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INDIA-CHINA INFORMAL SUMMIT 2.0

18TH NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT (NAM) SUMMIT

RANDOMIZED CONTROLLED TRIAL

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PREFACE

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

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

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

This is the 53rd edition of IASbaba's Monthly Magazine. This edition covers all important issues that were in news in the month of **OCTOBER 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

BAUL MUSIC

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-I – Art & Culture

In News

- A three day long festival of Baul songs named Indo-Bangla Baul Music Festival concluded in Dhaka which was organised to observe the 129th death anniversary of Baul saint Fakir Lalon Shah.
- Baul Music is a form of folk music, unique to Bangladesh and West Bengal of India.
- The word Baul means “afflicted with the wind disease” and the Baul singers are traditionally wandering minstrels singing their particular form of folk music.
- The lyrics and music are soul searching, quite comparable to the genre of Sufi music.
- In 2005, the Baul tradition of Bangladesh was included in the list of **Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO.**

REMBRANDT

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains GS-I – Art & Culture

In News

- In 2019, India and the Netherlands will commemorate Rembrandt’s 350th death anniversary with a showcase that will celebrate the two countries’ culture and heritage.
- Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn (1606 – 1669) was a Dutch draughtsman, painter and printmaker. He is generally considered one of the greatest visual artists in the history of art and the most important in Dutch art history.
- **Rembrandt was interested in Mughal miniatures**, especially around the 1650s.
- He made 25 drawings based on Mughal miniatures from India during 1656 to 1661, at the height of his career. This is in spite of the fact that the Dutch artist never set foot on Indian soil.
- These miniatures include paintings of Shah Jahan, Akbar, Jahangir and Dara Shikoh.
- They may also have influenced the costumes and other aspects of his works.

[A.P. likely had a flourishing port 2,000 years ago](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains I – Culture

In News

- The first round of excavation at the site near the banks of the **Swarnamukhi river in Andhra Pradesh’s** Gottipolu, about 80 km from Tirupati and Nellore, unearthed a huge settlement surrounded by a brick enclosure (fortified settlement)

- A maritime trade centre based out of a fortified settlement may have had a trade guild with its own army to protect its interests around 2,000 years ago, according to Archaeological Survey of India officials involved in the excavation of the site.
- The excavation unearthed brick-built structures in elliptical, circular and rectangular shapes. The size of bricks (43 to 48 cm) can be compared to those in the **Satavahana/Ikshvaku** period structures in the Krishna valley, according to the ASI. This means the site may date back to 2nd century to 1st century BCE.
- A four-armed 2-metre tall sculpture of Vishnu was unearthed at the site that can be dated back to the **Pallava period (8th Century CE)**, looking at its features like head gear and drapery.
- The excavation also unearthed a series of broken terracotta pipes that fit into each other, pointing towards a **form of drainage**.
- ASI had excavated about 10% of the site and would start on the second round of excavations in November or December, when more evidence was likely to be unearthed.

[Bhaona](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains I- Culture

In News

- Assamese Bhaona to make an English debut in Abu Dhabi
- Bhaona — a **mythology-based theatrical performance** - a 500-year old traditional Assamese art form propagated by Vaishnavite saint and reformer **Sankardeva**.
- It is for the first time that Bhaona would be presented in English for an international audience to popularise the Vaishnava theatrical performance for global art connoisseurs, and familiarise them with Assamese culture and traditions
- Sankardeva needed to connect with his Assamese masses, who did not expect the divine characters of his plays to speak in the common man's language. So he created the **Brajavali, a literary language limited to theatrical usage**

Do You Know?

- **Sattriya is one of the eight Indian Classical dance traditions**. The dance was introduced in 15th Century by a great Vaishnava Saint Mahapurush Shankardev in Assam.
- It was primarily a **monastery dance** and later on evolved as a distinctive dance form and spread across Assam.
- It has been for centuries, nurtured and preserved with great commitment by the **Sattras i.e. Vaishnava maths or monasteries**. Because of its religious character and association with the Sattras, this dance style has been aptly named Sattriya.

[PettaThullal](#)

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

In News

- PettaThullal, the ritualistic sacred dance to celebrate the victory of good over evil in the legend of **Lord Ayyappa** who killed the demon princess Mahishi, which denotes the beginning of the last leg of the annual **Sabarimala** pilgrimage season.
- Blanket ban has been mooted on chemical powder, the bespattering of which constitutes an indispensable part of the PettaThullal ritual.
- A study by the Kerala State Pollution Control Board (PCB) has pointed to the presence of hazardous metals, including lead, arsenic, and cadmium, in this powder.
- Besides causing skin troubles, it pollutes the soil and often gets washed into the waterbodies where the chances of these potent chemicals entering the human body are very high
- Plans are afoot to promote organic varieties of the brightly coloured powder as an alternative to chemical powder.

[IK ONKAR](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains I - Culture

In News

- In a unique gesture to mark 550th birth anniversary of Sri Guru Nanak Dev ji, Air India has depicted Sikh religious symbol 'Ik Onkar' on the tail of one of its aircraft.
- The national carrier has put the symbol on its Boeing 787 aircraft which will fly on October 31 from Amritsar to Stansted, UK.
- Ek Onkar means "God is One". The symbol is an emblem of the Sikh religion and is found on Gurdwaras (Sikh temples) around the world.
- The gesture is unique as the national carrier has never depicted any religious symbol on its planes

[Chhath puja](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains I - Culture

In News

- 400 junior policemen in Bihar's Samastipur district, a pledge of honesty is part of the application form for leave to perform Chhath puja.
- Chhath is a Hindu festival dedicated to the Sun god and his wife Usha in order to thank them for bestowing the bounties of life on earth.
- The word chhath means sixth and the festival is celebrated on the sixth day of the month Kartika of the Hindu lunar Bikram Sambat calendar.

- They rituals include holy bathing, fasting, standing in water for long periods of time, and offering prayers and food to the setting and rising sun.
- The festival is observed most elaborately in Mithila Province of Nepal, Terai-Madhesh region of Nepal, Indian states of Bihar, Jharkhand and UP.

[Saturn has the most numbers moons in our Solar System](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-I- Geography

In News

- The International Astronomical Union's Minor Planet Center confirmed 20 new moons orbiting Saturn, making it the planet with the most moons in our Solar System, at 82.
- Until their confirmation, the planet with the most moons was Jupiter, at 79
- Our Solar System's planets together have 205 confirmed moons now. Saturn and Jupiter, with 161 between them, account for nearly 80% of these.
- Another 20% are orbiting Uranus (27) and Neptune (14). Of the remaining three moons, one is Earth's own while the other two are with Mars.
- Mercury is so close to the Sun and its gravity that it wouldn't be able to hold on to its own moon. Any moon would most likely crash into Mercury or maybe go into orbit around the Sun and eventually get pulled into it.
- It is not yet clear, however, why Venus does not have a moon.

[Monsoon Prediction](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains I - Geography

In News

- The new monsoon model, called the **Coupled Forecast Model (CFS)**, deployed by the IMD under the National Monsoon Mission (NMM) has failed to forecast the excess rainfall received during August-September 2019.
- India this year may have recorded its highest monsoon rain in 25 years. India ended up with 10% more monsoon rain (or 110% of the long period average LPA of 887 mm) than usual

National Monsoon Mission (NMM)

- It was launched by Ministry of Earth Sciences to build an ocean atmospheric model for
 - improved prediction of monsoon rainfall on extended range to seasonal time scale (16 days to one season) and
 - improved prediction of temperature, rainfall and extreme weather events on short to medium range time scale (up to 15 days).

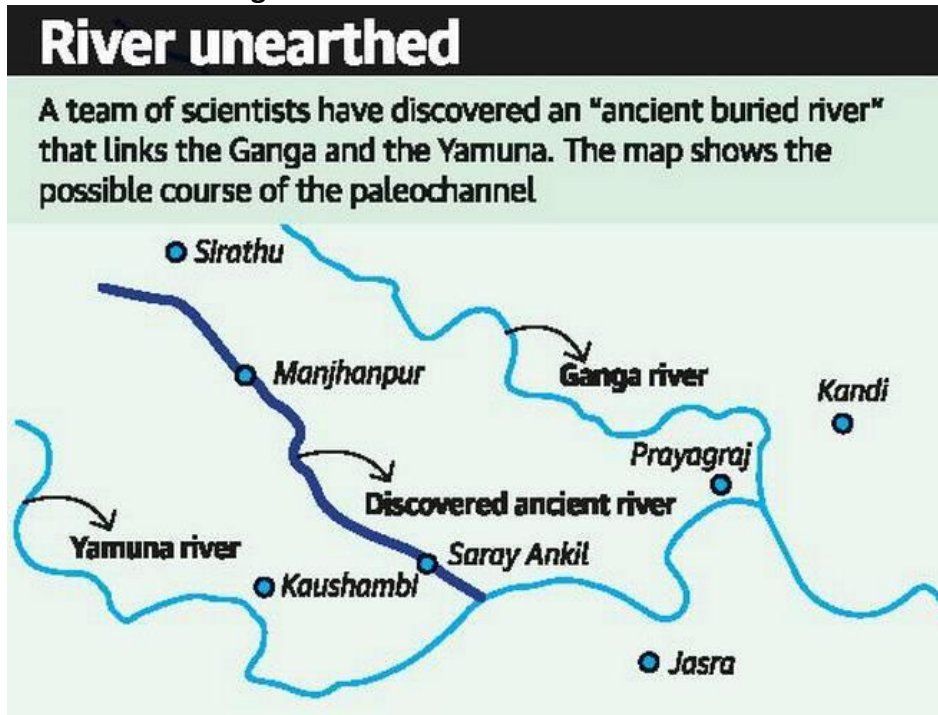
- Dynamical models also called CFS relies on capturing **the interactions between the land, ocean and atmosphere** and tracking how the changes in each affect the other for forecasting the monsoon.
- The land, atmosphere and ocean state at a particulate time, generally March, is mathematically simulated on supercomputers (**Prithvi High Performance Computers** at Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology Pune) and extrapolated into the monsoon months.

Paleochannel

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains I - Geography

In News

- The Union Water Ministry has excavated an old, dried-up river in Prayagraj (formerly Allahabad) that **linked the Ganga and Yamuna rivers**.
- The discovery was made last December by a team of scientists from the CSIR-NGRI (National Geophysical Research Institute) and the Central Groundwater Board.
- A palaeochannel is a remnant of an **inactive river or stream** channel that has been filled or buried by younger sediment.
- Paleochannels typically act as pathways for groundwater movement and provide a potential source of groundwater. **Their presence can be helpful in identifying areas suitable for recharge.**



https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/wyxpkb/article29560056.ece/ALTERNATES/FREE_960/TH01New-rivercol

[Typhoon Hagibis](#)

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

In News

- Hagibis, which means "speed" in the Philippine language, is a super typhoon swirling around Japan.
- It made landfall in Izu Peninsula, south-west of Tokyo and moved up the east coast.
- It led to Chikuma river breaching their banks inundating residential neighbourhoods and the torrential rain triggered landslides.
- The typhoon caused a total of 48 landslides in 12 prefectures and at the storm's peak, more than seven million people were placed under non-compulsory evacuation orders.
- After it made its landfall, a magnitude 5.7 earthquake shook Tokyo shortly after.
- **Hurricanes, cyclones and typhoons** are all basically the same thing, but are given different names depending on where they appear.
 - Hurricanes are tropical storms that form over the North Atlantic Ocean and Northeast Pacific.
 - Cyclones are formed over the South Pacific and Indian Ocean.
 - Typhoons are formed over the Northwest Pacific Ocean.
 - **willy-willy** are formed in south-west Australia.

[TULAGI ISLAND](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains I – Geography

In News

- A Chinese company has signed an agreement to lease an entire island in the **Solomon Islands**.
- Tulagi, an island about two square kilometres with a population of 1,200, is the site of a former Japanese naval base and was the scene of fierce fighting in World War II.
- The island of Tulagi served as a South Pacific headquarters for Britain and then Japan. During Second World War, its natural deepwater harbour across from Guadalcanal was coveted by the military.
- The agreement with state-owned China Sam Enterprise Group mentions developing special economic zone and a refinery on the island
- But the island's port and its potential for **dual use as a Chinese military base** is certain to raise concerns with the United States and Australia.
- Recently, China and the Solomons officially established diplomatic relations after China persuaded the impoverished Pacific nation to sever ties with Taiwan and become its ally.

[Col. Chewang Rinchen Setu](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains I - Geography

In News

- The Siachen glacier is “now open” for tourists and tourism, after government inaugurated a strategically important **bridge on the Shyok river** in Eastern Ladakh.
- The ‘**Col. Chewang Rinchen Setu**’ was constructed by the **Border Roads Organisation (BRO)** at an altitude of 14,650 feet in the forward area of **Ladakh region**
- This bridge has been completed in record time. It will not only **provide all-weather connectivity** in the region but also be a strategic asset in the border areas,
- From Siachen Base Camp to Kumar Post, the entire area has been opened for tourism purposes
- There is already an army-facilitated civilian trek from the Siachen Base Camp to the Kumar post located at about 15,500 feet. While it was supposed to be annual, it was cancelled on several occasions due to weather and border tensions.

Do You Know?

- Colonel Chewang Rinchen (1931 – 1997) was a highly decorated officer in the Indian Army from the Ladakh region. He was one of only six Indian service personnel to have twice won the Maha Vir Chakra (MVC), the second highest Indian gallantry decoration.
- Functioning under the control of the **Ministry of Defence since 2015**, the BRO is engaged in road construction to provide connectivity to difficult and inaccessible regions in the border areas of the country.
- The highly-skilled BRO personnel undertook and successfully completed construction of the **Delaram-Zaranj Highway in Afghanistan in 2008**.

[Kyarr](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains I - Geography

In News

- Supercyclone ‘Kyarr’ in the Arabian Sea has moved westwards and away from India’s coast,
- Heavy Rainfall to very heavy rainfall very likely in Kerala & Mahe is expected.
- With raging wind speeds of 220-230 kmph gusting to 250 kmph, the **Category-4 Kyarr** is thought to be the biggest Arabian Sea storm in at least a decade.
- **Indian Ocean Dipole**, a natural climate pattern, has given a boost to tropical cyclones in the western portion of the basin this year. It’s currently in a positive phase, which creates a warm reservoir of water in the Arabian Sea and elsewhere. Cyclones feed off of this warm water, and it generally spurs more areas of thunderstorms that can be spun up into cyclones.

- It has been a landmark year for cyclones in the North Indian Ocean. In fact, it has been the **Indian Ocean's most energetic cyclone season** on record.
- Thus far, 2019 **Accumulated Cyclone Energy, or "ACE," has hit 53.9 units**. ACE is a measure of how much kinetic energy a cyclone is dishing out through its winds. The average year-to-date ACE for the North Indian Ocean is no more than 10 units. The previous seasonal record was 46.1 ACE units in 2007.

[Vayoshreshtha Samman](#)

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

In News

- These are given to **eminent senior citizens and Institutions** involved in rendering distinguished services for the cause of elderly persons.
- The series of awards were **instituted by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in the year 2005** and were elevated to the level of national awards in 2013.
- Generally, the awards are **conferred** by the President of India **on the 1st October i.e. on the occasion of International Day of Older Persons (IDOP)**.
- This year Tamil Nadu is given the award for the **best State in implementing the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007**
- Tamil Nadu State has set up maintenance tribunals under the Act in each sub-division, but half of the cases are resolved through conciliation.
- The municipal council of Unhel, in Ujjain district of Madhya Pradesh, will receive the **award for the best urban local body** for its provision of medical services, income generation schemes and pension to seniors.

[Two-child policy](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains I - Society

In News

- All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) – political party in Assam- has opposed the Assam government's two-child policy for job eligibility
- In September 2017, the Assam Assembly had passed the '**Population and Women Empowerment Policy of Assam**' that specified that job candidates with two children only would be eligible for government employment and the existing government staff were to strictly follow the two children family norm
- The policy will come into effect from January 1st, 2021

[India hails U.K. verdict on former Nizam](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains I – Modern History

In News

- The case relates to the transfer of £1,007,940 (now worth £35 million) and nine shillings by the Nizam’s envoy and foreign minister in London on September 16, 1948 to Pakistan which the bank processed on September 20, 1948
- However, Hyderabad’s armed forces had already surrendered to India on September 17, 1948 after a military operation known as “**Operation Polo.**”
- Within days of surrender, Nizam sent a message to Bank demanding that the money be transferred back to his account which was objected by Pakistan

Do You Know?

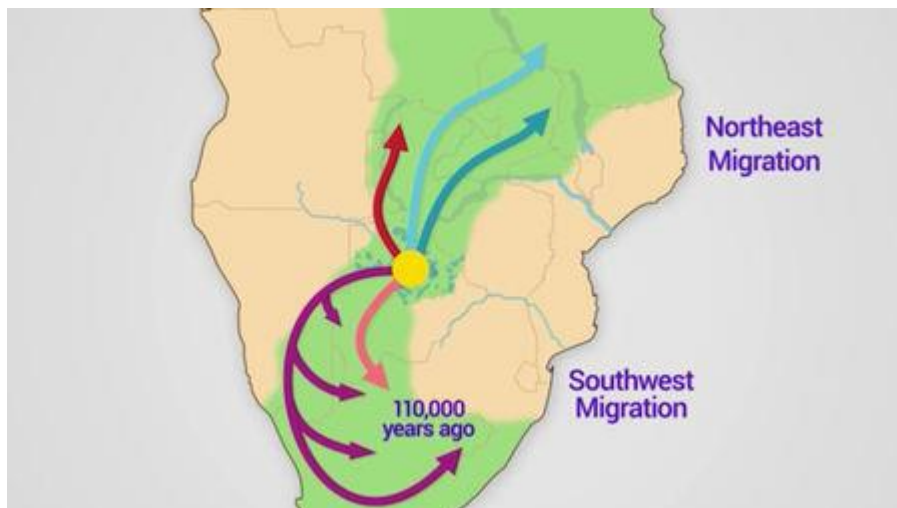
- Nearly 560 Princely states acceded to India at the time of Independence- except **Junagadh, Hyderabad and Kashmir**. Later these three states were integrated into India through **Plebiscite, Military action and Signing of Instrument of Accession** respectively
- India’s external boundaries has changed only three times—when Goa was subsumed into the Indian Union in 1961, Pondicherry in 1962 (officially) and Sikkim in 1975

[Modern Humans came from Botswana](#)


Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains I - History

In News

- Modern humans emerged 2,00,000 years ago in a region of northern Botswana, scientists have found.
- While it has long been known that modern humans — Homo sapiens — originated in Africa, scientists have until now been unable to pinpoint the precise location of our species’ birthplace.
- A team analysed DNA samples from 200 Khoesan people to arrive at the conclusion.



https://www.sciencemag.org/sites/default/files/styles/inline_699w_no_aspect/public/home/and-map_1280p.jpg?itok=pOgvW40e



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SOCIOLOGY OPTIONAL

Test Series 2020

For UPSC/IAS Exams
Under personal guidance of

Dr. Vamshi Krishna

(Topper in Sociology in 2014 and 2015, BDS and M.A. Sociology)

TEST SERIES HIGHLIGHTS

- Available in Online mode. (Student can come n write the test in Delhi offline center) **Session will be held in January**
- There will be two sessions
 1. Orientation on Sociology as an optional, how to study for Sociology, how to write Sociological answers
 2. A dedicated doubt clearing session. (Some dynamic topics of Paper-2 will be discussed)
- 12 meticulously framed question papers (8 sectional + 4 full-length tests) mimicking UPSC pattern which are well spaced out along with well-designed and broad synopsis.
- Dedicated Telegram channel for members which has a repository of materials to be studied and classroom notes (for selected topics) for easy and quick reference.
- Personalised doubt solving for queries via dedicated Email - sociologyiasbaba@gmail.com
- VAN 2.0 (Value Added Notes)- Our USP which is a rich source for covering Newer Concepts and perspectives by thinkers (Topic Wise), Case studies (from Sociology Journals, EPW ETC.) Sociological application of Current Affairs, Sociological analysis of Government Schemes (for Paper-2), Tables and innovative Mind maps for quick revision.

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POLITY/GOVERNANCE

Commutation

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

In News

- The Ministry of Home Affairs has decided to commute the death sentence of Balwant Singh Rajoana, who was convicted for the assassination of former Punjab chief minister Beant Singh, to life imprisonment
- Beant Singh, credited for ending terrorism in Punjab, was assassinated on August 31, 1995, in an explosion in Chandigarh.

About Presidential Pardoning Powers

- **Article 72** says that the President shall have the power to grant pardons, reprieves, respites or remissions of punishment or to suspend, remit or commute the sentence of any person convicted of any offence
1. **Commutation:** It means reducing the punishment by changing the nature of punishment. For example, punishment to death may be changed to life imprisonment.
 2. **Pardon:** It removes both the sentence and the conviction and completely absolves the convict from all the sentences, punishments and disqualifications.
 3. **Remission** It implies reducing the period of sentence without changing its character
 4. **Respite** It denotes awarding a lesser sentence in place of one originally awarded due to some special fact, such as the physical disability of convict or the pregnancy of a woman offender.
 5. **Reprieve** It implies a stay of the execution of a sentence (especially that of death) for a temporary period. its purpose is to enable the convict to have time to seek pardon or commutation from the President.

The EC's order on Sikkim CM's disqualification

Context:

- Sikkim CM Prem Singh was found guilty of misappropriation of government funds in a cow distribution scheme while he was the minister of animal husbandry in the 1990s. A case was registered in 2003 under **the Prevention of Corruption Act**
- Sikkim CM Prem Singh Tamang's disqualification period of 6 years, which began on August 10, 2018, was to end on August 10, 2024
- Tamang's SKM party won the assembly elections held in April, took over as CM in May.
- He has to contest assembly polls within six months of becoming the chief minister to hold the office
- Tamang had requested the poll panel to waive his disqualification period under **Section 11 of the Representation of the People Act.**

- The EC reduced Sikkim chief minister Prem Singh Tamang's disqualification period by almost five years under a provision of the electoral law, paving the way for him to contest the state assembly elections.

Did you know?

Section 11 of the RP Act states, "The Election Commission may, for reasons to be recorded, remove any disqualification under this Chapter 1 (except under section 8A) or reduce the period of any such disqualification."

EC's stand:

- The legislature has, in its wisdom, deemed it necessary to vest this Commission with this power with the understanding that socio-economic-political factors may, in certain peculiar circumstances, warrant that the general disqualification prescribed by statutory rule should be removed/reduced by exercising this extraordinary power."

The Prevention of Corruption Amendment Act 2018

The Bill incorporates the recommendations given by the 20th Law Commission headed by Justice (retd) AP Shah in its 254th Report.

- The Bill makes bribing a punishable offence.
- It redefines provisions related to criminal misconduct.
- It makes mandatory for taking prior approval of relevant Government or competent authority to conduct any investigation into offence.
- It modifies definitions and penalties for offences related to taking bribe, being habitual offender and abetting offence.

The Representation of the People Act, 1951

- **Article 327** of Indian Constitution
- For the conduct of election of the Houses of Parliament and to the House or Houses of the Legislature of each State,
- The qualifications and disqualifications for membership of those Houses,
- the corrupt practices and other offences at or in connection with such elections
- It was introduced in Parliament by law minister **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar**.

Rationale behind the relief:

- Argument was that law prevailing at the time of his offence entailed disqualification only if the sentence was for a term of two years or more; and that the amendment in 2003, under which any conviction under the anti-corruption law would attract the six-year disqualification norm, should not be applied to him.

Criticisms:

- Morally wrong and a dangerous precedent that may end up reversing the trend towards decriminalising politics
- Tamang was convicted under the Prevention of Corruption Act for and his one-year prison term was upheld by the High Court and the Supreme Court.
- Disqualification from contest is a civil disability created by electoral law to keep those convicted by criminal courts from entering elected offices.
- EC decision also goes against the grain of a series of legislative and judicial measures to strengthen the legal framework against corruption in recent years.(apex court has described corruption as a serious malady and one impinging on the economy.)

Conclusion:

- The EC is already battling a perception that its actions are partisan and this action is bound to further strain its credibility.

Connecting the dots:

- Today, we have 43% of the people sitting in the Lok Sabha with pending criminal cases. Do you think the EC's act of removing the disqualification of a convict is morally wrong and a dangerous precedent that may end up reversing the trend towards decriminalising politics? Elucidate .

Parichay (Identity)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II - Polity

In News

- In an innovative collaboration, law schools from across the country have come together to launch **legal aid clinic named Parichay(Identity)** with HQ in Guwahati to help people excluded from NRC
- More than **19 lakh out of a total of 3.3 crore applicants were left out** of the Supreme Court-monitored NRC that was published on August 31.
- Those who were left out are required to file appeals against their exclusion within 120 days of receiving their rejection order from the NRC authority.
- Parichay is envisaged to function as a clearing house of litigation and research assistance for lawyers filing appeals against exclusion from the NRC.
- Parichay consisting largely of student volunteers will **assist lawyers in drafting appeals, conduct research on pertinent questions of the law**, assist in training lawyers and paralegals, and generate documentation on the functioning of Foreigners' Tribunals.

[SC recalls verdict diluting SC/ST anti-atrocities law](#)

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

In News

- The Supreme Court had diluted the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act of 1989 in March 20, 2018 verdict in **Subhash Kashinath Mahajan vs State of Maharashtra case**
- The 2018 judgement had provided
 - To grant anticipatory bail to accused persons and
 - Directed that the police should conduct a preliminary enquiry on whether complaint under the 1989 law is “frivolous or motivated” before registering a case.
- Both the above conditions were not part of the original legislation.
- The judgement had created widespread protests and the Centre also filed a review against the judgment citing dilution of safeguards provided under the legislation
- SC in a review petition has now recalled the verdict given earlier.

Do You know?

- ‘Review’ of a Supreme Court judgment is done by the same Bench.
- ‘Overruling’ means that the law laid down in one case is overruled in another case.
- When a higher court on appeal alters the judgment of a lower court, it is called ‘reversal.’
- A crime is committed against an SC every 15 minutes.
- Six SC women are raped every day on an average.
- Between 2007 and 2017, there was a 66 per cent growth in crimes against SCs

[SC reverses dilution of SC/ST Act](#)

Context:

- In 2018, the Supreme Court of India banned immediate arrest of a person accused of insulting or injuring a Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe member to protect innocents from arbitrary arrest.
- **Why?** A number of cases of misuse of this Act has been reported from different parts of the country as mentioned
- The Supreme Court has recently recalled its directions

Did you know?

- In August, 2018, the parliament of India passed the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Amendment Bill, 2018, to bypass the ruling of the Supreme Court of India laying down procedures for arrests under the Act.

In what manner had the 2018 judgment diluted provisions for arrest?

- Keeping in view the special nature of crimes against Dalits, anticipatory bail under Section 438 will not be available to an accused under the Act. Supreme Court laid in 2018 down safeguards, including provisions for anticipatory bail and a “preliminary enquiry” before registering a case under the Act
- In 2018 SC ordered that neither is an FIR to be immediately registered nor are arrests to be made without a preliminary inquiry by an SSP. An arrest can only be made if there is “credible” information and police officer has “reason to believe” that an offence was committed. Now SC rejected the need of an SSP’s approval for arrest.

Justice Goel had observed that “interpretation of Atrocities Act should promote constitutional values of fraternity and integration of the society. This may require ‘check on false implication of innocent citizens on caste lines’.”

Terminologies:

- ‘Review’ of a Supreme Court judgment is done by the same Bench. (Generally, a review is heard in the judge’s chamber, but may be heard in open court in important cases — as in the Sabarimala and Rafale cases, in which no order has been pronounced yet)
- ‘Overruling’ means that the law laid down in one case is overruled in another case.
- When a higher court on appeal alters the judgment of a lower court, it is called ‘reversal.’

Justice Mishra said “despite various measures to improve the socio-economic conditions of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, they remain vulnerable. They are denied number of civil rights. They are subjected to various offences, indignities, humiliations and harassment. They have, in several brutal incidents, been deprived of their life and property”

Scheduled Castes and Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989

- The Scheduled Castes and Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 is an Act of the Parliament of India enacted to prevent atrocities against scheduled castes and scheduled tribes
- It was enacted when the provisions of the existing laws (such as the Protection of Civil Rights Act 1955 and Indian Penal Code) were found to be inadequate to check these crimes (defined as 'atrocities' in the Act).
- Recognising the continuing gross indignities and offences against Scheduled Castes and Tribes, the Parliament passed the ‘Scheduled Castes and Schedule Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989.

- The practice of untouchability, in its overt and covert form was made a cognizable and non compoundable offence, and strict punishment is provided for any such offence.
- The purpose of the Act was to help the social inclusion of Dalits into Indian society

Data :

- A crime is committed against an SC every 15 minutes.
- Six SC women are raped every day on an average.
- Between 2007 and 2017, there was a 66 per cent growth in crimes against SCs.

Conclusion:

- The Supreme Court can lay down guidelines only in cases of legislative gaps. But where the field is occupied by parliamentary legislation, the judiciary is bound by the text of law.

Connecting the dots:

- Interpretation of Atrocities Act should promote constitutional values of fraternity and integration of the society. Justify

[Inter-State portability for ration cards launched](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II - Governance

In News

- An inter-State portability for ration cards has been launched for Rajasthan and Haryana to facilitate the distribution of foodgrains to beneficiaries of the National Food Security scheme.
- Labourers in the unorganised sector, migrating from one State to the other in search of work, will mainly benefit from the scheme

Do You Know?

- In August 2019, Government of India launched the **One Nation-One Ration Card scheme** on a pilot basis in four States namely Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat.
- This will provide freedom to the beneficiaries as they will not be tied to any one PDS shop and reduce their dependence on shop owners and curtail instances of corruption.

[Non-Government Organisations \(NGOs\) under RTI Purview](#)**Context:**

- Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) receiving substantial financing from the government are bound to give information to the public under the RTI Act, the Supreme

Court.(D.A.V. College Trust and Management Society Vs. Director of Public Instructions)

- Institutions like schools, colleges and hospitals which receive substantial aid from the government both directly or indirectly in the form of land at discounted rate are also bound to give information to the citizens under the Right to Information (RTI) Act.

Why?

- Several schools and colleges and associations running this educational institution have moved the apex court claiming that NGOs are not covered under the RTI Act

Did you know this?

- Non-governmental organisations which were substantially financed by the appropriate government fall within the ambit of ‘public authority’ under Section 2(h) of the **Right to Information Act, 2005**.
- Under this section of the RTI Act, **‘public authority’** means “any authority or body or institution of self-government established or constituted by or under the Constitution and included... any non-government organisation substantially financed directly or indirectly by funds provided by the appropriate government.”
- **‘Substantial’** means a large portion which can be both, direct or indirect.

For instance, if land in a city is given free of cost or at a heavily subsidised rate to hospitals, educational institutions or other bodies, it can qualify as substantial financing.

Political parties:

- The Law Commission opines that political parties are the lifeblood of our entire constitutional system.
- Political parties act as a conduit through which interests and issues of the people get represented in Parliament.
- Since elections are predominantly contested on party lines in our parliamentary democratic polity, the agenda of the potential government is set by them.

Transparency in Political parties:

- In 2010, the **Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR)** filed an application under the RTI to all national parties, seeking information about the “10 maximum voluntary contributions”.
- None of the national political parties volunteered to disclose the information.
- Consequently, ADR and RTI activist Subhash Agarwal filed a petition with the Central Information Commission (CIC).

- In 2013, a full bench of the CIC delivered a historic judgment by declaring that all national parties came under 'public authorities' and were within the purview of the RTI Act.
- Notwithstanding the binding value of the CIC's, none of the six political parties complied with it
- Finally, in 2019, a PIL was filed in the Supreme Court seeking a declaration of political parties as 'public authority' and the matter is sub judice

Ambedkar's remarks:

"The working of a Constitution does not depend wholly upon the nature of the Constitution. The Constitution can provide only the organs of State...The factors on which the working of those organs of the State depend are the people and the political parties they will set up as their instruments to carry out their wishes and their politics."

Implication:

- It can be argued that national parties are 'substantially' financed by the Central government.
- If an entity gets substantial finance from the government, there is no reason why any citizen cannot ask for information to find out whether his/her money which has been given to the entity is being used for the requisite purpose or not.

Connecting the dots:

- The creation of an 'informed' citizenry, containment of corruption and holding of government and its instrumentalities accountable to the governed is a need of hour .Justify.

[RTI violations go unpunished](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-II - Governance

In News

- As the RTI Act marks its 14th anniversary on Saturday, a report card analysing its performance showed that government officials face hardly any punishment for violating the law by denying applicants the legitimate information sought by them.
- The 'Report Card on the Performance of Information Commissions in India' was prepared by the Satark Nagrik Sangathan and the Centre for Equity Studies.
- The State and Central Information Commissions, **which are the courts of appeal under the Act**, failed to impose penalties in about 97% of the cases where violations took place in 2018-19.
- The State Commissions of Tamil Nadu, Sikkim, Mizoram and Tripura did not impose penalties in any cases at all.

- The report showed that there were 2.18 lakh cases pending with the commissions in March 2019, in comparison with 1.85 lakh pending cases a year earlier.
- Any new appeal would have to wait more than one-and-a-half years for resolution. The backlog is exacerbated by the fact that four out of 11 CIC posts are yet to be filled.
- This destroys the basic framework of incentives and disincentives built into the RTI law, promotes a culture of impunity and exasperates applicants who seek information at a high cost and often against great odds

RTI RULES

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II–RTI

In News

- The Ministry of Personnel notified the Right to Information (Term of Office, Salaries, Allowances and Other Terms and Conditions of Service of Chief Information Commissioner, Information Commissioners and State Information Commissioners) Rules, 2019.
- The rules have reduced the tenure of Information Commissioners from five years to three.
- The Chief Information Commissioner’s salary has been fixed at Rs2.5 lakh and an Information Commissioner’s at Rs 2.25 lakh.
- It gives the government the discretion to decide on “conditions of service” for which no express provisions are made in the rules.
- According to activists, the rules had been drafted and promulgated in completely surreptitious manner which is in violation of the procedures laid down in the Pre-Legislative Consultation Policy of 2014.
- The policy requires all draft rules to be placed in the public domain for comments/suggestions of people. The draft was not available in the public domain and no consultations were held with members of the public.
- The changes would affect the independence of ‘Information Commissions who will function like caged parrots.’

Citizenship amendment bill

Context:

- Mr. Amit Shah recently said ,that the new government would re-introduce, and pass, the citizenship amendment bill in the next parliamentary session, or soon thereafter.

How is citizenship determined?

- Citizenship signifies the relationship between individual and state. It begins and ends with state and law, and is thus about the state, not people. Citizenship is an idea of exclusion as it excludes non-citizens.
- There are two well-known principles for grant of citizenship. While jus soli confers citizenship on the basis of place of birth, jus sanguinis gives recognition to blood ties. From the time of the Motilal Nehru Committee (1928), the Indian leadership was in favour of the enlightened concept of jus soli. The racial idea of jus sanguinis was rejected by the Constituent Assembly as it was against the Indian ethos.
- Citizenship is in the Union List under the Constitution and thus under the exclusive jurisdiction of Parliament.
- The Constitution does not define the term 'citizen' but gives, in Articles 5 to 11, details of various categories of persons who are entitled to citizenship.
- Unlike other provisions of the Constitution, which came into being on January 26, 1950, these articles were enforced on November 26, 1949 itself, when the Constitution was adopted. However, Article 11 itself confers wide powers on Parliament by laying down that "nothing in the foregoing provisions shall derogate from the power of Parliament to make any provision with respect to the acquisition and termination of citizenship and all matters relating to citizenship". Thus Parliament can go against the citizenship provisions of the Constitution.
- The Citizenship Act, 1955 was passed and has been amended four times — in 1986, 2003, 2005, and 2015. The Act empowers the government to determine the citizenship of persons in whose case it is in doubt.
- However, over the decades, Parliament has narrowed down the wider and universal principles of citizenship based on the fact of birth. Moreover, the Foreigners Act places a heavy burden on the individual to prove that he is not a foreigner.

So who is, or is not, a citizen of India?

- **Article 5:** It provided for citizenship on commencement of the Constitution. All those domiciled and born in India were given citizenship. Even those who were domiciled but not born in India, but either of whose parents was born in India, were considered citizens. Anyone who had been an ordinary resident for more than five years, too, was entitled to apply for citizenship.
- **Article 6:** Since Independence was preceded by Partition and migration, Article 6 laid down that anyone who migrated to India before July 19, 1949, would automatically become an Indian citizen if either of his parents or grandparents was born in India. But those who entered India after this date needed to register themselves.
- **Article 7:** Even those who had migrated to Pakistan after March 1, 1947 but subsequently returned on resettlement permits were included within the citizenship net. The law was more sympathetic to those who migrated from Pakistan and called them refugees than to those who, in a state of confusion, were stranded in Pakistan or went there but decided to return soon.

- **Article 8:** Any Person of Indian Origin residing outside India who, or either of whose parents or grandparents, was born in India could register himself or herself as an Indian citizen with Indian Diplomatic Mission.
- **1986 amendment:** Unlike the constitutional provision and the original Citizenship Act that gave citizenship on the principle of jus soli to everyone born in India, the 1986 amendment to Section 3 was less inclusive as it added the condition that those who were born in India on or after January 26, 1950 but before July 1, 1987, shall be Indian citizen. Those born after July 1, 1987 and before December 4, 2003, in addition to one's own birth in India, can get citizenship only if either of his parents was an Indian citizen at the time of birth.
- **2003 amendment:** The then NDA government made the above condition more stringent, keeping in view infiltration from Bangladesh. Now the law requires that for those born on or after December 4, 2004, in addition to the fact of their own birth, both parents should be Indian citizens or one parent must be Indian citizen and other should not be an illegal migrant. With these restrictive amendments, India has almost moved towards the narrow principle of jus sanguinis or blood relationship. This lays down that an illegal migrant cannot claim citizenship by naturalisation or registration even if he has been a resident of India for seven years.
- **Citizenship (Amendment) Bill:** The amendment proposes to permit members of six communities — Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan — to continue to live in India if they entered India before December 14, 2014. It also reduces the requirement for citizenship from 11 years out of the preceding 14 years, to just 6 years. Two notifications also exempted these migrants from the Passport Act and Foreigner Act. A large number of organisations in Assam protested against this Bill as it may grant citizenship to Bangladeshi Hindu illegal migrants

Logic behind this:

- Both the text of the Bill and its 'Statement of Objects and Reasons' refers to "minority communities" from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan.
- The logic appears to be that as these three countries are Muslim-majority, they may be subject to persecution on account of their faith, and, therefore, need refuge in a country such as India.

Crux:

Citizenship Amendment Bill does two things:

- it shields a set of individuals from being declared illegal migrants (and, by extension, shields them from detention or deportation);
- It creates a fast-track to citizenship for these individuals.
- It does so on an explicitly communal basis: it categorically excludes Muslims from its ambit.

Implication:

If the government goes ahead with its plan of implementing a nation-wide National Register of Citizens, then those who find themselves excluded from it will be divided into two categories:

- (predominantly) Muslims, who will now be deemed illegal migrants,
- all others, who would have been deemed illegal migrants, but are now immunised by the Citizenship Amendment Bill, if they can show that their country of origin is Afghanistan, Bangladesh or Pakistan.

Criticism:

- The Citizenship Amendment Bill explicitly, and blatantly, seeks to enshrine religious discrimination into law, contrary to our long-standing, secular constitutional ethos.
- If the objective is the protection of minorities, then there is no explanation for why Jews and atheists (to take just two examples) have been left out.
- There are Muslim religious minorities within these countries who are subjected to grave and serious persecution: Ex : Ahmadis in Pakistan.
- Lately, the Rohingya community in Myanmar, another neighbouring country, has been subjected to prolonged persecution, ethnic cleansing, and potentially genocide. However, the government has been openly hostile towards the Rohingyas and has even argued for their deportation before the Supreme Court.
- The Bill, will be the first time that religion or ethnicity will be made the basis of citizenship. That would do grave damage to the very idea of India as an inclusive and diverse polity, where religion has no bearing on who can become a full member of society.

Hence it is religious discrimination, plain and simple.

Constitutionality:

- Article 15 of the Constitution — that bars religious discrimination — applies only to citizens.
- But ,Article 14 of the same Constitution, which guarantees to all persons equality before the law, and the equal protection of law.
- Discriminatory treatment and especially, discrimination that is arbitrary, and classifications that are unreasonable violate the essence of the equal treatment clause.

Conclusion:

- A nationwide NRC will replicate the flaws of the Assam NRC on a much larger scale; and for those who find themselves on its wrong side, the discriminatory Citizenship Amendment Bill will protect some — but only some — based on their religion.

Connecting the dots:

- During the framing of the Indian Constitution, it was agreed that the primary basis for Indian citizenship would be jus soli — or, citizenship by birth (in the territory of India). Over the years this principle has been diluted . Analyse.

