help of the public is needed to locate an individual, or if those individuals pose a threat to public safety, a public extract of the RN is published on the Interpol's website.
- In 2018, Interpol issued 13,516 RNs

### **Importance of RNs**

- RNs are issued to simultaneously alert police in all member countries about internationally wanted fugitives
- An RN can help bring a fugitive to justice, sometimes many years after the crime was committed.

- However, because an RN is not an arrest warrant, action against a fugitive frequently rests on the diplomatic clout that the country making the request has with the country where the fugitive is located.

**Key notes about Interpol:**

- Interpol is global police co-operation agency and a non-governmental organization (NGO).
  - It was established as the International Criminal Police Commission (ICPC) in 1923.
  - Its headquarter is located at Lyon, France.
  - It is the world's largest international police organization, with 194 member countries (including India).
  - It is second-largest international organization after United Nations in terms of international representation.
  - Its work focuses on public safety and battling terrorism, crimes against humanity, genocide, war crimes, environmental crime etc.
  - It seeks to facilitate international police cooperation even where diplomatic relations do not exist between particular countries.
  - It ensures that police around world have access to tools and services necessary to do their jobs effectively.
  - It also provides targeted training, expert investigative support, relevant data and secure communications channels.
  - It primarily uses its police expertise and capabilities for these three types of crimes.
    1. Counter-Terrorism
    2. Organized crime
    3. Cyber Crime
- Interpol works in conjunction with all member countries and international organizations like the United Nations and European Union to combat international crime.

**India's membership:**

- India has been a member since 1956. Like any member nation, India maintains a National Central Bureau which serves as the national platform for cooperation between domestic law enforcement units and the international police community.
- The NCB is the designated contact point for the Interpol. India has collaborated with the Interpol in tackling a myriad of organised crimes such as poaching, wildlife trafficking, spurious drugs and fake medicine rackets, among others.

**Connecting the dots:**

- What is Interpol's Red notice and extradition? Explain how it works and what happens if there would be no extradition treaty?

## [Unlawful Activities Prevention Act \(UAPA\)](#)

**Part of:** GS Prelims and GS-III – Security

### In News

- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) declared **four individuals** - Masood Azhar, Hafiz Saeed, Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi and Dawood Ibrahim - as terrorists under Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967.
- UAPA was first enacted in 1967 and amended in 2004,2008,2012 and 2019.
- Some of the key provisions of amended act are
  - It empowers the government to **designate individuals as terrorists**. Previously, only an organisation could be designated as one.
  - It **empowers** the National Investigation Agency (**NIA**) **to seize properties**, which previously required permission from the Director General of Police.
  - It allows **NIA officers, of the rank of Inspector or above, to investigate cases**. Before only DySP or ACP or above could do so.
- **Opposition** parties have raised **concern** over the 2019 amendment act, saying it could also be **misused against political opponents** and civil society activists who spoke against the government may be branded as “terrorists.”

### Do You Know?

- NIA was created after the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks with the enactment of the National Investigation Agency Act 2008.
- NIA is the **Central Counter Terrorism Law Enforcement Agency of India** and it works under overall guidance of **Ministry of Home Affairs**.
- **Jurisdiction of NIA:**
  - The agency is empowered to deal with terror related crimes across states without special permission from the states.
  - A State Government may request the Central Government to hand over the investigation of a case to the NIA, provided the case has been registered for the offences as contained in the schedule to the NIA Act.
- NIA has registered and investigated 244 cases till date. After submission of charge sheets, 37 cases have been finally or partially decided in trial. Of these, 35 cases have ended in conviction giving **NIA an enviable conviction percentage of 91.3%**.

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## [Apache helicopters](#)

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-III - Security

## In News

- The Indian Air Force (IAF) formally inducted 8 **US-made** Apache AH-64E helicopters at Pathankot Air Force station
- In September 2015, IAF had signed a multi-billion dollar contract with **US government and Boeing Ltd** for 22 Apache helicopters.
- The first 8 helicopters have been delivered on schedule and last batch of helicopters is to be delivered by March 2020.
- Apache attack helicopters are being purchased to replace the Mi-35 fleet and will be deployed in the Western regions of India.
- Apache is one of world's most advanced **multi-role combat helicopters**, some of its features include:
  - Capability to **shoot fire and forget** anti-tank guided missiles, air to air missiles, rockets and other ammunitions.
  - **Capable of delivering variety of weapons** such as: air to ground Hellfire missiles, 70 mm Hydra rockets and air to air Stinger missiles
  - It has modern EW (**Electronic Warfare**) **capabilities** to provide versatility to helicopter in a network centric aerial warfare
  - These are day/night, **all weather capable** and have high agility and survivability against battle damage.

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## Centralised Technology Vertical (CTV)

**Part of:** GS Prelims and GS Mains III- Cyber Security

### In News

- Government announced that new Centralised Technology Vertical (CTV) would be set up under the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) at a cost of ₹99 crore
- The announcement was made during 1st **National Conference on cyber-crime investigation and forensics** organised by the CBI
- **Objective of CTV:** To facilitate real-time information sharing with investigators across the country.
- It will become operational next year, which would strengthen the hands of authorities to tackle the growing menace of cybercrimes.

### Do You Know?

- **Union Bank of India's SWIFT** (a banking messaging service for international transactions) was targeted by **hackers** who siphoned off **USD 171 million** using it in **2016** – considered as **India's biggest international hack**



- CBI who is presently investigating the case has noticed that the crime is spread over seven countries.
  - In terms of magnitude, the UBI cyber heist overtook the hacking of the **Bangladesh Central Bank, in which USD 81 million** were stolen by hackers
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## Role of media in fake news dispersal

### **Context:**

- Controlling fake news is a preoccupation of the technology platforms, the political class, the news media, and an increasing tribe of citizens concerned about democracy being hijacked.

### **The reason for the fake news dispersal:**

- The institutional news media have lost their credibility due to complicit
- The rise of social media has led to the ubiquity and difficulty in controlling/eliminating fake news.
- Governments and political actors (anyone in the business of mobilizing public opinion) have always invested in fake news campaigns to build news of their choice.

