

DECEMBER 2019



**IASBABA'S
MONTHLY
MAGAZINE**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF INDIAN CITIZENS
NATIONAL POPULATION REGISTER
CITIZENSHIP AMENDMENT ACT
FIFTEENTH FINANCE COMMISSION
INDIA'S FOREIGN RELATIONS
ECONOMIC CRISIS**

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 55th edition of IASbaba's Monthly Magazine. This edition covers all important issues that were in news in the month of **DECEMBER 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."

CONTENTS

HISTORY/CULTURE/GEOGRAPHY	8
Paika Memorial	8
HORNBILL FESTIVAL	8
Saptamatrikas: Earliest Epigraphic evidence for the cult found	9
Vivekananda Rock Memorial: Golden Jubilee Celebrations	9
Shore temple.....	9
Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya.....	10
Solar Eclipse	11
Rohtang Pass: Strategic tunnel under it.....	12
Somali Dervish movement: Negatives of 'lost' 1985 Somali epic found at NFAI	12
Dadasaheb Phalke Award	13
POLITY/GOVERNANCE	14
Role of the Governor.....	14
Governor's role during fractured verdicts	15
School Categorisation by Arunachal Pradesh	17
Zero FIR	18
Good Governance Index (GGI)	19
Defamation Case	21
Doorstep delivery of public services scheme.....	22
Mapathon Keralam	22
Unique Identification Authority of India(UIDAI) drops Monitoring agency plan.....	23
No State-wise minority classification.....	23
Increase Lok Sabha seats	24
GIMS or Government Instant Messaging System	24
GST compensation	25
NHRC seeks report on assault cases	25
National Register of Indian Citizens	26
National Population Register (NPR): West Bengal Opts out of the exercise	28
Political Parties Registration Tracking Management System (PPRTMS).....	29
PM-AASHA scheme	29
Fifteenth Finance Commission.....	29
126th Constitution Amendment Bill	30
Citizenship Amendment Bill	30
Assam protests against Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB).....	33
Protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill 2019.....	34
Section 144: Protests against Citizenship Amendment Act & Section 144	36
Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) of 2019: Consequences on the domestic and foreign policy.....	38

National Population Register (NPR): Census will be conducted in 2021	39
The International Financial Services Centres Authority Bill.....	42
Arms Amendment Bill, 2019	43
Transgender Persons' Bill, 2019	44
Personal Data Protection Bill	46
Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013.....	48
Creamy layer in SCs, STs.....	49
IS 10500:2012	51
Appointment of judges	52
National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT).....	53
Right to information: 'Abuse' of RTI	54
Three Capital of Andhra Pradesh	56
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Kerala is in the top slot	57
Regional Reservations: Karnataka Students in National Law School.....	58
SOCIAL ISSUE/WELFARE	59
PISA test	59
Human Rights Day.....	59
Accessible India campaign	60
National Strategy for Suicide Prevention under discussion.....	60
Global Gender Gap Index, 2020(India has ranked 112th among 153)	61
Intersex Person: Call for National ban on unnecessary medical surgeries.....	62
WOMEN ISSUE	64
Rape and sexual crimes law in India	64
Andhra Pradesh Disha Bill, 2019	66
HEALTH ISSUE	68
World AIDS day	68
Bill banning e-cigarettes passed	68
Anaemia: Nearly 3 out of 5 babies and children in India are anaemic	69
India State Level Disease Burden Initiative (ISLDBI)	70
Indian Pharmacopoeia (IP).....	70
CSE has alleged excessive and "dangerous" level of salt.....	71
Poshan Abhiyaan: Merely 30% of the funds used after 3 years	72
GOVERNMENT SCHEMES	73
Mission Parivar Vikas (MPV)	73
Call for Universalisation of Pradhan MantriMatruVandanaYojana(PMMVY).....	73

Ujwal DISCOM Assurance Yojana (UDAY): sharp spike in discom losses.....	74
Atal Bhujal Yojana (ATAL JAL)	76
MGNREGA: fewer jobs since July, wider demand-supply gap	77