Section 124-A (Sedition law)

- An FIR has been lodged in Bihar’s Muzaffarpur against a group of eminent personalities, including historian Ramchandra Guha, filmmakers Shyam Benegal and Aparna Sen among others, who had written an open letter to PM Narendra Modi against the incidents of lynching in the country.
- The FIR filed under various sections of IPC related to sedition, breach of peace and hurting religious sentiments

History:

- Sedition laws were enacted in 17th century England, when lawmakers believed that only good opinions of the government should survive, as bad opinions were detrimental to the government and monarchy. This sentiment (and law) was borrowed and inserted into the IPC in 1870.
- The law was first used to prosecute Bal Gangadhar Tilak in 1897. That case led to Section 124A of the IPC (which deals with sedition) being amended, to add the words “hatred” and “contempt” to “disaffection”, which was defined to include disloyalty and feelings of enmity.
- In 1908, upon conviction for sedition in another case, and imprisonment, **Tilak reportedly said, “The government has converted the entire nation into a prison and we are all prisoners.”** Gandhi, too, was later tried for sedition for his articles in Young India, and famously pleaded guilty.
- The Supreme Court highlighted these debates in 1950 in its decisions in Brij Bhushan v the State of Delhi and Romesh Thappar v. the State of Madras.
- These decisions prompted the First Constitution Amendment, where Article 19(2) was rewritten to replace “undermining the security of the State” with “in the interest of public order”.
- In 1962, the Supreme Court decided on the constitutionality of Section 124A in Kedar Nath Singh v State of Bihar. It upheld the constitutionality of sedition, but limited its application to “acts involving intention or tendency to create disorder, or disturbance of law and order, or incitement to violence”
- In 1995, the Supreme Court, in Balwant Singh v State of Punjab, acquitted persons from charges of sedition for shouting slogans such as “Khalistan Zindabaad” and “Raj Karega Khalsa” outside a cinema after Indira Gandhi’s assassination. Instead of looking at the “tendency” of the words to cause public disorder, the Court held that mere sloganeering which evoked no public response did not amount to sedition

About Section 124-A and Criticism on it

- Rulers everywhere tend to treat trenchant criticism as attempts to excite disaffection and disloyalty.
- That is perhaps the only reason that Section 124-A of the Indian Penal Code, enacted under colonial rule, remains on the statute book.
- The foremost objection to the provision on sedition is that its **definition remains too wide**. 'Overbroad' definitions typically cover both what is innocuous and what is harmful.
- Under the present law, strong **criticism against government** policies and personalities, slogans voicing disapprobation of leaders and stinging depictions of an unresponsive or insensitive regime are all likely to be **treated as 'seditious'**, and not merely those that overtly threaten public order or constitute actual incitement to violence.
- In fact, so mindless have some prosecutions been in recent years that **the core principle enunciated by the Supreme Court — that the incitement to violence or tendency to create public disorder are the essential ingredients of the offence — has been forgotten**.
- However, as long as sedition is seen as a reasonable restriction on free speech on the ground of preserving public order, it will be **difficult to contain its mischief**.

Misuse of Section 124-A

- There have been repeated instances of its misuse. Regimes at the Centre and the States have often been shown in poor light after they invoked the section against activists, detractors, writers and even cartoonists.
- Since Independence, many have seen the irony of retaining a provision that was used extensively to suppress the freedom struggle.
- Despite all this, Section 124-A has tenaciously survived all attempts by successive generations to reconsider it, if not repeal it altogether.
- In particular, it has raised the pertinent question: how far is it justified for India to retain an offence introduced by the British to suppress the freedom struggle, when Britain itself abolished it 10 years ago?

Law Commissions' observations

- The Law Commission, for the third time in five decades, is now in the process of revisiting the section.
- Its consultation paper calls for a thorough reconsideration and presents the various issues related to it before the public for a national debate.
- In an earlier report in 1968, the Law Commission had rejected the idea of repealing the section.

- In 1971, the panel wanted the scope of the section to be expanded to cover the Constitution, the legislature and the judiciary, in addition to the government to be established by law, as institutions against which 'disaffection' should not be tolerated.
- The only dilution it mooted was to modify the wide gap between the two jail terms prescribed in the section (either three years or life) and fix the maximum sanction at seven years' rigorous imprisonment with fine.

Way forward:

- The law and its application clearly distinguishes between strong criticism of the government and incitement of violence.
- Even if the letter is considered hateful, or contemptuous and disdainful of the government, if it did not incite violence, it is not seditious

Conclusion:

- The broad scope of Section 124A means that the state can use it to chase those who challenge its power, and the mere pressing of sedition charges ends up acting as a deterrent against any voice of dissent or criticism.

Connecting the dots:

- The threat of sedition leads to a sort of unauthorised self-censorship. Analyse
- We must protect our right to dissent as fiercely as we protect our right to live. If we fail to do so, our existence as a proudly democratic nation is at risk. Justify

[Statistical report for general election 2019](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-II - Governance

In News

- The Election Commission of India has officially released the statistical report for general election 2019.
- Some of the key findings of the report are:
- **The overall polling percentage** in the last parliamentary election, including postal ballots, was 67.4%, which is the **highest ever turnout in a Lok Sabha poll**.
- Nearly 86% of the 8,026 candidates in the recent Lok Sabha poll **forfeited their deposits**.
- **The national turnout among women electors** was marginally higher at 67.18% as compared to male electors (67%). The turnout of women voters surpassed the male turnout figures in 17 states/Union Territories, including Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand.
- As per the **state-wise turnout figures**, Lakshadweep recorded the highest turnout at 85.21% across all states and UTs, followed by Nagaland (83%). Jammu and Kashmir recorded the lowest turnout at 44.97%.

- Dhubri in Assam emerged as the constituency with the highest turnout of 90.66% while Anantnag in J&K recorded the lowest turnout of 8.98%
- **Postal ballots** received in the 2019 parliamentary poll totalled around 28 lakh, though only around 22.8 lakh were found to be valid with over 5 lakh rejected.
- **On the final vote share of national parties**, BJP polled 37.76% of valid votes, Congress 19.7%, Trinamool 4.11%, BSP 3.67%, CPM 1.77%, NCP 1.4% and CPI 0.59%.

National Judicial Appointments Commission

Context:

- Four years ago, on October 16, 2015, the Supreme Court (SC) struck down as unconstitutional an amendment to the Constitution establishing the **National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC)**.
- The amendment and the corresponding law were challenged by **the Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association (SCAORA)** believing, rightly, that the amendment would violate the basic structure of the Constitution by depriving the judiciary of its independence.

Did you know?

- The right to select judges to the Supreme Court was taken upon itself by the apex court in 1993 and revalidated in a 1998 judgment (Third Judges case).
- The current government tried to change that with the passage of a law on the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC), but the law was shot down — again by the Supreme Court.
- NJAC was struck down by the SC because it would have compromised the independence of the CJI and given a role to the government in the appointment of judges.
- Unlike in the U.S. where judges are appointed by the President and are known to be leaning towards the Democrats or Republicans, Indian judges are not supposed to have any political affiliation.

Did you know?

- The Collegium includes the five senior-most judges of the Supreme Court, who collectively constitute the selection panel for judicial appointments to the Supreme Court (and the three senior-most judges when it comes to the High Courts).
- India is one of the few countries where judges have the last word on judicial appointments, through the mechanism of the Collegium.
- The Collegium itself is not mentioned in the text of the Constitution. It arose out of a judgment of the Supreme Court, and in response to increased executive interference in judicial appointments, particularly during Indira Gandhi's regime.

- Therefore, the Collegium began life as a tool to secure and guarantee the independence of the judiciary.

“National Judicial Appointments Commission”, which was suggested as an alternative to Collegium system. But NJAC was struck down by the SC in 2015.

What was the proposed composition of the NJAC?

- The CJI was the chair, ex officio, and along with him were the next two senior judges.
- The Union Minister of Law and Justice was an ex officio member along with two eminent persons.
- They were to recommend persons for appointment as judges of the SC and high courts and the transfer of judges of the high courts (including chief justices)

Why was NJAC struck down by the SC?

- SC bench had held **that judicial primacy in appointments was the only constitutionally- authorised way of securing/ensuring judicial independence** against an increasingly powerful political executive.
- However, the Collegium had come under increasing criticism, because of its opacity and perceived notion that judicial appointments were too often made in an ad hoc and arbitrary manner.
- SC too acknowledged the above criticism and vowed to evolve a system where concerns of transparency will be addressed.
- A small step towards this was made during Dipak Misra’s tenure as CJI, when the resolutions of the Collegium began to be published online.

In his NJAC judgment (2015), Justice J.S. Khehar discussed the issue of reciprocity at length in striking down the commission.

- Justice Khehar preferred exclusion of the political executive from the appointment of judges as a **feeling of gratitude towards the government impacts the independence of the judiciary.**
- It was for this very reason that even **B.R. Ambedkar** wanted to insulate the judiciary from political pressures.

Recent developments:

- CJI had written to the law minister that 43 recommendations made by the collegium were pending with the government and the vacancies in the high courts were to the extent of about 37 per cent.
- the collegium recommended that Justice Irshad Ali be made a permanent judge of the Allahabad High Court, government rejected the recommendation (without furnishing any reason or justification)

Connecting the dots:

- The unconstitutional NJAC is rearing its head and is now Frankenstein's monster. Critically analyze.

One nation one language**Context**

- Recently, on the occasion of Hindi Divas, the Union Minister of Home Affairs held that if one language can do the work of uniting the country, then it is the most spoken language, Hindi.

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.

Background

- The Constituent Assembly of India adopted **Hindi written in Devnagari Script** along with **English** as the **official language of the country** on **September 14, 1949**, under **Article 343(1)**.
- **Article 351** gives power to the Union Government to issue a directive for the development of the Hindi language.
- The Hindi language is one of the 22 languages of the **Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India**.
- The imposition of Hindi was contested in many non-Hindi states, especially in the southern state of Tamil Nadu. Violent protests broke out in southern India leading the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, to introduce the '**Official Languages Act**' in **1963**, which assured the **continuation of English along with Hindi as the official language** of the Union of India.

Criticisms:

- People across India—particularly in the East and the South—Hindi is not the language of choice of most people.
- It is a language of convenience.
- An evened out version of Hindi would be a disaster for Hindi itself. It would destroy its multiple identities, many of them quite charming.

- It will compromise our many wonderful regional languages, the languages that give us our identity, our sense of belonging.

Bangladesh case:

- Bangladesh was liberated by a handful of brave Bengali students who raised the flag of protest when the attempt was made to impose Urdu, the language of political power in West Pakistan, on them.

Way Forward

- **Rethink the three-language policy(Kothari committee)**, which exists just on paper now.
- Try other ways to foster national unity than imposing a language..
- A united nation has to have space for diversity and India is united in its diversity.

Conclusion:

- A Tamilian needs to be a Tamilian first. A Maharashtrian needs to be a Maharashtrian first. A Naga needs to be a Naga first before he understands what being an Indian is.
- Our identities are defined by the language we are born into, the culture we inherit, the myths we grew up with, the stories we heard from our grandparents in the language they spoke.
- Nothing can ever replace that. Certainly not an Aadhar card. Nor a national language.

Connecting the dots :

- Playing with language is akin to playing with fire. Analyse
- It is a fallacy to imagine that we need a common language to feel connected. Justify

INDIAN PENAL CODE (IPC)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II – Indian Polity

In News

- The Home Ministry has constituted two committees comprising legal luminaries to overhaul the IPC introduced by the British in 1860.
- After it was framed, the IPC has never been amended in totality. Some additions and deletions have been made.
- Rebooting the code introduced by the British in 1860 was considered as necessary as it is primarily based on the spirit of “master and servant”

Do You Know?

- The Indian Penal Code (IPC) is the official criminal code of India. It is a comprehensive code intended to cover all substantive aspects of criminal law.

- **The code was drafted in 1860** on the recommendations of first law commission of India (Chairmanship of **Lord Macaulay**) established in 1834 under the Charter Act of 1833. The code **came into operation from 1862**.
- The **Malimath Committee of 2003** is related to the issue of reforms in the IPC.

Custodial interrogation & INX media case

Context:

- In *P. Chidambaram v. Directorate of Enforcement* (2019), the Supreme Court explained that “grant of anticipatory bail at the stage of investigation may frustrate the investigating agency in interrogating the accused and in collecting the useful information and also the materials which might have been concealed..
- If our liberty is to be protected, we the people must raise once again a formidable “flash flood of demands” against custodial interrogation (i.e., in the context of this discussion, arrest solely for the purposes of interrogation) — not only in courts, but also in public discourse — because custodial interrogation inherently, invariably and unavoidably violates our fundamental right against self-incrimination and our right to silence

Background:

- The INX Media case refers to an ongoing high-profile money laundering investigation in India.
- It involves allegation of irregularities in foreign exchange clearances given to INX Media group for receiving overseas investment in 2007. P. Chidambaram was union finance minister at the time.
- His son Karti Chidambaram has been implicated by the investigating agencies.
- The case dates back to 2007 when INX Media applied for clearance with the Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) on March 15 that year.
- INX Media had sought this approval in order to operate and broadcast a bouquet of channels including Hindi entertainment channel, and multiple vernacular entertainment channels.
- According to the CBI, the Board in its meeting on 18 March, 2007 approved an FDI inflow of Rs 4.62 crore against INX Media.
- It did not, however, approve the downstream investment by INX Media in INX News.

CBI report:

- INX Media deliberately and in violation of the conditions of the approval (i) made a downstream investment to the extent of 26% in the capital of INX News Limited without the specific approval of FIPB which included indirect foreign investment by the same foreign investors

- generated more than Rs 305 crores Foreign Direct Investment in INX Media (P) Limited against the approved foreign inflow of Rs 4.62 crores

Constitutionality:

- **Article 20(3)** of the Constitution says, , “No person accused of any offence shall be compelled to be a witness against himself”.
- **Section 161(2) of the Criminal Procedure Code** implements the constitutional right against self-incrimination: “[Every person who the police is authorised to examine orally] is bound to answer truly all questions relating to such case put to him by [the police officer legally authorised to examine him], other than questions the answers to which would have a tendency to expose him to a criminal charge or to a penalty or forfeiture”
- Such a person has the right to remain silent to avoid incriminating himself. Our right to silence thus flows from the **right against self-incrimination**.

Why right against self-incrimination?

- In **Selvi v. Karnataka (2010)**, then Chief Justice of India K.G. Balakrishnan explained that “the underlying rationale [of the right against self-incrimination] broadly corresponds with two objectives — **firstly**, that of ensuring reliability of the statements made by an accused, and **secondly**, ensuring that such statements are made voluntarily.
- The premise is that involuntary statements are more likely to mislead the judge and the prosecutor, thereby resulting in a miscarriage of justice.
- In **Nandini Satpathy vs. P.L. Dani**, “Article 20(3) is a human article, a guarantee of dignity and integrity and of inviolability of the person and refusal to convert an adversary system into an inquisitorial scheme in the antagonistic ante-chamber of a police station.
- **1966 U.S. Supreme Court judgment in Miranda v. Arizona** “The privilege against self-incrimination, which has had a long and expansive historical development, is the essential mainstay of our adversary system, and guarantees to the individual the ‘right to remain silent unless he chooses to speak in the unfettered exercise of his own will,’

Conclusion:

- Convictions of innocent people based on unreliable evidence obtained through coercive custody would have little impact on improving public safety, as the actual wrongdoers would likely still be on the loose.
- It will encourage the police to reject self-incrimination as a tool of investigation and improve their ability to find evidence through modern, scientific and humane means.
- It will reduce the scope for arbitrary power and strengthen liberty.

Connecting the dots:

- Very important persons of yesterday caught in the criminal investigation coils of today. Critically Analyse
- Abjuring custodial interrogation will improve public safety. Substantiate

Regulation of Social Media

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II - Governance

In News

- The Government has stated that Information Technology Intermediaries Guidelines (Amendment) Rules would be notified by January 15, 2020. These would be the new guidelines to regulate social media.
- This is in the light of ever-growing threats to individual rights and the nation's integrity, sovereignty, and security.
- If on the one hand technology has led to economic growth and societal development, on the other hand there has been an exponential rise in hate speech, fake news, public order, anti-national activities, defamatory postings, and other unlawful activities using Internet/social media platforms.
- Social media intermediaries like Facebook and WhatsApp have argued that this would lead to loss of individual privacy.

Freedom of Press

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II –Polity

In News

- On 21st Oct 2019, **Australian newspaper** readers had an unexpected experience — no matter which paper they picked up, the front page carried text that was blacked out — as if it had been redacted by the government.
- The decision to 'censor' the front page was carried out by a **media coalition** across print, TV, radio and online portals, called the **"Right to Know"**
- Australia's Right to Know coalition includes Nine, News Corp, the ABC, SBS, The Guardian, and journalists' union the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance.
- The move was in response to the progressive hardening of national security laws over the past two decades by successive governments that have not only **undermined investigative journalism but also criminalised it**
- A central demand of the Right to Know coalition is that the government exempts journalists and whistleblowers from a counter-espionage law that was introduced last year



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SOCIAL ISSUE/WELFARE

Kerala bagged the top spot on the School Education Quality Index (SEQI)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-II - Education

In News

- SEQI **assesses States** on the basis of learning outcomes, access, equity and infrastructure and facilities, governance processes using survey data, self-reported data from States and third-party verification.
- It is developed by **NITI Aayog** through a collaborative process, including key stakeholders such as Ministry of Human Resource and Development (MHRD) and World Bank.
- **Some of the findings of the Index are**
 - Among the large States, Kerala bagged the top spot with 76.6 per cent and while Uttar Pradesh with 36.4 per cent scored the lowest for 2016-17.
 - Among the small States, Manipur (68.8 per cent) emerged as the top performer while Arunachal Pradesh (24.6 per cent) came last in the category.
 - Among Union Territories, Chandigarh (82.9 per cent) stood at the top position while Lakshadweep ranked lowest (31.9 per cent).
- The index provides instructive feedback to State authorities to drive reforms in crucial sectors and encourage innovation in cost-effective policy approaches

NITI Aayog's Education Index

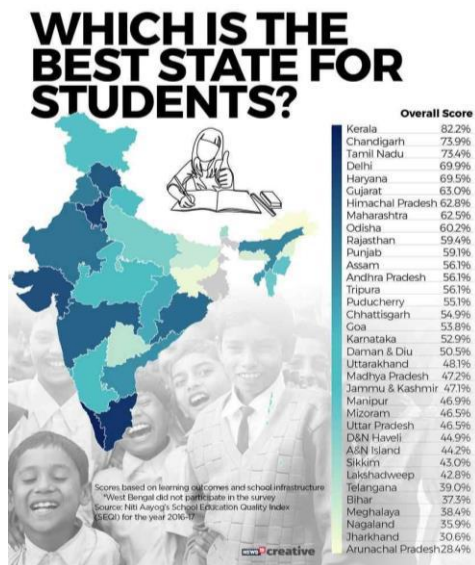
- Niti Aayog released the school education quality index (SEQI) aimed at evaluating the performance of states and Union Territories (UTs) in the school education sector.
- The top five performing states are Kerala, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Assam.

Background:

- The School Education Quality Index (SEQI) was developed to evaluate the performance of States and Union Territories (UTs) in the school education sector.
- The index aims to bring an outcomes focus to education policy by providing States and UTs with a platform to identify their strengths and weaknesses and undertake requisite course corrections or policy interventions.
- To foster the spirit of competitive and cooperative federalism, the index strives to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and best practices across States and UTs.
- SEQI aims to drive policy reforms that will improve the quality of school education.
- The index seeks to institutionalise a focus on enhancing education outcomes by driving improvements in learning levels, access, equity, infrastructure and governance processes.

Indicators

- The indicators are categorized into Outcomes and Governance Processes Aiding Outcomes (GPAO).
- **Outcomes** include learning outcomes, access outcomes, infrastructure and facilities for outcomes and equity outcomes,
- **GPAO** includes the support system necessary for learning to take place like training and availability of teachers, attendance of students and teachers, administrative adequacy etc.



Img:

https://images.firstpost.com/optimize/HCrW65Th2elr7st-OGgux80tZ_4=/images.firstpost.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/School-Performance-Index.jpg

A case study In Haryana:

- Among the lakhs of employees on the payrolls of State governments in India, the education department, unarguably, has the largest share of employees.
- Any effort to introduce education reforms must ensure that the incentives of all stakeholders are aligned throughout the system to ensure their participation.

Ex : Haryana, which has created a race among its administrative blocks to be declared as 'Saksham' (Hindi for abled/skilled), i.e.

- Block have 80% or more students who are grade level competent. (*appropriate level of competence for a particular grade*)
- If Officials are confident that their block has achieved the 80% target, state officials nominate their block for the '**Saksham Ghoshna**'.
- Then followed by rigorous rounds of third party assessments to check their claims.

- If a block is found to be 'Saksham', the block officials are recognised and honoured by the State administration.
- when all blocks in a district are declared as '**Saksham**', the entire district is also accorded the '**Saksham**' status.
- At present , 94 blocks out of a total of 119 in Haryana have been declared '**Saksham**'.

Conclusion:

- The index recognises that school education is a subject on the Concurrent List and that State-level leadership is crucial for improving outcomes in a cost-effective manner.
- The index will serve as a regular and transparent review of the status of school education quality across the States and UTs.

Connecting the dots :

- The NITI's Aayog's State ranking not only encourages competition among States but also rewards and motivates other States to consistently improve. substantiate.

[DHRUV Programme](#)

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

In News

- Pradhan Mantri Innovation Learning Programme – DHRUV is a 14-day learning programme launched by **Ministry of HRD** in ISRO HQ in Bengaluru.
- It aims to further sharpen innovative imagination, skills and knowledge of the students to bring solutions to socio-economic, political and environmental issues in the country.
- 60 brightest and talented students from **Science, Mathematics and Performing Arts** have been chosen for the programme through rigorous selection process
- Every student to be called 'DHRUV TARA' will be mentored by **renowned experts**.

[Mother tongue for preschool](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II - Education

In News

- The first-ever preschool curriculum was released by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)
- The NCERT's new curriculum is aimed at all pre-school education, defined as the education of 3 to 6-year-olds, whether at anganwadis, nursery schools, kindergartens, playschools or Montessori schools.
- It recommends that Children between the ages of three and six years **should be taught in their own mother tongues**

- Also, the **focus on learning should be through play** instead of being subjected to rote learning, tests and examinations.
- The draft National Education Policy has recommended that the Right to Education Act be extended to students in the three years of preschool before Class I.

[Nobel laureate Michael Kremer's India Link](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II - Education

In News

- Kremer's non-profit advisory service -**Precision Agriculture for Development (PAD)**- has **helped 6 lakh farmers**
- Randomised controlled trials – the research for which the Nobel was awarded – showed that a low-cost mobile phone based agriculture consulting service, developed by PAD led to an annual income growth of about ₹7,000 per farmer.
- When farmers could call a helpline for real-time expert advice on sowing and irrigation decisions and inputs such as seeds, fertilizers and pesticides, **yields rose by 28% for those producing cumin** and 8.6% for those growing cotton in Gujarat,
- PAD India began work with 2,000 cotton farmers in Gujarat in 2016, and now reaches six lakh farmers across the country, with the biggest contingent of 5.25 lakh coming from Odisha.
- Working with the Coffee Board of India, PAD India has connected 15,000 coffee growers in Karnataka to hydrologists and agronomists over the last year, with a plan to ramp up numbers to 50,000 farmers.
- Nationwide, PAD India projects get 800-1,000 calls a day, with answers being provided within two hours to 72% of queries.

[Jailed Uighur intellectual wins EU rights award](#)


Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II – Human rights

In News

- The European Parliament has awarded the Sakharov Prize for human rights to Uighur intellectual Ilham Tohti, who has been sentenced to life imprisonment in China for “separatism”.
- The outspoken former Professor of economics at a Beijing university was sentenced in 2014.
- By awarding this prize, European Parliament strongly urge the Chinese government to release Tohti and calls for the respect of minority rights in China

Who are Uighurs?

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



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WOMEN/CHILDREN ISSUE

[SARAS Aajeevika Mela](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains GS-II – Self-Help Groups

In News

- It is an initiative by the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM).
- Its objective is to bring the rural women SHGs formed with support of DAY-NRLM, under one platform to show-case their skills, sell their products and help them build linkages with bulk buyers.
- Through this mela, rural SHG women get vital **national level exposure** to understand the demand and taste of urban customers.
- It is organised by **Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART)**, marketing arm of **Ministry of Rural Development**.

[Commission for Protection of Child Rights](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II - Polity

In News

- The Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights wants the Department of Primary and Secondary Education to ban schools from assigning homework to students in classes I to V.
- This proposal is made on the grounds that the move will ease the pressure on young minds.
- Commissions for Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005 provided for establishment of Commissions for Protection of Child rights both at National level and State level.

About National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)

- NCPCR is country's apex child rights body.
- Objective of this commission is to **protect, promote and defend the child rights** in India including the rights adopted in the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children, 1989**, ratified by India in 1992.
- The Chairperson of NCPCR should be a person of eminence who has done outstanding work on promoting the child rights.
- The Commission's Mandate is to **ensure that all Laws, Policies, Programmes, and Administrative Mechanisms** are in consonance with the Child Rights perspective as enshrined in the Constitution of India and also the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Do you know?

- The Child is defined as a person in the 0 to 18 years age group.

HEALTH ISSUE

OPEN-DEFECATION FREE (ODF)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-II- Health

In News

- On the occasion of 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, PM Modi announced that rural India and its villages have declared themselves open-defecation free (ODF).

What is ODF?

- A village is ODF when: (i) there are no visible faeces in the village, and (ii) every household as well as public/community institution uses safe technology options for faecal disposal.
- After a village declares itself ODF, states are required to carry out verification of the ODF status of such a village. This includes access to a toilet facility and its usage, and safe disposal of faecal matter through septic tanks.

Do You know?

- In 60 months, more than 60 crore people were provided with 11 crore toilets.
- According to UNICEF report, there is a positive impact, worth Rs 20 lakh crore, on the Indian economy due to the Swachh Bharat campaign.
- It has created opportunities of 75 lakh jobs out of which a majority have been availed by the rural population”

Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared India “open defecation-free”

Context:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that the villages in India have declared themselves open defecation free.
- The prime minister made the announcement in the presence of over 20,000 village heads at an event to mark the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi at Sabarmati Riverfront in Gujarat.
- The prime minister said that 99 per cent of rural India was open defecation free

Background:

- Open defecation and contamination of drinking and bathing water has been an endemic sanitary problem in India.
- In 2014, India was the country with the highest number of people practicing open defecation, around 530 million people

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (SBA) or Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM):

- A nation-wide campaign in India for the period 2014 to 2019 that aims to clean up the streets, roads and infrastructure of India's cities, towns, urban and rural areas.
- The objectives of Swachh Bharat include eliminating open defecation through the construction of household-owned and community-owned toilets and establishing an accountable mechanism of monitoring toilet use.
- The mission aimed to achieve an "open-defecation free" (ODF) India by 2 October 2019, the 150th anniversary of the birth of Mahatma Gandhi, by constructing 100 million toilets in rural India at a projected cost of Rs 1.96 lakh crore (US\$28 billion)
- The mission will also contribute to India reaching Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6), established by the UN in 2015.
- The mission has two thrusts: **Swachh Bharat Abhiyan ("gramin" or 'rural')**, which operates under the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation; and Swachh Bharat Abhiyan ('urban'), which operates under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.
- Volunteers, known as *Swachhagrahis*, or "Ambassadors of cleanliness", have promoted indoor plumbing and community approaches to sanitation (CAS) at the village level.
- In the past five years, the Indian government has built a 100 million toilets. With a country as large as India, this is a big achievement.

Survey in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh:

- Between 2014 and the end of 2018, latrine ownership in the region had increased by 34 percentage points
- States that had already been declared open defecation-free, the actual coverage was far below 100%.
- the percentage of people defecating in the open declined by 26 percentage points, but close to half still reported to be relieving themselves in the open
- The programme barely managed to bring any change in the behaviour of latrine owners. Like in 2014, about a quarter of people who own a functional latrine continued to defecate in the open

Criticisms:

- With unrealistic targets pushed down from the top, "Swachh Bharat Mission beneficiaries" were facing coercion.
- Many rural Indians were threatened with or even denied their legal rights, such as PDS ration, for not building a latrine.
- Government officials at every level faced immense pressure and threats from their bosses
- one in every four families told that they have heard of government benefits being withdrawn for not having a latrine.

Conclusion:

- The spirit of bidding farewell to open defecation as a gift to Gandhi deserves accolades. But we must not forget that there are still miles to go.
- India needs to have a sanitation policy that focuses on reducing open defecation.

Connecting the dots:

- How is access to toilet and better sanitation under the Swachh Bharat Mission leading to socio-economic transformation of rural India? Explain.

[SURAKSHIT MATRITVA AASHWASAN \(SUMAN\)](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II – Health

In News

- **Union Minister for Health** along with several State Health Ministers launched SUMAN initiative for Zero Preventable Maternal and Newborn Deaths.
- The initiative aims at assuring dignified, respectful and **quality health care at no cost** and zero tolerance for denial of services for every woman and newborn visiting the public health facility in order to end all preventable maternal and newborn deaths.
- Under it, pregnant women, mothers up to 6 months after delivery, and all sick newborns will be able to **avail free healthcare benefits**.
- The government will also provide **free transport from home to health institutions**.
- The pregnant women will have a zero expense delivery **and C-section facility** in case of complications at public health facilities.

[2 out of 3 wild poliovirus strains have been eradicated](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III - Health

In News

- In an announcement by the World Health Organisation (WHO) on World Polio Day (October 24), an independent commission of experts declared **that wild poliovirus type 3 (WPV3) has been eradicated worldwide**.
- This follows the eradication of smallpox and wild poliovirus **type 2**.
- Efforts are being taken to eliminate the **wild poliovirus type 1. This virus remains in circulation in just two countries, Afghanistan and Pakistan**.
- There are three individual and immunologically distinct wild poliovirus strains: wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1), wild poliovirus type 2 (WPV2) and wild poliovirus type 3 (WPV3).
- Symptomatically, all three strains are identical, in that they cause irreversible paralysis or even death.
- But there are genetic and virological differences, which make these three strains three separate viruses that must each be eradicated individually.

- **There is no cure for polio, it can only be prevented.** Polio vaccine, given multiple times, can protect a child for life.
- Two polio vaccines, are used throughout the world to provide immunity to poliovirus. One uses inactivated (dead) poliovirus and the other uses attenuated (weakened) poliovirus.

[Mizoram is top State with HIV prevalence rate](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II - Health

In News

- Mizoram, one of the least populated States in India, reports nine positive cases of Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) a day.
- The virus “strike rate” has made Mizoram top the list of States with an HIV prevalence rate of 2.04% followed by two other north-eastern States — next-door neighbour Manipur with 1.43% and Nagaland with 1.15%.
- 67.21% of the positive cases from 2006 to March 2019 have been transmitted sexually, 1.03% of the transmission route being homosexual.
- The next major cause, accounting for 28.12% cases, is infected needles shared by intravenous drug users.
- People aged between 25 and 34 are most vulnerable, followed by 35-49 years and 15-24 years. The HIV/AIDS prevalence rates in these three age groups are 42.38%, 26.46% and 23.03% respectively.

Do You Know?

- The total number of people living with HIV was estimated at 21.40 lakh in 2017.
- India witnessed over 87,000 new cases in 2017 and saw a decline of 85% compared to 1995.
- HIV is transmitted from person to person through bodily fluids including blood, semen, vaginal secretions, anal fluids and breast milk
- Anti-Retroviral Therapy - combination of daily medications that stop the virus from reproducing is used as a treatment for HIV infected persons

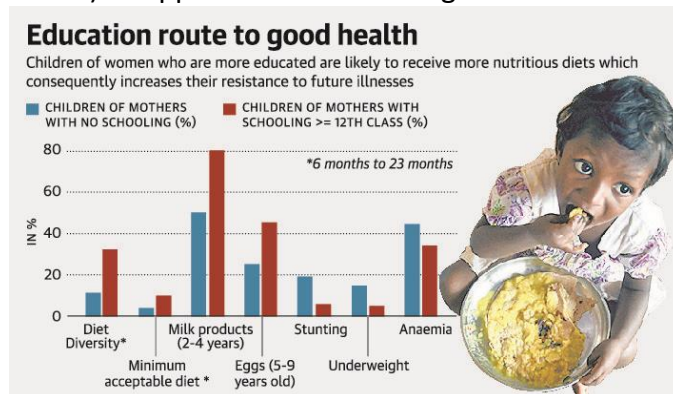
[Education of mothers directly linked to better nutrition for children](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II - Health

In News

- The **Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey** studied 1.2 lakh children between 2016 and 2018 and measured food consumption, anthropometric data, micronutrient levels, anaemia, iron deficiency and markers of non-communicable diseases.
- These were charted against population characteristics such as religion, caste, place of residence and the mothers’ levels of schooling.

- Data from the study show that with **higher levels of schooling in a mother, children received better diets.**
- While 31.8% of the children whose mothers finished Class XII received diverse meals, only 11.4% whose mothers with no schooling received adequately diverse meals
- Only 49.8% of the children in 2-4 years age group whose mothers did not go to school consumed dairy products, while 80.5% of the children of mothers who completed their schooling did so.
- Levels of stunting, wasting and low weight were higher in children whose mothers received no schooling as opposed to those who studied till Class XII. Stunting among children aged up to four was nearly three times for the former category (19.3% versus 5.9%)
- **But on the flip side,** a higher level of education among mothers meant that their children received **meals less frequently**, perhaps because the chances of the women being employed and travelling long distances to work
- Children in the age group of 10-19 showed a **higher prevalence of pre-diabetes** if their mother had finished schooling (15.1% versus 9.6%).
- The prevalence of **high cholesterol levels** was at 6.2% in these children (age group of 10-19) as opposed to 4.8% among those whose mothers never attended school.



https://d39gegkjaqduz9.cloudfront.net/TH/2019/10/14/CNI/Chennai/TH/5_11/a176072c_3259145_101_mr.jpg

[Cataract major cause of blindness above 50](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II - Health

In News

- According to the National Blindness and Visual Impairment Survey of India (2015-19), Cataract is the principal cause of blindness for people above 50 years in India
- The barriers to accessing treatment include the following — no one to accompany [the patient], seasonal preferences, and financial constraints.
- Cataract is the cause for 66.2% cases of blindness, 80.7% cases of severe visual impairment, and 70.2% cases of moderate visual impairment in the age group.
- Also, blindness is more pronounced among illiterate (3.23%) than literates (0.43%) and more prevalent in the rural population (2.14%) than urban (1.80%)

- What makes this worse for India is the fact that approximately 93% of cases of blindness and 96.2% visual impairment cases in this age group were avoidable.

About Cataract

- A cataract is a clouding of the lens in the eye which leads to a decrease in vision. Cataracts often develop slowly and can affect one or both eyes.
- Symptoms may include faded colors, blurry or double vision, halos around light, trouble with bright lights, and trouble seeing at night

[PM-JAY health scheme](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II - Health

In News

- Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Chhattisgarh, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh have emerged as the top performing States of Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana
- Nearly Rs7,901 crore has been availed under the scheme for secondary and tertiary level treatments
- Half-a-crore hospital treatments have been provided and there are 9 hospital admissions every minute across India
- More than 60% of the amount spent has been on tertiary care. Cardiology, Orthopaedics, Radiation Oncology, Cardio-thoracic and Vascular Surgery, and Urology have emerged as the top tertiary specialities.

About PM-JAY

- 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** in the past one year of its operations.

[KAYAKALP AWARDS](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II - Health

In News

- Union Health Minister gave away Kayakalp awards to Public and Private Health Facilities for high standards of sanitation and hygiene.
- Kayakalp awards were launched by Union Health Ministry in 2015 as part of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan to **felicitate Public Health Facilities (PHCs) for maintaining high standards of sanitation and hygiene.**
- **Objective is** to inculcate culture of cleanliness for gaining the trust and confidence of community in these facilities.
- The Union Health Ministry grants the awards through the **National Health Mission.**

[TB cases see decrease in India](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II - Health

In News

- The tuberculosis incidence rate in India has decreased by almost 50,000 patients over the past one year, according to the WHO -2019 edition of the Global Tuberculosis (TB) report
- The report notes that in 2017, India had 27.4 lakh TB patients which came down to 26.9 lakh in 2018.
- TB Incidence in India per 1,00,000 population has decreased from 204 in 2017 to 199 in 2018.
- The number of patients being tested for rifampicin resistance has increased from 32% in 2017 to 46% in 2018.
- However, the treatment success rate has increased to 81% for new and relapse cases (drug sensitive) in 2017, which was 69% in 2016.

Do you know?

- TB remains the top infectious killer in the world claiming over 4,000 lives a day
- **Nikshay Aushadi Portal** is a web-based application for the management of Anti-Tuberculosis (TB) Drugs and other commodities under **Revised National Tuberculosis Control Program (RNTCP)**. It is implemented by **Union Ministry of Health & Family welfare**

[NATIONAL MILK SAMPLE SAFETY QUALITY SURVEY](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II - Health

In News

- The Food Safety and Standard Authority of India (FSSAI) released the National Milk Sample Safety Quality Survey.
- Milk samples from Telangana, followed by Madhya Pradesh and Kerala, showed the highest number of cases of adulteration.
- In terms of safety parameters, 4% of the total processed milk samples (nearly 2,600) failed to comply with the FSSAI norm as contaminants like aflatoxin-M1 were found. In case of raw milk, non-compliance was at an even higher rate of 47% of the total samples of 3,825.
- In terms of quality, 7% of the total sample of processed milk did not comply with quality parameters because the presence of contaminants such as fats, Maltodextrin and sugar were above permissible limits.
- Problem of Aflatoxin-M1 is more dominant in processed milk than raw milk.
- **Aflatoxin M1** is a chemical compound which contaminate plant and plant products. IT comes in the milk through feed and fodder that are currently not regulated in the country.
- In large doses, aflatoxins can be life threatening, usually through damage to liver.

Do You Know?

- India is the world's largest producer of milk.
- The total estimated milk production in the country was 176.35 million tonnes during 2017-18.

[Anthrax](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II - Health

In News

- Veterinarians have confirmed anthrax as the cause of death of two Asiatic water buffaloes in central Assam's Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary has the highest concentration of one-horned rhinos in the world.

About Anthrax

- Anthrax is a serious infectious disease caused by gram-positive, rod-shaped bacteria known as *Bacillus anthracis* which can be found naturally in soil.
- It is characterised by blisters around swellings on the skin, chest pain, vomiting, diarrhoea and fever. However, **Anthrax is not contagious.**
- It commonly affects domestic and wild animals around the world. Cattle, sheep, goats, antelope, and deer can become infected when they breathe in or ingest spores in contaminated soil, plants, or water.
- People can get sick with anthrax if they come in contact with infected animals or contaminated animal products. Contact with anthrax can cause severe illness in both humans and animals.

[LIVER TRANSPLANT REGISTRY](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II - Health

In News

- India's first **voluntary liver transplant registry** that started on August 15 has picked up pace.
- Initiated by the **Liver Transplantation Society of India**, the registry aims to collate national data of the procedures and their outcomes.
- In a span of a little over two months, it has received data of 74 transplants carried out by 11 hospitals across six States.
- Nearly 2,000 liver transplants are carried out in the country annually, highest in the world, yet there is no India-specific data. This leaves doctors to take help from the evolved U.S. and the U.K. registries.
- Hospitals from Delhi NCR, Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu have voluntarily reported their transplants to the registry. More hospitals are in various stages of signing up and by December.

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GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

Motor Vehicles bill 2019

Context:

- The Motor Vehicles Bill 2019 seeks to amend the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 to provide for road safety.
- The Act provides for grant of licenses and permits related to motor vehicles, standards for motor vehicles, and penalties for violation of these provisions.
- The bill suggests a new National Transportation Policy, which may replace the existing National Urban Transport Policy, 2014.

Background:

- The past two decades have witnessed a huge rise in road accidents, fatalities and other safety concerns in India.
- A government committee estimated that road accidents rose by about 50% between 2005 and 2015.
- 2014 that the National Urban Transport Policy (NUTP) committee proposed a new legislation, incorporating all modes of transportation, multi-modal integration, road safety, etc. Following that, the Road Transport and Safety Bill was drafted in 2014.

Amendment:

The amendments in the Bill mainly focus on issues relating to improving road safety, citizens' facilitation while dealing with the transport department, strengthening rural transport, last mile connectivity and public transport, automation and computerization and enabling online services.

Road Safety: In the area of road safety, the Bill proposes to increase penalties to act as deterrent against traffic violations. Stricter provisions are being proposed in respect of offences like juvenile driving, drunken driving, driving without licence, dangerous driving, over-speeding, overloading etc.

Vehicle Fitness: The Bill mandates automated fitness testing for vehicles. This would reduce corruption in the transport department while improving the road worthiness of the vehicle. Penalty has been provided for deliberate violation of safety/environmental regulations as well as body builders and spare part suppliers. The Bill also provides for compulsory recall of defective vehicles and power to examine irregularities of vehicle companies.

Recall of Vehicles: The Bill allows the central government to order for recall of motor vehicles if a defect in the vehicle may cause damage to the environment, or the driver, or other road users.

Road Safety Board : The Bill provides for a National Road Safety Board. The Board will advise the central and state governments on all aspects of road safety and traffic management

Protection of Good Samaritan: To help road accident victims, Good Samaritan guidelines have been incorporated in the Bill. The Bill defines a Good Samaritan as a person who renders emergency medical or non-medical assistance to a victim at the scene of an accident, and provides rules to prevent harassment of such a person.

Cashless Treatment during Golden Hour: The Bill provides for a scheme for cashless treatment of road accident victims during golden hour.

Third Party Insurance : The Bill has included the driver's attendant in 3rd Party insurance. There will be no cap on liability of insurers. There will be a 10 time increase in insurance compensation, from Rs 50, 000 to Rs 5 lakh.

Motor Vehicle Accident Fund: The Bill requires the central government to constitute a Motor Vehicle Accident Fund, to provide compulsory insurance cover to all road users in India.

Improving Services using e-Governance: Provision for online driving licenses, Process of Vehicle Registration, Drivers Training

Taxi aggregators: The Bill defines aggregators as digital intermediaries or market places which can be used by passengers to connect with a driver for transportation purposes (taxi services). The Bill provides guidelines for Aggregators.

TIGHTENING NOOSE AROUND VIOLATORS

CHARGE	PENALTY
Driving without helmets	₹1,000
Over-speeding	₹1,000-2,000
Driving without insurance	₹2,000
Driving without licence	₹5,000
Drunken driving	₹10,000
Not way to emergency vehicles	₹10,000
Driving despite disqualification	₹10,000
Overloading of vehicles	₹20,000

Img:[https://images.tribuneindia.com/cms/gallery_content/2019/6/2019_6\\$largeimg26_Wednesday_2019_063819113.jpg](https://images.tribuneindia.com/cms/gallery_content/2019/6/2019_6$largeimg26_Wednesday_2019_063819113.jpg)

Aftermath:

- All these amendments are intended to reduce traffic crashes by at least 50% by 2030 (a target set by the United Nations).
- Out of the many amendments proposed in the Act, the increased penalties have been implemented in many States from September 1, 2019; at the same time, many States have decided to “dilute” the suggested increase in penalties.