### **Measures to combat fake news:**

- Rebuttal (Controversy)
- Removal of the fake news item
- Educating the public
- Controlling the longer political problem.

### **Do you know?**

- Rebuttal is a type of fact checking wherein the fake news is removed by pointing out errors like mismatch, malicious editing and misattribution.

### **Measures outlined for combating fake news discourse:**

- Companies like Facebook and YouTube are pressurized to proactively remove fake news from their platforms and rework their algorithms to ensure that such content does not gain prominence.
- The newly introduced limit on forwarding message on WhatsApp is one more example of this discourse, where accountability to address fake news is dumped on to the technology platforms.
- Educating the end users to be more precise about the news by informing them of verification tools so that they can verify the accuracy of a news item before sharing it.

- Another proposal by the government, concerns tracking the 'source' of fake news, primarily to address the issue at its root. But this may cause serious issues concerning invasion of privacy and free speech.

#### **Shortcomings of these approaches:**

- It is possible to rebut news on one fake instance (example of children getting abducted) but the 'fake news factory' will keep leaking out similar stories to advance its chosen narrative. So, it is impossible to completely 'remove' fake news even after rebuttal, given the decentralised nature of dissemination.
- The increasing complexity of issues, in combination with the deluge of information has made it impossible for any individual to develop a well-researched stand on all the topics.
- When the piece of information (fake news or otherwise) stands for someone's held beliefs, it is readily accepted and shared.
- People don't care about finding the 'truth' behind news item and instead look for evidence to support their preferred narrative (confirmation bias).

#### **Steps to address the debunking of fake news:**

- Addressing the weaknesses that allow the fake news narrative to take root. While pushing the fake news, they have to witness the loss of credibility which is perceived as elitist and corrupt.
- We must mobilise public opinion around an alternate narrative that makes the fake news item irrelevant.
- Instead of poking holes in an opponent's story, it may be more effective to replace it with a different narrative built on facts, as most of the people cannot hold multiple stories in their head.

#### **Conclusion:**

- Even if the fake news is not an electoral agenda, it is in the service of the political. So, we should not lose sight by focusing disproportionately on individual fake news items instead of the larger narrative.

#### **Connecting the dots:**

- Will de-anonymising all social media accounts by the government will ensure dispersal of fake news?
- Discuss why the government and the political actors have invested in disinformation campaigns?

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#### [Astra missile](#)

**Part of:** GS Prelims and GS-III - Security

## In News

- India has successfully flight-tested **air-to-air missile Astra** indigenously designed and developed by **DRDO** as part of the **Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP)**.
  - The state-of-the-art missile was launched from **Sukhoi-30 MKI** off the coast of Odisha as part of user trials by the Indian Air Force (IAF)
  - Modifications of the Sukhoi-30 MKI jets to accommodate Astra missiles has been carried out by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited.
  - The Astra missile is a **beyond visual range missile**. It is capable of engaging different targets at different altitudes.
  - The missile has a strike **range of 70km**.
  - The missile has a **15-kg high-explosive** pre-fragmented warhead.
  - It is smoke free, having two way data link and provides very less chances to enemy to be alert about it.
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## Tejas

**Part of:** GS Prelims and Mains GS-III- Security

## In News

- Rajnath Singh became the first defence minister to fly on the Tejas.
  - The Tejas is an **indigenous** light weight, multi role supersonic aircraft developed in both fighter and trainer versions.
  - Conceived as a MiG-21 replacement, the aircraft has been designed and developed by Aeronautical Development Agency (arm of DRDO) and produced by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)
  - The Tejas is designed to carry a veritable plethora of air-to-air, air-to- surface, precision guided and standoff weaponry.
  - A batch of the Tejas aircraft has been already been inducted into the Indian Air Force.
  - The naval version is in the development stage and a critical test was conducted successfully in September first week through “arrested landing”, an ability to land on board an aircraft carrier.
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## INS Khanderi

**Part of:** GS Prelims and GS-III - Security

## In News

- INS Khanderi fully-automated submarine and the second of the six Scorpene Class submarines, will be commissioned on September 28, 2019
  - It is built by State-owned **Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd**, India's biggest warship builder, under a **transfer of technology agreement with French** naval defence and energy group DCNS
  - The submarine 'KHANDERI' is named after the wide snouted Saw fish, a deadly sea predator of the great Indian Ocean.
  - **Six Scorpene class submarines** are being built under **Project 75** which can undertake various types of missions i.e Anti-Surface warfare, Anti-Submarine warfare, intelligence gathering, mine laying, area surveillance etc.
  - The first of the six scorpene class submarine named **INS Kalvari** was commissioned into the Indian Navy on September 2018.
  - The constructions of third Scorpene KARANJ, was started in 2018, and is currently undergoing the rigorous phase of sea trials.
  - The other three submarines VELA, VAGIR and VAGSHEER, are in various stages of development. The last of the submarines will be delivered by 2022.
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## PERSON IN NEWS

Person in news	Description
1. Dadasaheb Phalke Award to Amitabh Bachchan	<p><b>In News</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The country's highest film honour, the DadasahebPhalke award, will be presented this year to Amitabh Bachchan</li> <li>• The award comes in the year that marks Mr. Bachchan's golden jubilee in cinema, who made his debut in 1969</li> <li>• <b>DadasahebPhalke (1870–1944)</b>, was an Indian film-maker who directed India's first full-length feature film, Raja Harishchandra (1913). He is regarded as "the father of Indian cinema."</li> <li>• <b>Dadasaheb Phalke award</b>is given to people for their "outstanding contribution to the growth and development of Indian cinema".</li> <li>• It is presented annually at the National Film Awards ceremony by the <b>Directorate of Film Festivals</b> (an organisation set up by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting).</li> <li>• The award prize consists of a golden lotus, a cash prize of ₹10 lakh and a shawl.</li> <li>• The award was first presented in 1969. The first recipient of the award was actress <b>Devika Rani</b>, "the first lady of Indian cinema."</li> </ul>
2. SASTRA Ramanujan prize	<p><b>In News</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SASTRA Ramanujan prize for 2019 will be awarded to mathematician Adam Harper, Assistant Professor with the University of Warwick, England.</li> <li>• The prize was <b>instituted in 2005</b> and is conferred annually on mathematicians from across the world who are <b>less than 32 years of age</b>, working in an area influenced by the genius Srinivasa Ramanujan.</li> <li>• This prize is <b>awarded by SASTRA University</b> on its campus near Kumbakonam in Tamil Nadu, on Ramanujan's birth anniversary, December 22.</li> <li>• The prize carries a citation and an award of \$10,000</li> <li>• Previous winners of Ramanuja award, including Manjul Bhargava and AkshayVenkatesh, went on to win the Fields Medal (considered as mathematician's Nobel Prize)</li> <li>• The Fields Medal is a prize awarded to 2-4 mathematicians under 40 years of age at the International Congress of the International Mathematical Union (IMU), a meeting that takes place every four years.</li> </ul>