INTERNATIONAL79

Power of Siberia.....	79
U.S. threatens 100% tariffs on French goods.....	79
Ukraine – Trump issue	80
Israel Palestine issue (Part-1).....	81
Uighur issue.....	83
France Protest.....	83
Finland gets world’s youngest PM	84
U.S. International Commission on Religious Freedom (USCIRF).....	85
President Impeachment: US President Trump to be impeached	85
USMCA trade deal.....	86
Biggest parliamentary majority for Boris Johnson (BREXIT)	87
US and China: ‘Phase One’ agreement	89
What UK poll result means for Brexit?	90
Brexit :Withdrawal Agreement Bill (WAB).....	92
First Global Refugee Forum (GRF).....	93
UNICEF: Ensure Child Rights.....	94
Financial Action Task Force (FATF): Grills Pakistan	94
US Space Force: China raises objection	94
Hypersonic Weapons: Russia becomes the first country to deploy it	95
China, Iran and Russia: held joint naval drills in the Indian Ocean and Gulf of Oman	95
Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC): Pakistan to host OIC meet on Kashmir, CAA.....	97

INDIA AND THE WORLD 100

Palestine-India techno park	100
HAJ 100	
Land Boundary Agreement	101
INDIA’S FOREIGN RELATION.....	102
Joint River Commission: Bangladesh gives a miss	103
Industrial Security Annex (ISA): Signed between India and USA	103

ECONOMY..... 104

Telecom sector changes	104
Bharat Bond ETF.....	106
Extra Neutral Alcohol (ENA)	106
RBI keeps interest rate unchanged	107

Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA)	108
Nirav Modi now a fugitive economic offender	108
Fugitive Economic Offender (FEO)	109
Asia's biggest surge pool	110
Indian economy is losing its growth momentum	111
GST Council: Votes for first time to tax all lotteries at 28%	113
Operation Twist: RBI's Open market operations	116
Import Cover: Rises to 10 months	116
Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI): Annual Report for 2018-19 released	116
Non-Performing Asset: Gross NPAs may rise to 9.9% by next Sept., says RBI report	117
Economic crisis: economy in bad shape	118
AGRICULTURE	121
New Seed Bill 2019	121
Locust invasion in Gujarat	122
Desertification: Another 30% of the India's land is undergoing degradation	123
ENVIRONMENT/POLLUTION	126
OPERATION CLEAN ART	126
Water regulation	126
Global Climate Risk Index 2020	127
The seas have less oxygen now	127
Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI)	128
River Pollution	128
National Ganga Council (NGC)	129
COP25: Longest climate talks end	131
CoP 25: Climate Emergency	133
EcoClub Programme: To sensitize children about Environmental issues	135
Atal Bhujal Yojana — Why a scheme for groundwater?	136
Red sand boa snake: Rare Snake rescued in Madhya Pradesh	138
Bandhavgarh Forest: Gets its first Elephant Colony	139
ANIMALS/NATIONAL PARKS IN NEWS.....	140
GANGETIC DOLPHINS	140
INFRASTRUCTURE/ENERGY	141
Shipping Ministry approves Loktak Inland Water ways project	141
Delhi to get 11,000 hotspots across city	141

Train18	142
Indian Railway Management Service (IRMS): Railway Board Restructuring	142
FASTags deadline extended	143
National Broadband Mission.....	143
Digital Communications Commission (DCC): Approves auction of Spectrum	143
Mahadayi Project: Goa gets relief.....	144
Core Catcher: Device to contain nuclear accidents	144
Bharatnet Project: Free WiFi to all villages.....	145
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY	146
Battling anti-microbial resistance	146
Sexed Semen.....	149
World Malaria Report 2019	149
Chandrayaan 2	150
Didymos	150
RISAT	151
Electric commercial aircraft	152
Voice over Wi-Fi (VoWiFi)	152
Fog Pass.....	152
Pyrolysis	153
Odisha students develop smart water dispenser	153
Hydrogen cell technology (Fuel Cell Technology).....	154
Concrete Maturity Meter: To measure the strength of concrete	154
Electro-kinetic streaming: To produce energy from flowing or stagnant water	155
Indian State of Forest Report 2019 (ISFR).....	155
Internet rights: Internet shutdown in India	156
SnowEx: To assess how much water does snow contain	157
US astronaut Christina Koch	158
DISASTER MANAGEMENT	159
National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM)	159
DEFENCE/INTERNAL SECURITY/SECURITY	160
EXERCISE SURYA KIRAN – XIV.....	160
Exercise INDRA 19': India-Russia Trilateral Exercise	160
EXERCISE HAND-IN-HAND-2019.....	160
BrahMos Missile: Latest upgrades	161
Operation Prahar: Started by Haryana Police to fight Organised Crime	161
Dolphin's Nose: Joint Operation to crackdown on Espionage racket.....	162
Apache attack helicopters: India to import more from USA	162