Criticisms:

- The idea of higher fines as a deterrent to traffic crashes is based on the assumption that a driver is careless and that the fear of a higher penalty will encourage “careful” behaviour while on the road. This goes against current scientific understanding in reducing traffic crashes that promotes the design of a system which can forgive mistakes made by road users.
- Road safety experts suggest that road designs such as lane width, shoulder presence, number of lanes and median design influence driving behaviour such as operating speeds, lane changing, etc.
- In the past two decades, there have been major investments in expanding the national highway system in India. Yet, fatalities have continued to grow.
- The MVA amendments do not address the reliability of crash estimates, which form the basis of designing preventive strategies

Data:

- A Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) report of 2018 has listed 1,51,430 fatalities. However, for the same year, the World Health Organisation estimates nearly 300,000 deaths.
- A government of India study by the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India ('The Million Death' study) also reports at least a 50% under-reporting of traffic fatalities

Way forward:

- 'Roads themselves play an important role in road safety, and improved geometry design and infrastructure could in turn help to improve road safety.
- Stricter penalties and intensive driver training cannot reduce the risk of driver fatigue. However, road engineers can change the road design to reduce boredom and monotony.
- Recognition of human frailty, acceptance of human error, and creation of a forgiving environment and appropriate crash energy management.

Conclusion:

- If there is to be a reduction in India in traffic crashes, it requires establishing a system or institutional structure which enables the generation of new knowledge-new road standards thereby ensuring safe highways and urban roads.

Connecting the dots:

- In spite of the ambitious provisions in the amended Motor Vehicles law, safe road behaviour is still miles away. Analyse.

[Countrywide National Register of Citizens \(NRC\)](#)**Context:**

- After rolling out the National Register of Citizens in Assam, the BJP-led government at the Centre has said it will conduct a similar exercise in the rest of the country.

About:

- It is the register containing names of Indian Citizens. It was prepared first in 1951 after the conduct of the Census of 1951.
- It is used to identify who is a bona fide Indian citizen and those who fail to enlist in the register will be deemed *illegal migrants*.

Updates in the National Register of Citizens (NRC) of Assam: To compile a list of the names of genuine Indian citizens residing in Assam and, in the process, detect foreigners (read Bangladeshis) who may have illegally entered the state after March 24, 1971.

Background

Pre-independence: Assam's demographic changes date back to the introduction of the plantation economy by the colonial state in the 19th century. The colonial state brought in tribal labourers from Chota Nagpur and Bihar to work the plantations and encouraged the migration of Muslim farmers from Bengal.

Post-independence: Migrations continued after Independence even as Partition solidified national identities. The ethnic, cultural and religious dimensions of the situation demanded sensitive and imaginative solutions from the political class.

- In 1970s, All Assam Students' Union spearheaded a massive drive, popularly known as the **Assam Agitation** calling for the detection, deletion and deportation of illegal Bangladeshi migrants.
- In 2013, the Supreme Court finally ordered to complete the exercise by December 31, 2017, leading to the present updating of NRC in Assam.

Significance of updated NRC:

The publication of the updated NRC is a positive step in so far as-

- It is an important milestone in dealing with the influx of illegal migrants from Bangladesh into that state.
- It puts to rest wild speculations about the extent of the illegal migrant population in Assam and the resulting polarization that political parties have been exploiting to make electoral gains.

Concerns highlighted in the process

- Process of adding person to NRC list is too complex and confusing – riddled with legal inconsistencies and errors.
- Instances of arbitrary rejection of the gram panchayat certificates.
- Robust non-transparent “family tree verification” process resulted in numerous instances of parents being on the draft list but children being left out. Each person who is left out will now have to prove not only his or her linkages afresh, but also the documents themselves before the appropriate forum.
- Faults on part of the Supreme Court
 - Lack of proper monitoring process
 - Failed to ensure legal clarity over the manner in which the claims of citizenship could be decided

- Failed to understand the implications of the results, and after effects as well as recourse that should be made available for people who have failed to be recognized as citizens of the State
- Inability to comprehend the further political and policy actions in case of loss of citizenship

Criticisms:

- Without legal aid being provided to the people. Any adjudication process without legal aid for the poor is a null and void adjudication. And any adjudication on a tribunal without a judicially trained person there is a null and void adjudication. It is a terrible legal failure of the entire system in which the judiciary itself has played a very negative role, to put it mildly.
- The aspect of incarceration of people. That you can incarcerate stateless people is unheard of. That's another travesty of human rights taking place.
- Why is it that only Assam has NRC? Indian citizenship law is such that Assam is the only place where there's an exception. The idea that you can do an NRC on an all-India scale is bizarre.
- The Supreme Court saying you need it because you have an enemy invasion into Assam! It is a Supreme Court-created problem.
- 1.9 million people are there. And you can't push them back at gunpoint across the border with Bangladesh.
- The mass insecurity and social crisis stalking the 1.9 lakh people of Assam.
- Many people are in stake who lives in strategic and sensitive border state. Their documents are being ambiguous.
- Assam has a peculiar problem of villages getting ravaged, or disappearing, due to annual floods unleashed by the fiery Brahmaputra. Documents get destroyed, geographies shift, addresses change.
- Several cases of transparent injustice whereby families have been divided – some declared Doubtful Voters and foreigners, others as bonafide citizens.
- Widespread perception that specifically linguistic and religious minorities are being targeted – namely, Bengali speaking Muslims and Hindus.

Connecting the dots:

- The NRC process has an Assam-specific history. Extending it to the rest of the country is bizarre. Analyse.

[Many denied PDS rice due to non-seeding of Aadhaar](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II - Governance

In News

- The 'One Nation, One Ration Card' scheme seems to be not working in favour of many in Odisha, according to a survey that found that hundreds of people have not been provided rice through the PDS for two months due to non-seeding of Aadhaar.
- The study also found that exclusion due to Aadhaar linking is more prevalent in tribal areas.
- The survey was conducted during the first week of October by the Odisha chapter of the National Right to Food Campaign, an informal network of organisations and individuals working on right to food issues

One Nation, One Ration card

- The national portability of Ration cards will ensure all beneficiaries especially the migrants in getting access to PDS across the nation from any PDS shop of their own choice.
- This will provide **freedom to the beneficiaries** as they will not be tied to any one PDS shop and reduce their dependence on shop owners and curtail instances of **corruption**.
- There will also be creation of a **Central Repository of all Ration Cards** to help national level de-duplication.
- This initiative shall be **helpful for the large migratory population** of the country, who migrate from one part of the country to another in search of job or employment, marriage, or any other reason, and find difficulty in accessing subsidised foodgrains in the present system.
- The challenges for this scheme involves that all PDS shops should install ePoS machines and all ration cards have to be seeded with Aadhaar numbers.

[FASTags will work as Aadhaar, track vehicles](#)

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

In News

- 'A FASTag uses **Radio Frequency Identification technology** to make cashless payments through a prepaid account linked to it.
- The tag is fixed to the windscreen of a vehicle and an RFID antenna in the canopy of the toll gate scans the QR code and the tag identification number, following which the boom barrier lifts to allow a vehicle to pass through it without the need for a vehicle to stop.
- A **FASTag is linked to a bank account**. When a vehicle passes through a toll, an SMS with date, time and place of transaction will be sent to the owner of the vehicle.
- The master data of all transactions will be with the concessionaire of the toll booth concerned, along with the bank with which the owner has registered the FASTag and the National Payments Corporation of India
- FASTags are likely to reduce the nation's GDP loss by **bringing down loss of fuel while waiting at toll plazas**.

- Cameras at toll booths will take photos of passengers in a vehicle, which can be useful for the Ministry of Home Affairs as there will be a record of a vehicle's movement.
- The Union Government has appealed to all the States to adopt the technology so that the entire system could come under the National Electronic Toll Collection programme

Second round of Smart Cities, AMRUT may roll out in 2020

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains I – Urban Development

In News

- AMRUT, a five-year scheme, started in June 2015. Many of its water and sewage management projects would get completed towards the end of the scheme — June 2020
- In AMRUT scheme, there were 500 cities and the criteria was a population of 1,00,000, which gave a coverage of nearly 65% of urban population.
- The remaining 35% of the urban population will be covered under the AMRUT-2.
- The Smart Cities Mission covers 100 cities with a total population of 9,96,30,069 with projects worth a ₹2,05,018 crore and is a project designed till 2022

Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT)

- AMRUT adopts a **project approach** to ensure basic infrastructure services relating to water supply, sewerage, storm water drains, transport and development of green spaces and parks with special provision for meeting the needs of children.
- Implementation of this mission will be **linked to promotion of urban reforms** such as e-governance, constitution of professional municipal cadre, devolving funds and functions to urban local bodies, review of building bye-laws, improvement in assessment and collection of municipal taxes, credit rating of urban local bodies, energy and water audit and **citizen-centric urban planning** in cities other than the 100 smart cities.
- Under this project, **10% of the budget allocation** will be given to states/union territories as **incentive** based on achievement of reforms during the previous year

Smart city Mission

- Launched on 25 June 2015, Smart Cities Mission's objective is to strengthen urban infrastructure through application of smart solutions and provide a better quality of life to citizens.
- This will be implemented through an 'area based' approach consisting of retrofitting, redevelopment, pan-city initiatives and development of new cities.
- Under retrofitting, deficiencies in an identified area will be addressed through necessary interventions. Pan-city components could be interventions **like Intelligent Transport Solutions** that benefits all residents by reducing the commuting time.
- Smart city aspirants will be selected through a process of competition and with effective citizen participation ending the **'top down' approach** and leading to **'people centric' urban development**.

[Nurture the Future](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III - Governance

In News

- The Centre's first-ever common foundation course Aarambh (Beginning) for 2019 batch probationer civil servants has begun at the Statue of Unity in Kevadia, Gujarat
- Along with training and seminars by experts, the government has also launched a new initiative under which each official will guide a local youth from villages near the Statue of Unity, which is located in a tribal area along the Narmada river.
- Under the mentorship programme Nurture the Future, close to 500 civil service officials will be divided into teams to visit villages near Kevadia and **each official will take a youth under his wing and provide career and professional guidance**
- The initiative will ensure a better and brighter future for the youth living in remote and rural areas.
- Over the next five years, the initiative is expected to cover nearly one lakh youth throughout the country as part of the foundation course of probationers who have just passed the civil services exam and joined the country's elite bureaucracy.

[Unnat Bharat Abhiyan](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III –Inclusive Development

In News

- President during his convocation address in Jamia millia University emphasised need to connect all sections of society with development and appreciated the University for adopting five villages under Unnat Bharat Abhiyan
- Unnat Bharat Abhiyan was launched by the **Union Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD) in April 2018.**
- Under this each selected institute would adopt a cluster of villages/panchayats. Institutes will then carry out studies to assess the local problems and then use technology to improve the implementation of various government schemes.
- The Objective is to use the knowledge base of the Premier **Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)** of the country to ensure rural development.
- It is expected to be a two-way learning process, where institutions share their knowledge with villages and also learn from the wisdom and commonsense of rural folk.
- The key points include helping villages achieve 100% school results, creating 25 jobs each in four sectors in each village where work would take place, increasing rural incomes, providing drinking water and sanitation to villages, disposing village garbage, among other things.
- Under Unnat Bharat Abhiyan 2.0, both technical and non-technical institutions have been invited to build systems in villages as per their strengths.

Amaravati start-up area pact cancelled

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains I–Urban development

In News

- A.P government’s agreement with Singapore consortium for the development of Amaravati start-up area has been cancelled with mutual consent
- The reason given by government is that the Singapore consortium was unable to give a satisfactory explanation to doubts on the financial sustainability of the project when it was asked to reveal its exact plans.
- A.P. government had formed Amaravati Development Partners with the Singapore consortium for the development of a start-up area of nearly 1,692 acres over a period of 20 years.
- The bidding was conducted in the Swiss Challenge method in accordance with A.P. Infrastructure Development Enabling Act, 2001.

About Swiss Challenge

- It is a method of bidding, often used in public projects, in which an interested party initiates a proposal for a contract or the bid for a project.
- The government then puts the details of the project out in the public and invites proposals from others interested in executing it. On the receipt of these bids, the original contractor gets an opportunity to match the best bid.
- The Swiss Challenge allows a seller to mix-and-match the features of both an open auction and a closed tender to discover the best price for an asset.
- The method also has other uses. In its original form, a Swiss Challenge allows an infrastructure developer to come up with a *suo motu* proposal for a new project without waiting for the government to call for bids. This can foster innovation, as contractors or developers may initiate projects that the powers-that-be didn’t even think of.

For more viewpoints on Swiss model refer: <https://iasbaba.com/2016/03/3-understand-swiss-model-public-private-partnership-discuss-features-potential-india/>

Two-child policy

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains I - Society

In News

- All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) – political party in Assam- has opposed the Assam government’s two-child policy for job eligibility
- In September 2017, the Assam Assembly had passed the '**Population and Women Empowerment Policy of Assam**' that specified that job candidates with two children only would be eligible for government employment and the existing government staff were to strictly follow the two children family norm
- The policy will come into effect from January 1st, 2021



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INTERNATIONAL

[In economic growth, Bangladesh leads South Asian group](#)

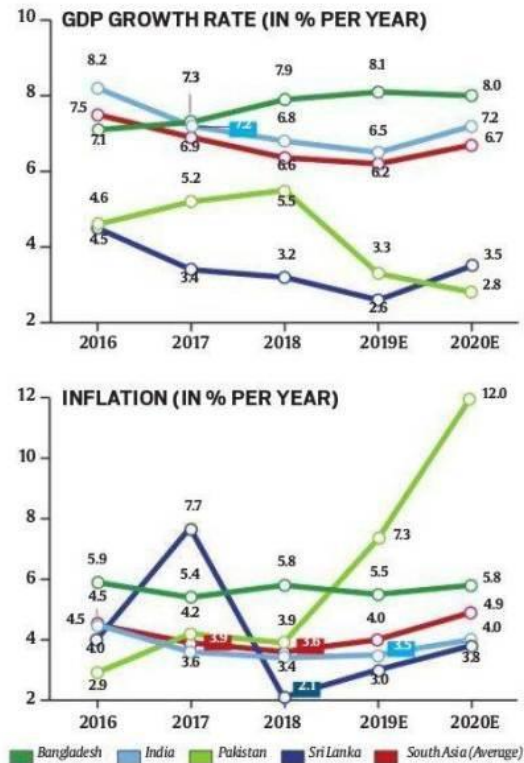
Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II –International Relations

In News

- Since 2016, Bangladesh has been growing at 7%-plus every year, and its growth is likely to cross the 8% mark both in this and the coming year, according to the **Asian Development Bank** report.
- Garments accounted for 84.2% of Bangladesh exports
- Over this same period, India has seen a secular decline in growth rates, even though an uptick is expected in the coming year.
- Sri Lanka has been the worst performing South Asian economy in terms of growth

Asian Development Bank (ADB)

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is a **regional development bank** established on **19 December 1966**.
- ADB is headquartered in **Manila, Philippines**. It aims to promote social and economic development in Asia.
- ADB now has **67 members**, of which 48 are from within Asia and the Pacific and 19 outside.
- It is modeled on the World Bank and has a similar weighted voting system where votes are distributed based on member's capital subscriptions.
- As of 31 December 2018, Japan and United States hold the largest proportion of shares at 15.571%. China holds 6.43%, India holds 6.32%, and Australia holds 5.77%.
- ADB provides financing to both **Sovereign Nations and private companies**.



<https://images.indianexpress.com/2019/10/Graph.jpg>

Data localisation

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

In News

- India's data localisation plans will hang on balance if it agrees to **e-commerce provisions of Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership(RCEP)**
- This would mean India won't be allowed to impose data localisation rules on companies looking to do business in India.
- In its April 2018 notification, the RBI had said that "all system providers shall ensure that the entire data relating to payment systems operated by them are stored in a system only in India."
- This data is to include the full end-to-end transaction details, information collected, carried, or processed as part of the message or payment instruction.
- India is negotiating in the RCEP talks, being held in Bangkok, to change the relevant provision so as to enable space for national rules and regulations over data.

Venezuela wins seat on UN Rights Council

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

In News

- Venezuela won a contested election for a seat on the UN Human Rights Council despite a campaign by over 50 organisations and many countries opposed to Nicolas Maduro's government and its rights record.
- For the two Latin American seats - Brazil topped the ballot with 153 votes, followed by Venezuela with 105 votes

About UNHRC

- It was founded in 2006. It replaced the former United Nations Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) that had been strongly criticised for allowing countries with poor human rights records to be members.
- The Council is made of 47 Member States, which are elected by the UN General Assembly. The Council's Membership is based on equitable geographical distribution.
- Members of the Council serve for a period of three years and are not eligible for immediate re-election after serving two consecutive terms.
- **In June 2018**, the United States announced its withdrawal from the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) terming it "hypocritical and self-serving."
- India had previously been **elected to the UNHRC for the 2011-2014 and 2014-2017 terms.**

[Bhashan Char island](#)

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

In News

- Thousands of **Rohingya living in Bangladesh refugee camps** have agreed to move to a Bhashan Char island located in the Bay of Bengal
- Rights groups have warned the island, which emerged from the sea only about two decades ago, might not be able to withstand violent storms during the annual monsoon season.
- In the past half a century, powerful cyclones have killed hundreds of thousands of people in the Meghna river estuary where the island is located.
- Dhaka has long wanted to move 1,00,000 refugees to the muddy silt islet, saying it would take pressure off the overcrowded border camps where almost a million Rohingya live.
- Some 7,40,000 Rohingya fled Myanmar in August 2017 in the face of a military crackdown, joining 2,00,000 refugees already in makeshift tent settlements at Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar.

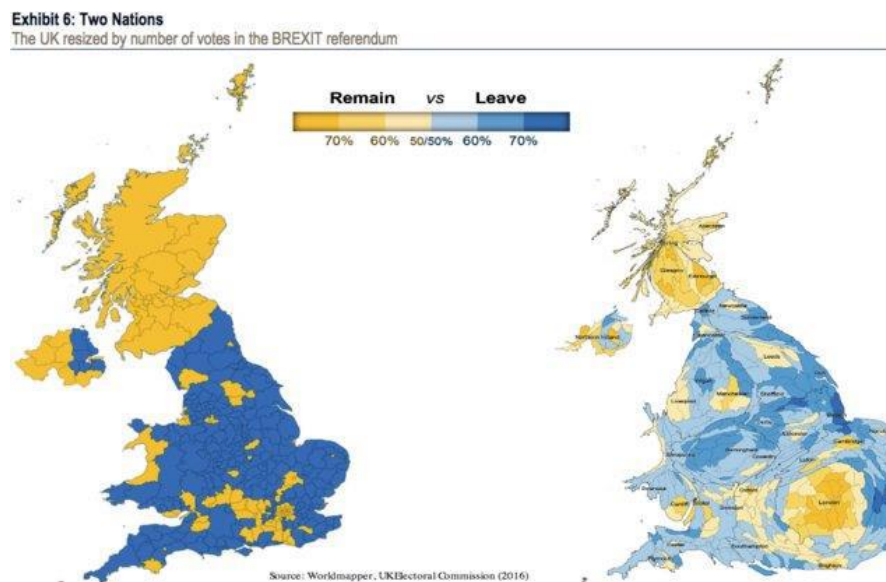
[New Brexit deal](#)

Context:

- Despite the euphoric reception to the fresh terms of Britain's withdrawal from the EU agreed on Thursday, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson was forced to seek an extension to the October 31 exit deadline.
- The House of Commons voted for an amendment making approval for the text conditional on Parliament passing legislation to ratify the treaty before Britain leaves the EU.
- The failure to clearly back the deal triggered a law forcing Mr. Johnson to ask EU leaders to delay Brexit for a third time

Why?

- Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), has opposed agreement — that it would undermine the constitutional integrity of the U.K.
- It is however true that the new deal would avoid a hard border in the Irish Sea, one that would have separated the north and south of the island of Ireland, thus endangering the 1998 Good Friday agreement.



Img : <https://media.businessinsider.com/images/59326a474cb1e4221247dc8f-640-418.jpg>

Brexit:

- Brexit - British exit - refers to the UK leaving the EU.
- Brexit is the scheduled withdrawal of the United Kingdom (UK) from the European Union (EU).
- Following a June 2016 referendum, in which 51.9% of participating voters voted to leave, the UK government formally announced the country's withdrawal in March 2017, starting a two-year process that was due to conclude with the UK withdrawing on 29 March 2019.

- As the UK parliament thrice voted against the negotiated withdrawal agreement, that deadline has been extended twice, and is currently 31 October 2019.
- The 'Benn Act' that passed in Parliament requires the government to seek a third extension if no agreement is reached before 19 October.

What is the European Union?

- The EU is an economic and political union involving 28 European countries. It allows free trade and free movement of people to live and work in whichever country they choose.
- The UK joined in 1973 (when it was known as the European Economic Community). If the UK leaves, it would be the first member state to withdraw from the EU.

Why hasn't UK left?

- Brexit was originally due to happen on 29 March 2019. That was two years after then Prime Minister Theresa May triggered Article 50 - the formal process to leave - and kicked off negotiations. But the Brexit date has been delayed twice.
- A deal was agreed in November 2018, but MPs rejected it three times.

What is the new Brexit deal?

- The new deal replaces the backstop with new customs arrangements.
- Under the plan, the whole of the UK would leave the customs union. At this point, the UK would be free to sign and implement its own trade agreements with countries around the world.
- But Northern Ireland would also remain an entry point into the EU's customs zone.
- The UK would not apply tariffs to products entering Northern Ireland, as long as they were not destined to be sent across the border into the Republic of Ireland.
- Northern Ireland would continue to follow EU regulations for agrifood and industrial goods.
- After four years, the Northern Ireland Assembly would have the opportunity to vote on whether Northern Ireland should continue the arrangement.

What after Brexit?

- EU will start carrying out checks on British goods.
- This could lead to delays at ports, such as Dover. Some fear that this could lead to traffic bottlenecks, disrupting supply routes and damaging the economy.
- If the pound falls sharply in response to no deal and there are significant delays at ports, like Dover, it could affect the price and availability of some foods.
- There are also concerns over potential shortages of medicines.

Positive effects of Brexit in India:

- **To reset legal terms:** Brexit is an opportunity for India to reset the legal terms of its trade with the UK and EU, at the multilateral level, and through free trade agreements.
- **Students friendly:** Before Brexit, British universities were forced to offer scholarships and subsidies to the citizens of the UK and EU. Brexit frees up funds for the other students and more Indian students might be able to get scholarships.
- **Increases tourism:** Reduction in pound value will reduce travelling cost to the UK and will make it a good travel destination.
- **Huge investment:** Brexit will help strengthen our ties with Britain because India's focus on innovation and entrepreneurship still makes it an attractive destination for outsourcing and investment.
- **Goods and services:** According to the UK's Department for International Trade (DIT) figures, total trade in goods and services between the UK and India was 18 billion pounds in 2017, a 15 per cent increase from 2016.
- **Current account deficit:** Lower commodity prices, crude oil prices may help narrowing current account deficit (CAD)
- **Trading partners:** The UK and the EU are losing trading partners in the process. So they will both be looking for replacements. Here, India can play a crucial role. We may see enhanced cooperation in segments like technology, cyber security, defence production and finance.

Negative effects of Brexit in India:

- **Short term effects:** Automobile, Pharmacy and IT might be the most affected. NASSCOM has predicted that the effect of Brexit will be felt on the \$108 Billion Indian IT sector in the short term.
- **Automobile industry:** In the automobile industry, Brexit may lead to reduction in sales and companies that derive good revenues of profits from Britain could get hurt majorly.
- **Disruptions:** Indian companies would need to recalibrate European operations, like setting up an additional operating company within European Union. This means short term disruptions will have a financial impact, as also take up management time.
- **Immigration:** Because of the large number of immigrants from EU, UK has restricted immigrants from other parts of the world, which had an impact on Indians.
- **Restrictions:** Post Brexit, immigration into UK of Indians may not become easier as the UK wants to place quantitative restrictions on total number of immigrants, and only a few Indians with special skills may find it easier to work in the UK.

Conclusion

- India should re-negotiate with the UK and EU the World Trade Organization Schedules of Concessions, for both goods and services, should resume its FTA discussions with the EU, and should prepare to launch FTA talks with the UK.

Connecting the dots:

- Britain might avoid a no-deal exit, but it will have to grapple with the costs of leaving the EU. Analyse

Asia's remarkable Economic Transformation

Asian economy in 19th Century:

- Asia accounted for two-thirds of the world's population and more than a half of world income.
- Asia contributed more than a half of manufacturing production in the world economy.

Decline of Asia in 20th Century:

- Colonialism and imperialism.
- Asia's share in world income had plummeted to 15%.
- Asia's Share in world manufacturing had dropped to 6%.
- End of 20th Century, Asia became the poorest continent.
- Its demographic and social indicators of development, among the worst anywhere, epitomised its underdevelopment.

Rise of Asia in 21st Century:

- Asia has witnessed a profound transformation in terms of economic progress of nations and living conditions of people.
- Now it accounted for 30% of world income, 40% of world manufacturing, and over a third of world trade.
- This transformation was unequal across countries and between people.

Why unequal?

- Diversity of Asia.(geographical size, embedded histories, colonial legacies, nationalist movements, initial conditions, natural resource endowments, population size, income levels and political systems)
- The reliance on markets and degree of openness in economies varied greatly.
- Diversity in politics (authoritarian regimes or oligarchies to political democracies)
- Diversity in ideologies (communism to state capitalism and capitalism)

Economic Development:

- Growth was driven by rapid industrialisation
- Rapid investment growth coincided in time with rapid export growth, leading to rapid GDP growth.
- This was associated with structural changes in the composition of output and employment.

- The process was also supported by a coordination of economic policies across sectors and over time.
- Literacy rates and life expectancy rose everywhere.
- Massive reduction in absolute poverty.

Unequal outcomes:

- East Asia was the leader and South Asia was the laggard, with Southeast Asia in the middle, while progress in West Asia did not match its high-income levels.
- South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore joined the league of industrialised nations.
- China developed impressively after 1990.
- The economic dynamism of Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand waned after the Asian financial crisis.
- The growth performance of India, Bangladesh and Vietnam was most impressive during the past quarter century (but less social progress).
- In comparison, the performance of Sri Lanka was respectable, while that of Turkey was average; but that of Pakistan and the Philippines was relatively poor.

Negatives:

- Inequality between people within countries rose almost everywhere, while the gap between the richest and poorest countries in Asia remains awesome.

Way forward:

- The future will be shaped partly by how Asia exploits the opportunities and meets the challenges and partly by how the present difficult economic and political conjuncture in the world unfolds.
- By 2030, per capita income in Asia, relative to the world, will return to its level in 1820.

Conclusion:

- It is plausible to suggest that in circa 2050, a century after the end of colonial rule, Asia will account for more than a half of world income and will be home to more than half the people on earth.

Connecting the dots:

- The rise of Asia represents the beginnings of a shift in the balance of economic power in the world and some erosion in the political hegemony of the West. Analyse

[Russian intervention in Syrian civil war](#)**Context**

- Russian military police have arrived in Syria, under an accord between Turkey and Russia which halted Turkey's military incursion into northeast Syria.
- The deal, by **Presidents Tayyip Erdogan and Vladimir Putin**, requires that Russian military police and Syrian border guards remove all Kurdish YPG militia from the Turkish border.
- Turkey regards the YPG as a terrorist group aligned with Kurdish militants who have waged an insurgency in southeast Turkey since 1984.



Img: <https://www.worldatlas.com/img/areamap/ebaac62ad98375890050b695082ce11b.gif>

Russian intervention in Syria:

- The Russian military intervention in the Syrian Civil War began in September 2015, after an official request by the Syrian government for military aid against rebel groups.
- Initially involved air strikes against targets against Syrian opposition militant groups opposed to the Syrian government, including the **Syrian National Coalition, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), al-Nusra Front (al-Qaeda in Syria) and the Army of Conquest.**
- Russian special operations forces and military advisors were stationed in Syria.

Russia's goals :

- Fighting terrorist organisations such as the Islamic State,

- Helping the Syrian government retake territory from various anti-government groups that are labelled by the United States as "moderate opposition",
- To roll back U.S. influence.
- In 2015, Russian president Vladimir Putin defined Russia's goal in Syria as "stabilising the legitimate power in Syria and creating the conditions for political compromise".

Significance:

- Recapture of Palmyra from the Islamic State in March 2016,
- Retaking the major city of Aleppo in December 2016,
- Breaking the three-year-long siege of **Deir ez-Zor**

Criticisms:

- Russian air strikes killed civilians, including children.
- Russian attacks have killed more civilians than either the Islamic State or the Syrian Army.
- The intervention polarized international observers.

International community:

- Countries with close diplomatic and economic ties to Russia, including **China, Egypt, Iraq and Belarus**, have generally supported the intervention
- Governments close to the US were usually contrary denouncing Russia for its role in the war and accusing the state of complicity in the Syrian regime's alleged war crimes.
- **Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International** have alleged Russia is committing war crimes and deliberately targeting civilians.
- The **United States** government has condemned the intervention and imposed economic sanctions against Russia for supporting the Syrian government
- **United Nations** have condemned the Russian intervention and accused Russia of war crimes.

India's response:

- India over decades has advocated policy of non interference in internal affairs of a sovereign nation.
- India suggested for dialogue and negotiations, and on the basis of the principles of the UN Charter and in accordance with international law

Connecting the dots:

- India over decades has advocated policy of non interference in internal affairs of a sovereign nation. Justify

[Chile pulls out from hosting climate and trade summits](#)

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

In News

- Chile's President announced that his country, which has been rocked by a wave of recent protests, was not in a position to host a key UN climate change meeting and major Asia-Pacific trade summit later this year.
 - The priority of Chilean government was to focus first and foremost on fully restoring public order and social peace,
 - Cancelling the climate meeting, which had been scheduled for December, leaves organisers with a very tight window to find a new venue.
 - Chile stepped up to host the Climate Change Conference after the initial host, Brazil, pulled out last year. Brazil's decision came soon after the election of President Jair Bolsonaro
-



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INDIA AND THE WORLD

India-Bangladesh ties to move to the next level

Context:

- Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will embark on a four-day visit to India beginning from with an aim to further intensify bilateral relations between the two countries.
- There is scope for India-Bangladesh ties to move to the next level, based on cooperation, coordination and consolidation

Did you know:



Img: <https://www.mapsofindia.com/neighbouring-countries-maps/maps/india-bangladesh-map.jpg>

- Bangladesh shares land borders with India to the west, north and the east and Myanmar to the east, whereas the Bay of Bengal lies to its south.
- Bangladesh's land border with India is quite long stretching up to 2,582 miles.

- Indian states Assam, Tripura, Mizoram, Meghalaya, and West Bengal share the India-Bangladesh border.
- The country's geography is dominated by the Ganges delta which empties into the Bay of Bengal the combined waters of several river systems, including those of the Brahmaputra and the Ganges
- The endangered Bengal tiger, the national animal..
- The borders of modern Bangladesh were established with the separation of Bengal and India in August 1947, when the region became East Pakistan as a part of the newly formed State of Pakistan following the Boundary of the Partition of India. Later the rise of the Bengali nationalist and self-determination movement led to the Liberation War and eventually resulted in the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent sovereign in 1971
- Bengalis, who speak the official Bengali language, make up 98% of the population of Bangladesh
- Islam is the country's established religion
- In the recent years Bangladesh has registered notable success in using Microcredit as a tool for poverty alleviation, women empowerment, generation of income through export of RMG, population control, reducing child mortality and combating natural disasters;
- The country continues to face the challenges of Rohingya refugee, terrorism, corruption, and erratic climate change

India- Bangladesh relations:

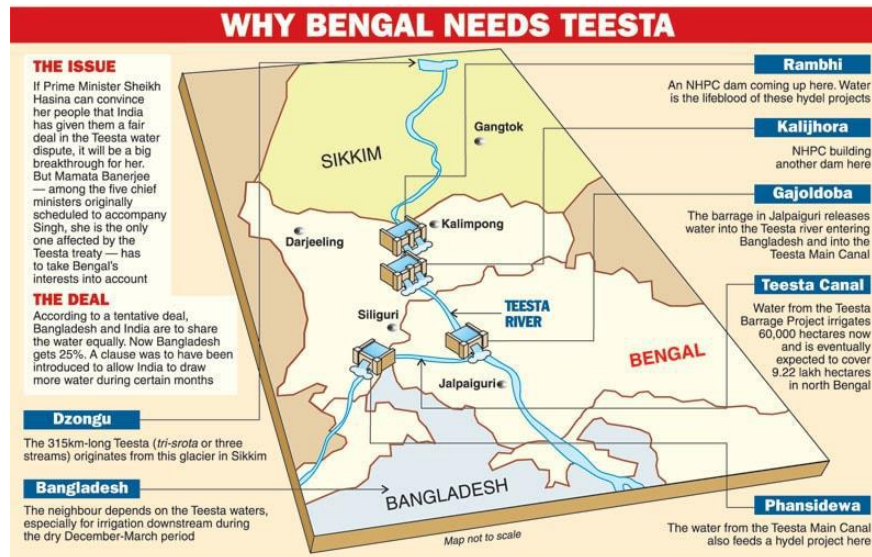
- Common members of **SAARC, BIMSTEC, IORA and the Commonwealth.**
- The two countries share many cultural ties. (*esp :Bengali-speaking*)
- In 1971, the Bangladesh Liberation War broke out between East Pakistan and West Pakistan; India intervened in December 1971 on behalf of East Pakistan and helped secure East Pakistan's independence from Pakistan as the country of Bangladesh.
- Since 2015, the notable developments have taken like resolution of long-pending land and maritime boundaries.
- Observed increase in bilateral trade from US\$9 billion to US\$10.46 billion in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2018-19, followed by US\$7 billion to US\$9 billion in FY 2017-18, an increase of 28.5 percent.

Present scenario:

- India and Bangladesh today enjoy one of the best periods of their relationship, with positive development in the areas of diplomatic, political, economic and security relations.
- The current Bangladesh government has uprooted security threats and acts of insurgency against India
- The India-Bangladesh border is one of India's most secured
- The signing of the Land Boundary Agreement in 2015 was a milestone
- Land Boundary Agreement in 2015
- Bilateral trade was a little over \$9 billion in FY 2017-18 and Bangladeshi exports increased by 42.91%.
- Indian export of electricity increased by another 500 MW. A 1,600 MW power station with a dedicated transmission system is being developed to boost power trade.
- Train services are doing well, Five additional bus services were introduced in 2018
- Bangladeshi tourists accounted for 21.6% of the total percentage of tourists visiting India in 2018
- Bangladesh contributes 50% of India's health tourism revenue
- Border killings have decreased.
- Since 2010, India has approved three lines of credit to Bangladesh of \$7.362 billion to finance development projects. Due to bureaucratic red tape, just \$442 million has been disbursed till December 2018
- Memoranda of understanding were also signed for cooperation between the naval forces.

Issues yet to be settled :

1. Teesta Water Sharing Agreement.



Img: <https://iasbaba.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Bengal-min.jpg>

- Teesta River long river that rises in the eastern Himalayas, flows through the Indian states of West Bengal and Sikkim through Bangladesh and enters the Bay of Bengal.
- West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's refusal to endorse water-sharing terms agreed upon by Prime Minister Modi in 2015 has resulted in the current impasse.

Read more on Teesta river dispute here : <https://iasbaba.com/2015/08/iasbabas-daily-current-affairs-15th-17th-august-2015/>

2. National Register of Citizens (NRC)

- The **National Register of Citizens (NRC)** has left out 1.9 million Assamese from the list with a group labelled as "illegal immigrants from Bangladesh" living in Assam post-1971.(Bangladesh refuses)

3. Rohingya issue

- The Rohingya issue and India's remarks in 2017 on the issue have been upsetting for Bangladesh .
- The Indian government is concerned over Rohingyas' stay in India for security regions, it is looking for ways to deport over 40,000 Rohingyas living in the country illegally.

Way forward:

- Removal of non-tariff barriers will help Bangladeshi exports such as harmonising the standards for goods accepted by India
- Approved lines of credit to Bangladesh must be cleared on time

- Both countries must reach consensus on the issues like NRC, Rohingya and Teesta rivers.

Conclusion:

- In a neighbourhood where distrust and cynicism prevail over friendship and hope(Pakistan & China), the relationship between the two countries(India & Bangladesh) has given hope for optimism.

Connecting the dots:

- India-Bangladesh relations have matured in the last decade with development in many areas of cooperation. Substantiate.

India-China informal summit**Context:**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping two-day India-China informal summit
- The second informal summit between leaders of India and China is scheduled to take place in the coastal town of Mamallapuram, south of Chennai.(first was wuhan)
- The summit would take place in the wake of the recent India-US bonhomie and growing China-Pakistan partnership.

Why Mamallapuram?

- Mamallapuram, or Mahabalipuram in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.
- An ancient historic town and one of two major port cities by the 7th century within the **Pallava kingdom** (Pallavas also had trade relations with the Chinese.)
- Now UNESCO world heritage site and one of the most visited towns in South India
- Renowned for its architecture, widely admired across the world.
- Wuhan was picked by President Xi Jinping as the venue last year to demonstrate China's **economic resilience and might**.
- Mamallapuram is symbolic of India's '**soft power**'.



Img : <https://cdn.kastatic.org/ka-perseus-images/75a502c2daddead167bd72b120b004c9d47801ed.jpg>

Did you know:

- Mamallapuram and the Pallava dynasty are also historically relevant, for the earliest recorded security pact between China and India (in the early 8th century) involved a Pallava king (Rajasimhan, or Narasimha Varma II), from whom the Chinese sought help to counter Tibet, which had by then emerged as a strong power posing a threat to China.

Issue of concern:

- Doklam and the disputed border between the two countries remains an issue of concern.
- China and India continue to compete and have a contradictory outlook on many strategic and civilisation issues. Like Asian security, regional stability and the role of the U.S. in the region
- The recent announcement by India of an “all arms integrated” exercise ‘codenamed Changthang Prahar (assault)’ in a “super high altitude” area near Chushul in eastern

Ladakh, featuring tanks, artillery guns, drones, helicopters and troops, as well as para-drops, is almost certain to be read suspiciously by China.

- The reopening of the Advance Landing Ground at Vijoynagar in Arunachal Pradesh for the use of military aircraft
- A proposed major combat exercise, in Arunachal Pradesh, in which the new Integrated Battle Groups will be seen in operation

Wuhan summit:

- The first Informal Summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and China's President Xi Jinping was held in Wuhan in 2018
- The purpose of meeting was to exchange views on overarching issues of bilateral and global importance and to elaborate their respective visions and priorities for national development in context of current and future international situation.
- Since the Wuhan Summit, little has changed as far as India-China relations are concerned.
- Political situation in Afghanistan deteriorates, China, along with countries like Pakistan, remains more intent than ever on ensuring that India has no role to play there.

Aftermath

- Relations between China and the U.S. have sharply deteriorated.
- Majority of nations in the West have cooled off towards China.
- strengthening of India-Russia ties.
- New triangular relationship of Russia, India and Japan.
- China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has also come under increasing attack.

Challenges in China:

- China's domestic scene is marked by heightened anxiety
- The economy is far more fragile than in early 2018, as exemplified by the jitters emanating from China's equity and currency markets
- The decline in growth rates.
- Internal security concerns such as unrest in Tibet, inroads made by radical extremist groups in Xinjiang
- Turn of events in Hong Kong
- The relentless attack by the U.S. and President Trump on China's economic practices has aggravated this mood of pessimism.

China's concern:

- India's relations with the U.S. have attained a new high.

- Relations with Russia have acquired a fresh dimension, incorporating economics alongside a longstanding military relationship.
- India's relations with Japan have greatly strengthened.
- The Quadrilateral (the U.S., India, Japan and Australia) has gained a new lease of life.

Way forward:

- India, needs to proceed with utmost caution
- India must ensure that it does not provoke China to the point where it would be inclined to indulge in 'adventurism'.
- China's efforts are more than likely to be directed towards 'disruption', primarily concentrating on disrupting the strategic alliances that India has forged, or strengthened, recently.

Conclusion:

- With preparations and proper handling, the forthcoming meet could, on the other hand, provide India's leaders with a realistic estimate as to where India-China relations are headed.

Connecting the dots:

- Informal summits have their use as trust-building exercises. Elucidate

INFORMAL SUMMITS

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

In News

- Second Informal India-China Summit scheduled to take place in Mamallapuram, Tamil Nadu on October 11-12.
- The two countries convened their first Informal Summit in central China's Wuhan in April 2018.
- By definition, informal summits lack the pomp, protocol and ceremony of formal ones, including delegation-level talks and a pre-set agenda for discussions.
- No agreements are signed, and there is no joint statement or press conference. The two leaders involved hold one-to one discussions, sometimes with only translators present.
- It allows for quietly discussing contentious issues away from media glare and publicity.

About Mamallapuram

- Mamallapuram is also known as Seven Pagodas or Mahabalipuram.
- It was one of two major port cities by the 7th century within the Pallava kingdom.
- It 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, Krishna's **Butterball**, Shore temple and **Pancha Rathas (Five Chariots)**.

[India-China informal summit 2.0](#)

Context:

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- Mamallapuram is symbolic of India's **'soft power'**.



Img :

<https://cdn.kastatic.org/ka-perseus/images/75a502c2daddead167bd72b120b004c9d47801ed.jpg>

Did you know:

- Mamallapuram and the Pallava dynasty are also historically relevant, for the earliest recorded security pact between China and India (in the early 8th century) involved a Pallava king (Rajasimhan, or Narasimha Varma II), from whom the Chinese sought help to counter Tibet, which had by then emerged as a strong power posing a threat to China.

Wuhan and after

- Three historical forces have been shaping India-China relations.
- Some of these forces have been pushing both countries towards 3 Cs **competition cooperation and collaboration**

Like,

- changing world order and the rise of Asia, (after the 2008 global economic crisis)
- Idea that with the West's declining capacity and inclination to responsibly manage international and Asian affairs
- Changing South Asia with China's 2013 and 2014 policy declarations of deepening ties with its periphery including with subcontinental states, followed soon after with the ambitious Belt and Road initiative and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor in April 2015.

These three factors led to :

- Antagonistic approaches and strategies.
- Much of this acrimonious build-up can be traced to China's decision to expand linkages with its southwestern periphery and India's perception and reaction to that process.

Ex: The Doklam episode

Solution Wuhan 1.0:

- Lessening of regional tension
- Hence, the April 2018 "informal summit" in Wuhan, where both sides decided to arrest the deterioration in the relationship and attempt to chart a fresh course.
- Wuhan 1.0 was an attempt to articulate some norms that could serve as a renewed set of guidelines to policymakers and bureaucracies in both countries.