3. Global Goalkeeper award to PM Modi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PM Modi received the Global Goalkeeper Award for the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan</li> <li>The Global Goalkeeper Award is a "special recognition" by <b>the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation</b>. The award celebrates a political leader who has "demonstrated their commitment to the Global Goals through impactful work in their country and/or globally."</li> </ul> <p><b>About Swachh Bharat Mission</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launched in 2014, Swachh Bharat Mission aims to accelerate the efforts to achieve universal sanitation coverage in the country.</li> <li>About 90 million toilets have been built to eliminate open defecation by October 2, 2019.</li> <li>At present, 98% of Indian villages have rural sanitation coverage instead of 38% four years ago.</li> </ul>
4. 200th birth anniversary of Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It was observed on 26 September</li> <li>He is forerunner of Bengal renaissance, great social reformer (girl education &amp; against Polygamy), writer, educationist and Sanskrit scholar</li> <li>He also rationalized and simplified the Bengali alphabet &amp; type, thus called the father of modern Bengali language.</li> <li>He was instrumental in passage <b>Widow Marriage Act 1856</b>, which gave legal recognition to the marriage of widows.</li> </ul>
5. IAU names asteroid after PanditJasraj	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The International Astronomical Union has named as asteroid discovered in 2006, after Indian Classical Singer PanditJasraj</li> <li>The asteroid or more formally known as minor planetoid is located between Mars and Jupiter.</li> </ul>

## MISCELLANEOUS

In News	Description
1. SLINEX	<p><b>In News</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Sri Lankan Navy</b> is sending two ships to <b>India</b> to participate in the SLINEX 2019</li> <li>SLINEX is a bi-lateral maritime fleet exercise between Navies of India and Sri Lanka</li> <li>Since 2005, six successful SLINEX series of maritime exercises have been conducted. 2019 edition is the seventh edition of SLINEX.</li> <li>The week-long SLINEX 2019 exercise will commence on September 7, 2019. The exercise features wide-ranging naval exercises including helicopter operations.</li> <li>This has helped the two Navies in understanding each other's</li> </ul>

	procedures and contributes <b>towards maritime security in the region.</b>
2. MAITREE EXERCISE	<p><b>In News</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint Military Exercise MAITREE-2019 between <b>India and Thailand</b> will be conducted at Umroi (Meghalaya) from 16-29 Sep 2019.</li> <li>• Exercise MAITREE is an annual training event which is being conducted alternatively in Thailand and India <b>since 2006.</b></li> <li>• The scope of this exercise covers company level joint training on <b>counter terrorism operations</b> in jungle and urban scenario.</li> <li>• The joint military exercise will enhance the level of defence co-operation between Indian Army (IA) and Royal Thailand Army (RTA) which in turn will further foster defence cooperation and bilateral relations between the two nations</li> </ul>
3. Global Liveability Index	<p><b>In News</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>Austrian capital</b> Vienna has been ranked the 'world's <b>most liveable city</b>' for the second year in a row on the annual Global Liveability Index</li> <li>• The annual Global Liveability Index of 140 cities around the world, is released by UK's <b>The Economist news magazine.</b></li> <li>• The index considers more than 30 qualitative and quantitative factors spanning categories like stability, healthcare, culture and environment, education, and infrastructure.</li> <li>• For the first time, the <b>index noted the effects of climate change on liveability.</b></li> <li>• <b>New Delhi was ranked at 118th (a drop of six ranks)</b> due to "poor air quality. Mumbai was ranked 119<sup>th</sup></li> <li>• The least liveable cities were Karachi, Tripoli, Dhaka, Lagos and, at the very bottom, Damascus (Syria).</li> <li>• Western Europe and North America continue to be the most liveable regions in the world.</li> </ul>
4. 'Make in India' metro coach	<p><b>In News:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PM Modi launched Mumbai's first 'Make in India' metro coach, manufactured by the state-run BEML.</li> <li>• BEML Limited (formerly Bharat Earth Movers Limited) was established in 1964, is a 'Miniratna-Category-1' Public Sector Undertaking of Government of India.</li> <li>• It manufactures a variety of heavy equipment, such as that used for earth moving, transport and mining</li> <li>• The Company operates under three major Business verticals viz., Mining &amp; Construction, Defence and Rail &amp; Metro.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is headquartered in Bengaluru. BEML has manufacturing plants in Kolar Gold Fields, Bengaluru, Palakkad and Mysore.</li> <li>• The indigenous coach, the first of 500 to be delivered to the Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation, was built by BEML at its Bengaluru facility in 75 days.</li> </ul>
5. Salt Consumption	<p><b>In News</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The study shows that <b>76.3%</b> of Indian households consumed adequately iodised salt, which is salt with at least 15 parts per million of iodine.</li> <li>• The survey also revealed that 13 out of 36 States have already achieved Universal Salt Iodisation or have 90% of households with access to adequately iodised salt.</li> <li>• The five <b>worst performers were Tamil Nadu</b> (61.9%), Andhra Pradesh (63.9%), Rajasthan (65.5%), Odisha (65.8%) and Jharkhand (68.8%).</li> <li>• The survey was conducted by Nutrition International in collaboration with the All India Institute of Medical Sciences and the Indian Coalition for the Control of Iodine Deficiency Disorders</li> <li>• <b>Gujarat produces 71% of salt in the country</b>, followed by Rajasthan at 17% and Tamil Nadu at 11%. The rest of the country accounts for a mere 1% of salt produced.</li> <li>• India made <b>fortification of salt with iodine mandatory</b> for direct human consumption in <b>1992</b>.</li> <li>• Iodine is a vital micro-nutrient for optimal mental and physical development of human beings. <b>Deficiency of iodine</b> can result in a range of disabilities and disorders such as <b>goitre</b>, hypothyroidism, cretinism, abortion, still births, mental retardation and psychomotor defects</li> </ul>
6. Five Star Movement (M5S)	<p><b>In News</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• M5S is a <b>political party in Italy</b>.</li> <li>• It was founded in 2009 due to frustration with the political establishment in a country with a stagnant economy and widespread corruption at the highest echelons.</li> <li>• The "five stars" are a reference to five key issues for the party: (1) public water, (2) sustainable transport, (3) sustainable development, (4) right to Internet access, and (5) environmentalism.</li> <li>• The M5S is variously <b>considered populist, anti-establishment, environmentalist, anti-globalist</b> and <b>Eurosceptic</b>.</li> <li>• Since June 2018 M5S was in coalition with Right-wing League</li> </ul>



	<p>party, but the League party leader withdraws from the government in August 2019 in the hope of triggering early elections.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• However, recently M5S members have voted (through its online website) in favour of forming a coalition government with the centre-left Democratic party (PD), who is considered as its traditional rival.</li> </ul>
7. Bombay Blood Group	<p><b>In News</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over the last two weeks, demand for the “Bombay blood group” has coincidentally spiked at Mumbai’s hospitals, but supply has been scarce.</li> <li>• The rare, Bombay blood group was first discovered in Mumbai (then Bombay) in 1952 by Dr Y M Bhende.</li> <li>• The Bombay blood group, <b>also called hh</b>, is deficient in expressing antigen H, meaning the RBC has no antigen H</li> <li>• Globally, the hh blood type has an incidence of one in four million. It has a higher incidence in South Asia; in India, one in 7,600 to 10,000 are born with this type.</li> <li>• This <b>blood type is more common in South Asia</b> than anywhere else because of inbreeding and close community marriages.</li> <li>• The individuals with Bombay blood group can only be transfused blood from individuals of Bombay hh phenotype only which is very rare.</li> </ul> <p><b>Blood Grouping:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When we say someone has blood group A, it means that the person has antigen of type 'A' and antibody of type 'B' in his/her blood.</li> <li>• People with AB have both antigen A and B in their blood and no antibodies.</li> <li>• People with O blood group have only antibodies A and B and no antigens. However what is not generally known is that all these groups have an antigen H in the blood as well.</li> <li>• There are very few people who do not have this antigen H also in their blood. Instead they have antibody H because of which no other blood can be given to them.</li> </ul>
8. India Urban Data Exchange (IUDX)	<p><b>In News</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IUDX is a research project under smart cities mission being implemented by Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs</li> </ul>

	<p>(MoHUA) in collaboration with Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IUDX will be an open source software platform for cities, industry and researchers to share Smart City data with each other that could be monetised in the future, similar to the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) for bank accounts and digital payments.</li> <li>• It will facilitate secure, authenticated and managed exchange of data amongst various data platforms, third-party authenticated and authorized applications and other data sources</li> <li>• The India Urban Data Exchange set up by <b>the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)</b> for its Smart Cities would be expanded, eventually leading to a “<b>marketplace</b>”.</li> <li>• MoHUA said that the open data platform for the 100 cities would be expanded to cover 500 cities by 2022 and all urban centres in the country by 2024.</li> </ul>
9. Hindi Wikipedia	<p><b>In News</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Department of Science and Technology (DST) is <b>planning to translate large number of wikipedia articles into Hindi</b>, as there isn't sufficient representation of scientific topics on Wikipedia in Indian languages</li> <li>• There are about 50 lakh Wikipedia articles in English and only 125,000 comparable ones in Hindi. DST plans to increase the number of Hindi articles</li> <li>• <b>Machine learning</b> would be used to train software to rapidly translate large tracts of text from English to Hindi and the services of scientists as well <b>as subject experts</b> would be employed</li> <li>• The project will first involve translating a large number of science-based wikis and eventually move on to creating original content in Indian language</li> <li>• Hindi would be the beginning but DST plans to branch out to other Indian languages in long run.</li> </ul>
10. SAHIBGANJ MULTI-MODAL TERMINAL (MMT)	<p><b>In News</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PM Modi inaugurated the second riverine Multi-Modal Transport Terminal at <b>Sahibganj, Jharkhand</b></li> <li>• It has been constructed on <b>River Ganga (NW-1)</b> under the Jal Marg Vikas Project under the PPP model.</li> <li>• Acting as a point of convergence for Road-Rail-River routes, Sahibganj MMT is strategically located in the logistic chain of</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Eastern Transport Corridor of India.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The MMT will specially <b>benefit the coal sector, stone chips, fertiliser, cement</b> and sugar industries in the states Jharkhand and Bihar by connecting them to global markets.</li> <li>• It will also provide <b>alternate route for Nepal bound cargo</b> and open up international markets for sea trade for land locked states of Jharkhand and Bihar.</li> <li>• The terminal will be connected to North-East States via Bangladesh by a river-sea route.</li> <li>• This is the second riverine multi-modal terminal in the country, the first has been built in Varanasi and was inaugurated in November, 2018.</li> </ul>
11. Lotus Tower	<p><b>In News</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sri Lanka unveils <b>South Asia's tallest tower</b> (called Lotus Tower) in Colombo</li> <li>• It is <b>350-metre-tall</b> and in the shape of Lotus</li> <li>• It comprises a hotel, a TV tower, restaurants, a mall, a telecommunications museum, and auditorium.</li> <li>• The tower, which is expected to function as Sri Lanka's '<b>digital TV tower</b>', is built with fibre optic cables and is fully equipped with necessary telecommunication equipment.</li> <li>• The tower costs more than \$100 million. The 80% of costs incurred has been funded by China under the controversial <b>Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)</b>.</li> </ul>
12. Wawe Summit 2019	<p><b>In News</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Union Human Resource Development Minister has launched the <b>Waste Management Accelerator for Aspiring Women Entrepreneurs (WAVE Summit 2019)</b>.</li> <li>• The summit will be the largest gathering of young women students who will promote entrepreneurship in waste management and provide <b>alternatives to single-use plastic carry bags</b></li> <li>• It is organized by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and Institute of Waste Management(IIWM) at Jaipur.</li> <li>• Theme of summit: "Make your own bag – empowering women to take up income generation activity and entrepreneurship in waste management, through making a business out of this record-creating concept."</li> <li>• <b>AICTE is the statutory body</b> responsible for proper planning and coordinated development of the technical education and management education system in India.</li> <li>• AICTE works under Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development.</li> </ul>
13. ISAPTI IRADA	<p><b>In News</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ChintanShivirwas organized by Ministry of Steel on the theme -</li> </ul>