It was built on five pillars

1. "simultaneous emergence of India and China".
2. The relationship has regained importance and become "a positive factor for stability"

3. Both sides recognise the “importance of respecting each other’s sensitivities, concerns and aspirations”.
4. Both leaderships would provide “strategic guidance to their respective militaries” to manage the border peacefully.
5. Both sides would strive for “greater consultation on all matters of common interest”, which includes building a real “developmental partnership”.

Way forward:

- An inclusive security architecture in Asia that facilitates a non-violent transition to multipolarity without disrupting economic interdependence;
- A fair and rules-based open international order to better reflect Indian and developing economy interests;
- Geopolitical peace and sustainable economic development in the neighbourhood

Conclusion:

- China is important to the successful pursuit of each of these goals, and the principal task before Indian policymakers is to envisage and execute a policy framework that allows for progress on the three ends mentioned above

Connecting the dots:

- India has to find and define for itself a relationship with China which allows us to maintain our foreign policy objectives and at the same time allows us a policy that is prudent enough that does not lead us to conflict on every occasion. Justify

Mamallapuram Summit**Context:**

- Chinese President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Narendra Modi held “productive” talks as part of the second India-China informal summit in the southern coastal town of Mamallapuram in Tamil Nadu
- Modi took Xi to three iconic monuments in the historical coastal city—Arjuna’s Penance, Panch Rathas and the Shore Temple. The monuments date back to the Pallava era (4th-9th century CE). One of the reasons for choosing Mamallapuram was to highlight the contacts between the Pallava kings and China’s Fujian province where Xi served as governor once.
- Talks between Modi and Xi were aimed at building on the relationship reset that began in Wuhan in April last year.
- The broad agenda included their unresolved border dispute, trade and people-to-people contacts besides regional and global issues.

Concerns:

- summit was clouded by a series of irritants including a statement by Xi telling Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan that he was watching the situation in Kashmir and would support Pakistan on issues related to its core interests
- India has termed it as its internal matter and issued a sharp response to Xi's comments, that was also notable for its timing—less than 48 hours ahead of Xi's arrival in India.
- China, on its part, has been reportedly unhappy about Indian military exercises in Arunachal Pradesh, some 100km from the undemarcated border between the two countries. China claims the whole of Arunachal Pradesh as part of its territory.
- The U.S. and China were in a better relationship. Beijing's focus was entirely on economic development and "peaceful rise". It was also the beginning of the golden age of globalisation and free trade that softened borders between big trading and investment partners. Now, U.S.-China ties have turned hostile at a time when India is steadily enhancing its strategic partnership with US.

Challenges:

- Relations with Beijing are doubly critical for India as China is both a neighbour and a rising great power.
- There are structural problems in ties — the boundary dispute, the Pakistan factor, and historical mistrust.
- Deepen Tactical engagement further, and for that they should not allow strategic glitches dictate terms for a bilateral partnership.
- U.S wants India to swing to its side and join its Indo-Pacific strategy, the undeclared aim of which is to contain China's rise. China, obviously, doesn't want India to swing to the other side.
- The Pakistan factor looms large over ties. With Mr. Modi's hyper-nationalist government taking an aggressive approach towards Pakistan and cracking down on Kashmir, China's Pakistan card is now stronger

Trade and border:

- Since 1990, Ind-China have decided to strengthen ties in Economy.
- Economy, as in the early 1990s, India, following China's footsteps, started liberalising its economy.
- Trade ties between the two countries boomed over the years (it touched \$95 billion last year), though it's largely skewed towards China as the latter was fast emerging as an industrial and technological powerhouse.
- The border has been largely peaceful during this period.

Way forward:

- China must make investments in India, especially in building infrastructure and fifth generation technology architecture.
- India, wants greater market access in China,
- India-China cooperation in projects in third countries.
- India should engage with Pakistan, which will not only calm down its borders but also weaken China's Pakistan card
- Plan to take economic ties to the next level, addressing mutual concerns.

Example:. In the 1950s and '60s, the U.S. tried everything it could to weaken and isolate Mao Zedong's China. But it didn't stop President Nixon(U.S) from visiting China in 1972 that led to a remarkable turnaround in Sino-American ties.

Conclusion:

- India should turn the focus to its rise and building capacities, not on conflicts and rivalries.
- If it's driven by such a broader but a realist vision, India could expand the avenues of deep tactical engagement with a powerful China.

Connecting the dots:

- Should India compete with China for dominance of Asia or should it stay focussed on its own rise in which competition with China will be a part? Analyse.
- A nation can pick its friends, but not its neighbours. Elucidate

[China's role in Bangladesh while shaping its ties with Dhaka](#)

Context:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping to meet in two-day India-China informal summit
- The second informal summit between leaders of India and China is scheduled to take place in the coastal town of Mamallapuram, south of Chennai.(first was wuhan)
- The just-concluded visit (October 6) to India by Bangladesh's prime minister, Sheikh Hasina.

Wuhan summit:

- The first informal summit between the two leaders was held at Wuhan in April 2018, necessitated by the earlier military stand-off between the Asian giants at Doklam.
- Prudence at the highest political level enabled the two nations to arrive at a **modus-vivendi** in Wuhan, though the long-festering territorial dispute and an unresolved 4,000 km-plus Line of Actual Control are tenaciously alive.

History:

- In the run up to the 1971 Bangladesh war, the US and China, which had begun their own rapprochement, supported Pakistan, and were opposed to Indian assistance to the East Pakistan political leadership — symbolised by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.
- Yet, with support from Russia, India achieved what may be described as a spectacular military victory — it liberated Dhaka and handed over power to Mujibur Rahman.

India – China – Bangladesh-Pakistan :

- Indian military victory of 1971 led to a strategic reappraisal in Beijing about its democratic neighbour, whom it had militarily humiliated in October 1962.
- The seeds of the strategic-security anxiety in China about India were sown at that time.
- Beijing's response was to invest in Pakistan and, in the intervening decades, a deep and opaque Sino-Pak strategic and security relationship was nurtured
- This in turn emboldened Pakistan , to embark upon a proxy war against India (with terrorism as a tool) that began in 1990 and has continued to-date.
- Bangladesh is an active partner of the Xi Jinping-led BRI (Belt and Road Initiative) .
- In the security sector, Bangladesh is also a major recipient of Chinese military inventory, including submarines.

Recent visit of Bangladesh PM takeaways:

- Provides an instructive cue as to how the strategic ties between India and China have evolved and future lessons to be drawn from this bilateral relationship.
- Despite some missteps and hesitation, the bilateral is currently described as the “best ever” and a template for India's ties with its other neighbours

Way forward:

- India's abiding regional strategic objective ought to be one which ensures that Bangladesh does not morph into a Pakistan, either by way of being compelled into choosing Beijing over Delhi; or nurturing radical Islamic ideologies domestically.
- The maritime domain, and the Bay of Bengal in particular, with Dhaka as the coxswain, ought to be envisioned at Mamallapuram.

Connecting the dots:

- The Bangladesh-India-China triangle is often obscured by the high visibility accorded to Pakistan in the uneasy relationship between the two Asian giants. Analyse.

Pakistan continues to be on the Grey List of FATF

Context:

- Pakistan continues to be on the Grey List of the international terror financing watchdog Financial Action Task Force. The decision of FATF was taken after the completion of its five-day plenary session in Paris.
- Pakistan has been warned of action for its failure to combat money laundering and terror financing.
- If Pakistan continues with the 'Grey List' or is put in the 'Dark Grey' list, it would be very difficult for the country to get financial aid from the IMF, the World Bank and the European Union

This will benefit India in many ways, such as:

- Pakistan will be put under closer scrutiny immediately to curb terror financing.
- Reduced Pakistan funded terrorist attacks and infiltrations such as Pulwama and Mumbai attacks.
- Economic benefits to India as FATF has increased the cost of doing business with Pakistan which will attract less FDI now.
- Enhanced image of India in international forums as Pakistan will face an international boycott.
- Pakistan's already fragile economy will have a powerful blow which will be in India's favour in international trade.

What next?

- In an assessment Pakistan has failed to meet 22 of the 27 targets set by it.
- If it does not comply with the FATF's demands fully by February 2020, however, it risks ending up in the company of Iran and North Korea on its black list, which could result in its financial isolation.

The Financial Action Task Force :

- FATF stands for The Financial Action Task Force. It was established in July 1989 by a Group of Seven (G-7) Summit in Paris, initially to examine and develop measures to combat money laundering.
- The FATF Secretariat is housed at the OECD headquarters in Paris.

India and the Financial Action Task Force (FATF):

- India became a member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) in 2010.

- It will help India to build the capacity to fight terrorism and trace terrorist money and help to successfully investigate and prosecute money laundering and terrorist financing offences.
- India will benefit from securing a more transparent and stable financial system by ensuring that financial institutions are not vulnerable to infiltration or abuse by organized crime groups.
- In recent past, Pakistan had asked for India's removal from the group, citing bias and motivated action, but that demand was rejected.

China and other allies:

- It is no coincidence that Pakistan's all-weather ally China is the current chair of the FATF. While support from Turkey and Malaysia helped block the move — the charter states that three votes are mandatory for a country to avoid being blacklisted— it was not enough to avoid a stern warning.

Conclusion:

- There is greater awareness now of how Pakistan has diverted aid for the war on terror towards funding terror.
- Pakistan must abandon terror as an instrument of State policy.

Connecting the dots:

- There is greater awareness now of how Pakistan has diverted aid for the war on terror towards funding terror. Analyse

[KARTARPUR SAHIB CORRIDOR AGREEMENT](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II—International Relations

In News

- India and Pakistan signed an agreement to operationalise the Kartarpur corridor that will facilitate pilgrims from India to visit the Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib in Pakistan.
- The corridor is being built to connect Dera Baba Nanak in Gurdaspur with Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Kartarpur, the final resting place of Sikhism founder Guru Nanak, to commemorate his 550th birth anniversary celebrations on November 12.
- Indian pilgrims of all faiths and persons of Indian origin can use the corridor.
- The **travel will be Visa Free**; Pilgrims need to carry only a valid passport
- The Pakistan side has assured India to make sufficient provision for 'Langar' and distribution of 'Prasad'. However, there has been no progress on resolving the disagreement over a \$20 fee that Pakistan intends to levy on each traveller.

- Pilgrims would be allowed to carry kirpans (dagger), one of the five articles of faith worn by Sikhs.

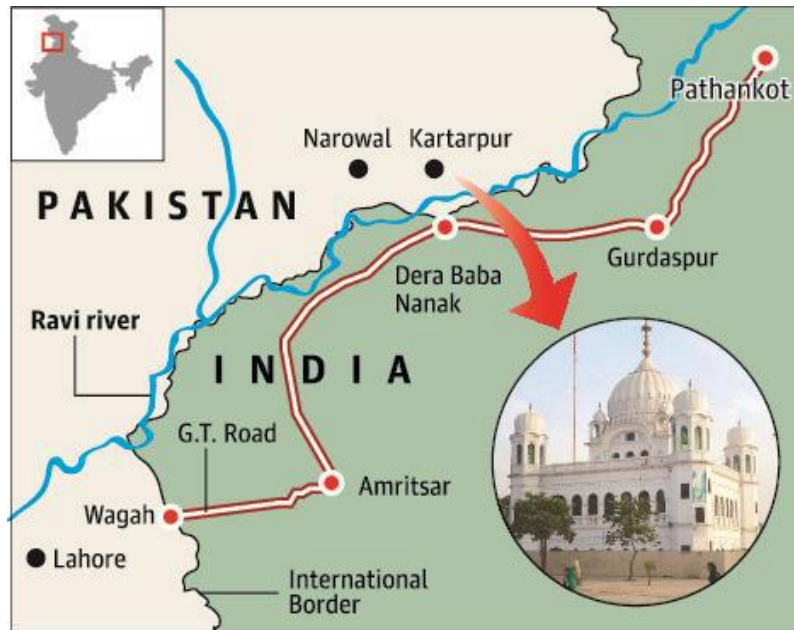


<https://images.indianexpress.com/2018/11/kartarpur1.jpg>

Operationalisation of the Kartarpur Corridor

Context

- India and Pakistan signed agreement on Kartarpur corridor.
- The agreement relates to the modalities for operationalisation of the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor at Zero Point, International Boundary, Dera Baba Nanak.
- Indian pilgrims of all faiths and persons of Indian origin can use the corridor and the travel will be Visa Free
- Pilgrims need to carry only a valid passport and the Corridor is open from dawn to dusk
- Pilgrims travelling in the morning will have to return on the same day.



Pic: https://d39gegkjaqduz9.cloudfront.net/TH/2018/11/23/DEL/Delhi/TH/5_01/88722918_2544650_101_mr.jpg

Current status:

- Currently pilgrims from India have to take a bus to Lahore to get to Kartarpur, which is a 125 km journey although people on the Indian side of the border can physically see Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur on the Pakistani side.
- An elevated platform has also been constructed for the same on the Indian side, where people use binoculars to get a good view

Concern:

- Under the agreement, Pakistan will charge a very nominal USD 20 from every Indian Sikh pilgrim for a single trip
- India continues to urge this issue with the Government of Pakistan to reconsider its insistence on levying the fee.
- Indian pilgrims who enter Pakistan through the Kartarpur corridor will not be allowed to visit other gurdwaras in the Punjab province of that country. They would have to go via the normal route, after applying for a visa, and paying the requisite fees.
- Concerns about the pilgrims being exposed to the propaganda of pro-Khalistan elements.



Img: <http://www.samacharnama.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/kartarpur-corridor-map-1.png>

Why levy?

- Pakistan has spent about Rs 1,000 crore on the Kartarpur corridor infrastructure. It would be providing langar to the pilgrims who visit Gurdwara Darbar Sahib.
- It would also be providing e-rickshaws to ferry the pilgrims from Dera Baba Nanak on the Indian side.
- The fee has triggered a political controversy within India, and Punjab Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh has called the fee a “jazia” tax on pilgrims.

Gurdwara in Kartarpur

- The gurdwara in Kartarpur is located on the bank of river Ravi in Pakistan
- It is about four km from the Dera Baba Nanak shrine, and about 120 km northeast of Lahore
- It was here that Guru Nanak assembled a Sikh community and lived for 18 years until his death in 1539
- The shrine is visible from the Indian side, as Pakistani authorities generally trim the elephant grass that would otherwise obstruct the view
- Indian Sikhs gather in large numbers for darshan from the Indian side, and binoculars are installed at Gurdwara Dera Baba Nanak
- The gurdwara was opened to pilgrims after repairs and restoration in 1999, and Sikh jathas have been visiting the shrine regularly ever since

- Sikh jathas from India travel to Pakistan on four occasions every year- for Baishakhi, the martyrdom day of Guru Arjan Dev, the death anniversary of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, and the birthday of Guru Nanak Dev.

Significance

- First proposed in 1999 by the prime ministers of India and Pakistan, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Nawaz Sharif, respectively, as part of **the Delhi–Lahore Bus diplomacy**
- Implemented as an integrated development project with Government of India funding.
- The development comes ahead of the 550th Prakash Purab or 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak in 2019.
- Until now, most Indian devotees have had to contend with a darshan using binoculars installed at **Dera Baba Nanak Sahib**.
- This can be considered a big development since despite the India-Pakistan deadlock in talks, both India and Pakistan have been able to form a consensus on the issue.

Way forward:

- India must work to secure its border from the threat even as it opens the gates for thousands of pilgrims to travel to Pakistan.
- National security must get priority
- there must be an effort by all stakeholders in India — the Centre, the State government and the leadership of the BJP, the Akalis and the Congress — to resist scoring political points against one another.
- Modalities and technical issues, such as on the numbers, eligibility and identity proof required for the trip to Kartarpur Sahib, should be ironed out by both governments.
- India must negotiate with the Government of Pakistan to reconsider its insistence on levying the fee.

Conclusion:

- It will be unfortunate if Pakistan uses the Kartarpur Corridor to fish in troubled waters and cause instability for its political ends

Connecting the dots:

- Security concerns are high-priority, but blocking work on the corridor is not right. Justify

[India - Maldives](#)

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

In News

- India and the Maldives will take forward several pending measures to promote defence cooperation in the next few months, these include
 - The agreement for lease of a **Dornier aircraft for maritime surveillance**
 - Bringing the Maldives under **India's coastal radar chain network** and
 - A broad-based humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) exercise.
- India had gifted the Maldives two Advanced Light Helicopters (ALH) in 2013 and each was operated by the Indian Coast Guard and the Indian Navy. These were of great service to Maldives as it was used extensively for medical evacuation and search and rescue operations.
- In the aftermath of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks, India began setting up the coastal radar chain network to monitor the movement of traffic on the high seas. Mauritius, the Seychelles and Sri Lanka have already been part of the network

About DORNIER

- The Dornier Do-228 was designed and developed by Dornier GmbH (Germany-France) in the late 1970s
- **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited holds the license** to locally produce the Do-228 aircraft. Since 1983, HAL has produced more than 125 Do-228 aircraft.
- The 19 seater HAL - DO - 228 aircraft is a highly versatile **multi-purpose light transport aircraft**.
- It has been developed specifically to meet the manifold requirements of utility and commuter transport, third level services and air-taxi operations, coast guard duties and maritime surveillance.

[Eighth Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership \(RCEP\) ministerial meeting](#)

Context:

- Commerce Minister **Piyush Goyal** is in Bangkok for the eighth Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) ministerial meeting.
- The meeting, which is likely to be the last one at this level, is expected to work out the unresolved issues in the negotiations on the mega trade deal that is to be concluded later this year.

RCEP:

- The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) is a trade deal that is currently under negotiation among 16 countries — the 10 member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the six countries with which the ASEAN bloc has free trade agreements (FTA).
- The ASEAN, which includes Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam, has FTAs with India, Australia, China, South Korea, Japan and New Zealand.

Img: <https://images.indianexpress.com/2019/10/rcep.jpg?w=759&h=413&imflag=true>

Purpose:

- The purpose of RCEP is to create an “integrated market” spanning all 16 countries, making it easier for products and services of each of these countries to be available across this region.
- ASEAN says the deal will provide “a framework aimed at lowering trade barriers and securing improved market access for goods and services for businesses in the region”.
- The negotiations are focussed on areas like trade in goods and services, investment, economic and technical cooperation, intellectual property, competition, dispute settlement, e-commerce, and small and medium enterprises.

Milk issue of India:

- Milk is the India’s largest “crop”.
- In 2018-19, the estimated production of milk, at 187.75 million tonnes (mt).
- The value of milk output (Rs 5,63,250 crore at an average farm-gate rate of Rs 30/kg)
- Milk is a source of liquidity for farmers, as it is sold daily and generates cash to take care of routine household expenses, unlike other crops that are marketed only once or twice a year.

Concern:

- Milk matters equally to consumers in India, because it meets the animal protein/fat requirements of a significant portion of the population that is vegetarian.
- As incomes rise, the demand for milk goes up even more.
- If dairy products are covered under an RCEP deal, India may have to allow members of the bloc greater access to its market, whether through phased duty reductions or more liberal tariff rate quotas (TRQs).
- There is an already existing TRQ for milk powder, which enables import of up to 10,000 tonnes per year at 15% customs duty, and quantities beyond that at the regular rate of 60%.
- The Indian dairy industry is resisting any enhanced TRQs or other import concessions, even if extended only to RCEP countries, as opposed to the US or European Union.

Other Issues:

- India’s trade deficits with nations have always widened after signing free-trade-agreements (FTAs) with them, citing the cases with ASEAN, Japan, Korea, and Singapore, most of which are RCEP nations.

- It has also been pointed out that India's vulnerable agriculture and dairy sectors, which are not in positions to compete with Australia and New Zealand, will be exposed to vagaries of global trade.
- Indian manufacturing is not competitive enough to face the vagaries of a free trade regime.
- Even after 27 years of liberalisation, inefficiency prevails due to a host of unimplemented reforms in the product and the factor markets.
- On the factor side, labour market reforms are incomplete. Labour productivity in manufacturing is still one of the lowest in the world with spatially fragmented labour laws are escalating the costs of doing business. Given this, Indian industry is hardly in a position to compete in the level-playing ground in a free-trade region.

Way forward

- Despite all the concerns, the government must take into account that either slowing down India's RCEP engagement or walking out of the talks at this stage would cut India out of the rules-making process for the RCEP and give China further space in the regional trade and security architecture.
- At a time when the U.S. has broken from the global consensus on multilateral trade agreements, an Indian walkout would endanger the united message that RCEP countries, which represent 40% of the global GDP, would wish to send out.
- It would also be a sharp departure from India's "Act East" slogan and its extended outreach to ASEAN.

Conclusion:

- RCEP could perhaps end up doing to dairy what the free trade agreement with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) did in palm oil, fear many in the industry in India.
- At a time of global uncertainties and challenges to multilateralism and the international economic order, a negative message on RCEP would undermine India's plans for economic growth.

Connecting the dots:

- India cannot afford to fall out of the free trade agreement negotiations. Analyse

[Brazil intends to allow Indians without visas](#)

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

In News

- Brazil is working to implement a policy to facilitate a faster entry for Indian travellers into the country,
- This is intended to boost people to people contact between the two countries and increase foreign investment into Brazil
- Brazil has already ended visa requirements for the citizens of U.S., Canada, Japan and Australia.
- The announcement from Brazil came ahead of the upcoming BRICS summit that will be held in Brazil which is expected to **boost intra-BRICS ties**.

18th Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit (Part-1)

Context

- The 18th Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit held in Baku, Azerbaijan between October 25 and October 26, 2019T
- his will be second time in row PM Modi is missing in NAM summit
- Earlier skipped the 17th Margarita NAM Summit, 2017 in Venezuela too wherein India was represented by the then Vice-President Mr. Hamid Ansari.
- This time again the country will be represented by the Vice President of the country Mr. V. Naidu.



Img: https://akm-img-a-in.tosshub.com/indiatoday/images/story/201901/nonaligned_movement.jpeg?wSE3nTP7UvBer2nTciKuexZQA0U1u50R

NAM:

- The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) is a forum of 120 developing world states that are not formally aligned with or against any major power bloc(USA or USSR).

- After the United Nations, it is the largest grouping of states worldwide
- Agreed at the Bandung Conference in 1955
- Established in 1961 in Belgrade, Yugoslavia through an initiative of the Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and the Yugoslav President Josip Broz Tito.
- Now consists of nearly two-thirds of the UN members and 55% of the world population.

Purpose:

- To ensure "the national independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of non-aligned countries" in their "struggle against imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism, and all forms of foreign aggression, occupation, domination, interference or hegemony as well as against great power and bloc politics." (Havana declaration ,Fidel castro)

During cold war:

- Many of the Non-Aligned Movement's members were closely aligned with one or another of the superpowers
- the movement maintained unity throughout the Cold War.
- Several conflicts between members threatened the movement.

After cold war:

- NAM focused on developing multilateral ties and connections as well as unity among the developing nations of the world

India and Non Alignment:

- India played vital role in the multilateral movements of colonies and newly independent countries that wanted to join the Non-Aligned Movement.
- India's policy was neither negative nor positive.
- Diplomacy, size and its economic miracle turned India into one of the leaders of the Non-Aligned Movement and upholder of the Third World solidarity

Connecting the dots:

- The role of the Non-Alignment Movement in world affairs had suffered greatly due to the theatre of internecine conflicts among the third World countries who spearheaded it. Elucidate.

[18th Non-Aligned Movement \(NAM\) Summit \(Part-2\)](#)**Context**

- The 18th Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit held in Baku, Azerbaijan between October 25 and October 26, 2019T

- his will be second time in row PM Modi is missing in NAM summit
- Earlier skipped the 17th Margarita NAM Summit, 2017 in Venezuela too wherein India was represented by the then Vice-President Mr. Hamid Ansari.
- This time again the country will be represented by the Vice President of the country Mr. V. Naidu.



Img:

https://akm-img-a-in.tosshub.com/indiatoday/images/story/201901/nonaligned_movement.jpeg?wSE3nTP7UvBer2nTciKuexZQA0U1u50R

India and NAM:

- The term "Non-Alignment" was coined by V K Menon in his speech at UN in 1953
- India played an important role in multilateral movements of colonies and newly independent countries that wanted join the Non-Aligned Movement.
- Non-Aligned movement was the "formula" devised by Nehru and other leaders of the newly independent countries of the third world to "guard" their independence "in face of complex international situation demanding allegiance to either of the two warring superpowers"

The principles of “**Panchsheel**” serves as the basis of the Non-Aligned Movement.

1. Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty
2. Mutual non-aggression
3. Mutual non-interference in domestic affairs
4. Equality and mutual benefit
5. Peaceful co-existence

Significance:

- NAM Brought India large international prestige among newly independent states
- India used nonalignment to establish itself as a leader of the newly independent world in multilateral organisations as the United Nations (UN) and the Nonaligned Movement.

Crux:

- The signing of the Treaty of Peace, Friendship, and Cooperation between India and the Soviet Union in 1971 tarnished India's image as a nonaligned nation
- India's involvement in the internal affairs of its neighbours in the 1970s and 1980s tarnished India's image as a nonaligned nation

NAM and India in 21st century

- India continues to practice the policy of non-alignment which allows it to maintain national sovereignty while still receiving economic and military assistance when needed.
- Non-alignment has propelled India to achieve one of their main strategic objectives: non-dependence.
- In recent years India has used this policy to its advantage in order to strengthen external partnerships and seek out material needs when necessary, while still ensuring that India as a country is able to pursue its own foreign policy goals.

Conclusion:

- Given the present impasse in international relations with little leeway for game-changing initiatives, India will do well to move away from being a camp follower of one of the emerging poles to create our own fourth pole.

Connecting the dots:

- India must seek nonaligned partnerships which can work together outside the influence of the U.S., China and Russia. Analyse

INDIA - SAUDI ARABIA RELATIONS**Context:**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi held extensive talks with the Saudi Arabia's top leadership
- Strategic Partnership Council was established to coordinate on important issues.
- The council will be headed by Modi and the crown prince and it will meet at an interval of two years.
- India and Saudi Arabia inked dozen of agreements in several key sectors, including oil and gas, defence and civil aviation

- Saudi Arabia, known to be a key ally of Pakistan, has been siding with India in its campaign to rid the region of terrorism and pledged to extend all cooperation to effectively deal with the challenge
- The first naval exercise between the two nations will take place by end of this year or early next year.

India- Saudi relations:

- India–Saudi Arabia relations are generally strong and close, especially in commercial interests.
- Indo-Saudi bilateral trade reached US\$27.48 billion in the financial year 2017–18
- Saudi Arabia's exports to India stood at US\$22.06 billion whereas India's exports were US\$5.41 billion
- the trade relations between southern India and Arabia flourished and became the backbone of the Arabian economy 1000 AD
- Arab traders held a monopoly over the spice trade between India and Europe until the rise of European imperialist empires
- Saudi Arabia is one of the largest suppliers of oil to India, who is one of the top seven trading partners and the fifth biggest investor in Saudi Arabia.

Conflicts:

- Saudi's relations with Pakistan affected India's strategic relations with Saudi Arabia
- Saudi Arabia supported Pakistan's Kashmir stance
- During the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971, Saudi supported Pakistan at the expense of its relations with India.
- The Russia's close relations with India also negatively affected Indo-Saudi relations.
- During the Persian Gulf War (1990–91), India officially maintained neutrality.

Relationship since 1990s:

- Saudi Arabia has supported granting observer status to India in the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)
- Saudi has expanded its collaboration with India to fight Islamic terrorism in the Middle East
- The Saudi king and the Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh signed an agreement forging a strategic energy partnership that was termed the "Delhi Declaration."
- The pact provides for a "reliable, stable and increased volume of crude oil supplies to India through long-term contracts.
- Both nations also agreed on joint ventures and the development of oil and natural gas in public and private sectors

- In 2019, Saudi Arabia increased the Hajj quota of India

Relations in 2019:

- The Saudi Crown Prince, Muhammad bin Salman, made a visit to India in February, 2019.
- The number of Indian pilgrims performing Hajj in Saudi Arabia has been increased to 200,000 every year.
- India, the world's third-largest oil consumer, imports 83 per cent of its oil needs. Saudi Arabia is its second-biggest supplier after Iraq.
- It sold 40.33 million tonnes of crude oil to India in 2018-19 fiscal, when the country had imported 207.3 million tonnes of oil.
- India buys some 200,000 tonnes of LPG every month from Saudi Arabia.

Connecting the dots:

- India's relations with Saudi Arabia have been on an upswing over the last few years based on burgeoning energy ties. Justify



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MAINS TEST SERIES 2020

Under personal guidance of

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ECONOMY

[Eight core industries' output contracts \(negative growth\) by 0.5% in August 2019](#)

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

In News

- The eight core sector industries are coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertiliser, steel, cement and electricity.
- The eight core sector industries had expanded by 4.7 per cent in August last year
- The contraction indicates weakness in industrial activity and may spur RBI to cut REPO rates in its next Monetary Policy Review.

Do You Know?

- These eight sectors have 40.27% of the weight of all sectors that figure in Index of Industrial Production (IIP)
- The IIP index is computed and published by the **Central Statistical Organisation (CSO) on a monthly basis**
- The base year used for IIP calculations is **2011-12**.
- Repo rate is the rate at which the central bank of a country (RBI) lends money to commercial banks in the event of any shortfall of funds

[Foreign Direct Investment 2.0](#)

Context :

Recently, the Union Cabinet has approved the proposal for the review of Foreign Direct Investment in various sectors.

- This will result in making India a more attractive FDI destination, leading to benefits of increased investments, employment and growth.
- As of now (March 2019), Singapore remains India's top FDI source, twice that from Mauritius.

Situation demanding policy response:

- Emergence of Internet Multinational Companies (MNCs) such as Microsoft, Google, Facebook and Twitter that are based on 'winner-takes-all' platform business models. These firms are characterised essentially by inequitable dynamics, since they distribute most gains to themselves vis-à-vis their host countries.
- In 1978, the Indian government adopted a policy that required equity dilution by 100% foreign-owned companies. This led to the 'Listing of MNCs', and many of which then provided handsome returns to both MNCs and Indian shareholders.

In China:

- China banned Internet MNCs.
- China strategically deploys a **quid pro quo** policy.
- MNC firms are mandated to transfer technology, share patents and enter into 50:50 joint ventures with Chinese partners in return for market access.

Foreign direct investment (FDI)

- It is an investment from a party in one country into a business or corporation in another country with the intention of establishing a lasting interest.
- Lasting interest differentiates FDI from foreign portfolio investments, where investors passively hold securities from a foreign country.
- Foreign direct investment can be made by expanding one's business into a foreign country or by becoming the owner of a company in another country.

FDI 2.0

- 100% FDI under automatic route is permitted for sale of coal, for coal mining activities including associated processing infrastructure.
- The government has allowed 100% FDI through the automatic route for contract manufacturing.
- It will augment the Make in India initiative and will attract global companies in India looking to establish alternative manufacturing hubs

Merit:

FDI 2.0 could deploy 'List or Trade in India' as a strategic policy tool to enable Indian citizens become shareholders in MNCs such as Google, Facebook, Samsung, Huawei and others, thus capturing the 'upside' they create for their platforms and companies. This is equitable to all, since Indian consumers contribute to the market value of MNCs.

Proposals:

- **(List in India):** Majority (more than 51%) foreign-owned Indian-listed MNCs could be eligible to domestic company tax rate whereas unlisted MNC subsidiaries could be subjected to a higher tax rate. Many countries such as Bangladesh, Vietnam and Thailand have used tax incentives to attract listing by MNCs.
- **('Trade in India' i.e. U.S. dollar-denominated parent MNC Shares to be 'Admitted for Trading' on Indian bourses):** In , Indian investors could buy shares of parent MNCs (where global profits and value get consolidated). This can be permitted within the \$250,000 **Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS)** limit.

What needs to be done?

- Indian bourses could admit only S&P 500 stocks. The Mexican Stock Exchange allows trading of international shares listed in other stock exchanges. India could replicate such models

Measures for successful implementation of above mentioned “Trade in India”:

- Permit Indian bourses to implement international trading system on the lines of Mexico.
- Parent MNCs in S&P 500 with business interests in India could be mandated to facilitate trading of their shares in India. MNCs would readily agree as it does not envisage listing in India.
- For taxation purposes, no distinction should be made between transactions in comparable domestic and foreign securities.
- LRS implementation for buying foreign stocks in GIFT City/NSE/BSE could be simplified and work as single click functionality.
- Educate Indian investors about the value of diversification of their portfolio in international stocks for achieving better risk adjusted returns.

Problem with implementation:

- For Indian citizens, U.S. estate taxes @40% apply above portfolio value of \$60,000.

Solution:

- National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL) could design a sovereign trust for holding parent MNC stocks.
- The NSDL could then issue BharatShares to retail investors. Nominees of the government of India would get voting rights in parent MNCs.
- In addition, the government could make available a ‘Fully Disclosed Model’ for holding foreign stocks in line with our NSDL/Central Depository Services Ltd (CDSL) system.
- The prevalent ‘Omnibus model’ carries the risk of U.S broker default because investors’ shares are held in the U.S. broker’s name. For this reason, it could also lead to higher tax liabilities in Indi

What is the Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS) of USD 2,50,000?

- Under the Liberalised Remittance Scheme, all resident individuals, including minors, are allowed to freely remit up to USD 2,50,000 per financial year (April – March) for any permissible current or capital account transaction or a combination of both.
- Further, resident individuals can avail of foreign exchange facilities for the purposes mentioned in Para 1 of Schedule III of Foreign Exchange Management(Current Account Transactions) Amendment Rules 2015, within the limit of USD 2,50,000 only.

Way forward:

- Increasing Indian equity ownership of MNCs would offer diversification benefits and make Indians more prosperous.
- Wealth distribution through mutual funds would create a virtuous cycle of innovative ideas, entrepreneurship, employment, consumption, higher taxes, social and physical infrastructure for the benefit of Indian society.
- MNCs would earn the goodwill of Indian consumers while expanding their investor base.

Connecting the dots:

List or trade in India' should be used as a strategic policy tool to enable Indians to become shareholders in MNCs. Comment.

[Fourth bi-monthly monetary policy statement, 2019-20](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-III- Economy

In News

- Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has decided to reduce the policy repo rate under the liquidity adjustment facility (LAF) by 25 basis points to 5.15 % from 5.40 %
- Consequently, the reverse repo rate under the LAF stands reduced to 4.90 %, and the marginal standing facility (MSF) rate and the Bank Rate to 5.40 %.
- It also revised its growth forecast for the current financial sharply, from 6.9% projected in the August policy, to 6.1%. Growth forecast for the first quarter of the next financial year was also trimmed to 7.2% from 7.4%.

About MPC

- MPC is a **six-member committee** constituted by the Central Government (Section 45ZB of the amended RBI Act, 1934).
- Of these, three members are from RBI while **three other members are nominated by the Central Government.**
- The MPC **determines the policy interest** rate required to achieve the inflation target
- Before establishment of Monetary Policy Committee, the final decision on interest rates etc. would come from RBI Governor's desk.
- The quorum for the meeting of the MPC is four members. Each member of the MPC has one vote, and in the event of an equality of votes, the Governor has a second or casting vote.

[MICROFINANCE](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II –Economy

In News

- RBI has decided to raise the lending limit per borrower from ₹1 lakh to ₹1.25 lakh to enable more borrowers to avail loans from microfinance institutions (MFI)
- RBI has also proposed to increase the **household income limit for borrowers** of NBFC-MFIs from the current level of ₹ 1.00 lakh for rural areas to ₹ 1.25 lakh and from present level of ₹ 1.60 lakh for urban/semi urban areas to ₹ 2.00 lakh.
- RBI said the decision was taken after taking into consideration the important role played by MFIs in delivering credit to those at the bottom of the economic pyramid and enable them to play their assigned role in a growing economy.
- **Microfinance institutions (MFIs)** are **financial** companies that provide small loans to people who do not have any access to banking facilities

[The Reserve Bank of India \(RBI\) cut the repo rate](#)

Context:

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) cut the repo rate or key lending rate by 25 basis points while maintaining an accommodative stance.
- The reverse repo rate was reduced to 4.9%.
- This is the fifth consecutive rate cut by the apex bank this year, aggregating to 135 bps.
- The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) also cuts GDP growth forecast for the current fiscal year 2019-20 to 6.1% from 6.9% earlier.

Highlights of MPC:

- A repo rate cut allows banks to reduce interest rates for consumers and lowers equal monthly instalments on home loans, car loans and personal loans.
- Central banks around the world are loosening monetary policy to offset a global slowdown made worse by U.S.-China trade tensions
- RBI will take a fresh look at cooperative bank regulations and take it up with the government
- The RBI has allowed domestic banks to freely offer foreign exchange (forex) prices to NRIs
- The continuing slowdown warrants intensified efforts to restore the growth momentum.
- On the crisis in the Punjab & Maharashtra Cooperative Bank (PMC), the RBI governor said one incident cannot be and should not be used to generalise the health of the co-operative banking sector.
- PCA(**Prompt Corrective Action**) is an opportunity for the bank to correct itself.
- Appealed members of the public and all depositors that our banking system remains sound and stable, there is no reason for unnecessary panic.

- RBI has decided to create a separate category of NBFC, viz., **Non-Banking Financial Company-Micro Finance Institution (NBFC-MFI)**.
- It acknowledged “the negative output gap has widened further”

Negative output gap:

- A negative output gap indicates surplus capacity in the economy. A widening of this gap means the industry is unable to use much of its capacity due to poor demand.

What is Prompt Corrective Action?

- To ensure that banks don't go bust, RBI has put in place some trigger points to assess, monitor, control and take corrective actions on banks which are weak and troubled.
- The process or mechanism under which such actions are taken is known as Prompt Corrective Action, or PCA.

Present scenario:

- Inflation is well within the target giving space to the RBI to focus on growth
- Crude oil prices are back in the comfort zone, retreating from the spike in mid-September, and food prices are projected to remain soft on the back of a good monsoon.

Crux:

- If the projection of 6.1% for 2019-20 is to be met, the economy has to grow by about 7% in the second half which does not look very likely.
- The problem is that the central bank can only facilitate lower rates and push banks to lend. It cannot force borrowers to borrow and this is evident from the soft trends in credit offtake in the last few months.

Way forward:

- Recent measures announced by the government are likely to help strengthen private consumption and spur private investment activity, the continuing slowdown warrants intensified efforts to restore the growth momentum

Connecting the dots:

- Its commentary on the state of the economy and its outlook too has qualitatively changed — from being “optimistic” in April to expressing “concerns” in August and calling for “intensified efforts to restore the growth momentum” in October. Substantiate

[NATIONAL e-ASSESSMENT CENTRE \(NeAC\)](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-III- Economy

In News

- Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman inaugurated National e-Assessment Centre (NeAC) in **New Delhi**.
- With this, Income Tax Department is introducing **faceless e-assessment** to impart greater efficiency, transparency and accountability in the assessment process. There would be **no physical interface between taxpayers and tax officers**.
- Under the new system, taxpayers have received notices on their registered emails as well as on registered accounts on the web portal, with real-time by way of SMS on their registered mobile number, specifying the issues for which their cases have been selected for scrutiny.
- Replies to the notices can be prepared at ease by taxpayers at their own residence or office and sent by email to the National e-Assessment Centre by uploading the same on the designated web portal.

[Slowdown effects more pronounced in India: IMF](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III – Economy

In News

- The new IMF chief Kristalina Georgieva warned that the global economy is witnessing “synchronised slowdown” which will result in slower growth for 90% of the world this year.
- Widespread deceleration meant that growth this year would fall to its lowest rate since the beginning of the decade.
- Despite this overall deceleration, close to 40 emerging market and developing economies are forecast to have real GDP growth rates above 5% — including 19 in sub-Saharan Africa. Also, in the U.S. and Germany, unemployment is at historic lows.

Do You Know?

- **World Economic Outlook by IMF** to be released by mid-October would show downward revisions for 2019 and 2020.
- The RBI has recently lowered India’s GDP growth estimate for the year to 6.1% from the earlier 6.9% due to the ongoing period of economic slowdown.

[India slips 10 places in global competitiveness index](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-III- Economy

In News

- India has moved down 10 places to rank 68th on an annual global competitiveness index, largely due to improvements witnessed by several other economies
- While **Singapore has replaced the U.S. as the world's most competitive economy.**
- Global Competitiveness Index compiled by Geneva-based **World Economic Forum (WEF),**
- Some of the findings of WEF study are:
 - India is ranked also high at 15th place in terms of corporate governance, while it is ranked second globally for shareholder governance.
 - In terms of market size, India is ranked third, while it has got the same rank for renewable energy regulation.
 - The healthy life expectancy, where India has been ranked 109th out of total the 141 countries surveyed for the index, is one of the shortest outside Africa and significantly below the South Asian average.
 - With a ratio of female workers to male workers of 0.26, India has been ranked very low at 128th place.
 - India is also ranked low at 118th in terms of meritocracy and incentivisation and at 107th place for skills.
- In overall ranking, India is followed by some of its neighbours including Sri Lanka at 84th place, Bangladesh at 105th, Nepal at 108th and Pakistan at 110th place.

[Assam tea estates violating labour laws](#)


Part of: GS Prelims and GS-III- Economy

In News

- A report by **Oxfam**, a confederation of independent charitable organisations focussing on the alleviation of global poverty, has flagged violation of labour rights in the tea estates of Assam.
- The report noted that the Assam government's commitment to increasing the minimum wages of tea plantation workers to ₹351 met with hurdles of financial viability in the sector.
- The researchers found that despite working for over 13 hours a day, workers earn between **Rs 137-167**
- Tea brands and supermarkets "typically capture over two-thirds of the price paid by consumers for Assam tea in India — with just **7% remaining for workers** on tea estates"
- Oxfam asked consumers, supermarkets and brands to support the Assam government's move to provide living wages to workers and to ensuring more of the price paid by the consumers trickle down to them.
- State government is trying to increase the wages of tea plantation workers through the upcoming Occupational Health and Safety Bill.