	<p>Towards a Vibrant, Efficient and Globally Competitive Indian Steel sector.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purpose of the event was to bring all stakeholders together to deliberate on a roadmap for making Indian Steel Sector more vibrant, efficient and globally competitive.</li> <li>• The Ministry urged industry to work towards zero exports of natural resources and focus on value addition.</li> <li>• During the event, new logo of Steel Ministry “ISPATI IRADA” was launched</li> <li>• The “ISAPTI IRADA” campaign aims to increase appropriate usage of steel in the country and bring more strength to society.</li> </ul>
14. Rantidine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drug regulators caution against ranitidine use following concerns over its contamination by cancer causing agents</li> <li>• Rantidine is an antacid - medication which decreases stomach acid production. It is commonly used in treatment of peptic ulcer disease, gastroesophageal reflux disease.</li> </ul>
15. Dermatoglyphics Multiple Intelligence Test (DMIT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Called as alternative IQ testing method, this test uses the unique fingerprints and dermal ridge patterns of individuals to measure or access intelligence, activate brain lobe functioning and predicting future behaviour.</li> <li>• The Indian Psychiatric Society has called such tests as unscientific and cautioned parents to not indulge their children in such activities</li> </ul>

## (TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE)

Model questions: (Answers are provided at the end)

**Q.1) The descent of the Ganges and Arjuna's Penance are portrayed in which of the following India's heritage site**

- a) Ajanta Caves
- b) Ellora Caves
- c) Mahabalipuram
- d) None of the above

**Q.2) Uranium deposits are located at which among the following places in India**

1. Mahadek Basin in Meghalaya
2. Singhbhum belt in Jharkhand
3. Bhima basin in Karnataka
4. Aravallis in Rajasthan

Select the correct answer from the codes given below.

- a) 1,2 and 3 only
- b) 2,3 and 4 only
- c) 1,2 and 3 only
- d) 1,2,3 and 4

**Q.3) Consider the following statements**

1. Ministry of Culture is launching "Ek Bharat Vijayi Bharat", a mass-contact programme to spread the teachings of Swami Vivekananda
2. Vivekananda Rock Memorial is a monument in Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu at the Tri-junction of Indian ocean, Bay of Bengal and Arabian sea.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only

- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Q.4) Which of the following is geographically closest to Great Nicobar?**

- a) Sumatra
- b) Borneo
- c) Java
- d) Sri Lanka

**Q.5) Who among the following headed the task force constituted by RBI for development of Secondary market for corporate loans?**

- a) Subhash Chandra Garg
- b) Bimal Jalan
- c) T.N. Manoharan
- d) None of the above

**Q.6) Consider the following statements**

1. Scientists are deploying mussels (sea animal that has a dark shell) across the oceans to absorb microplastics and other pollutants in the fight against water pollution.
2. Mussels have been used as "bio-indicators" of the health of the seas, lakes and rivers they inhabit.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only

- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Q.7) Consider the following statements**

1. KVIC is statutory body established under the Khadi and Village Industries Commission Act of 1956.
2. KVIC works under Union Ministry of textiles

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Q.8) He was a professor of Gujarati, mathematics, and natural philosophy. He moved from India to Liverpool for business and began rousing public opinion on Indian issues. He was the first Indian to get elected to British Parliament on Labour Party ticket. He helped form an Indian parliamentary committee which became an important lobbying force for Indian interest. He acted as a liaison between nationalist Indians and British parliamentarians.**

**Identify the Indian National leader mentioned in the above write-up.**

- a) Shapurji Dorabji Saklatvala
- b) Dadabhai Naoroji
- c) Sir Macherjee M. Bhownagree
- d) None of the above

**Q.9) Nine-dash line often seen in news is related to which of the following?**

- a) Border of North Korea & South Korea
- b) Israel-Palestine Conflict
- c) South China Sea
- d) None of the above

**Q.10) Consider the following statements**

1. Only an organisation could be designated as terrorist under Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.
2. NIA is the Central Counter Terrorism Law Enforcement Agency of India and it works under overall guidance of Ministry of Defence

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are **incorrect**?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Q.11) Consider the following statements about Eastern Economic Forum**

1. EEF is an international forum established by Russia in 1991 to support the economic development of Russia's Far East
2. The Russian Far East comprises the eastern Russian territory between Lake Baikal in eastern Siberia and the Pacific Ocean

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Q.12) Nuakhai festival is observed in which part of India?**

- a) Western Odisha
- b) Nagaland
- c) Punjab
- d) None of the above

**Q.13) Consider the following statements**

1. CBI derives power to investigate from the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946.
2. Director of CBI has been provided security of two-year tenure in CBI by the CVC Act, 2003
3. The CVC Act also provides mechanism for selection of Director of CBI and other officers of the rank of SP and above in CBI.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1,2 and 3

**Q.14) Consider the following statements**

1. The Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) is implementing POSHAN Abhiyaan

2. Union Government is celebrating the entire month of September as "Rashtriya Poshan Maah" to emphasise the need for healthy nutrition.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Q.15) Consider the following statements**

3. Recent studies from Rakhigarhi remains have shown that hunter-gatherers of South Asia were descendent of Eurasian farmers strengthening Aryan Invasion theory.
4. Rakhigarhi, the largest Indus Valley Civilization site is situated in Maharashtra.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Q.16) Global Liveability Index is released by which body/organisation?**

- a) World Economic Forum
- b) United Nations
- c) World Bank
- d) None of the above

**Q.17) Measles and Rubella diseases are caused due to**

- Bacteria
- Virus
- Fungus
- Protozoan parasite Plasmodium.

**Q.18) Consider the following statements about Mega Food Park**

- The Scheme is based on "Cluster" approach and envisages creation of state of art support infrastructure in a well-defined agri / horticultural zone
- It is being implemented by Union Ministry of Food Processing Industries
- It is a central sector scheme with 100% contribution from Centre

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- 1 and 2 only
- 2 and 3 only
- 1 and 3 only
- 1, 2 and 3

**Q.19) The 38th north parallel forms the border between which two countries?**

- USA & Canada
- North Korea & South Korea
- France & Germany
- None of the above

**Q.20) Which of the following Public Sector Undertakings are considered as Navaratna companies in India?**

- National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC)

- Oil India Ltd
- Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd
- BEML

Select the correct answer from the codes given below

- 1, 2 and 3 Only
- 1, 2 and 4 Only
- 2 and 3 Only
- 1, 2, 3 and 4

**Q.21) Consider the following statements**

- Gujarat produces 71% of salt in the country.
- India made fortification of salt with iodine mandatory for direct human consumption in 1992.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

**Q.22) Consider the following statements about Bonn Challenge**

- It aims to aims to conserve terrestrial, aquatic and avian migratory species throughout their range.
- India has also joined the voluntary Bonn Challenge pledge.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- 1 only
- 2 only



- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Q.23) Consider the following statements about Indian Skill Development Services (ISDS)**

1. ISDS is the newest All India Services, who gets recruited after passing Indian Engineering Service Examination conducted by UPSC.
2. It is special initiative taken by the Ministry of Labour to attract young and talented administrators towards institutionalizing the Skill Development environment in the country

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Q.24) Consider the following statements Motihari-Amlekhganj petroleum pipeline**

1. It is transnational pipeline between India and Bhutan
2. The pipeline is the first ever cross-border petroleum products pipeline in South Asia.
3. It will drastically reduce the cost of transporting fuel from India, by doing away with transportation of petroleum products through tankers

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1,2 and 3

**Q.25) Sanjay Mitra Committee often seen in the news is related to which of the following area?**

- a) Disinvestment of Air India
- b) Military reforms
- c) Bifurcation of Jammu & Kashmir into two UT
- d) None of the above

**Q.26) M5S (Five Star Movement) often seen in news in related to which of the following area?**

- a) Movement in France against exorbitant prices in Five Star hotels
- b) Hongkong protests
- c) Italy anti-establishment political party
- d) None of the above

**Q.27) Consider the following statements about Bombay Blood Group**

1. The rare, Bombay blood group was first discovered in Mumbai (then Bombay) in 1952 by Dr Y M Bhende.
2. The Bombay blood group, also called hh, is deficient in expressing antigen H, meaning the RBC has no antigen H

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Q.28) Consider the following statements about Indian Urban Data Exchange (IUDX)**

1. IUDX will be an open source software platform for cities, industry and researchers to share Smart City data with each other that could be monetised in the future
2. It is being implemented by NITI Aayog

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Q.29) Consider the following statements**

1. Drought Toolbox was officially launched during the 14th Conference of Parties (COP14) to United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) held at Greater Noida, India.
2. In India, the Ministry of Rural Development is the nodal ministry in respect of monitoring and managing drought conditions

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only

- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Q.30) RCEP recently seen in news is related to which of the following ?**

- a) ASEAN
- b) Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
- c) South Asia Space collaboration
- d) None of the above

**Q.31) Consider the following statements about Salmonella**

1. Salmonella is a group of viruses that can cause food-borne illnesses known as salmonellosis.
2. WHO identifies Salmonella as one of four key global causes of diarrhoeal diseases.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Q.32) Consider the following statements about Sahibganj Multi-Modal Transport Terminal**

1. It is second riverine Multi-Modal Transport Terminal located at Bihar
2. Acting as a point of convergence for Road-Rail-River routes, Sahibganj MMT is strategically located in the logistic chain of Eastern Transport Corridor of India.
3. It will also provide alternate route for Nepal bound cargo and open up international markets for sea trade for land locked states of Bihar and Jharkhand

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1,2 and 3

**Q.33) Jan Sookna Portal to bring transparency in governance by voluntary disclosure of information is launched by which Indian State?**

- a) Karnataka
- b) Maharashtra
- c) Delhi
- d) Rajasthan

**Q.34) Consider the following statements**

1. The Internal Working Group (IWG) headed by Bimal Jalan was constituted by the RBI to Review Agricultural Credit scenario in India
2. IWG recommended a federal institution, like that of the GST Council, should be set up with members from the central and state governments to implement agricultural reforms
3. IWG also recommended a credit guarantee scheme to farm loans on the lines of credit guarantee schemes for MSME sector to cover the default risk of the borrowers.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1,2 and 3

**Q.35) Consider the following statements**

**Assertion (A):** The population of the vultures in the country declined sharply from 40 million in the 80s to a few thousand by 2009.

**Reason (R):** The major reason behind the vulture population getting nearly wiped out was the drug Diclofenac, found in the carcass of cattle the vultures fed on.

Select the correct answer from the codes given below.