Brewing inequalities

Supermarkets and tea brands take a significant chunk of the end consumer prices, leaving little to pay workers. The table shows the share of the end consumer price required to enable a living wage for tea workers in Assam and in the different countries to which Assam tea is exported:



Country	Supermarkets and tea brands (%)*	Workers (%)*	Share of end consumer price required by workers to enable a living wage (%)
India	58.2	7.2	18.7
U.S.	93.3	0.8	2.1
Germany	87.5	1.3	3.4
Netherlands	83.7	2.9	7.6
U.K.	76.1	4	10.4

SOURCE: STUDY OF ASSAM TEA VALUE CHAINS, 2019 *END CONSUMER PRICES TAKEN

- https://d39gegkjaqduz9.cloudfront.net/TH/2019/10/11/CNI/Chennai/TH/5_09/4ecf2bf6_3253037_101_mr.jpg

Industrial output shrinks by 1.1% in August 2019

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III – Economy

In News

- The Index of Industrial Production (IIP) contracted 1.1% from a year earlier, following a growth of 4.3% in July. Industrial output had grown 4.8% in August 2018.
- Industrial production slipped into a contraction in August, driven in large part by poor performances in the mining, manufacturing and capital goods sectors
- Within the Index, the mining sector saw growth decelerating to 0.1%, from a 4.9% expansion in July.
- The manufacturing sector, hampered by poor demand, witnessed a contraction of 1.2%, compared with a growth of 4.2% in July and a 5.2% expansion in the year-earlier period.

About IIP

- IIP is a composite indicator measuring changes in the volume of production of a basket of industrial products over a period of time, with respect to a chosen base period.
- It is compiled and published on a monthly basis by the **Central Statistical Office** with a time lag of six weeks from the reference month.
- Coal, Crude Oil, Natural Gas, Refinery Product, Steel, Cement and Electricity are known as Core Industries. The eight Core Industries comprise nearly **37.9 %** of the weight of items included in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP).

Sector	Base year 2011-12		Base year 2004-05	
	Weights (%)	Item groups	Weights (%)	Item groups
Mining	14.373	1	14.157	1
Manufacturing	77.633	405	75.527	397
Electricity	7.994	1	10.316	1
Total	100	407	100	399

<https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=161745>

Downturn in India's economy

Context:

- Gross domestic product (GDP) growth in the first quarter of 2019-20 at 5% was the lowest in six years, even less than the last quarter of 2018-19 at 5.8%, which was the lowest in five years.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has reduced its 2019-20 growth forecast from 6.9% to 6.1%.

Moody's

- Moody's Investors Service slashed its 2019-20 GDP growth forecast for India to 5.8 per cent from 6.2 per cent earlier, saying the economy was experiencing a pronounced slowdown which is partly related to long-lasting factors.
- The projection is lower than 6.1 per cent that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had forecast
- Investment-led slowdown that has broadened into consumption, driven by financial stress among rural households and weak job creation.
- private investment has been relatively weak since 2012, consumption -- which makes up about 55 per cent of GDP -- had remained robust
- Asian Development Bank and the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development lowered 2019-20 growth forecast for India by 50 basis points and 1.3 percentage points to 6.5 per cent and 5.9

IMF:

- IMF said global economy now in 'synchronized slowdown'
- Global growth will fall to its lowest rate in this decade
- Slowdown is emerging markets like India and Brazil to be even more pronounced
- In 2019, IMF expect slower growth in nearly 90 per cent of the world.

- Economic activity is softening in advanced economies, such as the US, Japan and, especially, the eurozone,
- while in other emerging markets, such as India and Brazil, the slowdown is even more pronounced this year.
- China's accelerated growth is experiencing a gradual decrease

Impacts on India:

- A prolonged period of slower nominal GDP growth constrains the scope for fiscal consolidation
- Keeps the government debt burden higher for longer compared with our previous expectations
- General government deficit, which is likely to remain wide
- Affected the disposable income of households, so that the increase in private consumer expenditure has witnessed a slump, dampening growth further from the demand side.
- The consequences for the automobile sector, which is the driver of manufacturing, and for construction, which is an important source of employment creation, are now being felt.
- Investment rates as a percentage of GDP are progressively lower. So are savings rates. The stagnation in the dollar value of exports continues.

Criticisms:

- The government has been in denial mode about the slowdown.
- The Union budget presented in early July, was a missed opportunity, did little,
- Since then, as a consequence of significant changes introduced in the budget, stock markets have plummeted and business sentiment has floundered.
- Theory and experience both suggest that tax cuts work with a time lag and do not ever lead to an equivalent increase in investment. (*Because Higher profits emanating from lower taxes could be used by firms to restructure debt and clean up their balance sheets, increase dividends paid to shareholders*)
- Tax cut increase the fiscal deficit by 0.7% of GDP, compared with budget estimates for 2019-20.

Measures taken by govt:

- Measures to boost the economy,
- Correcting for mistakes on taxation,
- Decriminalizing defaults on corporate social responsibility obligations,
- Simplifying laws related to labour, companies and the environment,
- Streamlining government procedures,
- Facilitating capital flows in financial markets

- The government slashed corporate income tax rates. The effective rate, including the surcharge, was reduced from 35% to 25%.

Connecting the dots:

- Economic downturns do have political consequences. Analyse

Tax evasion and base erosion and profit shifting

Context:

- Indian government desperate to raise more tax revenues.
- It missed its tax targets last fiscal year, (poor goods and services tax (GST) collections).
- Its declared budgetary target for the current year requires tax receipts to increase by around 25%, when the first quarter increase was only 6%.

MNCs Tax Evasion:

- MNCs manage to avoid taxation in most countries, by shifting their declared costs and revenues through transfer pricing across subsidiaries, practices described as “base erosion and profit shifting” (BEPS).
- Digital companies, some of the largest of which make billions of dollars in profits across the globe, but pay barely any taxes anywhere.
- The International Monetary Fund has estimated that countries **lose \$500 billion a year** because of this.

Base erosion and profit shifting (BEPS):

- **Base erosion and profit shifting (BEPS)** refers to corporate tax planning strategies used by multinationals to "shift" profits from higher-tax jurisdictions to lower-tax jurisdictions, thus "eroding" the "tax-base" of the higher-tax jurisdictions
- The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) define BEPS strategies as also "exploiting gaps and mismatches in tax rules
- Initiatives to curb BEPS by the OECD and the Trump administration have failed.

Way forward:

Idea Proposed by the Independent Commission for the Reform of International Corporate Taxation, or ICRICT

- Since an MNC actually functions as one entity, it should be treated that way for tax purposes. So the total global profits of a multinational should be calculated, and then apportioned across countries according to some formula based on sales, employment and users (for digital companies).Ex: US

- A minimum corporate tax should be internationally agreed upon for this to prevent companies shifting to low tax jurisdictions (ICRICT has suggested 25%)
- Indian government has already proposed in a white paper that it could take such a unilateral initiative for digital companies.

The OECD G20 Base Erosion and Profit Shifting Project (or BEPS Project):

- It is an OECD/G20 project to set up an international framework to combat tax avoidance by multinational enterprises ("MNEs") using base erosion and profit shifting tools
- The aim of the project is to mitigate tax code loopholes and country-to-country inconsistencies so that corporations cannot shift profits from a country with a high corporate tax rate to countries with a low tax rate.
- Implementation phase, 116 countries are involved, including a majority of developing countries.
- The BEPS project looks to develop multilateral dialogue and could be achieved thanks to a successful international cooperation, unavoidable when it comes to such a domestic and sovereign topic.
- The European Commission and the US have unilaterally taken actions in 2017-2018 that implement several key measures of the BEPS project

Concerns:

- Arbitrary separation between what OECD calls "routine" and "residual" profits, and the proposal that only residual profits will be subject to unitary taxation. This has no economic justification, since profits are anyway net of various costs and interest.
- The proposal does not clearly specify the criteria for determining routine profits
- Formula to be used to distribute taxable profits. The **OECD suggests** only sales revenues as the criterion, but developing countries would lose out from this because they are often the producers of commodities that are consumed in the advanced economies.

Conclusion:

- A government that is currently ineffective in battling both economic slowdown and declining tax revenues cannot afford to neglect this crucial opportunity.

Connecting the dots:

- The International Monetary Fund has estimated that countries lose \$500 billion a year because of "base erosion and profit shifting" (BEPS). Examine.

[The economic slowdown in the country](#)**Data:**

- Private consumption has contracted and is at an 18-quarter low of 3.1%
- Rural consumption is in a deep southward dive and is double the rate of the urban slowdown
- Credit off-take by micro and small industries remains stagnant;
- Net exports have shown little or no growth;
- GDP growth is at a six-year low with the first quarter of FY20 registering just 5%;
- Unemployment is at a 45-year-high.

Recession:

- The technical term for the same is growth recession.
- A recession is defined in economics as three consecutive quarters of contraction in GDP. But since India is a large developing economy, contraction is a rarity.
- The last instance of negative growth for India was in 1979.
- A growth recession is more commonplace where the economy continues to grow but at a slower pace than usual for a sustained period, what India has been facing nowadays.

Consumption:

- The growth of the Indian economy had been predominated by consumption inclusive of both -- Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE) as well as the Government Final Consumption Expenditure (GFCE).
- The recent sharp fall in PFCE in the June quarter to 3.1 per cent compared to 7.2 per cent in the March quarter has significantly contributed to the recent slowdown.

Investment:

- Major component of India's GDP is investment, induced by both -- private and government sectors. It has been a key driver of growth since the liberalisation of 1991, fell by 6.2 percentage points in 2014-19 than in 2011-14

Other Reasons:

- Partly driven by **domestic problems** like neglected farmers
- Weakening **global economy**
- Mr. Trump's fusillade of **trade conflicts**.
- Last weekend's attack on two Saudi Arabia's oil facilities, which sent the global price of oil soaring, underscored just how **vulnerable** India and other developing countries are to external factors beyond their control.
- The overhang of **bad bank loans**, coupled with recent defaults by nonbank financial firms, has curbed lending to consumers and businesses.
- Policy decisions by India's central and state governments have worsened the country's downturn

For example Auto manufacturers: New safety and emissions standards increased the cost of vehicles, nine states raised taxes on car sales, and the banks and finance companies that fund dealers and 80 percent of consumer car purchases were paralyzed by the credit crunch.

- The textile industry, which employs about 45 million people and is India's second-largest employer after agriculture, is emblematic of the country's distress.

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%)
- Government revised GST for the automobile sector, opened up FDI in contract manufacturing sector and even announced the recapitalization of the banking sector.

Way forward:

- Focus on optimum utilization of funds granted by RBI and direct them to boost investment in the economy both infrastructural and research investment.
- Structural shifts over the long run can be achieved through tapping into the health and education sectors that long for quality improvements.

Conclusion:

- Only long-lasting structural changes can improve the growth potential of the Indian economy and deter the possibility of three slowdowns within the short span of a decade.

Connecting the dots:

- Recession can be short-lived if corrective actions are taken immediately, failure of which can have a prolonged effect on the health of an economy. Examine

[Economics Nobel](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III - Economy

In News

- The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences has decided to award the **2019 Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences** in Memory of Alfred Nobel, popularly called the Nobel Prize in Economics, to Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo, and Michael Kremer

- They were awarded “for their **experimental approach to alleviating global poverty**”
- The experiment-based approach of the laureates involved dividing an issue into smaller and more manageable questions
- They have shown that smaller and more precise questions are often best answered through carefully designed experiments among the people who are the most affected
- In the mid-1990s Dr Kremer and his colleagues demonstrated how powerful this approach can be when they used field experiments to test a range of interventions that could improve school results in Western Kenya
- **Impact on Policy**
 - Research surrounding **remedial tutoring** provided arguments for large-scale support programmes that have now reached more than five million children in India
 - Their studies showed that deworming provides clear health benefits for school children but also that parents are very price sensitive. This led the **WHO to recommend that medicine should be distributed for free** to over 800 million school children living in areas where over 20% of them have a specific type of parasitic worm infection
 - Their studies paved way for heavy **subsidies for preventive healthcare** that have been introduced in many countries

[Experimental approach to alleviating global poverty](#)

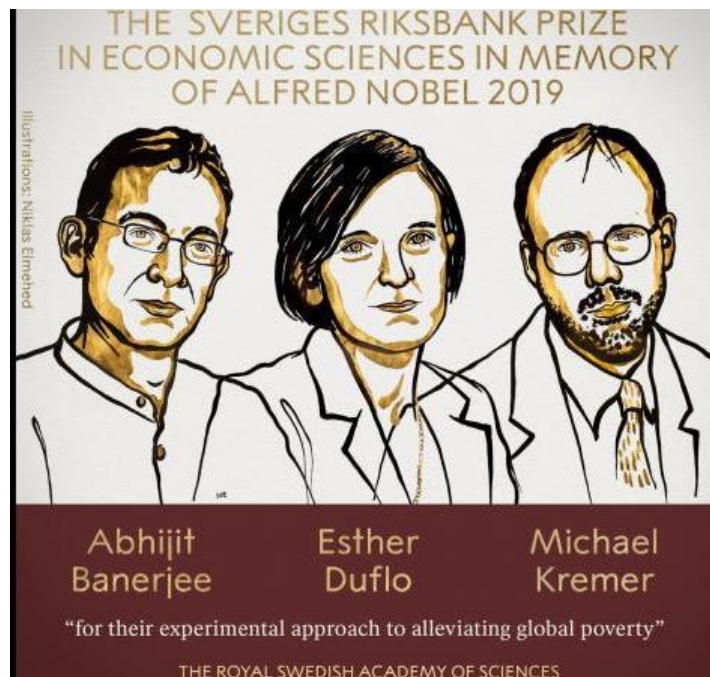


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- The 2019 Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel has been awarded jointly to Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo and Michael Kremer “for their experimental approach to alleviating global poverty”.
- The three adopted an evidence-based approach to apply theory to real-life situations using randomised trials and assessing the outcomes.
- The effort was to understand the impact of interventions to achieve desirable outcomes.
- The approach is derived from the concept of clinical trials in the pharmaceuticals industry.

“new experiment-based” approach:

- The “new, powerful tool” employed by the Laureates is the use of Randomised Control Trials (or RCTs). So if one wanted to understand whether providing a mobile vaccination van and/or a sack of grains would incentivise villagers to vaccinate their kids, then under an RCT, village households would be divided into four groups.
- Group A would be provided with a mobile vaccination van facility, Group B would be given a sack of foodgrains, Group C would get both, and Group D would get neither.
- Households would be chosen at random to ensure there was no bias, and that any difference in vaccination levels was essentially because of the “intervention”.
- Group D is called the “control” group while others are called “treatment” groups. Such an experiment would not only show whether a policy initiative works, but would also provide a measure of the difference it brings about.
- It would also show what happens when more than one initiatives are combined. This would help policymakers to have the evidence before they choose a policy.

Critics:

- Angus Deaton, the winner of the Economics Nobel in 2015, who said “randomisation does not equalise two groups”, and warned against over-reliance on RCTs to frame policies.
- While randomly assigning people or households makes it likely that the groups are equivalent, randomisation “cannot guarantee” it. That’s because one group may perform differently from the other, not because of the “treatment” that it has been given, but because it has more women or more educated people in it.
- More fundamentally, RCTs do not guarantee if something that worked in Kerala will work in Bihar, or if something that worked for a small group will also work at scale.

Case study:

- some years ago would explain the concept better. Despite immunisation being free, women were not bringing in their children for the vaccination shot.

- The two MIT economists decided to give a bag of pulses free to women who brought their babies for vaccination.
- Word soon spread and the rate of immunisation shot up in the region.

Conclusion:

- Governments across the world, including in India, spend big money on social schemes without the vaguest of ideas on whether their objectives have been met.
- The field-work based approach that these economists have perfected has revolutionised the field of development economics and made it more relevant in policy making.
- The government would do well to borrow from the research of these laureates to understand the impact of its several schemes, and where necessary, tweak them to derive maximum benefit for the thousands of crores of rupees that it spends.

Connecting the dots:

- New experiment-based approach has transformed development economics. Justify

Experimental approach

Economists Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo, who, along with Michael Kremer, won the 2019 Nobel Prize for Economics for their “experimental approach to alleviating global poverty”,

- The three adopted an evidence-based approach to apply theory to real-life situations using randomised trials and assessing the outcomes.
- The effort was to understand the impact of interventions to achieve desirable outcomes.
- The approach is derived from the concept of clinical trials in the pharmaceuticals industry.
- They have published a new book, **Good Economics for Hard Times**. The book explains where the economy has failed, where ideology has blinded us, and where and why good economics is useful, especially in today’s world

“new experiment-based” approach:

- The “new, powerful tool” employed by the Laureates is the use of Randomised Control Trials (or RCTs). So if one wanted to understand whether providing a mobile vaccination van and/or a sack of grains would incentivise villagers to vaccinate their kids, then under an RCT, village households would be divided into four groups.
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Also Read Link 1 : <https://iasbaba.com/2019/10/daily-current-affairs-ias-upsc-prelims-and-mains-exam-15th-october-2019/>

Excerpts:

- Growth in India, like that in China, will slow. And there is no guarantee it will slow when India has reached the same level of per capita income as China.
- Many economists worry that there may be such a thing as the middle income trap, an intermediate-level GDP where countries get stuck or nearly stuck.
- According to the World Bank, of 101 middle-income economies in 1960, only 13 had become high income by 2008. Malaysia, Thailand, Egypt, Mexico and Peru all seem to have trouble moving up.
- We know very little about why some countries get stuck but others don't.(Ex: south korea grew but others dint)
- Recent “business friendly” nature to preserve growth may be interpreted, as it was in the **U.S. and U.K. in the Reagan-Thatcher era**, enrich the top earners at the cost of everyone else, and do nothing for growth. (*IMF also criticises this*)
- In this situation the political backlash leads to the election of populist leaders touting miracle solutions that rarely work and often lead to **Venezuela-style disasters**.
- Ultimate goal remains one of raising the quality of life of the average person and especially the worst-off person.
- A higher GDP may be one way in which this can be given to the poor, but it is only one of the ways.

Way forward:

- Get rid of the most egregious sources of waste in their economy
- Improve the welfare of their citizens
- Improve health and education

Conclusion:

- A clear focus on the well-being of the poorest offers the possibility of transforming millions of lives much more profoundly than we could by finding the recipe to increase growth from 2% to 2.3% in the rich countries.

Connecting the dots:

- Despite the best efforts of generations of economists, the deep mechanisms of persistent economic growth remain elusive. Examine

Financial stability and the RBI**Context:**

- The slowing of the economy suggests that the central bank's stance on inflation may have impacted growth

Recent measures taken by MPC:

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) cut the repo rate or key lending rate by 25 basis points while maintaining an accommodative stance.
- The reverse repo rate was reduced to 4.9%.
- The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) also cuts GDP growth forecast for the current fiscal year 2019-20 to 6.1% from 6.9% earlier.
- A repo rate cut allows banks to reduce interest rates for consumers and lowers equal monthly instalments on home loans, car loans and personal loans.
- Central banks around the world are loosening monetary policy to offset a global slowdown made worse by U.S.-China trade tensions
- RBI will take a fresh look at cooperative bank regulations and take it up with the government
- The RBI has allowed domestic banks to freely offer foreign exchange (forex) prices to NRIs
- The continuing slowdown warrants intensified efforts to restore the growth momentum.
- On the crisis in the Punjab & Maharashtra Cooperative Bank (PMC), the RBI governor said one incident cannot be and should not be used to generalise the health of the co-operative banking sector.
- PCA (**Prompt Corrective Action**) is an opportunity for the bank to correct itself.
- Appealed members of the public and all depositors that our banking system remains sound and stable, there is no reason for unnecessary panic.
- RBI has decided to create a separate category of NBFC, viz., **Non-Banking Financial Company-Micro Finance Institution (NBFC-MFI)**.
- It acknowledged "the negative output gap has widened further"

Negative output gap:

- A negative output gap indicates surplus capacity in the economy. A widening of this gap means the industry is unable to use much of its capacity due to poor demand.

What is Prompt Corrective Action?

- To ensure that banks don't go bust, RBI has put in place some trigger points to assess, monitor, control and take corrective actions on banks which are weak and troubled.
- The process or mechanism under which such actions are taken is known as Prompt Corrective Action, or PCA.

Present scenario:

- Inflation is well within the target giving space to the RBI to focus on growth
- Crude oil prices are back in the comfort zone, retreating from the spike in mid-September, and food prices are projected to remain soft on the back of a good monsoon.

Central bank in west:

- Reflects two things: the political power of financial interests in the U.S. economy and the global intellectual influence of the American economic model.
- This model revolves around the goal of maximum creation of wealth by private individuals unimpeded by societal objectives.
- No equal distribution
- The objective of ensuring stability of the economy is allowed to come in the way of private individuals pursuing wealth enhancement.
- This model requires of the government only one action, namely, the control of inflation.

Inflation:

- Unanticipated inflation is the problem for producers, as it has the potential to derail their profit calculations.
- If fully anticipated, can harm holders of financial assets yielding fixed incomes by eroding their wealth.
- Borrowers on the other hand are better off with inflation as the real value of their outstanding loans is now less.
- This can be tackled through **inflation-indexation**, the practice is not widespread. This leaves owners of financial wealth averse to inflation.

*Indexation is a technique to adjust income payments by means of a price index, in order to maintain the purchasing power of the public after inflation, while **deindexation** is the unwinding of indexation.*

Inflation control:

- When inflation control is implemented via monetary policy it results in higher interest rates.
- Managers of financial wealth lobby for such a policy on behalf of their clients.
- This lobbying is the origin of the policy of inflation targeting.
- Inflation targeting by the central bank involves use of the interest rate to keep inflation under control.
- it let go of the employment objective and central bank is not accountable for unemployment
- in situations where growth, employment and inflation are jointly determined, inflation-targeting via the interest rate can lower inflation only by suppressing growth
- This is the mechanism by which inflation-targeting inevitably lowers growth.

Way forward:

- Public regulation, which sets limits to private activity, is rejected as an unnecessary interference in beneficial activity that maximises social gain, and is therefore to be avoided

Conclusion:

- Governments across the world, including in India, spend big money on social schemes without the vaguest of ideas on whether their objectives have been met.
- The field-work based approach that these economists have perfected has revolutionised the field of development economics and made it more relevant in policy making.
- The government would do well to borrow from the research of these laureates to understand the impact of its several schemes, and where necessary, tweak them to derive maximum benefit for the thousands of crores of rupees that it spends.

Connecting the dots:

- The slowing of the economy suggests that the central bank's stance on inflation may have impacted growth. Analyse

[INDIA INNOVATION INDEX 2019](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III - Economy

In News

- NITI Aayog with Institute for Competitiveness as the knowledge partner released the India Innovation Index (III) 2019.

- **The aim is to** create a holistic tool which can be used by policymakers across the country to identify the challenges to be addressed and strengths to build on when designing the economic growth policies for their regions.
- The Index is calculated as the average of the scores of its **two dimensions - Enablers and Performance**.
 - **The Enablers** are the factors that underpin innovative capacities, grouped in five pillars: (1) Human Capital, (2) Investment, (3) Knowledge Workers, (4) Business Environment, and (5) Safety and Legal Environment.
 - **The Performance dimension** captures benefits that a nation derives from the inputs, divided in two pillars: (6) Knowledge Output and (7) Knowledge Diffusion.
- There seems to be a west-south and north-east divide across the country. The top ten major states are majorly concentrated in southern and western India.
- **Karnataka is the most innovative major state in India.** Karnataka's number one position in the overall ranking is partly attributed to its top rank in the Performance dimension.
- Sikkim and Delhi take the top spots among the north- eastern & hill states, and union territories/city states/small states respectively.

[FATF may keep Pakistan on grey list](#)

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

In News

- Pakistan could escape being blacklisted by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) but the country is likely to be issued strong warnings and put under pressure
- Blacklisting unlikely given support of China and Malaysia
- If not downgraded, Pakistan is expected to be kept under 'significant and sustained' pressure to deliver on the action plan by February 2020
- Asia-Pacific group assigned a National risk rating of "medium" to the country on counter-terror financing and anti-money laundering
- The report by Asia-Pacific group says that Pakistan had taken positive actions against these organisations "but UNSCR 1267 is not being fully implemented"
- The Grey listing means downgrading of the country by multilateral lenders like IMF, World Bank, ADB, EU and also a reduction in risk rating by Moody's, S&P and Fitch.

About FATF

- It was established in 1989 to set standards and promote effective implementation of legal, regulatory and operational measures for combating money laundering, terrorist financing and other related threats to the integrity of the international financial system.
- The FATF currently comprises 37-member jurisdictions and 2 regional organisations (the Gulf Cooperation Council or GCC, and the European Commission)

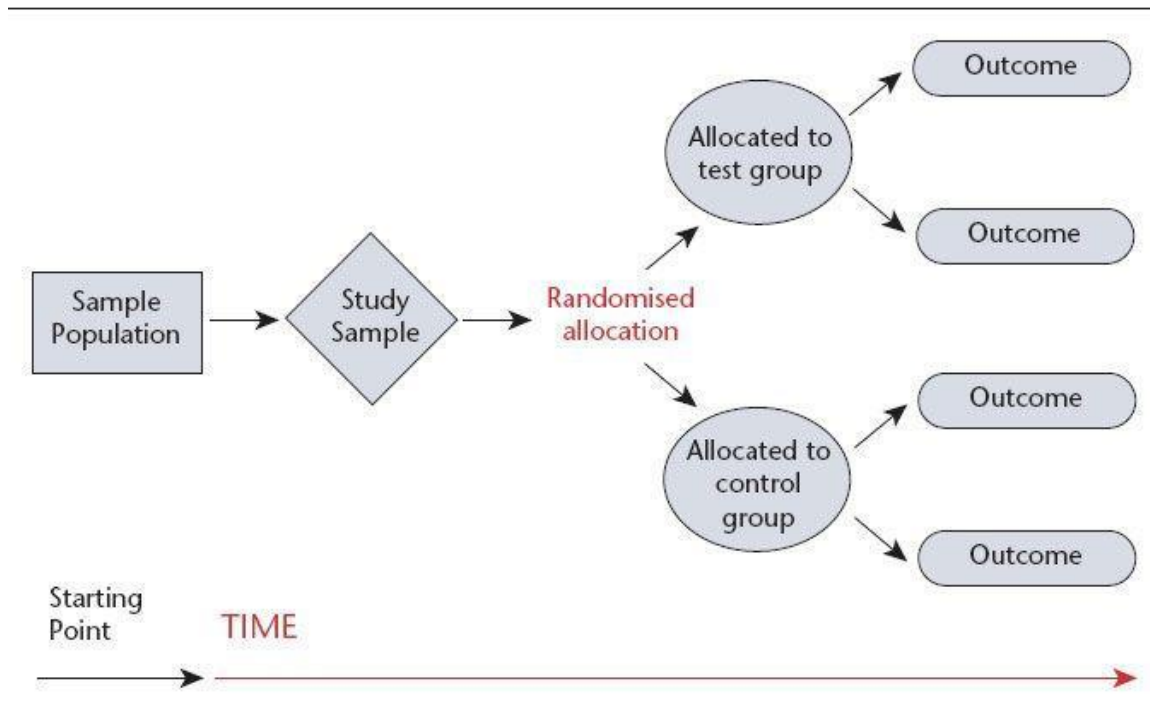
Randomized controlled trial

Context:

- The 2019 Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel has been awarded jointly to Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo and Michael Kremer “for their experimental approach to alleviating global poverty”.
- The three adopted an evidence-based approach to apply theory to real-life situations using randomised trials and assessing the outcomes.
- The effort was to understand the impact of interventions to achieve desirable outcomes.

Randomized controlled trial

- A randomized controlled trial is a type of scientific (often medical) experiment that aims to reduce certain sources of bias when testing the effectiveness of new treatments;
- This is accomplished by randomly allocating subjects to two or more groups, treating them differently, and then comparing them with respect to a measured response.
- One group—the experimental group—has the intervention being assessed, while the other—usually called the control group—has an alternative condition, such as a placebo or no intervention.
- The groups are followed under conditions of the trial design to see how effective the experimental intervention was.
- Treatment efficacy is assessed in comparison to the control. There may be more than one treatment group or more than one control group.
- Back in the late 1990s, this was not a well-known concept, let alone a widely practised research method. Moreover, research in economics was still largely theoretical although the shift in a more empirical direction had already started.



RCTs use the following insight:

- You select two groups that are similar and then randomly select one to receive the treatment (a drug, or a policy) being tested and then compare the outcome of this group (called the treatment group) with that of the other group (called the control group).
- If the difference is statistically significant, then that is attributed to the treatment. Using this method in economics has altered our views about what policies work and what do not.

Application:

- From testing drugs to placing government programmes as well as those carried out by NGOs on a randomised basis across villages, households, and organisations, takes quite a leap of imagination.
- The reason it caught on in academic research in economics is because with greater computing power and large data-sets that were available, empirical work was in ascendance and yet, given the nature of data that is collected in usual surveys, it is hard to establish the effect of any programme on any outcome in a rigorous way.
- Applied to study problems at the micro-level where the implementation of an individual programme can be done in a randomised way that allows for a statistically satisfactory evaluation of the programme's impact.

Criticism:

- RCTs are not feasible, which is often the case with more large-scale macro-level questions, one has to rely on other, more roundabout methods to overcome the problem of causal inference.
- Broad macro-level issues or the more long-run aspects of development and institutional change, they are not feasible

Contemporary RCTs :

- A new generation of RCTs are going beyond programme evaluation and asking how individuals react to change in prices, contracts, and new information in the context of specific markets such as land or credit.
- For example, a recent RCT offered different terms of sharecropping contracts in a randomised way to find out the effect of higher crop-shares on agricultural productivity in the context of tenancy. The evidence suggested significant productivity gains, confirming the importance of incentives.

Case study:

- **'Operation Barga'**, the tenancy reform programme carried out in West Bengal by the Left Front government in the late 1970s and early 1980s, which shifted crop-share up. In that study, there was no way of fully controlling for all other factors that had changed contemporaneously, such as empowering panchayats.
- This is an example of how RCTs can be potentially applied to a broader set of issues going beyond programme evaluation.

Limitations:

- They can establish what works, but cannot say much about what could have worked better or whether it could work in a very different environment.
- **Solution:** see how they can be combined with theoretical models to simulate the effect of alternative policies or what could happen in a very different environment.

Conclusion:

- This method now has become one of the main tools used in empirical work in development economics and in related fields. It has also led to a paradigm shift in development policy evaluation — the World Bank, and many governments and large NGOs now insist on randomised control methods wherever feasible.

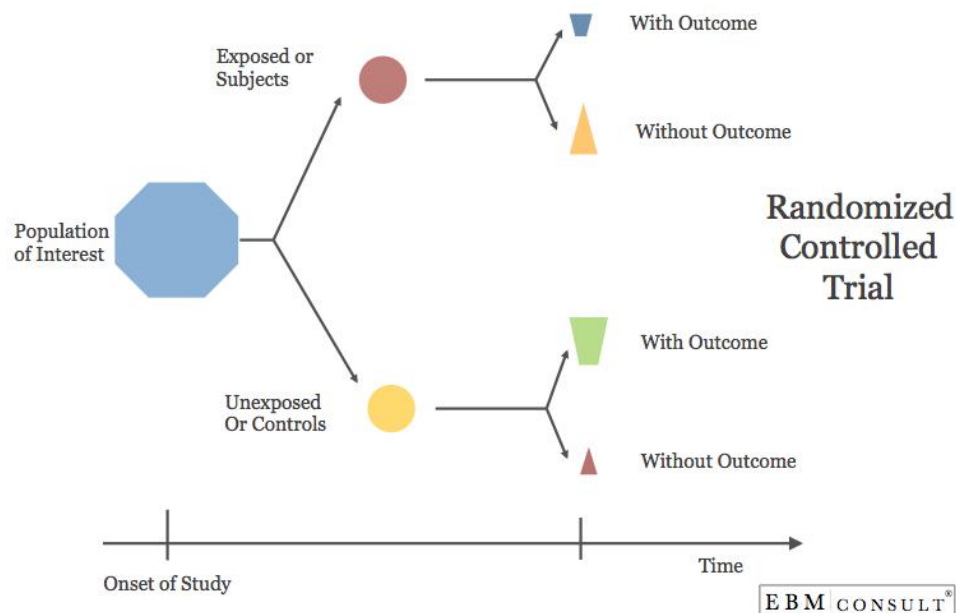
Connecting the dots:

- Despite limitations, the use of randomised control trials has led to a paradigm shift in development policy evaluation. Justify

Randomised control trials (RCT) (Part 2)

Context:

- Three randomistas, Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo and Michael Kremer, were awarded the 2019 Nobel prize in Economics for their 'randomised control trials' (RCT)-based studies on poverty worldwide.
- Development economics has drastically changed during the last two decades, due to the extensive use of 'randomised control trials' (RCT).



Img

[:https://www.ebmconsult.com/content/images/Stats/Randomized%20Control%20Trial%20Deisgn.png](https://www.ebmconsult.com/content/images/Stats/Randomized%20Control%20Trial%20Deisgn.png)

RCTs Evolution:

- RCTs can be traced back in the 16th century.
- The statistical foundation of RCT was developed by British statistician Sir Ronald Fisher, about 100 years ago
- In 1995, statisticians Marvin Zelen and Lee-Jen Wei illustrated a clinical trial to evaluate the hypothesis that the antiretroviral therapy AZT reduces the risk of maternal-to-infant HIV transmission.
- Drawing an inference, despite heterogeneity among the patients, was possible due to randomisation.
- RCT got its importance in clinical trials since the 1960s, currently any clinical trials without RCT were being considered almost useless.

- RCT was not applied to social sciences then .

RCTs in Social sciences:

- RCTs in Social scientists is interesting, doable, and effective.
- Nature of social science slowly converted from 'non-experimental' to 'experimental'.
- Many applications of RCTs took place in social policy-making during the 1960-90s,
- The 'randomistas' took control of development economics since the mid-1990s.
- Nearly 1,000 RCTs were conducted by Noble laureates 2019 and their colleagues in 83 countries such as India, Kenya and Indonesia.

Case study: Finland's Basic Income experiment

- Finland's Basic Income experiment (2017-18), where 2,000 unemployed Finns between ages 25-58 were randomly selected across the country, and were paid €560 a month instead of basic unemployment benefits.
- Results from the first year data didn't have any significant effect on the subjects' employment, in comparison with the control group comprising individuals who were not selected for the experimental group

Significance:

- Randomisation makes different treatment groups comparable and also helps to estimate the error associated in the inference.
- Unless randomisation is done, most of the standard statistical analyses and inference procedures become meaningless.
- Earlier social experiments lacked randomisation and that might be one reason that statisticians such as **Sir Ronald Fisher** were unwilling to employ statistics in social experiments.

Criticisms:

- In order to conduct RCTs, the broader problem is being sliced into smaller ones, and any dilution of the scientific method leaves the conclusions questionable.

Connecting the dots:

- "RCT or no RCT" may not be just a policy decision to economics; it is the question of shifting the paradigm. justify

Also read: Part 1 : https://iasbaba.com/2019/10/daily-current-affairs-ias-upsc-prelims-and-mains-exam-18th-october-2019/#Randomized_controlled_trial

The economic slowdown in the country

Data:

- Private consumption has contracted and is at an 18-quarter low of 3.1%
- Rural consumption is in a deep southward dive and is double the rate of the urban slowdown
- Credit off-take by micro and small industries remains stagnant;
- Net exports have shown little or no growth;
- GDP growth is at a six-year low with the first quarter of FY20 registering just 5%;
- Unemployment is at a 45-year-high.
- The IMF expects global economic growth to be just 3% this year, the lowest since the 2008 global financial crisis

Causes:

- The trigger was probably the trade slowdown. Recently, the WTO also indicated that world trade growth would be 1.2% , down from 3%. So, a very anaemic or even a flat growth rate in trade is pulling down the economy.
- Because this is the age of global integration, all economies get affected.
- The trigger also lies in the protectionist tendencies of world economies and the U.S.-China trade war.
- India is also affected by this and other domestic issues.
- Emerging market economies started showing some weaknesses. Brazil and South Africa have already got into the recessionary stage.
- China started slowing down although there are many who say it is deliberate to reduce the overheating the economy was facing.

India's case:

- India is that compared to 2008, we are not immune to global slowdown. In fact, in 2008 we were growing faster. That is the main worry for us.
- As the Indian economy has gradually opened up since 1991, the global economic situation has had spillovers in India.
- Between 2003 and 2008, the Indian economy was averaging between 8% and 9% growth. After the collapse of Lehman Brothers, it came down to 6.2%, but we were very solid.
- Non-Banking Financial Companies [NBFC] crisis has affected the flow of credit to capital goods. The demand for capital goods is down, as is car sales. Real estate is in trouble. This has resulted in a spillover in the rest of the economy.
- There is a slump in demand.

- Public investment is very critical.

Criticisms:

- India's exports have not been able to keep pace with expectations, especially in labour-intensive sectors like textiles, where Vietnam and Bangladesh have surged ahead.

Way forward:

- We have to worry about fiscal stimulus, not fiscal consolidation.
- Then there should be some kind of social spending which affects people in need with a high propensity to consume.
- Any cash reaching the poor will find its way into the market quickly.
- Address the inequalities in recent times.
- Indian industry has grown with the comfort of having a large domestic market.
- We need to nudge industry to look at global and regional markets, especially for labour-intensive goods.
- We need to avoid the appreciation of the rupee if we are to strengthen the domestic manufacturing industry.
- Any appreciation of the rupee facilitates more imports and less exports, adversely affecting domestic production.

Eastern trade:

- The dynamism in world trade is in the Eastern side. The Western markets are really flat. There is also a rise in protectionism.
- In such a situation, we need to tap the Asian markets. In that context, RCEP [Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership] is an important initiative.
- It gives us a possibility to integrate the Indian economy and production with the value chains in east-Asian countries.

Connecting the dots:

- What can India do to overcome the global slowdown? Examine.

[Vehicle registrations fell 12.9% in September](#)

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

In News

- Reflecting continued weakness in consumer sentiment, overall vehicle registrations in September 2019 fell 12.9% compared to the same period last year

- This is as per data obtained from the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations of India (FADA) with the help of Vahan

About VAHAN

- It is a digital national vehicle registry portal
- Vahan intends to collate all the information available with road transport authorities for easy access by both citizens and regulators.
- Vahan allows access to all details related to vehicles such as registration number, chassis/engine number, body/fuel type, colour, manufacturer and model and provides various online services to citizens.
- Driving Licence and related data are automated through a separate application called 'Sarathi'.

Significance of VAHAN

- Vahan has been designed to capture all the information mandated by the Central Motor Vehicle Act 1988 as well as State Motor Vehicle Rules.
- Banks, which may have given out loans for vehicle purchases, will also have access to the National/State Registry to track the status of vehicles under lien.

Merchant discount rate (MDR)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III - Economy

In News

- The Union government said banks or system providers will not impose charges or merchant discount rate (MDR) on customers as well as merchants on digital payments made to establishments having turnover in excess of ₹50 crore from November 1.
- MDR is a fee charged from a merchant by a bank for accepting payments from customers through credit and debit cards in their establishments
- Amendments to this effect have been made in the Income Tax Act as well as in the Payment and Settlement Systems Act 2007.

Non-Performing Asset

Context:

- The financial stability report released by the Reserve Bank of India has warned that the gross non-performing assets (GNPAs) of scheduled commercial banks in the country could rise from 11.6% in March 2018 to 12.2% in March 2019, which would be the highest level of bad debt in almost two decades.

What is NPA?

- NPA in terms of RBI regulations result out of non-payment of interest for a period of 90 days or non-payment of principle amount for 90 days or more. So beyond that point, it is called Non-Performing Asset.
- The loan is taken by the company on its assets from the bank. When the asset is not performing because they become doubtful and NPAs from doubtful become bad loans.

Background:

- The problem name NPA is not of recent origin. Few years back, India suffered from a huge infrastructure gap and the banking sector was encouraged to get themselves into a lending spree for companies willing to undertake various projects.
- Public Sector Banks were actually pushed to provide loans for projects that were floated largely by the private sector.

The following have caused distress in the banks' assets and have played part in the mounting NPAs –

- Prolonged downturn in the world economy,
- Falling commodity prices,
- Lack of due diligence and adherence to rules
- Complex workings of the bureaucracy,
- Typical bureaucratic red tape,
- Long delays and gestation periods of several infrastructure projects,
- Delays in land acquisition and
- Politically inspired agitations

Can't collateral be used to write off loans?

- When the banks give loans, they take something from the entity taking it as collateral for that loan. Lot of people give collaterals but in case of large projects, it is not possible to give collaterals. In such cases, the land purchase, the building purchase, the plant machines, the debtors and inventory are mortgaged to the bank.
- These assets are available but if they are able to produce enough to really repay to the bank remains doubtful.

How NPAs arose?

- After 2008, there was international financial crisis. The prices have fallen significantly in the international market. In last two years the commodity market is very bad for example, the Sugar industry and steel industry. Power sector was not operating properly. Halfway through the plants being operational, the banks stopped giving them money due to policy paralysis.
- People had extended their business beyond their means and higher interest was creating more problems

- Had the financial planning and financial management not compromised while giving the loans, the issue wouldn't have been this grave. In certain cases, the money has been diverted by entrepreneurs, they did not bring in promoters, did over invoicing of expenditure and took out money from that. So all kinds of speculations are there which led to increase in NPAs.

Five-pronged plan of the Sunil Mehta-panel: *Project Sashakt*

- An independent asset management company (AMC) and alternative investment fund-led resolution approach to deal with NPA cases of more than Rs 500 crore
- An asset trading platform for both performing and non-performing assets
- A plan for also dealing with bad loans up to Rs 50 crore – for very small loans, banks will set up verticals and departments to deal specifically on a template basis like the deadlines, the timeframe for it to be resolved in 60 days, and the resolution will be carried out on a basis which will be defined. Banks will have to follow a predefined manner of putting forth resolution plans and work with people with specialisations to deal with it.
- For loans between rs 50 crore and rs 500 crore, the committee called for a bank-led resolution approach, with the resolution being achieved in 180 days. The resolution plan has to be approved by lenders holding at least 66 per cent of the debt
- For the resolution of SMEs, the committee suggested the setting up of a steering committee by banks for formulating and validating the schemes, with a provision for additional funds. Stating that the resolution should be complete within 90 days, the committee suggested that the resolution of these assets be under a single bank's control, with the bank having the liberty to customise it.