- a) Both A & R are correct and R is the correct explanation for A
- b) Both A & R are correct but R is not the correct explanation for A
- c) A is correct and R is incorrect
- d) A is incorrect and R is correct

**Q.36) Consider the following statements about Survey of India**

1. It is the oldest scientific department of the Govt. of India. It was set up in 1767 with its headquarters at Dehradun, Uttarakhand.
2. It is under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Q.37) Consider the following statements**

1. India's first National Anti-microbial Resistance Hub is established in Kolkata by the ICMR in association with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
2. The centre would be hub for research on antibiotic resistance not only for the country but for the entire South Asia.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Q.38) Consider the following statements**

1. Mega Shopping festivals in India on the lines of Dubai shopping festival can be used as a measure to reverse a deepening economic downturn.
2. However, to withstand the competition from existing such events, the festival must offer a mix of global and indigenous products, instead of sticking solely to products made in India.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Q.39) CPI for Agricultural Labourers (AL) is compiled and released by which body?**

- a) Central Statistical Organisation
- b) Ministry of Labour
- c) RBI
- d) None of the above

**Q.40) Consider the following statements**

1. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) "substantially" financed by the government fall within the ambit of RTI
2. This means that they have to disclose vital information, ranging from finances to hierarchy to decisions to functioning, to citizens who apply under RTI

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Q.41) Consider the following statements about Tejas aircraft**

1. The aircraft has been indigenously designed and developed by Aeronautical Development Agency (arm of DRDO) and produced by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)
2. The Tejas is designed to carry air-to-air, air-to-surface, precision guided and standoff weaponry.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Q.42) Consider the following statements about Astra missile**

1. It is indigenously designed and developed by DRDO as part of the

Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP).

2. It is a surface-to-air missile having a range of 300 kms.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Q.43) Consider the following statements**

1. At 17.5 million, Indian diaspora largest in the world followed by Mexico (11.8 million), China (10.7 million) and Russia (10.5 million)
2. The highest number of international migrants into India came from Africa and ASEAN countries.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Q.44) Kalvari, Khanderi and Karanj often seen in the news is related to which of the following area?**

- a) New varieties of plant species discovered in Western Ghats
- b) Aircraft Carriers
- c) Submarines built by India
- d) None of the above

**Q.45) Supreme Court in K.S.Puttaswamy Vs Union of India case upheld which of the following principle?**

- a) Doctrine of Basic Structure
- b) Transgender Identity
- c) Right to Privacy as part of Article 21
- d) None of the above

**Q.46) Consider the following statements about National Educational Alliance for Technology (NEAT)**

1. It is a PPP scheme by Ministry of Human Resource Development for better learning outcomes in primary Education
2. The objective of the scheme is to use Artificial Intelligence to make learning more personalized and customised as per the requirements of the learner.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Q.47) Consider the following statements about NIRVIK scheme**

1. It is a scheme to ease the lending process and enhance loan availability for exporters.
2. The scheme is being implemented by Export Credit Guarantee Corporation of India, which is Special Purpose vehicle created by Ministry of Commerce and Confederation of Indian Industry(CII)

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Q.48) Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana is being implemented by which Ministry?**

- a) Ministry of Health
- b) Ministry of Finance
- c) Ministry of Women and Child Development
- d) None of the above

**Q.49) "Fridays for Future" movement often seen in news is related to which of the following areas?**

- a. Awareness about ill-effects of alcoholism
- b. Wage parity between men and women employees
- c. Students protesting for action by government towards Climate change
- d. None of the above

**Q.50) Which of the following are the objectives of setting National Recruitment Agency**

- 1. To streamline recruitment process on subordinate-rank posts in the government.
- 2. To reduce the burden of SSC and the IBPS, among others, from holding

preliminary recruitment exams, which is an extensive exercise.

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.51) Consider the following statements about Lotus Tower**

- 1. It is South Asia's tallest tower located in Thailand
- 2. It has been funded by China under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

**Q.52) Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) which is the source of information on children's learning outcomes is released by which body/Ministry?**

- a. Ministry of Human resource development
- b. Ministry of Finance
- c. NGO- Pratham
- d. None of the above

**Q.53) Shondol is a cultural dance of which region of India?**

- a. Kerala
- b. Manipur

- c. Ladakh
- d. Rajasthan

**Q.54) Mochi Swabhimaan Initiative is being implemented by which Union Ministry?**

- a. Ministry of Labour
- b. Ministry of Human resource development
- c. Ministry of Skill development and Entrepreneurship
- d. None of the above

**Q.55) Consider the following statements about Atlantic Meridional Overturning Current (AMOC)**

1. It is a large system of ocean currents operating in the Atlantic, which circulates the waters between the north and the south.
2. It ensures that heat and energy are distributed around Earth.
3. Recent report show AMOC may be speeding, which could have drastic consequences on global climate.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 2 and 3 only
- c. 1 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

**Q.56) The decennial census exercise will be carried out by which body/Ministry?**

- a) Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, Union Home Ministry
- b) National Sample Survey Office
- c) Prime Minister's Office
- d) None of the above

**Q.57) Participatory Guarantee Scheme often seen in news is related to which of the following?**

- a) Credit guarantee given by Confederation of Indian Industries(CII) for exports/imports
- b) Self Help Groups and their access to loans by Commercial banks
- c) Certification of organic products without involving third-party
- d) None of the above

**Q.58) "ISAPTI IRADA" campaign is being implemented by which Union Ministry?**

- a. Ministry of Labour
- b. Ministry of Steel
- c. Ministry of Skill development and Entrepreneurship
- d. None of the above

**Q.59) Consider the following statements about Pradhan Mantri Jan Aarogya Yojana (PM-JAY)**

1. PM-JAY is the world's largest government funded healthcare program, with an aim to bring quality healthcare to around 50 crore poor and vulnerable Indians.
2. The scheme gives annual healthcare benefits of up to ₹5 lakh for every entitled family per year, for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization.
3. PMJAY will provide cashless and paperless access to services for the beneficiary at the point of service.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 2 and 3 only
- c. 1 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

**Q.60) UMMID initiative is being implemented by which Union Ministry?**

- Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
- Ministry of Minority affairs
- Ministry of Science & Technology
- None of the above