Criticisms of Project sashakth:

- Disfavours the idea of setting up a “bad bank”
- The resolution route is also applicable to larger assets already before the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) and any other asset whose resolution is still pending.

Way forward:

- Government will have to do mix and match of various things. No single solution for all the problems. The solution has to be derived on case to case basis.
- The government is thinking of setting up committees for this purpose. There can be learned people appointed in each and every case who know their industry very well.
- Whether government should run the business is also a big issue. It makes sense for the government to convert part of the loan into equity and take majority ownership possible.

- The banks will be able to take over the management and revive the company. It is important to do the financial restructuring.
- There are many who get repeated in the defaulters list. So some long term solution is required. They can't be allowed to benefit on their own fault. There should be certain benchmark on the performance. If they are not able to perform, then entire debt can be converted into equity or part of the debt can be waived and bring in other promoters.

Connecting the dots:

- Serious corporate governance issues faced by public sector banks, which to a large extent also contributed to the lax lending practices that are at the core of the NPA crisis. Examine.

[DOING BUSINESS REPORT 2020](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III –Economy

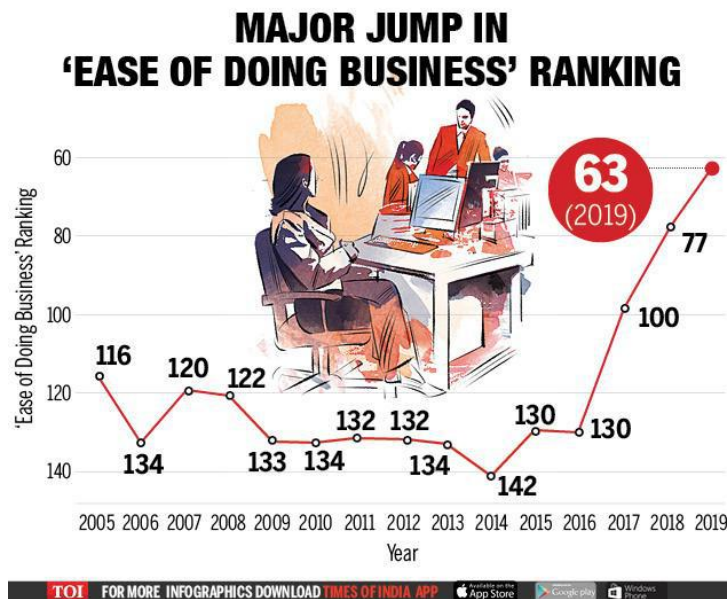
In News

- The World Bank released its latest Doing Business Report (DBR, 2020).
- India ranks at 63rd among 190 countries, moved 14 places from the previous year (77th rank in 2018).
- The DBR ranks countries on the basis of Distance to Frontier (DTF), a score that shows the gap of an economy to the global best practice. This year, India's DTF score improved to 71.0 from 67.23 in the previous year.
- The report assess improvement in ease of doing business environment in Delhi and Mumbai.
- In the last 5 years, India's ranking has improved 79 places - to 63 in 2019 from 142 in 2014.
- Significant improvements have been registered in 'Resolving Insolvency', 'Dealing with Construction Permits', 'Registering Property', 'Trading across Boards' and 'Paying Taxes' indicators
- Recovery rate under resolving insolvency has improved significantly from 26.5% to 71.6%.
- The time taken for resolving insolvency has also come down significantly from 4.3 years to 1.6 years.
- India continues to maintain its first position among South Asian countries. It was 6th in 2014.

[World Bank's ease of doing business ranking \(India 63rd Rank\)](#)

Context:

- India hiked 14 places to the 63rd position on the World Bank's ease of doing business ranking
- India is among the top 10 performers on the list for the third time in a row
- New Zealand, Singapore and Hong Kong topped
- World Bank applauded the reform efforts undertaken by the India in its report
- India is the first country of its type to jump this year by 14 position.



Src: <https://static.toiimg.com/img/71732579/Master.jpg>

Journey from 140 to 63:

- In 2014 India was at 140th.
- 100th position in 2018
- 77th position in 2019
- 63rd now

Policies that helped :

- **'Make in India' campaign** focused on attracting foreign investment, boosting the private sector (manufacturing in particular) and increasing the country's overall competitiveness
- In 2015, the government's goal was to join the 50 top Rank in the ease of doing business ranking by 2020.

- successful implementation of the **Insolvency And Bankruptcy Code**(Before the implementation of the reform, it was very burdensome for secured creditors to seize companies in default of their loans)
- Improvements were registered in starting business(start up India scheme), dealing with construction permits and trading across borders.
- Govt made starting a business easier by abolishing filing fees for the SPICe (Simplified Proforma for Incorporating a Company Electronically) company incorporation form, electronic memorandum of association, and articles of association
- **Trading across borders** made easier by enabling post clearance audits, integrating trade stakeholders in a single electronic platform, upgrading port infrastructures, and enhancing the electronic submission of documents.

Ease of doing business report:

The report was introduced in **2003 by world bank** to provide an assessment of objective measures of business regulations and their enforcement across 190 economies on **ten parameters** affecting a business through its life cycle

1. Starting a business
2. Dealing with construction permits
3. Getting electricity
4. Registering property
5. Getting credit
6. Protecting investors
7. Paying taxes
8. Trading across borders
9. Enforcing contracts
10. Resolving insolvency

Implications:

- First, the Doing Business indicators provide a snapshot of a country's red tape; they have no pretension of providing a comprehensive picture of the investment climate. As the World Bank makes clear, the indicators are not designed to comment on macroeconomic indicators or prospects for growth.
- Second, there exists a wide divergence between de jure and de facto realities in most economies.
What firms actually encounter "on the ground" is perhaps more important, but there are limitations to our ability to measure and interpret those experiences without bias.

The Way Ahead:

- While we can truly be proud of the extent of India's macro-policy reforms, it is time we started to focus on the micro-policies of enforcement. Top down macro reforms can

only be effective if they are twinned with bottom-up micro reforms. Unless the day-to-day experience of doing business improves, we will continue to under-perform relative to our true potential.

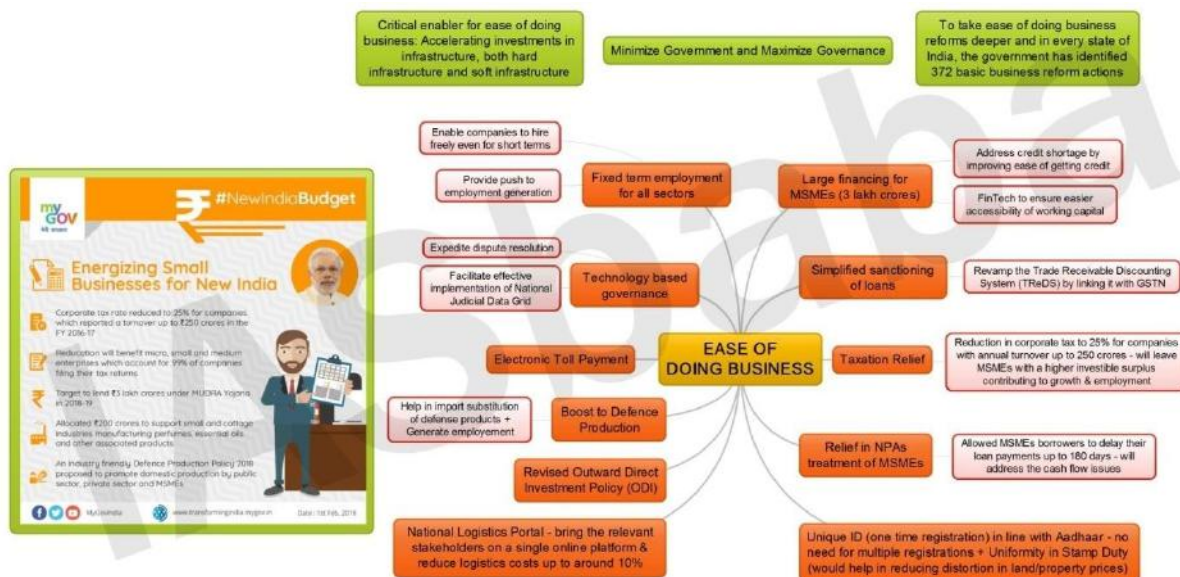
- To secure changes in the remaining areas will require not just new laws and online systems but deepening the ongoing investment in the capacity of states and their institutions to implement change and transform the framework of incentives and regulation facing the private sector. India's focus on 'doing business' at the state level may well be the platform that sustains the country's reform trajectory for the future

Conclusion:

- The Ease of doing business rankings thus, should not be seen as the ultimate marker of the ruling party's reform success. Likewise, investors who are considering the prospects for investment in India should recognize what the rankings do and do not tell us.
- While India has made tremendous progress in various categories, it is the depth of these reforms which needs to be worked in the next few years to bring up India into the Top 50 ranking.

Connecting the dots:

- The change in Ease of doing business ranking is fully acknowledged by the growth in Foreign Direct Investment into India. Analyse



Img: <https://iasbaba.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Ease-of-Doing-Business.jpg>

[Weavers will soon sell products directly online](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III - Economy

In News

- Handloom weavers in Andhra Pradesh are going to get the much-needed impetus as the Department of Handloom and Textiles(H&T) is all set to launch three initiatives that directly connect weavers to customers via popular online and offline garment business platforms.
- The initiatives are aimed at ending the middlemen system that has been depriving weavers of basic earnings and sustainability, and passing on the benefit from the sale of the product to the weaver
- Government already tied up with e-commerce site Yes Poho which is selling Uppada and Kalamkari saris. Yes Poho talks to weavers directly and middlemen and even the AP State Handloom Weavers Cooperative Society (APCO) have no role to play here.
- For sale of saris and fabric through showrooms other than APCO's stores, the H&T Department is going to tie up with Fab India who will procure the saris from weavers directly and sell them in their stores across the country and abroad.
- The APCO has also entered into an agreement with e-commerce giants Amazon and Flipkart for sale of 400 types of handloom products like saris, towels and blankets on their platforms.

Anti-Trust

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III - Economy

In News

- The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has ordered a detailed investigation into online travel booking companies Make My Trip and Goibibo and hospitality provider OYO
- This order is based on complaints by members of the Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) alleging deep-discounting, payment issues and cheating by these firms.
- CCI said there was a prima-facie case to investigate MMT-Go and OYO for alleged violation of the provisions of Section 3(4) of the Competition Act — pertaining to anti-competitive pacts and Section 4 of the Act (relating to abuse of dominant position).

Competition commission of India (CCI)

- A statutory body established under the provisions of The Competition Act, 2002.
- It consists of a Chairperson and 6 Members appointed by the Central Government.
- Its mandate is implement provisions of The Competition Act, 2002 which –
 - prohibits anti-competitive agreements and abuse of dominant position by enterprises
 - regulates mergers and acquisition (M&A) which can have an adverse effect on competition within India.

[Employment in India](#)

Context:

- Since the results of **the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2017-18** became public — they showed that unemployment in India was at a 45-year high — there has been vigorous public debate about the true state of unemployment in the country.

What fuelled debate?

- Long delays in the availability of past employment data, even though PLFS tracks employment annually.

Highlights of survey:

- 6.1% of India's labour force, and 17.8% of young people (15-29 years) in the labour force are unemployed.
- proportion of the workforce engaged in regular wage/salaried jobs increased by 5 percentage points between 2011-12 (when the last NSSO employment unemployment survey was conducted) and 2017-18.
- The overall workforce declined by 4 percentage points between 2011-12 and 2017-18).
- Regular workers increased only by one percentage point to 8% over the same period.
- India still lags far behind developing economies such as China (53.1%), Brazil (67.7%) and South Africa (84.8%) in the share of salaried or regular jobs.

ORGANISED SECTOR INCREASINGLY PREFERS NON-CONTRACTUAL LABOUR (ALL NUMBERS IN CRORE)

Sector	Without Contract	With Contract
2004		
Unorganised	6.33	0.4
Organised	1.31	2.28
2011		
Unorganised	8.9	0.46
Organised	2.44	2.65
2017		
Unorganised	10.9	0.48
Organised	3.61	2.8

Img : <https://images.indianexpress.com/2019/10/jobs1.jpg?w=481&h=497&imflag=true>

Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM) suggested :

- Instead of focusing on unemployment, it focuses only on the “employment” data.
- It does so by looking at three comparable surveys conducted by the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) — the Employment-Unemployment Surveys (EUS) of 2004-05 and 2011-12, and the PLFS of 2017-18.

Mapping of Unemployment:

The NSSO surveys divide the entire population into three categories.

Category 1 consists of people who were involved in economic activity (or work) during the reference period of the survey. These individuals are labelled as “Employed” — and Category 1 can be subdivided into categories such as self-employed, salaried employees, and casual labourers.

Category 2 consists of people who were not engaged in any economic activity during the reference period of the survey, but were looking for work if work was available. These individuals are labelled as “Unemployed”.

Category 3 constitutes people who are neither engaged in work nor available for it. This category — labelled as “Not in the labour force” — would have a large number of people,

including those who have retired, those studying, those unable to work due to disability, and those attending “only” to domestic duties.

**STATES THAT SAW STAGNANT
EMPLOYMENT IN 15-59 AGE BRACKET**
(ALL NUMBERS IN LAKH)

State	2004	2011	2017
Rajasthan	204	222	225
Gujarat	213	227	225
Uttarakhand	30	30	33
Jharkhand	99	94	95
Odisha	135	139	135
Andhra Pradesh	351	352	354
Karnataka	244	239	238
Tamil Nadu	284	276	283
Himachal Pradesh	25	30	29

Img: <https://images.indianexpress.com/2019/10/jobs-2.jpg?w=546&h=572&imflag=true>

Connecting the dots:

- Has the rise of the organised sector led to an increase in contractual employment? Analyse.

Employment in India (Part 2)

Context:

- Since the results of **the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2017-18** became public — they showed that unemployment in India was at a 45-year high — there has been vigorous public debate about the true state of unemployment in the country.

What fuelled debate?

- Long delays in the availability of past employment data, even though PLFS tracks employment annually.

Also read : Part 1 : <https://iasbaba.com/2019/10/daily-current-affairs-ias-upsc-prelims-and-mains-exam-30th-october-2019/>

Main findings:

- Total employment in the country grew by 4.5 crore in the 13 years between EUS 2004-05 and PLFS 2017-18.
- This represents a growth of just 0.8 per cent — less than half the rate at which the overall population grew, which was 1.7 per cent.

Urban and Rural:

- 4.5 crore increase in employment, 4.2 crore happened in the urban areas while rural employment either contracted (by 0.01 per cent between 2004 and 2011) or was stagnant (grew by 0.18 per cent between 2011 and 2017).

Male and female:

- Male employment grew by 6 crore but female employment fell by 1.5 crore. Women's share in employment has fallen from an already low level of 27.08% in 2004 to 21.17 per cent in 2017.
- Youth employment (those between the ages of 15 and 24) has fallen from 8.14 crore in 2004 to 5.34 crore in 2017.

Organised and Unorganised sector:

- The rate of employment growth in the organised sector has been the fastest, and its share in the total employment has risen from 8.9 per cent in 2004 to 14 per cent in 2017.
- The pace of growth of the unorganised sector has moderated since 2011, its overall share in the economy has gone up from 37.1 per cent in 2004 to 47.7 per cent in 2017.
- The agri-cropping sector, employment has fallen from 21.9 per cent in 2004 to 17.4 per cent in 2017.

Contractual employment:

- The organised sector in India preferring to employ workers without a contract. Indeed, between 2011 and 2017, this resulted in the organised sector coming to employ more people without a contract.
- The presence of a contract makes all the difference when it comes to job security, minimum wages, equal pay for equal work, safe working conditions, etc. Without a contract, even a worker employed in the organised sector would not have any means of seeking recourse for any injustice.


Conclusion:

- Firms (organised or unorganised) preferring non-contractual employment is bad news for India's bid to make the economy more formal.

- Firms are doing so to cut the extra costs that come with complying with inflexible and stringent labour laws.


Connecting the dots:

- Those who are poor, illiterate, and unskilled are increasingly losing out on jobs. Substantiate



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AGRICULTURE

The link between jobs, farming and climate

Context:

- Slowing economy is taking place, growth has slowed for the past two-and-a-half years
- Unemployment is the biggest crisis that India is facing today

Data:

- Periodic Labour Force Survey point to a dramatic rise in the unemployment rate since 2011-12
- Unemployment is the highest in the 45 years since 1972-73
- Unemployment in 'Rural Males', in 2017-18, is four times the average for the 40 years up to 2011-12.

Causes for the slow growth in rural income:

- Since 2008-2009, crop agriculture activity has recorded zero or negative growth in five years not seen anything like this since 1947.
- Other causes include low export growth, the state of the banking sector etc
- Decline in investment rate (due to poor agricultural growth)
- ecological factors like land degradation involving loss of soil moisture and nutrients, and the drop in the water table, leading to scarcity which raises the cost of cultivation
- excessive fertilizer use caused over-abuse of the earth's resources.
- increasingly erratic rainfall, due to climate change

Measures to be taken :

- Recent Reduction in the corporate tax rate. (but large part of corporate sales is driven by rural demand)
- The future growth of demand for much of industrial production is likely to come from rural areas so the rural picture matters

Way Forward:

- Govt must strive to increase rural income
- Intelligent governance, resource deployment and change in farmer behaviour is a need of the hour
- Draw in the public agricultural institutes and farmer bodies for their views on how to resuscitate the sector.
- Policy focus is disproportionately on the tax rate, the ease of doing business in the non-agricultural sector which must be turned towards agricultural sector

Did you know:

- In the average country of the OECD, an increase in unemployment of such magnitude would have triggered a nationwide debate and agitation on the streets.

Connecting the dots :

- It is imperative to focus on agricultural production in devising a long-term solution to the problem of unemployment. Substantiate.

[The truth about ZBNF \(zero budget natural farming\)](#)

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) recently

History:

- It was after the pioneering work of Justus von Liebig and Friedrich Wöhler in organic chemistry in the 19th century that chemical fertilizers began to be used in agriculture.
- In the 20th century, the criticisms levelled against Green Revolution technologies were criticisms of the increasing “chemicalisation” of agriculture.
- Claims were made that alternative, non-chemical agricultures were possible. Ex : Organic farming , Rudolf Steiner’s biodynamics, Masanobu Fukuoka’s one-straw revolution and Madagascar’s System of Rice Intensification (SRI).
- In India, such alternatives and their variants included, among others, homoeo-farming, Vedic farming, Natu-eco farming, Agnihotra farming and Amrutpani farming. Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF)

About ‘zero budget natural farming’ (ZBNF):

Pioneered by Subhash Palekar, an innovative farmer from Maharashtra.

- The technique replaces fertilisers and pesticides with concoctions of cow dung, cow urine, jaggery and pulse flour, and ensure perfect soil conditions for plant growth.
- It does so by keeping the top soil covered with crop residues to increase water retention, coating of seeds with cow dung and urine, concoction made of dung, urine, jaggery and pulse flour to multiply soil microbes, concoction to protect plants from pests etc.

Logic behind this:

Soil has all the nutrients plants need. To make these nutrients available to plants, we need the intermediation of microorganisms. For this, he recommends the “four wheels of ZBNF”: **Bijamrit, Jivamrit, Mulching and Waaphasa.**

- **Bijamrit** is the microbial coating of seeds with formulations of cow urine and cow dung.
- **Jivamrit** is the enhancement of soil microbes using an inoculum of cow dung, cow urine, and jaggery.
- **Mulching** is the covering of soil with crops or crop residues.
- **Waaphasa** is the building up of soil humus to increase soil aeration.
- Includes three methods of insect and pest management: **Agniastra, Brahmastra and Neemastra** (all different preparations using cow urine, cow dung, tobacco, fruits, green chilli, garlic and neem).
- 98.5% of the nutrients that plants need is obtained from air, water and sunlight; only 1.5% is from the soil.
- All nutrients are present in adequate quantities in all types of soils. However, they are not in a usable form.
- **Jivamrit**, Mr. Palekar’s magical concoction, makes these nutrients available to the plants by increasing the population of soil microorganisms.
- Because of ZBNF’s **spiritual closeness** to nature, its practitioners will stop drinking, gambling, lying, eating non-vegetarian food and wasting resources.

Mr. Palekar’ arguments:

- All knowledge created by agricultural universities is false. He calls Liebig as “Mr. Lie Big”.
- He labels chemical fertilizers and pesticides as “demonic substances”, cross-bred cows as “demonic species” and biotechnology and tractors as “demonic technologies”,
- He is critical of organic farming,” is “more dangerous than chemical farming”, and “worse than [an] atom bomb”.
- He calls vermicomposting a “scandal” and Eiseniafoetida, the red worm used to make vermicompost, as the “destructor beast”.
- He also calls Steiner’s biodynamic farming “bio-dynamite farming”.

Research argues:

- Indian soils are poor in organic matter content.
- About 59% of soils are low in available nitrogen;
- About 49% are low in available phosphorus;
- About 48% are low or medium in available potassium.
- Indian soils are also varyingly deficient in micronutrients, such as zinc, iron, manganese, copper, molybdenum and boron.

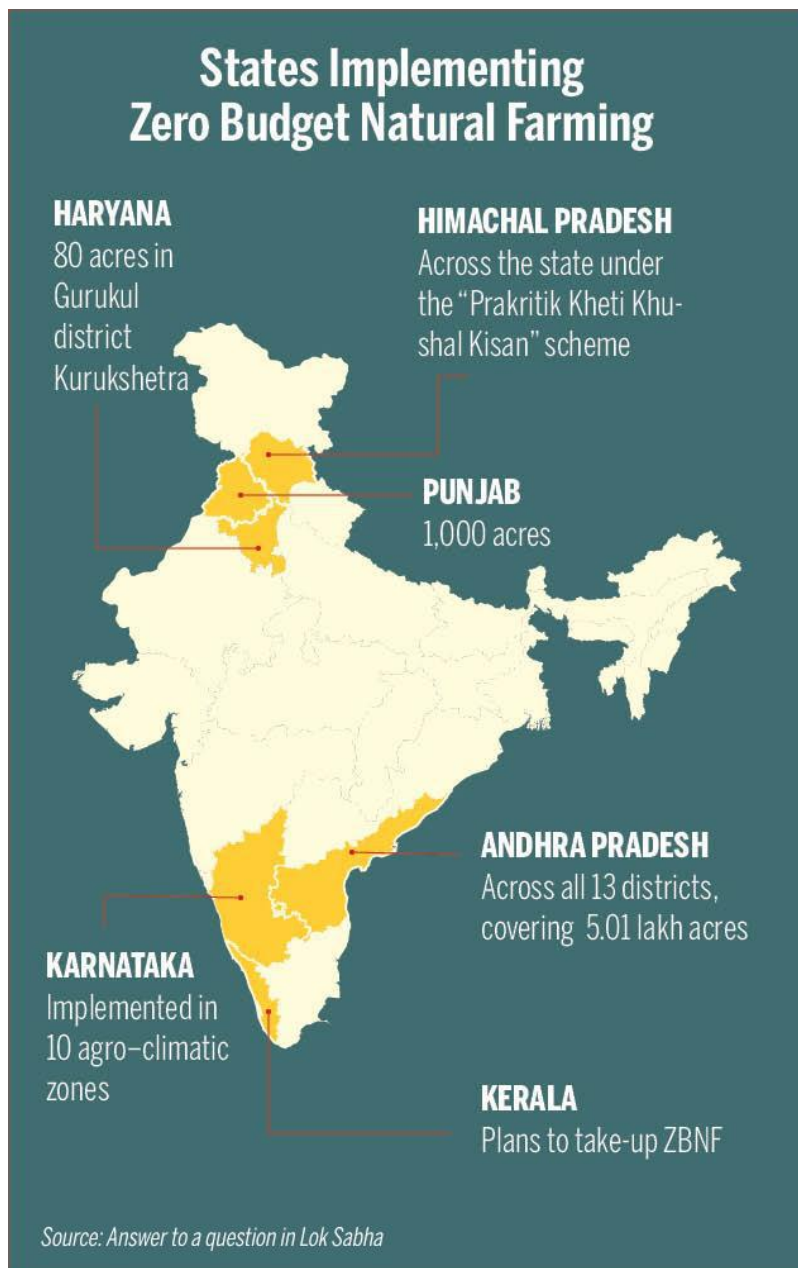


Image : <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/img/70463084/Master.jpg>

Solution:

- Location-specific solutions to nurture soil health and sustain increases in soil fertility.
- Scientists suggest soil test-based balanced fertilisation and integrated nutrient management methods combining organic manures (i.e., farm yard manure, compost, crop residues, biofertilizers, green manure) with chemical fertilizers.

Criticisms of ZBNF:

- ZBNF is hardly zero budget. Many ingredients of Mr. Palekar's formulations have to be purchased.
- There are no independent studies to validate the claims that ZBNF plots have a higher yield than non-ZBNF plots.
- Field trials have recorded a yield shortfall of about 30% in ZBNF plots when compared with non-ZBNF plots.
- The **Jivamrit** prescription is essentially the application of 10 kg of cow dung and 10 litres of cow urine per acre per month. For a five-month season, this means 50 kg of cow dung and 50 litres of cow urine. Given nitrogen content of 0.5% in cow dung and 1% in cow urine, this translates to just about 750 g of nitrogen per acre per season. This is totally inadequate considering the nitrogen requirements of Indian soils.

Way Forward:

- We need steps to check wind and water erosion of soils.
- We need innovative technologies to minimise physical degradation of soils due to waterlogging, flooding and crusting.
- We need to improve the fertility of saline, acidic, alkaline and toxic soils by reclaiming them. We need location-specific interventions towards balanced fertilisation and integrated nutrient management.

Conclusion:

- While we try to reduce the use of chemical fertilizers in some locations, we should be open to increasing their use in other locations. But such a comprehensive approach requires a strong embrace of scientific temper and a firm rejection of anti-science postures.
- In this sense, the inclusion of ZBNF into our agricultural policy by the government appears unwise and imprudent.

Connecting the dots:

- Zero Budget Natural Farming has no scientific validation and its inclusion into agricultural policy appears unwise. Analyse.

ENVIRONMENT/POLLUTION

Humans pollute more than volcanoes

- The Deep Carbon Observatory (DCO), a 500-strong international team of scientists, noted that Human activity churns out up to 100 times carbon each year as all the volcanoes on Earth.
- Manmade emissions in 2018 alone topped 37 gigatonnes.
- By comparison, the CO₂ released annually by volcanoes hovers around 0.3 and 0.4 gigatonnes
- Modern manmade emissions were the “same magnitude” as **past carbon shocks that precipitated mass extinction.**

India’s first e-waste clinic will come up in Bhopal

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

In News

- **The Bhopal Municipal Corporation (BMC) and the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)** have joined hands to set up the country’s first e-waste clinic in Bhopal that would enable segregation, processing and disposal of waste from both household and commercial units.
- The clinic is being conceived in compliance with the **Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016**
- Electronic waste will be collected door-to-door or could be deposited directly at the clinic in exchange for a fee. The CPCB will provide technical support at the unit

Do You Know?

- It is estimated that 50 million tonne of e-waste will be generated globally in 2018. Half of this is personal devices such as computers, screens, smartphones, tablets.
- **India is ranked 5th in the world among top e-waste producing countries**-USA, China, Japan and Germany. The volume of e-waste is growing at an estimated 21 per cent annually.
- The concept of **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)**- under 2016 E-waste (Management) Rules - mandated producers of electrical and electronic equipment to register and specified targets to collect back e-waste generated and to ensure that it is channelised to authorized recyclers

Multidisciplinary drifting observatory for the Study of Arctic Climate (MOSAIC) expedition

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

In News

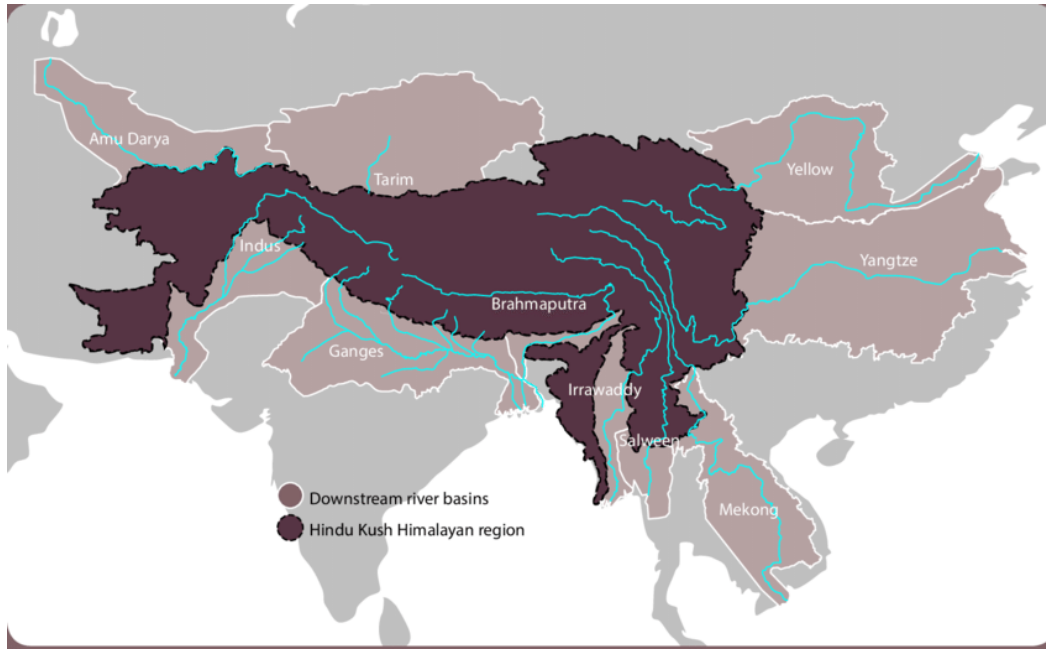
- Vishnu Nandan, a 32-year-old polar researcher from Kerala, will be the only Indian among 300 scientists from across the world aboard the MOSAiC expedition
- The aim of the expedition will be to parameterise the atmospheric, geophysical, oceanographic and all other possible variables in **the Arctic**, and use it to more accurately forecast the changes in our weather systems.
- MOSAiC, **the largest ever Arctic expedition** in history, will be the first to conduct a study of the North Pole for an entire year. Previous studies have been of shorter periods as the thicker sea ice sheets prevent access in winter.
- Under it, the **German research vessel Polarstern** has locked itself into a large sea ice sheet, before the winter, and will drift along with it
- Spearheaded by the Alfred Wegener Institute in Germany, scientists from **17 nations will take part in the year-long mission.**

[HINDU-KUSH-HIMALAYAN \(HKH\) REGION](#)

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

In News

- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) will collaborate with meteorological agencies in China and Pakistan to provide climate forecast services to countries in HKH region
- HKH region spans Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.
- The HKH region is considered the Third Pole [after the North and South Poles], and has significant implications for climate.
- It contains vast **cryospheric zones**, is also the world's largest store of snow and ice outside the polar region, and the **source of 10 major rivers.**
- There are proposals to establish a regional climate centre that will provide forecasting services and climate analyses, which will be under World Meteorological Organisation



- https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Ritu_Verma5/publication/260672786/figure/fig1/AS:464559514361856@1487771027603/Map-of-the-Hindu-Kush-Himalayan-region.png

Aarey milk colony controversy

- A metro car depot proposed at Aarey milk colony in Mumbai is an important electoral issue in the upcoming state elections.
- The project will wipe out **2,646 trees**, which environmentalists say will destroy Mumbai's "green lungs" and floodplains of **Mithi river**. They have recommended alternative sites be used for the metro project.
- Aarey not a notified forest, a claim that some environmentalists are disputing, the state government plans to go ahead with the project and notes that the metro will ease the congested suburban railways.
- The Supreme Court on October 7, ordered a halt on any further cutting of trees until the next hearing.

Aarey Milk Colony

- The Aarey Milk Colony is a neighbourhood situated in Goregaon, a suburb of the city of Mumbai, India.
- It was established in 1949 to revolutionize the processing and marketing of dairy products in the city.
- Inaugurated by the then Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

- Aarey's trees, grassland, bushes and marshes are also home to leopards, migratory birds, snakes, scorpions, spiders, butterflies and more species.
- The area has more than 290 wild species of flora and fauna, such as leopard and rusty-spotted cats (classified as vulnerable).

Objective:

- Shifting of cattle/buffalo from the city limits,
- Supply of better quality milk to the citizens of Mumbai at comparatively cheaper cost, and
- Maintenance of these animals on scientific and modern animal husbandry practices.



Img : <https://static.guim.co.uk/ni/1400169151409/India-Mumbai-leopards.svg>

Critics:

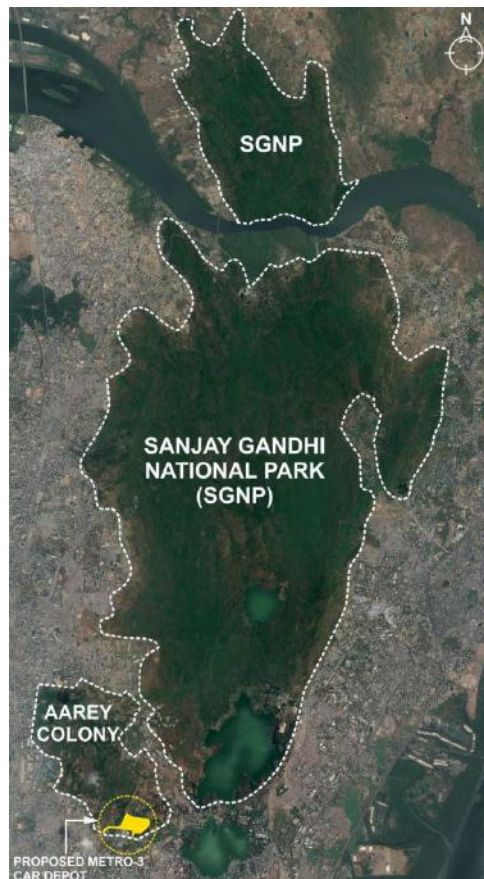
- The car shed will gradually open up the entire Aarey for construction which will be a disaster for Mumbai. A large part of the Aarey Milk colony has already been encroached upon.
- Rich biodiversity like Aarey takes hundreds of years to build up and cannot be replanted overnight. Metro shed can't be built at the cost of Mumbai's largest natural air purifier
- Floodplain of the Mithi river will be impacted by the construction at Aarey
- Aarey is home to over 3,500 families of Warli *adivasis* and other tribal groups spread over 27 hamlets. Many of them face displacement now.

Data:

- The state estimates that over 7.5 million people travel in Mumbai's suburban trains daily and the upcoming metro will serve as many passengers as suburban rails by 2034 easing the pressure off from the world's most congested railways

Arguments:

- The government claims that Aarey is not a notified forest and hence the land can be used by the government for the metro project but the activists claim otherwise.
- The activists say they are not against the metro depot but the MMRCL's choice of land for the same. "There are plenty of non-residential and industrial locations where car shed can be constructed,"
- Aarey Colony which was categorised as "unclassified forest in the SGNP" (Sanjay Gandhi national park) was included in the SGNP in 1969, as per a government document obtained through the Right to Information (RTI) Act. An **unclassified** forest is recorded in land records as forests, but not reserved or protected by the government.
- In 1969, the revenue and forests department (which still allots land in this same area) transferred 2,076 ha of land to the Borivali National Park.



Img:<https://imgs.mongabay.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/30/2019/10/08124020/aarey-map-610x1104.jpg>

Conclusion:

- Rational cost-benefit assessment of any large project calls for transparency and engagement between policymakers, civil society, scientists and business in the development planning process.
- What must be considered are the ecosystem services Aarey provides to Mumbai and how these are impacted by the diversion of 33 hectares, roughly 2% of the total area.
- The benefits of augmenting Mumbai's public transport system compared to cost of diverting a section of the green belt, and other options of locating the infrastructure, must be considered.

Connecting the dots:

- The Aarey forest imbroglio is a clear example of the failure to appreciate the need to balance the demands of economic development and environmental protection. Analyse.

[Invasive weeds threatening tiger habitats in Adilabad, Telangana](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-III- Environment

In News

- Invasive weeds affect population of herbivores which are prey to the big cats
- As a result, there is increase in influx of tigers from forests across the border in Maharashtra.
- It was way back in **1992 at the Rio de Janeiro Convention** on Biodiversity that biological invasion of alien species of plants was recognised as **the second worst threat to the environment** after habitat destruction.

About Invasive Species

- Those species whose introduction into an ecosystem successfully **out-compete native organisms and harms ecosystems**. Common characteristics are:
 - Rapid reproduction and growth,
 - High dispersal ability,
 - Phenotypic plasticity (ability to adapt physiologically to new conditions)

['Foreign' plastic invades Great Nicobar Island](#)

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

In News

- About 10 countries including India contributed to the plastic litter in the Great Nicobar island. They were Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, Philippines, Vietnam, India, Myanmar, China and Japan.
- Major portion of the litter (40.5%) was of Malaysian origin. It was followed by Indonesia (23.9%) and Thailand (16.3%). The litter of Indian origin only amounted to 2.2%
- The overwhelming **contribution from Indonesia and Thailand** was likely due to its proximity to the island; the plastic is likely to have made its way to the island because of **water currents via the Malacca Strait**, which is a major shipping route.
- The huge quantities of marine debris observed on this island might be due to **improper handling of the solid waste** from fishing/mariculture activity and ship traffic.
- Plastic pollution has emerged as one of the severest threats to ocean ecosystems and its concentration has reached 5,80,000 pieces per square kilometre.
- Plastic represents 83% of the marine litter found. The remaining 17% is mainly textiles, paper, metal and wood.

Do You Know?

- The Great Nicobar Island of Andaman has an area of about 1044 sq. km.
- According to the 2011 census, has a population of about 8,069.
- The island is home to one of the most primitive tribes of India — the **Shompens**.
- The island includes the **Great Nicobar Biosphere Reserve (GNBR)** comprising of the **Galathea National Park** and the Campbell Bay National Park.
- The island harbours a wide spectrum of ecosystems from tropical wet evergreen forests, mountain ranges and coastal plains.
- The island is also home to giant robber crabs, crab-eating macaques, the rare megapode as well as leatherback turtles.

PLOGGING

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

In News

- ‘Plogging’ is a combination word formed from ‘jogging’ and ‘plocka upp’, which is Swedish for ‘pick up’.
- It refers to an emerging international trend in which people picks up trash while jogging or brisk walking as a way of cleaning up litter while also taking care of fitness.
- The trend was **started in Sweden by Erik Ahlström in 2016**. Thanks to social media and word of mouth, it has gradually turned into an international movement involving both fitness and environmental enthusiasts.
- **In India**, the government organised the Fit India Plog Run on October 2, as part of the Fit India Movement launched by the Prime Minister on August 29.
- In his Mann Ki Baat address on September 29, PM Modi urged people to start plogging for a litter-free India.

- According to Ahlström, jogging for half an hour will burn at least 288 calories on an average as compared to 235 calories from regular jogging.

Waste to Wealth: Cooking oil-to-biodiesel

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III –Environment Conservation

In News

- Zomato and biodiesel manufacturer BioD Energy have inked a partnership to collect used cooking oil from restaurants around the country so that it could be converted into biodiesel, which would then be sold to oil marketing companies to be blended with regular diesel
- According to FSSAI regulations, the maximum permissible limits for Total Polar Compounds (TPC) have been set at 25%, beyond which the cooking oil is unsafe for consumption.
- Reducing the re-use of cooking oil in the food industry will have positive public health outcomes and also reduces import demand of crude oil
- The deal assumes significance in the light of government's **Repurpose Cooking Oil (RUCO) initiative**

About RUCO

- It was launched by The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) in Feb 2019 to collect and convert used cooking oil into bio-fuel.
- As many as 64 companies in 101 locations across the country have been identified for the purpose by FSSAI. By 2020, it should be possible to recover about 220 crore litres of used cooking oil for conversion into bio-fuel.

2019 ozone hole is the smallest on record

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III–Environment

In News

- The ozone hole over Antarctica is the smallest observed since 1982, due **to abnormally warm temperatures in the upper atmosphere** that dramatically limited ozone depletion in September and October this year, according to NASA
- Ozone is a molecule that is composed of three oxygen atoms. It is responsible for filtering out harmful ultraviolet radiation from the Sun.
- The gas is constantly being made and destroyed in the stratosphere, about 20-30km above the Earth.
- In an unpolluted atmosphere, this cycle of production and decomposition is in equilibrium. But chlorine and bromine-containing chemicals released by human activity have unbalanced the process, resulting in a loss of ozone that is at its greatest in the Antarctic spring in September/October.

- Nearly 200 countries agreed to ban the chemicals most damaging to the ozone under the Montreal Protocol of 1987.
-

Ramgarh dam

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III –Environment Conservation

In News

- An agitation for protection of catchment area of the historic Ramgarh dam , once considered the lifeline of Jaipur, has revived with the villagers and farmers of the region staging a sit-in near the dam **demanding immediate removal of encroachments.**
 - Its construction was completed in 1904 during the reign of erstwhile Jaipur ruler Sawai Madho Singh II.
 - The dam, which earlier supplied drinking water to the city, has dried completely in the last decade
 - There is a suggestion that the Chambal river water be supplied to the dam through the proposed Eastern Rajasthan Canal Project so as to revive the dam
-

Rise in stubble burning cases in Punjab

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III – Environment Conservation

In News

- Over 3,300 cases reported till October 21 as against 2,564 incidents in corresponding period last year
- Stubble burning, close to the autumn season every year, has been **a key contributing factor of pollution in the air** and breathing problems among people across the northern region, including New Delhi
- The reason behind the higher number of fire cases has been the decision to advance the date of paddy sowing this season, a week earlier than the scheduled date of June 20 due to early arrival of monsoon this year.
- Consequently, harvesting of the crop has also started early this time. And because of this, the number of farm fires this year, as against the corresponding period last year, is higher.
- For management of paddy straw without burning, the Centre and the State government are **providing subsidised agro-machines and equipment to farmers and cooperative societies.** Yet farmers continue to burn crop residue claiming lack of alternatives.
- The ban and action against people burning crop residue is regulated under the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981.

- In 2016, Punjab witnessed 84,000 incidents of stubble fire while in 2017, a dip was seen with the number of cases at 46,000. In 2018, the fire incidents were close to 50,000, according to the government data.