**Q.61) Consider the following statements**

- Dadasaheb Phalke award is given to people for their outstanding contribution to the growth and development of Indian cinema.
- The award first presented in 1951 is presented annually at the National Film Awards ceremony by the Directorate of Film Festivals

**Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?**

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

**Q.62) Consider the following statements**

- India is the third largest emitter of greenhouse gases, after China and the US.
- India's per capita emission is double that of World's average
- India has pledged for a 33-35% reduction in emission intensity by 2030, compared to 2005 levels

**Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?**

- 1 and 2 only
- 2 and 3 only
- 1 and 3 only
- 1, 2 and 3

**Q.63) Consider the following statements about Shastra Ramanuja Prize**

- The prize was instituted in 2005 and is conferred annually on mathematicians from across the world who are less than 32 years of age, working in an area influenced by the genius Srinivasa Ramanujan.
- This prize is awarded by Indian Statistical Institute on Ramanujan's birth anniversary, December 22.
- Previous winners of Ramanuja award, including Manjul Bhargava and Akshay Venkatesh, went on to win the Fields Medal

**Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?**

- 1 and 2 only
- 2 and 3 only
- 1 and 3 only
- 1, 2 and 3

**Q.64) Global Goalkeeper Award is given by which organisation/body ?**

- UNESCO
- World Economic Forum
- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- Amnesty International

**Q.65) Consider the following statements**

- India has set "Net Zero imports" in electronics by 2020 under Digital India roadmap released in 2014
- The government under the National Policy on Electronics 2019 had set a target of making 100 crore mobile handsets indigenously by 2025 valued at about 13 lakh crore rupees

**Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?**

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2



**Q.66)Ranitidine often seen in the news is related to which area?**

- Vaccine against Dengue
- Indigenously developed drug to treat Drug resistant-TB
- Antacid
- None of the above

**Q.67)Consider the following statements**

- IPCC was established in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to assess climate change based on the latest science.
- Global ocean has warmed unabated since 1970 and has taken up nearly 20% of the excess heat in the climate system while the rest of excess heating has led to rise in atmospheric temperature

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- 1 only
- 2only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

**Q.68)Consider the following statements about Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG)**

- NSG is part of UNO which controls the world trade in nuclear material and nuclear technology
- India is a member of the group

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- 1 only
- 2only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

**Q.69)Consider the following statements about Organisation of Islamic Cooperation(OIC)**

- It is the second largest inter-governmental organisation after the UN, with the membership of 57 states, covering four continents.
- India became a member of this organisation in March 2019

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

**Q.70)Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action often seen in news is related to which of the following area?**

- Trade agreement between Asia-Pacific countries
- Counter terrorism action in Syria
- Nuclear restrictions on Iran
- None of the above

**Q.71)Chabahar port is located in which country?**

- Pakistan
- Iraq
- Iran
- None of the above

**Q.72)Consider the following statements about Model Code of Conduct(MCC)**

- The MCC comes into effect as soon as the Election Commission announces the election schedule.
- MCC has statutory backing through Representation of People Act, 1951

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Q.73) Consider the following statements about 1267 Committee**

1. It is a committee formed in the year 1999, under inter-governmental organisation FATF (Financial Action Task force)
2. It designates and sanctions terrorist entities and individuals

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Q.74) Consider the following statements about Manas National Park**

1. It is Tiger reserve, Elephant reserve, UNESCO World Heritage Site(Natural) and Biosphere Reserve under Man & Biosphere Programme of UNESCO
2. It is located in Sikkim State of India bordering Bhutan

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Q.75) Consider the following statements about Citizenship(Amendment) bill recently in news**

1. It has provisions to grant citizenship to people from minority communities —

Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians — from SAARC countries

2. It has reduced the time period of stay in India from previous 12 years to 6 years so as to be eligible to grant Citizenship
3. The bill is being opposed in Assam as the above provisions goes against the NRC and the Assam Accord

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 2 and 3 only
- c. 1 and 3 only
- d. 1,2 and 3

**Q.76) Consider the following statements about Silicosis**

1. It is a skin disease which is not curable
2. It mostly affects workers exposed to silica dust in occupations such mining, glass manufacturing, foundry and building construction industries.

Which of the statement(s) given above 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 about Coastal Regulation Zones(2018)**

1. It is based on the recommendations of Shailesh Nayak committee
2. They have been issued under provisions of Environment Protection Act, 1986.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2

d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Q.78) Consider the following statements**

1. National nutrition survey is the first survey undertaken by Ministry of Health & Family welfare to study both malnutrition and non-communicable diseases in India
2. September is being observed as PoshanMaah or Nutrition month

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Q.79) Consider the following statements about National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED)**

1. It was set up under National Food Security Act, 2013
2. Its objective is to promote Co-operative marketing of agricultural produce to benefit the farmers.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

**Q.80) Galos community recently in news is present primarily in which region of India?**

- a) Bastar district of Chhattisgarh
- b) Andaman and Nicobar islands
- c) Ladakh region
- d) Arunachal Pradesh and Assam

**Q.81) Plogging often in news is related to which area?**

- a) New form agriculture
- b) Fitness and health
- c) Environmental cleanliness
- d) Both b and c



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## 2019 SEPTEMBER MONTH CURRENT AFFAIRS MCQs SOLUTIONS

1 c	22 b	43 a	64 c
2 d	23 d	44 c	65 c
3 b	24 b	45 c	66 c
4 a	25 c	46 b	67 a
5 c	26 c	47 a	68 d
6 c	27 c	48 c	69 a
7 a	28 a	49 c	70 c
8 b	29 c	50 c	71 c
9 c	30 a	51 b	72 a
10 c	31 b	52 c	73 b
11 b	32 b	53 c	74 a
12 a	33 d	54 c	75 b
13 d	34 b	55 a	76 b
14 c	35 a	56 a	77 c
15 d	36 a	57 c	78 c
16 d	37 c	58 b	79 b
17 b	38 c	59 d	80 d
18 a	39 b	60 c	81 d
19 b	40 c	61 a	
20 c	41 c	62 c	
21 c	42 a	63 c	