[PMO tells States to address stubble burning issue](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III - Environment

In News

- The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) has instructed Punjab and Haryana to address the issue of stubble burning.
- Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister chaired a meeting with members of a task force that oversees implementation of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP)
- According to assessment by weather forecast agency SAFAR, the impact of stubble burning from Haryana & Punjab is "moderate but gradually increasing."
- Experts had earlier said that this weekend is particularly crucial for air quality due to Diwali which will see bursting of crackers as well as heightened traffic.
- The GRAP Task Force recommended that hot mix plants, stone-crushers and construction activities that generate dust are prohibited from October 26 to 30 in Delhi and its satellite towns

What is graded response action plan (GRAP)?

- The plan was prepared by the Supreme Court-mandated Environment Pollution Control Authority (EPCA), which held meetings with stakeholders from all states over several months. A graded response lays down stratified actions that are required to be taken as and when the concentration of pollutants reaches a certain level.
- This plan will be putting into action a number of anti-pollution measures and there will be specific actions for each category — moderate to poor, very poor, severe and emergency.
- The measures include stoppage in the running of diesel sets, a three-fourfold increase in the parking rates, enhanced bus and metro services, and newspapers, TV and radio stations alerts on a daily basis with advice to people with respiratory and cardiac problems.
- Also, air in moderate-to-poor category will involve periodical mechanised sweeping of roads, deployment of traffic police for smooth flow of traffic at identified choke areas and strict enforcement of pollution norms at brick kilns and industrial complexes.

Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III –Environment

In News

- With air quality in Delhi nose diving to ‘severe’ levels, the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) Task Force extended the ban on construction and industrial activities dependent on coal till November 2.
- Apart from Diwali crackers and sluggish wind, the key culprit for dip in air quality in Delhi was stubble burning in Punjab and Haryana,
- The plan was prepared by the Supreme Court-mandated Environment Pollution Control Authority (EPCA), which held meetings with stakeholders from all states over several months. A graded response lays down stratified actions that are required to be taken as and when the concentration of pollutants reaches a certain level.
- This plan will be putting into action a number of anti-pollution measures and there will be specific actions for each category — moderate to poor, very poor, severe and emergency.
- **Severe+ or Emergency**
(PM 2.5 over 300 µg/cubic metre or PM10 over 500 µg/cu. m. for 48+ hours)
 - Stop entry of trucks into Delhi (except essential commodities)
 - Stop construction work
 - Introduce odd/even scheme for private vehicles and minimise exemptions
 - Task Force to decide any additional steps including shutting of schools
- **Severe**
(PM 2.5 over 250 µg/cu. m. or PM10 over 430 µg/cu. m.)
 - Close brick kilns, hot mix plants, stone crushers
 - Maximise power generation from natural gas to reduce generation from coal
 - Encourage public transport, with differential rates
 - More frequent mechanised cleaning of road and sprinkling of water
- **Very Poor**
(PM2.5 121-250 µg/cu. m. or PM10 351-430 µg/cu. m.)
 - Stop use of diesel generator sets
 - Enhance parking fee by 3-4 times
 - Increase bus and Metro services
 - Apartment owners to discourage burning fires in winter by providing electric heaters during winter
 - Advisories to people with respiratory and cardiac conditions to restrict outdoor movement
- **Moderate to poor**
(PM2.5 61-120 µg/cu. m. or PM10 101-350 µg/cu. m.)
 - Heavy fines for garbage burning
 - Close/enforce pollution control regulations in brick kilns and industries
 - Mechanised sweeping on roads with heavy traffic and water sprinkling
 - Strictly enforce ban on firecrackers

GRAPPLING WITH GRAP

Graded Response Action Plan
Formulated in 2016
Notified in 2017
Third edition this year

Photo: Rajesh Mehta

Measures to be enforced from Oct 15

VERY POOR

- Use of diesel generator sets to be stopped in Delhi and nearby towns. List of exempted places to be released soon
- Parking fee to be hiked by 3-4 times | Charges yet to be decided under parking policy, so no fee hike for now
- Bus, metro services to be augmented | No new buses being added, but metro frequency will be increased
- No use of coal/firewood in hotels of Delhi, nearby towns
- RWAs to provide electric heaters to security staffers
- Media alerts and advisories to be issued

SEVERE

- Only brick kilns without zigzag technology to be allowed to operate. Stone crushers and hot-mix plants will have to take dust protection measures
- Four thermal power plants in NCR to give a compliance plan on meeting the 2017 standards
- Intensified public transport
- Increased frequency of mechanised cleaning of road and sprinkling of water

What may be enforced later under GRAP

SEVERE+ OR EMERGENCY
(When PM 2.5 over 300 µg/cubic metre or PM10 over 500 µg/cubic metre for 48+ hours)

- Stop entry of trucks into Delhi (except essential commodities)
- Stop construction work
- Introduce odd-even scheme for private vehicles and minimise exemptions
- Task force to decide any additional steps to be taken, including shutting of schools

Measures already in place

MODERATE TO POOR CATEGORY

- Curbs on garbage burning
- Pollution regulation in all industries
- Periodic mechanised sweeping
- No polluting vehicles on roads
- Enforcement of SC order on diversions, ban on crackers
- Strict enforcement of dust control norms
- Fly ash ponds to be watered every alternate day
- Traffic cops at vulnerable areas
- Apps to inform people and register complaints

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ANIMALS/NATIONAL PARKS IN NEWS

Climate change is prompting a habitat change in Himalayas

- The butterfly named Himalayan tailless bushblue was known to occur at an altitude between 1,300 m to 2,400 m in Jammu and Kashmir and Uttarakhand.
- Recent studies however, have located the species at 3,577 m in **Askot Wildlife Sanctuary in Uttarakhand**, at least 1,200 m **higher than it's known range**.
- Most of the species that were found at lower attitude had moved up possibly due to climate change, according to research
- **Lepidoptera (moths and butterflies)** are known as potent **ecological indicators**

NH 766

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III – Environment Conservation

In News

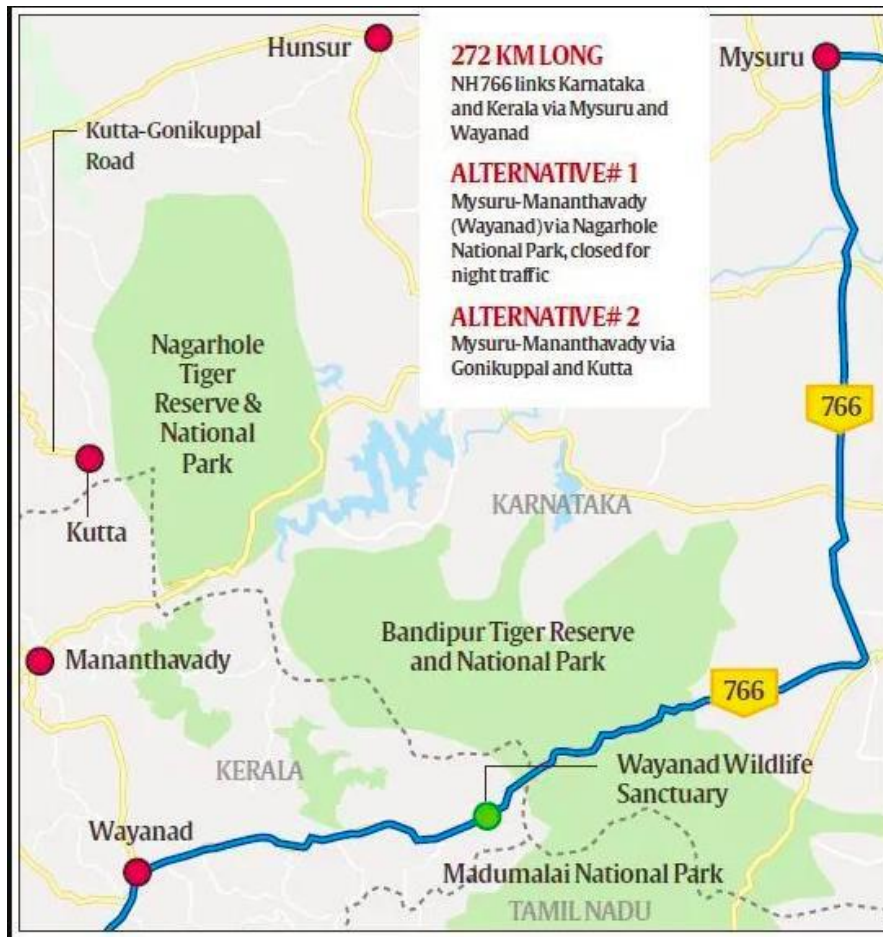
- NH 766 is a key highway between Karnataka and Kerala that passes through the **Bandipur Tiger Reserve in Karnataka**.
- Kerala's Wayanad district has witnessed a series of protests against a **ban on night traffic on the forest stretch of NH 766**.
- Although the night ban was first enforced a decade ago, the immediate trigger for the current agitation was a recent Supreme Court direction to the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change and NHA to suggest alternative routes so that NH 766 could be shut down permanently

Bandipur Tiger Reserve:

- Spread over 990.51 sq km, Bandipur Tiger Reserve is part of interconnected forests that include Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary (Tamil Nadu), Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary (Kerala) and Nagarhole National Park (Karnataka).
- A large variety of wildlife including the elephant moves from one stretch to another, cutting the states.

Do You Know?

- **Night traffic would affect behaviour biology** such as breeding and parental care of animals, disrupt their life cycle and make them stray to human habitats.
- Using the central Motor Vehicle Act read with the Karnataka Motor Vehicle Rules, traffic was banned from both sides of stretch from 9 pm to 6 am



<https://images.indianexpress.com/2019/10/forest.jpg?w=759&h=797&imflag=true>

[Drone cameras threatening Nilgiris wildlife](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III – Environment Conservation

In News

- Birds may get injured when they attack drones of photographers which may lead to endangering of species and abandoning nesting sites,
- Use of drone cameras or Unmanned Aerial Vehicles mounted with filming equipment in forest areas, without the permission of the Chief Wildlife Warden is a criminal offence.

Nilgiris

- The Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve was **the first biosphere reserve in India** established in the year 1986
- It forms a part of Western Ghats shared among Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka

- Main vegetation of the region is montane grasslands and shrub lands interspersed with shola forests
- Niligir Tahr (endangered species) is endemic to Nilgiri hills. It is also State animal of Tamil Nadu

[National Tiger Conservation Authority\(NTCA\)](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III–Environment Conservation

In News

- NTCA has red-flagged the Madhya Pradesh government’s move to increase tourism activities inside the State’s tiger reserves in violation of the existing guidelines
- According to a latest report by the Environment Ministry, India has 2,967 tigers, with 526 of them in Madhya Pradesh alone — the highest in the country.
- There are six tiger reserves in Madhya Pradesh — Kanha, Bandhavgarh, Panna, Satpura, Sanjay-Dubri and Pench.

About NTCA

- It is a statutory body under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change constituted under enabling provisions of the **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**, as amended in 2006, for strengthening tiger conservation, as per powers and functions assigned to it under the said Act.
- The National Tiger Conservation Authority is set up under the Chairmanship of the Minister for Environment and Forests.
- Project Tiger aims to aid and facilitate the breeding of tigers within a safe environment and transport the tigers to other parks to increase the tiger population across its habitats. In addition, Project Tiger also takes up initiatives to improve the vegetation in the park, to facilitate the availability of prey for the tigers.
- NTCA used an app/system called MSTriPES, to monitor and record the tiger population to release the census in 2019.

[Mountain gorillas](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II - Conservation

In News

- Rainforest protection and dedicated veterinarians have helped the mountain gorilla population bounce back in **Volcanoes National Park, Rwanda**
- Alarmed by rising rates of poaching and deforestation in central Africa, experts predicted the species could go extinct by 2000.

- Instead, a concerted and sustained conservation campaign has averted the worst and the number of mountain gorillas – a subspecies of eastern gorillas – has risen from 680 a decade ago to just over 1,000 today
- Switzerland-based International Union for Conservation of Nature changed the status of mountain gorillas from "critically endangered" to "endangered," an improved if still-fragile designation.
- It involved "extreme conservation," which has entailed monitoring every single gorilla in the rainforest, periodically giving them veterinary care and funding forest protection by sending money into communities that might otherwise resent not being able to convert the woods into cropland.

Do You Know?

- Gorillas share about 98% of human DNA
- Gorillas are actually languid primates that eat only plants and insects, and live in fairly stable, extended family groups.
- Their strength and chest-thumping displays are generally reserved for contests between male rivals.



INFRASTRUCTURE/ENERGY

Delhi-Lucknow Tejas Express

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-III - Infrastructure

In News

- This is the **first train which is not operated directly by the Railways**. IRCTC will be operating this train.
- IRCTC has promised Tejas passengers **compensation for delays** – Rs100 will be paid if the delay is for over an hour and ₹250 if delay is more than 2 hours
- The IRCTC has **announced a slew of offers**, including free travel insurance worth ₹25 lakh and on-board infotainment services, doorstep baggage collection, local food and no tatkal quota, to make the travel on its first train attractive ahead of its first commercial run on October 5.

Do You know?

- In **Japan and Paris**, a **delay certificate** is issued to passengers by railway companies as proof that a train arrived at a station later than stated in the timetable (even for delay as little as five minutes)
- The document can be shown in schools or offices for late admission at university exams.
- In the U.K., rail passengers are entitled to get automatic compensation for delayed journeys.

PRAKASH PORTAL

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-III- Energy/Infrastructure

In News

- PRAKASH stands for '**Power Rail Koyla Availability through Supply Harmony**'.
- The Union Minister for Power and the Union Minister for Coal & Mines jointly launched PRAKASH portal for transparency and better coordination in coal supplies to power plants.
- **The Portal aims at** bringing better coordination for coal supplies among all stakeholders viz - Ministry of Power, Ministry of Coal, Coal India, Railways and power utilities.
- **PRAKASH Portal is developed by NTPC** and sources data from different stakeholders such as Central Electricity Authority (CEA), Centre for Railway Information System (CRIS) and coal companies.

VANDE BHARAT EXPRESS

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains GS-III -Infrastructure

In News

- Union government **started New Delhi-Katra 'Vande Bharat' Express to give boost to religious tourism in Jammu.**
- Katra is a small town located 42 km from the city of Jammu which serves as the base camp for pilgrims who visit Vaishno Devi.
- The coaches of this train are **indigenously manufactured at the Chennai Rail coach factory.**
- Vande Bharat Express has been tested at 180 kmph and can run upto maximum speed of 160 kmph on passenger service. All Coaches are equipped with automatic doors; GPS based audio-visual passenger information system, onboard hotspot, wi-fi for entertainment purposes, and very comfortable seating.
- This is the second 'Vande Bharat' express after the New Delhi - Varanasi semi-high speed train was started in February this year.

[ELECTRIC VEHICLE \(EV\) CHARGING GUIDELINES](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III – Infrastructure

In News

- Union Minister for Power has approved amendments in Electric Vehicle Charging Guidelines and Specifications.
- At least one Charging Station to be available in a grid of 3 Km x 3 Km in the cities and one Charging Station at every 25 Km on both sides of highways/roads.
- All Mega Cities & expressways connected to these Mega Cities to be taken up for coverage in first phase, other big cities to be taken up in second phase.
- For inter-city travel, Fast Charging Station to be installed at every 100 Kms.
- Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), a statutory body under Ministry of Power has been nominated as the Central Nodal Agency to facilitate installation of Charging Infrastructure.

[Many hydropower projects could face closure](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III - Economy

In News

- India's hydropower projects that do not comply with the **Centre's ecological flow notification**, which mandates that project developers ensure a minimum supply of water all through the year, could face closure.

- Power producers generally hoard water to create reserves to increase power production.
- Central Water Commission (CWC) has been tasked to ascertain actual flows and the amount of water present in the rivers
- The e-flow notification specifies that the upper stretches of the Ganga — from its origins in the glaciers and until Haridwar — would have to maintain:
 - 20% of the monthly average flow of the preceding 10-days between November and March, which is the dry season
 - 25% of the average during the ‘lean season’ of October, April and May; and
 - 30% of monthly average during the monsoon months of June-September.

[Hover-taxis](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III - Infrastructure

In News

- German firm Volocopter tests its **battery-operated**, two-seater heli-taxi vehicle in Singapore
- The 18 propeller vehicle— resembling small helicopters but powered by drone-like technology — can fly autonomously but there was a pilot aboard during the test for safety reasons.
- Earlier in October 2019, Volocopter unveiled the “VoloPort”, a flying taxi port at the Singapore’s Marina Bay with a landing and takeoff pad as well as a passenger terminal.
- Many Asian mega-cities are notorious for monster traffic jams, which leave millions of commuters facing long journeys, and can delay executives trying to dash to airports or reach important meetings on time.
- Volocopter says that such innovation in air transport is going to reduce traffic congestion and revolutionize urban mobility

[Kudankulam Power Plant](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III - Energy

In News

- Hours after a cybersecurity expert claimed on Twitter that the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant’s (KKNPP) domain controller-level access could have been compromised, government has categorically denied it
- Cyberattack on the unit was not possible as its systems were all standalone and forms an isolated network.
- Kudankulam and other Indian nuclear power plants, control systems were not connected to an outside cyber network and Internet

- Government revealed that a cybersecurity audit was conducted recently after a futile attempt to hack the NPCIL's isolated network was made.
- When an Iranian nuclear power plant came under suspected cyberattack in 2012 (**Stuxnet virus**), Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd. (NPCIL) took all precautionary measures though it had already put in place an isolated network

[Government to work on relief package for Telecom sector](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III - Economy

In News

- The government has constituted a Committee of Secretaries (CoS), headed by Cabinet Secretary to work out a relief package for the telecom sector.
- This may help mitigate the impact of the more than ₹1.4 lakh crore that the telcos may need to pay the exchequer following a recent Supreme Court order.
- The Supreme Court upheld the government's position on including revenue from non-telecommunication businesses in calculating the annual **adjusted gross revenue (AGR) of telecom companies**, a share of which is paid as licence and spectrum fee to the exchequer.
- Following the order, the telcos may have to pay the government ₹1.42 lakh crore within three months.
- CoS will review various demands made by the industry, including deferment of spectrum auction payment due for the next two years, reduction in spectrum usage charges and the Universal Service Obligation Fund levy.

Stress in Telecom Sector

- The industry's debt currently stands at about ₹4 lakh crore
- The gross revenue of the industry had fallen between 2017-18 and 2018-19, the source said the price of data for the customer at an average of ₹8 per GB is perhaps the lowest in the world.
- The average revenue per user per month has declined from ₹174 in 2014-15 to ₹113 in 2018-19.
- Bharti Airtel's liability stands at about ₹42,000 crore while Vodafone Idea may have to shell out about ₹40,000 crore

[Kudankulam plant & 'dtrack' malware](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III - Energy

In News

- The Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd. (NPCIL) on Wednesday confirmed that a malware had indeed infected its system at the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant

(KKNPP), a day after KKNPP officials had categorically asserted that the systems at the plant could not be accessed by anyone outside the network as they were all isolated.

- The matter was conveyed by CERT-In [Indian Computer Emergency Response Team] when it was noticed by them on September 4, 2019.
- The investigation had revealed that the infected computer belonged to a user who was connected “in the Internet connected network used for administrative purposes,
- However, the authorities stated that system was isolated from the critical internal network and that the networks were being “continuously monitored”.
- The cyberintrusion came to light on 28th October after the website VirusTotal uploaded a data dump that seemed to point to a data breach in the KKNPP system. The dump pointed to a ‘dtrack’ malware, which can be used as a remote administrator tool, having infected systems at the KKNPP.

About CERT-IN

- CERT-In is an acronym for ‘Indian Computer Emergency Response Team’. As per Information Technology Amendment Act 2008, CERT-In is the National Incident Response Centre for major computer security incidents in its constituency i.e. Indian cyber community.
- CERT-IN is operational since 2004
- CERT-In’s primary role is to raise security awareness among Indian cyber community and to provide technical assistance and advise them to help them recover from computer security incidents. It functions under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
- Objectives of CERT-In
 - Preventing cyber-attacks against the country’s cyber space.
 - Responding to cyber-attacks and minimizing damage and recovery time.
 - Reducing ‘national vulnerability to cyber-attacks.
 - Enhancing security awareness among common citizens.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Pyrofuse

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III –Science & Technology

In News

- Cutting off power in an accident is key in Electric Vehicles to prevent car occupants, rescuers from suffering electric shock
- Pyrofuse are small devices that “blow out” whole sections of the cable connection to the high-voltage battery by means of **miniature explosive charges**, thus quickly and effectively shutting off the power circulation
- For example, if the airbag sensor detects an impact, the tiny devices — measuring no more than 10 mm by 10 mm and weighing a few grams — trigger the pyrofuse.
- This sets off little explosions that drive a wedge into the high-voltage cable between the battery unit and the power electronics, disconnecting the two.
- By thus cutting off the flow of power, the risk of electric shock or fire is fully eliminated.

PHOSPHORESCENCE

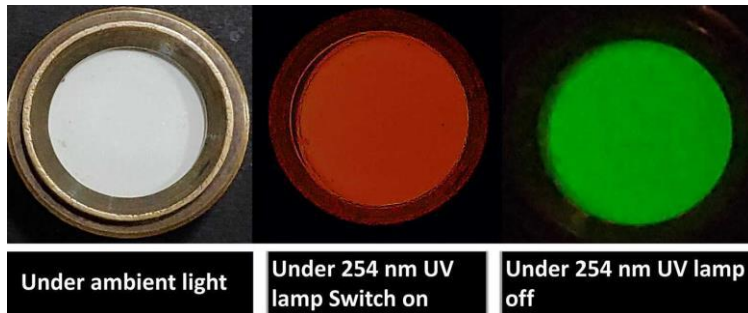
Part of: GS Prelims and Mains GS-III – Science & Technology

In News

- A novel security ink that emits intense red colour when exposed to 254 nm wavelength UV and emits green colour soon after the UV source is turned off has been synthesised by a team of researchers from the Delhi-based National Physical Laboratory (CSIR-NPL).
- The emission of red is due to fluorescence while green is due to phosphorescence phenomenon.
- This is the first report of an ink that contains two pigments that emit different colours at very different wavelengths when exposed to UV light of a particular wavelength
- The ink has the potential to be used as a security feature on currency notes and passports.

Phosphorescence

- It is a type of photoluminescence related to fluorescence. Unlike fluorescence, a phosphorescent material **does not immediately re-emit the radiation it absorbs**.
- In certain materials, absorbed radiation is re-emitted at a lower intensity for up to several hours after the original excitation.
- Everyday examples of phosphorescent materials are the glow-in-the-dark toys that glow after being charged with a bright light such as in any normal reading or room light



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2019 NOBEL PRIZE FOR PHYSICS

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-III- Science & Technology

In News

- Three scientists, James Peebles, Michel Mayor and Didier Queloz have won the Nobel Prize 2019 for Physics for their contribution to the understanding of the evolution of the universe and earth's place in the cosmos.

Cosmic Microwave Background (CMB):

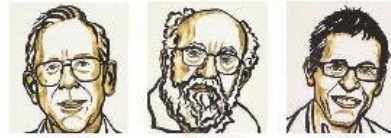
- Canadian-American cosmologist James Peebles, 84, won one-half of the Prize for his theoretical work helping us understand how the universe evolved after the Big Bang.
- His work is focused largely on Cosmic Microwave Background (CMB) radiation, which is electromagnetic radiation left over from the early universe once it had cooled sufficiently following the Big Bang.

Exoplanet:

- The other half went to Swiss astronomers Michel Mayor, 77, and Didier Queloz, 53, for their discovery of an exoplanet that challenged preconceived ideas about planets.
- Using a spectrograph, ELODIE, they predicted the planet by observing the “Doppler effect” — when the star wobbles as an effect of a planet’s gravity on its observed light.
- Today, exoplanets are being discovered very frequently — over 4,000 are known — which is remarkable progress from three decades ago, when not even one exoplanet was known.

The unknown & an exoplanet

Canadian-American cosmologist James Peebles and Swiss scientists Michel Mayor and Didier Queloz won the 2019 Nobel Prize for Physics for revealing the wonder of the evolution of the universe and discovering exoplanets

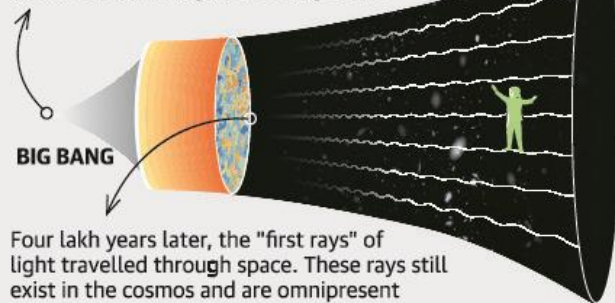


James Peebles

Michel Mayor

Didier Queloz

The universe was in a hot and dense state, and 14 billion years ago there was a "big bang" and then it started expanding and cooling down



Four lakh years later, the "first rays" of light travelled through space. These rays still exist in the cosmos and are omnipresent

■ **Peebles** interpreted the "first rays" and showed that in the universe just 5% is known matter. The rest is unknown dark matter & dark energy. His insights turned cosmology from speculation to science sparking further research

■ The dark matter is the force which holds together galaxies which otherwise may get torn apart. The dark energy helps the universe's increasingly rapid and constant expansion. Thus, one pulls and the other pushes

■ **Mayor and Queloz** discovered "51 Pegasi b" – first-ever find of an exoplanet orbiting a solar-type star

■ Surprisingly, the planet was as big as Jupiter (1,300 times Earth's volume) but was very close to its star (takes just 4 days to orbit)

■ Big planets were thought to be created far from their stars. How did "51 Pegasi b" get so close? This question led to theories that described how large gas balls formed at the edges of their solar systems, then spiralled inward

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2019 NOBEL PRIZE FOR CHEMISTRY

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-III- Science & Technology

In News

- Three scientists were awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry for their contributions to the **development of lithium-ion batteries**
- These batteries have reshaped energy storage and transformed cars, mobile phones and many other devices in an increasingly portable and electronic world.
- The prize went to **John B Goodenough** of the University of Texas; **M Stanley Whittingham** of the State University of New York at Binghamton; and **Akira Yoshino** of Meijo University in Japan.
- At 97, Mr. Goodenough is the oldest Nobel winner.
- The Nobel committee said the lithium-ion battery has its roots in the oil crisis in the 1970s, when Whittingham was working to develop methods aimed at leading to fossil fuel-free energy technologies.

Do You Know

- Prize founder Alfred Nobel, a Swedish industrialist who invented dynamite, decided the physics, chemistry, medicine and literature prizes should be awarded in Stockholm, and the peace prize in Oslo.

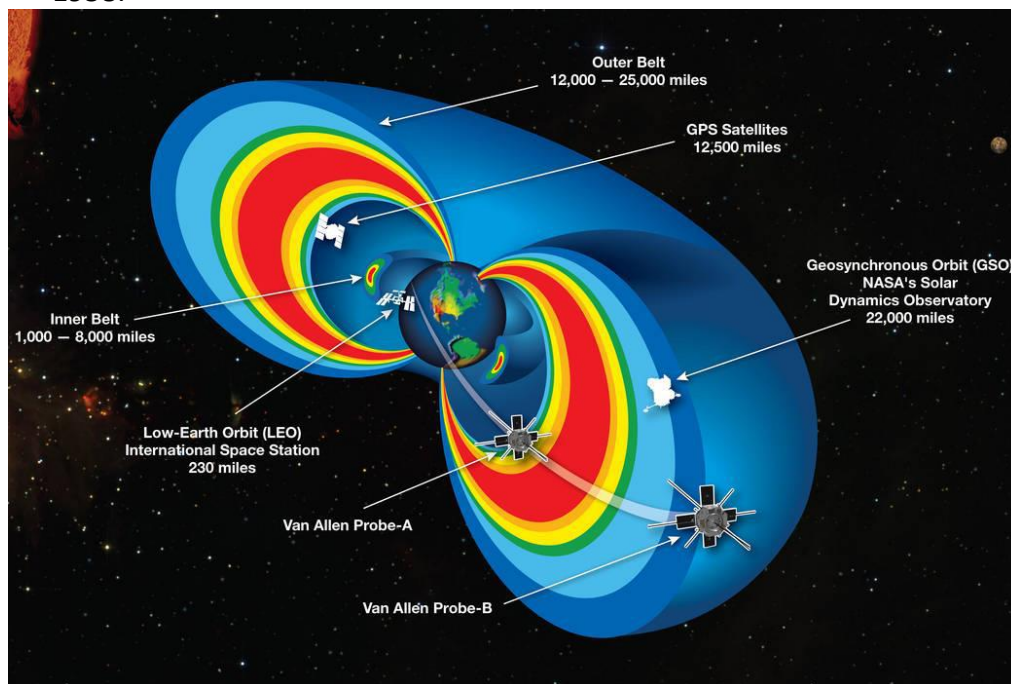
- The prizes come with a 9-million kronor (\$918,000) cash award, a gold medal and a diploma that are conferred on December 10 — the anniversary of Nobel's death in 1896 — in Stockholm and in Oslo, Norway.

Van Allen Probes mission

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III –Science & Technology

In News

- NASA recently decommissioned its 7-year-old Van Allen Probes mission.
- It comprised of two satellites that were placed in Van Allen belts which studied how these radiation rings acquire and lose electromagnetic particles
- Understanding space weather is important as it interferes with our on-ground power grids, navigation communications satellites in orbit and health of astronauts
- Both the satellites will exist in the orbit for approximately 15 years during which they are going to slowly come towards the atmosphere and get destroyed in the orbit.
- Van Allen radiation belts are giant swaths of magnetically trapped, highly energetic charged particles that surround earth.
- James Van Allen, a physicist at the University of Iowa, discovered these radiation belts in 1958.



https://www.nasa.gov/sites/default/files/styles/full_width_feature/public/images/730056main_20130228-radiationbelts-orig_full.jpg

IndiGen initiative

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III –Science & Technology

In News

- The **IndiGen initiative** was undertaken by **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)** in April 2019, which was implemented by the CSIR-Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (IGIB), Delhi and CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), Hyderabad.
- CSIR has conducted Whole Genome Sequencing of 1,008 Indians from different populations across the country under the IndiGen Genome project.
- This has enabled benchmarking the scalability of genome sequencing and computational analysis at population scale in a defined timeline. The ability to decode the genetic blueprint of humans through whole genome sequencing will be a major driver for biomedical science.
- The aim of the exercise was twofold: to test if it's possible to rapidly and reliably scan several genomes and advise people on health risks that are manifest in their gene and to understand the variation and frequency of certain genes that are known to be linked to disease.
- The outcomes of the IndiGen will have applications in a number of areas including predictive and preventive medicine with faster and efficient diagnosis of rare genetic diseases.

About Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)

- It is an **autonomous body** and the largest research and development (R&D) organisation in India – running 37 laboratories and 39 field stations or extension centres.
- Although it is mainly funded by the Ministry of Science and Technology, it operates as an autonomous body registered under the **Registration of Societies Act, 1860**.
- The research and development activities of CSIR includes aerospace engineering, Structural engineering, ocean sciences, Life sciences, metallurgy, chemicals, mining, food, petroleum, leather, and environment.

SYCAMORE

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III – Science & Technology

In News

- Google announced that its quantum computer – Sycamore- has achieved a breakthrough called quantum supremacy in computing.

what is quantum supremacy?

- It describes the point where quantum computers can do things that classical computers cannot.
- In Google's case, researchers at the University of California, Santa Barbara have claimed to have developed a processor that took 200 seconds to do a calculation that would have taken a classical computer 10,000 years.

what is a quantum computer?

- Traditional computers work on the basis of the laws of classical physics, specifically by utilising the flow of electricity. A quantum computer, on the other hand, seeks to exploit the laws that govern the behaviour of atoms and subatomic particles.
- A classical computer processes information. Bits of information are stored as either 0 or 1. Every string of such digits (bitstrings) represents a unique character or instruction; for example, 01100001 represents the lowercase "a".
- In a quantum computer, information is stored in quantum bits, or qubits. And a qubit can be both 0 and 1 at the same time.
- Unlike classical physics, in which an object can exist in one place at one time, quantum physics looks at the probabilities of an object being at different points. Existence in multiple states is called superposition, and the relationships among these states is called entanglement.

[Submarine propulsion system test a success](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III- Science & Technology

In News

- The indigenous **Air Independent Propulsion (AIP)** system to enhance the endurance of conventional submarines being developed by DRDO reached a milestone with the successful operation of a land-based prototype.
- An AIP module enables conventional submarines to remain submerged for longer duration. Fuel cell-based AIP has merits in performance compared to other technologies
- All Scorpene submarines of the Navy are planned to be equipped with an AIP module in due course

Scorpene-class submarines

- These are a class of diesel-electric attack submarines jointly developed by the French Direction des Constructions Navales (DCN) and the Spanish company Navantia, and now by Naval Group.
- It features diesel propulsion and an additional air-independent propulsion (AIP).

DISASTER MANAGEMENT

[GEMINI system to warn fishermen of danger](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-III- Disaster Management

In News

- To avoid communication blackouts during disasters like cyclones, slew of government departments, research agencies and private companies have developed GEMINI, a **portable receiver** linked to ISRO satellites, that is “fail-proof” and warn fishermen of danger.
- GEMINI works on GAGAN and is an India-made global positioning system. It relies on the positioning system of ISRO’s GSAT satellites.
- The **Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS)**, a Hyderabad institute collaborated with Accord, a private company, to develop a box-shaped receiver that has an antenna and in-built battery that can last three to four days.
- When GEMINI is connected to an app, it also **lets fishermen know the probability of fish catch** in the surrounding seas.
- At ₹9,000 a device, it’s relatively expensive but attempts are on to subsidise it by as much as 90%.

About GAGAN

- GPS Aided GEO Augmented Navigation (GAGAN), developed by **ISRO and Airports Authority of India(AAI)** is a regional Satellite Based Augmentation System (SBAS).
- The GAGAN's goal is to provide a navigation system to assist aircraft in accurate landing over the Indian airspace and in the adjoining area and applicable to safety-to-life civil operations.
- GAGAN is inter-operable with other international SBAS systems.
- GAGAN covers the area from Africa to Australia and has expansion capability for seamless navigation services across the region.
- GAGAN makes airline operations more efficient and effective, increase air safety, and fuel efficiency.

[Flood risk](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III –Disaster Management

In News

- New study has shown that in India, **36 million people would face annual flooding by 2050** and 44 million by 2100 if emissions continue to rise unabated.
- Nearly 21 million are expected to be living below the High Tide Line, the boundary that marks the farthest to which the sea reaches into the land at high tide.

- Globally nearly 110 million people live on land below the current high tide lines and 250 million on land below annual flood levels
- Current climate studies say that climate change has caused global mean sea level to rise by 11-16 cm in the 20th century and is expected to by as much as 2 m by the end of this century.
- As the tideline rises higher than the ground people call home, nations will increasingly confront questions about whether, how much, and how long coastal defences can protect them

The tidal threat

A new study suggests that in India, as of today, nearly 17 mn people live on land below the high tide lines and 31 mn on land below annual flood levels. The numbers are a sharp increase from previous estimates. Table lists new estimates and change from old estimations of population under threat

Population in areas prone to once-a-year-on-average coastal flooding (mn)			Population in areas below high tide line (mn)		
Country	New estimates	Change	Country	New estimates	Change
China	81	56	China	23	17.5
India	31	27	Vietnam	19	14.5
Vietnam	28	20.5	India	17	14.9
Bangladesh	28	25	Bangladesh	9.3	8.2
Indonesia	20	15.7	Indonesia	8.9	7.4
Thailand	8	7.54	Philippines	4.3	3.7
Philippines	5.4	4.52	Netherlands	4.1	0.1
Netherlands	4.9	-1.2	Egypt	3.9	3.9
Japan	4.1	0.1	Japan	3.2	-0.2
World	250	185	World	110	82

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DEFENCE/INTERNAL SECURITY/SECURITY

Information Fusion Centre-Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III – Security

In News

- The **Navy's** IFC-IOR is a single point centre linking all coastal radar chain networks along the 7500km Indian coastline and in some neighbouring countries
- The FC-IOR was inaugurated in **December 2018 at Gurugram** and has now started functioning as an information sharing hub of maritime data and “cuing incident responses” to maritime security situations through a collaborative approach
- The IFC tracks and **monitors 75,000-1.5 lakh shipping vessels in real time** around the clock
- The IFC actively interacts with maritime community and has already built linkages with 18 countries and 15 multinational and maritime security centres
- India has asked neighbours to draw upon it and consider it as their own facility rather than duplicating it. This statement is important in the context of reports that Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are considering setting up similar fusion centres.

India formally received the first Rafale fighter jet

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III – Security

In News

- The Dassault Rafale is a French twin-engine, canard delta wing, **multirole fighter** aircraft designed and built by **Dassault Aviation of France**
- Equipped with a wide range of weapons, the Rafale is intended to perform in-depth strike, anti-ship strike and nuclear deterrence missions
- In September 2016, India and France signed a €7.87 billion Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) for 36 Rafale multi-role fighter jets in fly-away condition following the surprise announcement by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in April 2015.
- The first batch of the jets will arrive in India only in May 2020. By February 2021, India will receive 18 Rafale jets and by April 2022, India will get all the 36 Rafale.

Do You Know?

- Rafale has been selected for purchase by the Indian Air Force, the Egyptian Air Force, and the Qatar Air Force.
- The Rafale has been used in combat over Afghanistan, Libya, Mali, Iraq and Syria.

[Project Beehive](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and Mains GS-III – Security

In News

- The Army's Corps of Electronics and Mechanical Engineers (EME) has launched a major initiative under Project Beehive for **automation of the entire Corps**
- The objective is to **enable real-time monitoring and response of its 2,000 workshops** across the country.
- The Army is collaborating with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology on this and EME officers are part of the product development
- Each of them will be able to track their equipment and readiness in realtime. On a click, all critical readiness states will be displayed. The equipment, how much mileage was done, when is the next service due and so on. It allows **easy forecast of requirements**
- The Army had earlier automated its workshops under WASP (Workshop Honey bees) which is now being upgraded to be on same level with Beehive.

[Annual Crime in India Report 2017](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III–Security

In News

- After a delay of two years the annual Crime in India Report 2017 was published by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)
- Some of the findings of the report are:
- Delhi had the highest crime rate in the country with 1050 crimes committed per one lakh of the population as listed under the Indian Penal Code
- **Crime against women:**
 - 3,59,849 cases of crime against women were reported in the country in 2017 **an increase of 6%** with respect to 2016 figures
 - Uttar Pradesh topped the list with 56,011 cases followed by Maharashtra with 31,979 cases and West Bengal 30,002
 - Majority of cases under crimes against women were registered under 'Cruelty by Husband or his Relatives' (27.9%) followed by 'Assault on Women with Intent to Outrage her Modesty' (21.7%), 'Kidnapping & Abduction of Women' (20.5%) and 'Rape' (7.0%)
- **Rioting:** 58,880 incidents of rioting were reported, of which the maximum incidents were reported from Bihar - 11,698, followed by Uttar Pradesh - 8,990 and Maharashtra - 7,743
 - Of the total riots reported, communal and sectarian riots accounted for 723 and 183 incidents respectively. There were 805 riots due to caste conflict and 1909 riots occurred due to political reasons,
- **SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Act:** The incidents registered under this act saw an increase from 5,082 in 2016 to 5,775 in 2017.

- Incidents of crime related to Scheduled Tribes dipped from 844 in 2016 to 720 in 2017
- **Kidnapping/Abduction:** A total of 95,893 cases of kidnapping and abduction were registered during 2017, showing an increase of 9.0% over 2016 (88,008 cases).
- The NCRB for the **first time collected data on circulation of “false/fake news and rumours.”** Under the category, maximum incidents were reported from Madhya Pradesh (138), Uttar Pradesh (32) and Kerala (18).

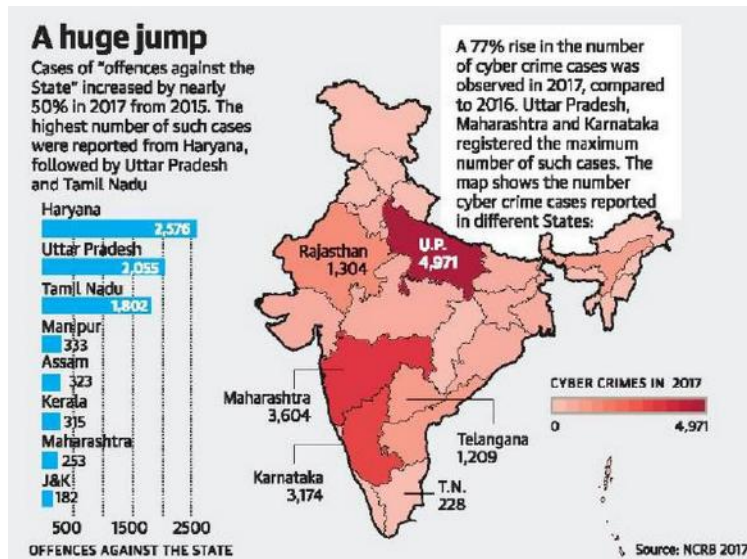
About NCRB

- NCRB was set-up in 1986 to function as a **repository of information on crime and criminals** so as to assist the investigators in linking crime to the perpetrators, based on the recommendations of the National Police Commission (1977-1981)
- It was set up by merging the Directorate of Coordination and Police Computer (DCPC), Inter State Criminals Data Branch of CBI, Central Finger Print Bureau of CBI, and Statistical Branch of BPR&D.
- NCRB was entrusted with the responsibility for monitoring, coordinating and implementing the **Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems (CCTNS)** project in the year 2009. The project connects 15000+ police stations and 6000 higher offices of police in the country.
- In 2017, NCRB launched **National Digital Police Portal-** It allows search for a criminal / suspect on the CCTNS database apart from providing various services to citizens like filing of complaints online and seeking antecedent verification of tenants, domestic helps, drivers

[Crime in India report](#)

Context

- The 2017 **Crime in India report**, released by the **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)**,
- 30% jump in cases recorded as “offences against the State
- For the first time, the NCRB has introduced categories of cyber crimes against women and children.
- The NCRB has also recorded cases of disproportionate assets against public servants besides introducing new crime heads such as abetment, criminal intimidation, simple hurt, credit/debit card and online frauds, Internet crimes through online gaming and kidnapping for begging among others.



Img:https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/qkx7fd/article29771115.ece/ALTERNATES/FREE_960/TH23NCRB-datacol

Facts:

Crime against SC /ST

- More than half of all offences registered under The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act where victims were Dalits, were related to insult and humiliation heaped on them.(Karnataka, UP and Bihar)
- The highest rates of crimes against Dalits (number of incidents per 1,00,000 population) were in Madhya Pradesh (52), Bihar (41), and Rajasthan (35).

Corruption:

- A new trend in cases of corruption: "traps" involving lower-level government officials are increasing at the cost of criminal misconduct involving senior officials. (*This could mean either reduced corruption at higher levels, or increased enthusiasm among law enforcement to go after small offenders*)
- Registration of corruption cases has fallen by over 20% since 2015. "Trap" cases have spiked.
- "**Trap**" cases, in which bribery is caught red-handed, generally involve lower-level officials who accept gratification in cash. **Criminal misconduct** cases generally involve higher officials; pecuniary gains in these case are rarely made in cash.

Cyber crime:

- The number of cyber crimes increased dramatically in 2017 as compared to 2016,
- Nearly every fifth cyber crime in 2017 was committed against a woman.
- More than half the incidents of cyber crime in 2017 were motivated by fraud

- The number of cyber crimes committed per 1,00,000 population — in 2017 was 1.7, the report shows.
- The most cyber crimes per 1,00,000 population were committed in Karnataka 5% in 2017; Telangana was next, with a rate of 3.3%, followed by Maharashtra (3) and Uttar Pradesh (2.2%)
- UP, the most populous state, registered the largest number of cyber crimes
- The cyber crimes against women were related to cyber blackmail or threats, cyber pornography or hosting or publishing obscene sexual materials, cyber stalking or cyber bullying of women, defamation, or morphing and indecent representation of women, etc

Crime against women and children:

- In the case of women and children, the NCRB has this time recorded data for “murder with rape”.
- In 2017, as many as 33,885 women were reported to have been raped across the country. Of these, 227 were murdered after the rape.
- As many as 28,152 children were raped with cases registered under IPC and the POCSO Act. Of these, 151 were killed after being raped.
- Majority of juveniles in conflict with law apprehended under IPC and SLL crimes were in the age group of 16 years to 18 years.



Img: <https://indiatribune.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Crime.jpg>

Justice:

- Police delayed charge sheets in 40% of cases.

- In certain cases such as rioting, which includes communal riots, police delayed filing of chargesheets in 60% of the cases(90 days as per law).
- There are more than 3 lakh cases pending investigations for more than one year.
- 40% of cases in fast-track courts have taken more than three years to finish the trial
- 3,384 cases committed to fast-track courts, the trial was finished in more than 10 years.
- 2,71,779 cases were pending trial at the end of 2017.(In total)

Criticism:

- The report omits data on mob lynchings, khap killings, murder by influential people and killings for religious reasons.
- Data on farmer suicides after 2015 not published.

Do you know?

- The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), is an Indian government agency responsible for collecting and analysing crime data as defined by the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Special and Local Laws (SLL).
- Part of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Government of India.
- It was set up based on the recommendation of the Task force,1985 and National Police Commission,1977 by merging the Directorate of Coordination and Police Computer (DCPC), Inter State Criminals Data Branch of CBI and Central Finger Print Bureau of CBI

Conclusion:

- The NCRB data on crime hide significant variances in case registration of serious crimes such as rapes and violence against women across States, which make it difficult to draw State-wise comparisons.

Connecting the dots:

- The 2017 report shows that the States in the northeast and others in the rest of the country with a significant tribal population (Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Odisha) have relatively higher murder rates and this is a cause of worry. Analyse

DOXXING

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III –Issues related to Cyber

In News

- A court in Hong Kong has issued a temporary order, banning the practice of ‘doxxing’

- A common dictionary definition of doxxing (also spelt as ‘doxing’) is to **publicly identify or publish private information about someone**, especially with the intention of punishing or taking revenge.
- The intention was to identify and stigmatise, and attempt to force a change in the behaviour of the targeted individual through these intimidatory tactics.
- While it was employed widely against members of the neo-Nazi white supremacist crowd who seemed open and bold about their racism, its potential for use — and misuse — by a range of people and groups was apparent.
- In Hong Kong, **protesters have been releasing information about police officers** and their families, thereby opening them up to targeted violence or harassment and abuse, either physically or online.
- Doxxing has emerged as one of the major tactics employed by **pro-democracy protesters** who have been carrying out relentless, sometimes violent, demonstrations that the administration has found impossible to suppress for over four months now.

[Manipur, Arunachal wants to be kept out of Naga peace deal](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II – Federalism

In News

- Arunachal Pradesh has echoed Manipur in demanding to be kept out of any “territorial changes” that might be incorporated in the settlement of the Naga political problem.
- The Central government has been discussing with National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN-IM) as well as a rival conglomerate named Naga National Political Groups for the “final solution” on the peace accord by October 31
- NSCN-IM’s vision of Nagalim or Greater Nagaland would entail redrawing of boundaries to bring all Naga-inhabited areas in the Northeast under one administrative umbrella.
- The NSCN-IM’s map of Nagalim spreads over 1,03,473 sq km beyond the 16,527 sq km area of Nagaland. It includes much of eastern Arunachal.
- The outfit, as well as rival factions, claim these areas, primarily Changlang, Longding and Tirap districts are dominated by Nagas.

Naga Framework Agreement, 2015

- On Aug 3, 2015, latest agreement was signed with NSCN (Isak-Muivah) and other Naga armed groups such as NSCN (Khole-Kitovi) with the Union government. (however, NSCN (Khaplang) was excluded)
- Idea of a **pan-Naga Hoho** (a proposed statutory body as part of the Framework Agreement) that will enjoy independent executive and budgetary powers to look after the welfare of Naga inhabited areas outside Nagaland was mooted to bring long lasting solution to Naga peace process

- The biggest breakthrough is that the NSCN (I-M), and other Naga armed groups such as NSCN (Khole-Kitovi) have agreed to give up violence and resolve all issues peacefully.

For background on Naga issue refer - <https://iasbaba.com/2016/07/iasbabas-daily-current-affairs-6th-july-2016/>

NAGA Peace talks

Context:

- The deadline set by the Centre for wrapping up the Naga peace talks is on October 31
- The Centre's interlocutor and now Nagaland's Governor, **R N Ravi**, has stressed some key issues remain unresolved with the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (Isak-Muivah), or NSCN(I-M).



Img:

http://images.newindianexpress.com/uploads/user/imagelibrary/2018/8/3/w900X450/Nagaland_map.jpg

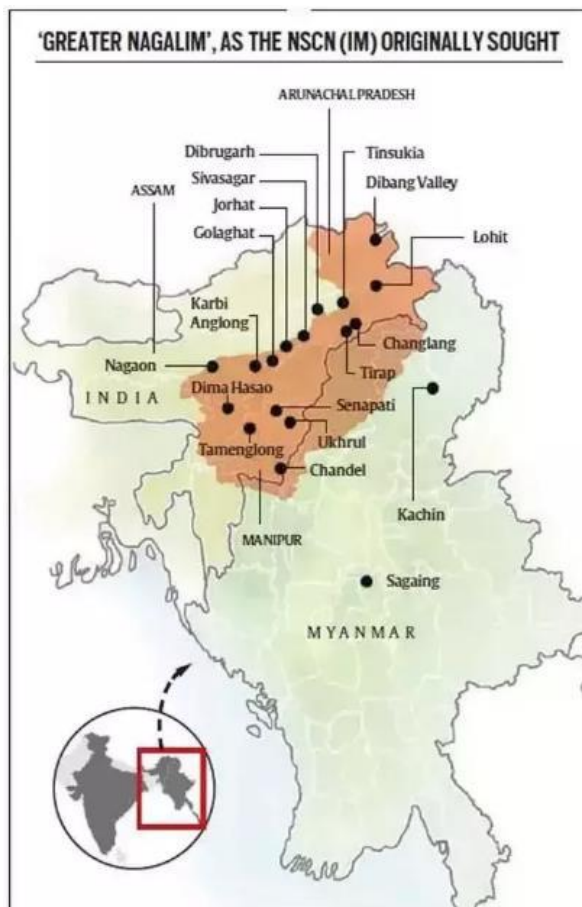
Background:

- The ethnic conflict in Nagaland, is an ongoing conflict fought between the ethnic Nagas and the governments of India and Myanmar.
- Nagaland inhabited by the Nagas is located at the tri-junction border of India on the West and South, north and Myanmar on the East.
- "National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Khaplang)", which wants an independent "greater Nagaland" to include territory now in Myanmar, based on ethnicity; and the "Naga National Council (Adino)".
- The question of "Naga Sovereignty" was put to plebiscite on 16 May 1951.

- Historian Benjamin Zachariah, "It was in the north-east of India that the Nehruvian vision took on its most brutal and violent forms."
- The Indian Government conceded a separate Naga state within the Indian Union in 1960 and the state was inaugurated in 1963.

Rebel groups have operated in Nagaland :

- Naga National Council under Angami Zapu Phizo.
- Naga National Council (Adino) – NNC (Adino): led by the daughter of Naga rebel A.Z. Phizo.
- National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Isak-Muivah): want to establish a 'Greater Nagaland' ('Nagalim' or the People's Republic of Nagaland) based on Mao Tse Tung's model.
- National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Khaplang): formed goal is to establish a 'greater Nagaland' based on ethnicity, comprising the Naga-dominated areas within India, and contiguous areas in Myanmar.



Img: <https://qph.fs.quoracdn.net/main-qimg-f72266ce1f485983cd489d1072b5b2e0.webp>

Current status:

- In 2015, the Centre signed a framework agreement with the NSCN(I-M). Prime Minister Narendra Modi described this as a “historic agreement” towards settling the “oldest insurgency” in India.
- This set the stage for the ongoing peace talks. In 2017, six other Naga armed outfits under the banner of the Naga National Political Groups (NNPGs) joined the talks.
- Currently, Muivah remains the senior-most Naga rebel leader. Isak died in 2016. In the NSCN(-K), its leader Khaplang died in 2018

Framework agreement:

- The government has not yet spelt out the details in public.
- Following the agreement, the government had said “The Government of India recognised the unique history, culture and position of the Nagas and their sentiments and aspirations. The NSCN understood and appreciated the Indian political system and governance.”

Current status 2018:

- The accord being finalised “does not change the boundary of states;
- Provides autonomous Naga territorial councils for Arunachal and Manipur;
- A common cultural body for Nagas across states;
- Specific institutions for state’s development, integration, rehabilitation of non-state Naga militia
- The removal of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act”.

Other issues:

- The government and the NSCN(I-M) have failed to agree on issues relating to a separate Naga flag and a constitution.
- NSCN(I-M) has said it will not budge from the demand for the flag and the constitution — and that it is looking for a lasting solution.

Connecting the dots:

- Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Manipur are wary of the NSCN-IM’s concept of Nagalim or Greater Nagaland that could lead to a redrawing of their boundaries. Analyse

PERSON IN NEWS

Person in news	Description
1. 2019 NOBEL PRIZE IN MEDICINE	<p>In News</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 2019 Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine has been awarded to scientists William G Kaelin, Jr, Peter J Ratcliffe and Gregg L Semenza. They received the award jointly for their discoveries of "how cells sense and adapt to oxygen availability". They established the basis for our understanding of how oxygen levels affect cellular metabolism and physiological function. Their research has paved the way for promising new strategies to fight anaemia, cancer and many other diseases. It is the 110th prize in the category that has been awarded since 1901.
2. 2019 NOBEL PRIZE FOR PHYSICS	<p>In News</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three scientists, James Peebles, Michel Mayor and Didier Queloz have won the Nobel Prize 2019 for Physics for their contribution to the understanding of the evolution of the universe and earth's place in the cosmos.
3. 2019 NOBEL PRIZE FOR CHEMISTRY	<p>In News</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three scientists were awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry for their contributions to the development of lithium-ion batteries These batteries have reshaped energy storage and transformed cars, mobile phones and many other devices in an increasingly portable and electronic world. The prize went to John B Goodenough of the University of Texas; M Stanley Whittingham of the State University of New York at Binghamton; and Akira Yoshino of Meijo University in Japan. At 97, Mr. Goodenough is the oldest Nobel winner. The Nobel committee said the lithium-ion battery has its roots in the oil crisis in the 1970s, when Whittingham was working to develop methods aimed at leading to fossil fuel-free energy technologies. <p>Do You Know</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prize founder Alfred Nobel, a Swedish industrialist who invented dynamite, decided the physics, chemistry, medicine and literature prizes should be awarded in Stockholm, and the peace prize in Oslo. The prizes come with a 9-million kronor (\$918,000) cash award, a gold medal and a diploma that are conferred on December 10 — the anniversary of Nobel's death in 1896 — in Stockholm and in

4. NOBEL PRIZE IN LITERATURE	<p style="text-align: center;">Oslo, Norway.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Austria's Peter Handke won the 2019 Nobel Prize for Literature, and the postponed 2018 award went to Polish author Olga Tokarczuk. • Austria's Peter Handke won the 2019 prize for "for an influential work that with linguistic ingenuity has explored the periphery and the specificity of human experience". • Polish author Olga Tokarczuk won the 2018 prize – delayed by one year after a sexual assault scandal rocked the award-giving Academy – for "a narrative imagination that with encyclopaedic passion represents the crossing of boundaries as a form of life." • Olga Tokarczuk, the 15th woman to win the Nobel Literature Prize, also won the International Booker Prize in 2018. • The Nobel Prize in Literature is a Swedish literature prize that is awarded annually, since 1901. • It is awarded to an author from any country who has produced "in the field of literature the most outstanding work in an ideal direction".
5. NOBEL PEACE PRIZE	<p>In News</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali was awarded the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize for "his important work to promote reconciliation, solidarity and social justice" • When Abiy became Prime Minister in 2018, Ethiopia had been locked in conflict with Eritrea for 20 years. In July that year, he stepped across the border in Eritrea and in cooperation with Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki, worked out the principles of a peace agreement. • Ethiopia is landlocked country, while Eritrea has a sea coast which connects the Middle East. • Through the years of conflict, Ethiopia had depended heavily on Djibouti for access to the Gulf of Aden and onward to the Arabian Sea. • The peace deal opened up Eritrean ports for Ethiopian use. • In domestic achievements, he lifted Emergency, granted amnesty to thousands of political prisoners, discontinued media censorship, dismissed leaders suspected of corruption, and increased the influence of women in political and community life. <p>Do you know?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethiopia is the most populous landlocked country in the world and the second-most populous nation on the African continent. • Its capital and largest city is Addis Ababa, which serves as the headquarters of the African Union and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.

MISCELLANEOUS

In News	Description
1. 'Einstein Challenge'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Albert Einstein's famous words on Gandhi: "Generations to come will scarce believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth" • PM announced Einstein Challenge to ensure the ideals of Gandhi are remembered by future generations • In this he invited thinkers, entrepreneurs and tech leaders to take the lead to spread Gandhi's ideas through innovation.
2. Community fridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To mark Gandhi Jayanti, South Western Railway in association with Feeding India NGO, installed a community fridge at Bangalore Railway Station • Anyone can keep excess food in the fridge and people in need of it can take it. • The move will benefit migrant labourers, daily wage workers, and poor people.
3. Bioswale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These are vegetated channels to manage rainwater, recommended as long-term sustainable solution for urban floods (Patna Floods) • They are long, channeled depression or trench that receives rainwater runoff and has vegetation (such as grasses, flowering herbs, and shrubs) and organic matter (such as mulch) to slow water infiltration and filter out pollutants • Bioswales are the most effective type of green infrastructure facility in slowing runoff velocity and cleansing water while recharging the underlying groundwater table.
4. Blood4Pet - mobile app that brings together canine blood donors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order to bridge the gap between canine-blood demand & supply, Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (Tanuvas) has launched a mobile app — Blood4Pet — to bring 'pet-parents' together across the country. • There's also a provision in the app for calculating the amount of blood required. A dog can safely donate blood once in three weeks. • The app will help both pet owners and veterinarians to find suitable donors for dogs and thus help save lives of dogs
5. Repatriation Mizoram Bru refugees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 30,000 Bru, also known as Reang, refugees are now housed in camps in north Tripura, since they fled ethnic violence in Mizoram in September 1997. • Initiatives to repatriate the Mizoram Bru refugees back to their homes in Mizoram have failed as the refugee leaders refused to return citing mainly security reasons in their home State.

6. ChangthangPrahar (assault)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is an all arms integrated exercise in a “super high altitude” area near Chushul in eastern Ladakh, featuring tanks, artillery guns, drones, helicopters and troops, as well as para-drops.• The exercise encompassed employment of mechanised forces with force multipliers integrating high technology platforms• Changthang is a plateau in western and northern Tibet that extends into SoutheasternLadakh• Another major combat exercise called “Him Vijay” will be held by the Army in Arunachal Pradesh during October second week, which will see the force testing its new integrated battle groups in mountain warfare in conjunction with the IAF
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(TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE)**Model questions: (Answers are provided at the end)**

Q.1) Index of Industrial Production is released by which body/ministry?

- Central Statistical Organisation
- Ministry of Commerce and Industry
- NITI Aayog
- None of the above

- NGO Pratham
- NITI Aayog
- Union Ministry of Human Resource Development
- Both b and c

Q.2) Consider the following statements about Palaeochannel

- It is a remnant of an inactive river or stream channel that has been filled or buried by younger sediment.
- Their presence can be helpful in identifying areas suitable for groundwater recharge

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

Q.3) Consider the following statements

- Article 161 deals with power of Governor to grant pardons, etc, and to suspend, remit or commute sentences in certain cases
- Commutation of sentence means reducing the period of sentence without changing its character

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

Q.4) School Education Quality Index (SEQI) is developed by which of the following body/bodies?

Q.5) Subhash Kashinath Mahajan Case often seen in news dealt with which of the following area?

- Doctrine of Basic structure
- Right to Privacy
- Judicial Independence
- SC/ST atrocities law

Q.6) Consider the following statements about Tejas Express between Delhi and Lucknow

- This is the first train which is not operated directly by the Railways
- Passengers in this train can avail compensation for delays in train operations

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

Q.7) Consider the following statements about Parichay(Identity)

- It is legal aid clinic launched by Government of Assam and Government of India
- It is envisaged to function as a clearing house of litigation and research assistance for lawyers filing appeals against exclusion from the NRC

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) Askot Wildlife Sanctuary is present in which state of India?

- a. Uttar Pradesh
- b. Himachal Pradesh
- c. Uttarakhand
- d. Arunachal Pradesh

Q.9) Lichens can be used as an indicator for which of the following?

- 1. Air and Water Pollution
- 2. Presence of radioactive metals
- 3. Presence of heavy metals

Select the correct answer from the codes given below.

- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 2 and 3 only
- c. 1 and 3 only
- d. 1,2 and 3

Q.10) Coupled Forecast Model often seen in news dealt with which of the following area?

- a. Flood prediction and Riverbed management
- b. Cyber threat predictions
- c. Smart Traffic management
- d. Weather predictions

Q.11) Consider the following statements

- 1. According to UNICEF report, there is a positive impact, worth Rs 20 lakh crore, on the Indian economy due to the Swachh Bharat campaign
- 2. A village is declared Open Defecation Free when there are no visible faeces in the village, and every household as well as public/community institution uses safe technology options for faecal disposal.

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) Consider the following statements about Vayoshreshtha Samman

- 1. These are annual awards instituted by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
- 2. It is awarded for eminent senior citizens and Institutions involved in rendering distinguished services for the cause of elderly persons.
- 3. It is conferred by the President of India on the 1st October i.e. on the occasion of International Day of Older Persons

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.13) Bioswales often seen in news is related to which of the following area?

- a. Management of Oil spills
- b. Decomposition of Plastics
- c. Management of rainwater
- d. None of the above.

Q.14) NH 766 often seen in news passes through which of the following States of India?

- a. Assam and Arunachal Pradesh
- b. Gujarat and Maharashtra
- c. Karnataka and Kerala
- d. None of the above

Q.15) Consider the following statements Asian Development Bank (ADB)

- 1. Japan and India hold the largest proportion of shares ADB
- 2. It provides financing to both Sovereign Nations and private companies.

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) Consider the following statements about Nilgiris

1. The Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve was the first biosphere reserve in India established in the year 1986
2. Its main vegetation of the region is montane grasslands and shrub lands interspersed with shola forests

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.17) PRAKASH PORTAL often seen in news is related to which of the following area?

- a. Management of Waste
- b. Promotion of energy efficient LED lights
- c. Coal supply to Power plants
- d. None of the above.

Q.18) Changthang Prahar often seen in news is related to which of the following area?

- a. India-China joint military exercise
- b. India-Mongolia joint army exercise
- c. India's integrated military exercise in Eastern Ladakh
- d. None of the above

Q.19) Consider the following statements Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)

1. The MPC determines the policy interest rate required to achieve the inflation target
2. It consists of 5 members out of which three are from RBI and the remaining two are nominated by the Central Government

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.20) Consider the following statements

1. India is ranked first in the world with respect to e-waste generation.
2. India's first e-waste clinic will come up in Bangalore to deal with recycling of e-waste

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.21) Consider the following statements about Multidisciplinary drifting observatory for the Study of Arctic Climate (MOSAIC) expedition

1. MOSAIC is the largest ever Arctic expedition in history which will be the first to conduct a study of the North Pole for an entire year.
2. The MOSAIC mission is being spearheaded by Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, with scientists from 17 nations (including India) taking part in the year-long mission.

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.22) Consider the following statements about NATIONAL e-ASSESSMENT CENTRE (NeAC)

1. NeAC centre has been set up in Mumbai
2. With this, Income Tax Department is introducing faceless e-assessment to impart greater efficiency, transparency and accountability in the assessment process

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

Q.23) Consider the following statements about Information Fusion Centre-Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR)

- It was set up by Ministry of Home Affairs in Gurugram in 2018
- It is a single point centre linking all coastal radar chain networks along the 7500km Indian coastline and in some neighbouring countries

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

Q.24) Consider the following statements

- The dark matter is the force which holds together galaxies which otherwise may get torn apart
- The dark energy helps the universe's increasing-rapid and constant expansion

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

Q.25) Which of the following countries are part of Hindu-Kush-Himalayan mountain system

- India
- China
- Myanmar
- Uzbekistan
- Kyrgyzstan

Select the correct answer from codes given below

- 1,2 and 3 only
- 1 and 2 only
- 1,2,3 and 4 only
- All of them

Q.26) Consider the following statements about Mamallapuram

- The UNESCO World Heritage site Mamallapuram is also known as Seven Pagodas
- It was one of two major port cities by the 7th century within the Pallava kingdom
- Some important structures include Descent of the Ganges or Arjuna's Penance, Krishna's Butterball, Shore temple and Pancha Rathas

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.27) Consider the following statements Global Competitiveness Index (2019)

- It is released by World Bank
- India has moved down 10 places on the index when compared to 2018
- India is ranked high at 15th place in terms of corporate governance, while it is ranked second globally for shareholder governance.

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.28) Which of the following organisations/body releases the World Economic Outlook report?

- a. United Nations
- b. World Trade Organisation
- c. World Bank
- d. International Monetary Fund

Q.29) Consider the following statements

1. Saturn and Jupiter account for nearly 80% of the total 205 moons in our Solar system
2. Mercury and Venus are the only planets in our solar system which does not have moons

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) Consider the following statements

1. 2019 Nobel Prize in Chemistry was awarded to three scientists for their contributions to the development of lithium-ion batteries
2. Lithium-ion battery has its roots in Rio Earth Summit of 1992, where scientists were encouraged at developing fossil fuel-free energy technologies.

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.31) Consider the following statements

Assertion (A): Invasive weeds are threatening tiger populations leading to increased man-animal conflict

Reason (R): Biological invasion of alien species of plants is recognised as the second worst threat to the environment after habitat destruction

Select the correct answer from codes given below

- a. Both A and R are correct, and R is the correct explanation of A
- b. Both A and R are correct, and R is not correct explanation of A
- c. A is correct while R is incorrect
- d. A is incorrect while R is correct

Q.32) SUMAN scheme often seen in the news is being implemented by which Ministry?

- a. Ministry of Women and Child Development
- b. Ministry of Minority Affairs
- c. Ministry of Health
- d. None of the above

Q.33) Consider the following statements about Dhruv Scheme

1. It is intended to increase the spread awareness about space and astronomy among the school children.
2. It is being implemented by Ministry of Women and Child Development

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.34) Consider the following statements Right to Information Act, 2005

1. Non-Resident Indians can also file RTI applications under the Act to seek governance-related information from Central government
2. The State and Central Information Commissions act as the courts of appeal under the Act

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.35) Consider the following statements about Index of Industrial Production (IIP)

1. It is released on monthly basis by Central Statistical Office
2. The revised 2011-12 series of IIP has increased the weightage of electricity in comparison to 2004-05 series of IIP

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.36) Horn of Africa is home to which of the following countries?

1. Djibouti
2. Eritrea
3. Kenya
4. Ethiopia
5. Rwanda
6. Somalia

Select the correct answer from the codes given below

- a. 2, 4, 5 and 6
- b. 1, 2, 4 and 6
- c. 1, 3, 4 and 5
- d. 1, 2, 3 and 5

Q.37) Galathea National Park and the Campbell Bay National Park is located in which State/Union Territory?

- a. Uttar Pradesh
- b. Lakshadweep Islands
- c. Odisha
- d. Andaman & Nicobar islands

Q.38) Baul music is predominant in which State/region of India ?

- a. Andhra Pradesh
- b. Gujarat
- c. West Bengal
- d. South India

Q.39) Consider the following statements

1. The overall polling percentage in 2019 Lok Sabha General elections was 67.4%, which is the highest ever turnout in a Lok Sabha poll.
2. The national turnout among women electors was lower as compared to male electors in 2019 Lok Sabha Elections

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.40) Consider the following statements about Plogging

1. It involves people picking up trash while jogging or brisk walking as a way of cleaning up litter while also taking care of fitness
2. It was started in Paris during 2015 Climate deal to spread the awareness among people about sustainable lifestyle

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) FASTag often seen in the news is related to which of the following area?

- a. Tiger census
- b. E-governance tracking
- c. Toll collection
- d. None of the above

Q.42) Consider the following statements about SARAS Aajeevika Mela

1. It is an initiative by the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM).
2. Its objective is to bring the rural women SHGs formed with support of DAY-

NRLM, under one platform to showcase their skills, sell their products and help them build linkages with bulk buyers.

3. It is organised by NITI Aayog in collaboration with NABARD and state governments

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.43) Consider the following statements about The Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences

1. Sveriges Riksbank (Sweden's central bank) established the Prize in Economic Sciences in 1968, in Memory of Alfred Nobel, founder of the Nobel Prize
2. The 2019 prize was awarded to three scholars for their experimental approach to alleviating global poverty

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) 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.45) Consider the following statements about Kayakalp Awards

1. Kayakalp awards were launched by Union Health Ministry in 2015 as part of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan
2. It was instituted to felicitate Public Health Facilities (PHCs) for maintaining high standards of sanitation and hygiene.
3. The Objective of the awards is to inculcate culture of cleanliness for gaining the trust and confidence of community in these facilities.

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.46) Consider the following statements

1. The Differences Between Fluorescence and Phosphorescence is that fluorescence emits light immediately after photon adsorption, whereas there is a delay with phosphorescence
2. Everyday examples of phosphorescent materials are the glow-in-the-dark toys, stickers, paint, wristwatch and clock dials that glow after being charged with a bright light

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) KHON RAMLILA is predominantly associated with which country/region?

- Thailand
- Vietnam
- South Korea
- None of the above

Q.48) Consider the following statements about Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)

- India does not have CDS as of 2019 and creation of one will enable to offer seamless tri-service views and single-point advice to the Executive on defence management
- Currently, each Service has an individual Act passed by Parliament. A Joint Services Act on approval by the government will facilitate faster integration

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

Q.49) Rashtriya Gokul Mission is being implemented which ministry/body?

- Niti Aayog
- Ministry of Agriculture
- Ministry of fisheries, animal husbandry & dairying
- Ministry of Rural development

Q.50) GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX is being released by which organisation?

- World Food Organisation
- UNESCO
- World Bank
- None of the above

Q.51) Nikshay Aushadi Portal often seen in news is predominantly associated with which of the following area?

- Provision of cheap Generic drugs

- Revised National Tuberculosis Control Program
- Tracking of imports of Active Pharmaceutical ingredients
- None of the above

Q.52) Consider the following statements about the World Health Organisation -2019 edition of the Global Tuberculosis (TB) report

- TB remains the top infectious killer in the world claiming over 4,000 lives a day
- TB Incidence in India per 1,00,000 population has decreased from 204 in 2017 to 199 in 2018.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

Q.53) India Innovation Index is released by which ministry/body?

- Niti Aayog
- Ministry of Commerce
- World Economic Forum
- None of the above

Q.54) Tulagi islands often seen in news is located in which region?

- Mediterranean Sea
- Indian Ocean
- Pacific Ocean
- South China Sea

Q.55) Consider the following statements about UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC)

- It was established in 2006 whose members are elected by the UN General Assembly for a three-year period
- United States of America withdrew its membership from the organisation in 2018 and Iceland was elected to replace the vacancy left by the United States

3. India is currently serving as the chair of the Council

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- 1 and 2 only
- 2 only
- 2 and 3 only
- 1,2 and 3

Q.56) Consider the following statements

- NITI Aayog releases the National Milk Sample Safety Quality Survey.
- Milk samples from Telangana, followed by Madhya Pradesh and Kerala, showed the highest number of cases of adulteration.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

Q.57) Consider the following statements about VAHAN portal

- Vahan intends to collate all the information available with road transport authorities for easy access by both citizens and regulators.
- Banks, which may have given out loans for vehicle purchases, will also have access to the National/State Registry to track the status of vehicles under lien.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

Q.58) Repurpose Cooking Oil (RUCO) initiative is being implemented by which body /ministry?

- Ministry of Oil & Petroleum
- NITI Aayog

- Food Safety and Standards Authority of India
- None of the above

Q.59) Which one of the following best describes the term “Merchant Discount Rate” sometimes seen in news?

- The incentive given by a bank to a merchant for accepting payments through debit cards pertaining to that bank.
- The amount paid back by banks to their customers when they use debit cards for financial transactions for purchasing goods or services.
- The charge to a merchant by a bank for accepting payments from his customers through the bank’s debit cards.
- The incentive given by the Government to merchants for promoting digital payments by their customers through Point of Sale (PoS) machines and debit cards.

Q.60) The term M-STRIPES’ is sometimes seen in the news in the context of

- Captive breeding of Wild Fauna
- Maintenance of Tiger Reserves
- Indigenous Satellite Navigation System
- Security of National Highways

Q.61) Consider the following statements about National Tiger Conservation Act

- It is a statutory body constituted under the provisions of Wildlife Protection Act, 1972
- It is set up under the Chairmanship of the Prime Minister of India

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 about Indian Penal Code (IPC)

1. The code was drafted on the recommendations of first law commission of India under the Chairmanship of Lord Macaulay
2. The Malimath Committee of 2003 is related to the issue of reforms in the IPC.

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.63) Consider the following statements about India liver transplant registry

1. It is initiated by NITI Aayog
2. The registry aims to collate national data of the liver transplant procedures and their outcomes.

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.64) Delaram-Zaranj Highway sometimes seen in the news is located in which country?

- a. Myanmar
- b. Afghanistan
- c. Iran
- d. None of the above

Q.65) Border Road Organisation works under the overall guidance of which Union Ministry?

- a. Ministry of Home Affairs
- b. Ministry of Road Transport and Highways
- c. Ministry of Defence
- d. None of the above

Q.66) Consider the following statements

1. National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) is a statutory body established under Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946
2. NCRB data of 2017 shows that crime against women has declined in comparison to 2016

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.67) Consider the following statements

1. Union government's ecological flow regulation mandates that hydropower project developers should ensure a minimum supply of water all through the year
2. NITI Aayog has been tasked to ascertain actual flows and the amount of water present in the rivers

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.68) Van Allen belts sometimes seen in the news is related to which of the following?

- a. Belt of volcanoes surrounding Pacific Ocean
- b. Belt of asteroids between Mars and Jupiter
- c. Magnetic belt surrounding Earth
- d. None of the above

Q.69) Ramgarh Dams sometimes seen in news is located in which state ?

- a. Uttar Pradesh
- b. Uttarakhand
- c. Rajasthan
- d. Gujarat

Q.70) Consider the following statements

1. Ozone is a molecule that is composed of three oxygen atoms. It is responsible for filtering out harmful ultraviolet radiation from the Sun.
2. The gas is constantly being made and destroyed in the stratosphere, about 20-30km above the Earth.
3. Nearly 200 countries agreed to ban the chemicals most damaging to the ozone under the Paris Protocol of 2015.

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.71) MSP is form of agricultural market intervention undertaken by Central Government in order to insure agricultural producers are protected against any sharp fall in farm prices. Which of the following statements are correct regarding MSP?

1. It is announced for all the crops by Central Government prior to sowing season.
2. Its purpose is to incentivize cultivators to adopt modern technology and raise productivity and overall production in line with the emerging demand pattern in the country.
3. The Prices are decided by Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA).

Select the code from following:

- a. 1 and 2
- b. 2 and 3
- c. 1 and 3
- d. All of the above

Q.72) Which of the following are the objectives of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP)?

1. To stabilize agricultural prices.
2. To ensure meaningful real income levels to the farmers.

3. To protect the interest of the consumers by providing essential agricultural commodities at reasonable rates through public distribution system.

Choose the correct option:

- a. 1, 2 and 3
- b. 1 and 2 only
- c. 1 and 3 only
- d. 3 only

Q.73) Assertion (A): The market price of a crop does not fall below its minimum support price (MSP).

Reason (R): Minimum support price (MSP) is the price at which the government guarantees to buy unlimited quantity of an agricultural commodity.

- a. Both A and R are true and R is the correct explanation of A
- b. Both A and R are true but R is not a correct explanation of A
- c. A is true but R is false
- d. A is false but R is true

Q.74) Which of the following are Rabi crops?

1. Rice
2. Maize
3. Wheat
4. Barley

Select the correct code:

- a. 1, 2 and 3
- b. 3 and 4
- c. 2 and 3
- d. 1 and 4

Q.75) Which of the following statement [s] is/are correct with reference to India's Air Quality Index (AQI)?

1. The index is launched under Swacch Bharat Abhiyan
2. PM10 , PM 2.5 and Lead are considered in calculating the value of Air Quality Index

3. Both Central Pollution Control Board and State Pollution Control Board administer National Air Monitoring Program

Choose the appropriate code

- 2 only
- 1 and 2 only
- 1, 2 and 3
- None of the above

Q.76) Which among the following atmospheric gases are normally considered in calculating the value of Air Quality Index in India?

- Carbon dioxide
- Carbon monoxide
- Nitrogen dioxide
- Sulfur dioxide
- Methane

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- 1, 2 and 3 only
- 2, 3 and 4 only
- 1, 4 and 5 only
- 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

Q.77) Government of India has introduced SAFAR system in important metropolitan cities of India for

- Forecasting the condition of roads in different weather
- Providing precise Indian navigation system
- Providing location specific information on air quality in near real time
- Providing details of tourist places and hotels in and near the cities

Q.78) Consider the following statements about The Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program (GSLEP)

- It is world's first joint initiative that aims to conserve the snow leopard.
- All 12 snow leopard range countries are a part of this initiative.
- The initiative aims to secure at least 20 snow leopard landscapes by 2020.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- 1 and 2
- 1 and 3
- 2 and 3
- 1,2 and 3

Q.79) Consider the following statements about 'Snow Leopard'

- It is listed as 'Endangered' on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species
- Brazzaville declaration deals with the Conservation of the Snow Leopard
- It is protected under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972

Select the correct statements

- 1 and 2
- 2 and 3
- 1 and 3
- 3 Only

Q.80) Uighur problem sometimes seen in the news is predominantly related to which of the following country?

- Afghanistan
- Iran
- Yemen
- China

Q.81) Consider the following statements

- Wild poliovirus type 2 and type 3 has been eliminated world wide
- Wild Polio Virus Type 1 virus remains in circulation in just two countries, Afghanistan and Pakistan.
- There is no cure for polio, it can only be prevented.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- 1 and 2
- 1 and 3
- 2 and 3
- 1, 2 and 3

Q.82) Consider the following statements with reference to the National commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)

1. It is a statutory body established under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012.
2. It defines a Child as a person in the 0 to 18 years age group.
3. The commission works under the administrative control of the Ministry of Women & Child Development.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- a. 1 and 2
- b. 1 and 3
- c. 2 and 3
- d. 1, 2 and 3

Q.83) Consider the following statements about Doing Business report (DBR)

1. It is released by International Monetary Fund
2. The DBR ranks countries on the basis of Distance to Frontier (DTF), a score that shows the gap of an economy to the global best practice.
3. The report assess improvement in ease of doing business environment in all Capital cities of States of India.

Which of the statements given above are **incorrect**?

- a. 1 and 2
- b. 1 and 3
- c. 2 and 3
- d. 1, 2 and 3

Q.84) IndiGen initiative is undertaken by which body/organisation?

- a. DRDO
- b. Ministry of Skill Development
- c. CSIR
- d. None of the above

Q.85) Consider the following statements about Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)

1. It is an autonomous body registered under the Registration of Societies Act, 1860.
2. The research and development activities of CSIR includes aerospace engineering, Structural engineering, ocean sciences, Life sciences, metallurgy, chemicals, mining, food, petroleum, leather, and environment.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q.86) SYCAMORE often seen in news is related to which of the following area?

- a. Cyber ransomware
- b. New vaccine to treat Malaria
- c. Quantum Computing
- d. None of the above

Q.87) Consider the following statements about BRICS

1. The first BRIC Summit took place in 2009 in Russia
2. During the Sixth BRICS Summit in Fortaleza (2014) the leaders signed the Agreement establishing the New Development Bank (NDB).

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q.88) DOXXING oftenseen in news is related to which of the following areas?

- a. Evergreening of Patents

- b. Military exercises with focus on counter-terror operations
- c. Publishing private information about someone
- d. None of the above

Q.89) Consider the following statements about Future Investment Forum

1. It is organised by the Sovereign Wealth Fund of Saudi Arabia, the kingdom's public investment fund
2. The forum is popularly known as the 'Davos in the Desert' and has been hosted by Riyadh since 2017 to project the kingdom as the future investment hub in the region.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q.90) Consider the following statements about India-Saudi Arabia Strategic Council

1. The council will include only the External Affairs Ministry and Defence Ministry and their counterparts from Saudi Arabia.
2. The council will be led by Indian Prime Minister and Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia-King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q.91) Consider the following statements about Accumulated Cyclone Energy (ACE)

1. It is a measure of how much kinetic energy a cyclone is dishing out through its winds.

2. The average ACE for the North Indian Ocean is no more than 40 units.
3. Thus far, 2019 Accumulated Cyclone Energy has hit 53.9 units. The previous seasonal record was 46.1 ACE units in 2007.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 2 and 3 only
- c. 1 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

Q.92) Bhaona, an India performing artis predominant in which region/state of India?

- a. Gujarat
- b. Ladakh
- c. Assam
- d. None of the above

Q.93) Consider the following statements

1. Gorillas share about 98% of human DNA
2. Gorillas are actually languid primates that eat only plants and insects, and live in fairly stable, extended family groups.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q.94) Consider the following statements about Competition Commission of India (CCI)

1. It is a quasi-judicial body.
2. It is responsible for enforcing Competition Act, 2002 throughout India.
3. It works to protect the interests of consumers.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- a. 1 and 2
- b. 1 and 3
- c. 2 and 3
- d. 1, 2 and 3

Q.95) Consider the following statements about Sattriya

1. Sattriya is one of the eight Indian Classical dance traditions.
2. The dance was introduced in 15th Century by a great Vaishnava Saint MahapurushShankardev in Ladakh.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q.96) Consider the following statements

1. Current climate studies say that climate change has caused global mean sea level to rise by 11-16 cm in the 20th century and is expected to by as much as 2 m by the end of this century.
2. In India, 36 million people would face annual flooding by 2050 and 44 million by 2100 if emissions continue to rise unabated.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q.97) Swiss Challenge often seen in news is related to which of the following areas?

- a. Inculcating Innovation spirit among Universities
- b. Improvements in Urban development
- c. Public-Partnership Model
- d. None of the above

Q.98) Consider the following statements about CERT-IN

1. It is the National Incident Response Centre for major computer security incidents in Indian cyber community.

2. It functions under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q.99) Consider the following statements about Unnat Bharat Abhiyan

1. It was launched by the Ministry of Skill development
2. The Objective is to use the knowledge base of the Premier Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) of the country to ensure rural development

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q.100) Consider the following statements about Chhath puja

1. Chhath is a Hindu festival dedicated to the Sun god and his wife Usha in order to thank them for bestowing the bounties of life on earth
2. The festival is observed most elaborately in Mithila Province of Nepal, Terai-Madhesh region of Nepal, Indian states of Bihar, Jharkhand and UP

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2



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1	A	40	A	79	D
2	C	41	C	80	D
3	A	42	A	81	D
4	D	43	C	82	C
5	D	44	D	83	B
6	C	45	D	84	C
7	B	46	C	85	C
8	C	47	A	86	C
9	D	48	C	87	C
10	D	49	C	88	C
11	C	50	D	89	C
12	B	51	B	90	B
13	C	52	C	91	C
14	C	53	A	92	C
15	B	54	C	93	C
16	C	55	A	94	D
17	C	56	B	95	A
18	C	57	C	96	C
19	A	58	C	97	C
20	D	59	C	98	C
21	A	60	B	99	B
22	B	61	A	100	C
23	B	62	C		
24	C	63	B		
25	D	64	B		
26	D	65	C		
27	B	66	D		
28	D	67	A		
29	C	68	C		
30	A	69	C		
31	B	70	A		
32	C	71	B		
33	D	72	A		
34	B	73	D		
35	A	74	B		
36	B	75	C		
37	D	76	B		
38	C	77	C		
39	A	78	D		



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