Pinaka missile system successfully flight-tested.....	163
Panel finalises role of Chief of Defence Staff.....	163
DRDO to develop naval fighter jet.....	164
Nod for Data Protection Bill.....	164
Blue Water Force.....	165
Strandhogg.....	165
Tech firms facing antitrust issues.....	166
Sarvatra Kavach: Indigenously developed Bullet-proof jacket.....	168
Chief of Defence Staff (CDS): Union Cabinet gives approval.....	168
Chief of Defence Staff: Gen. Rawat Appointed as first CDS.....	169
PERSON IN NEWS.....	170
MISCELLANEOUS.....	171
(TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE).....	176
2019 DECEMBER MONTH CURRENT AFFAIRS MCQS SOLUTIONS.....	195



AIPTS-2020
All India Prelims Test Series (ENGLISH/HINDI)
ONLINE + OFFLINE
New Batch on 20th November

HISTORY/CULTURE/GEOGRAPHY

Paika Memorial

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

In News

- President Ram Nath Kovind laid the foundation stone for the Paika Memorial which will come up in a 10-acre plot at the bottom of **Barunei Hill in Odisha**.
- The event marks 200 years of the **Paika Rebellion of 1817**, an uprising against colonial rule that predates the rebellion of the sepoys in 1857, and is **sometimes described as the first war of independence**.
- The Paikas (pronounced “paiko”, literally ‘foot soldiers’), were a class of **military retainers** had been recruited since the 16th century by kings in Odisha from a variety of social groups to render martial services **in return for hereditary rent-free land** (nish-karjagirs) and titles.
- The advent of the British and establishment of colonial rule brought new land revenue settlements, which led to the **Paikas losing their estates** mostly to Bengali absentee landlords
- The British changed the currency system, demanding revenue payments in rupees, which increased pressure on the dispossessed, marginal tribal.
- The British control over salt — which had pre-1803-4 origins, but was extended to coastal Orissa in 1814 — also meant increased hardship for the people in the region.
- In 1817, some 400 Kondhs rose in revolt against the British under the leadership of **Bakshi Jagabandhu** Bidyadhar Mohapatra Bharamarbar Rai, the highest-ranking military general of Mukund Dev II, and erstwhile holder of the lucrative Rodanga estate
- Paikas fought bloody battles at several places, but the **colonial army gradually crushed the revolt**.
- Bakshi Jagabandhu escaped to the jungles, and stayed out of reach of the British until 1825, when he finally surrendered under negotiated terms.

HORNBILL FESTIVAL

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-I – Culture

In News

- The 20th Edition of Hornbill Festival began at Naga Heritage Kisama in Nagaland
- It is annually held from 1 – 10 December. The first festival was held in 2000.
- The festival organized by Nagaland Government is an annual tourism promotional event to showcase the state’s traditional and rich cultural heritage in all its ethnicity, diversity and grandeur.
- The Objective is to encourage inter-tribal interaction and to promote cultural heritage of Nagaland.

- Highlights of the Hornbill Festival will witness cultural performance of different tribes of Nagaland and Northeastern States, indigenous games, city tour, night carnival, art exhibition, photo-fest and many more.
- One of the major highlights of this festival is the Hornbill International Rock Festival where local and international rock bands perform.

Saptamatrikas: Earliest Epigraphic evidence for the cult found

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

In News

- The Epigraphy Branch of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has discovered the earliest epigraphic evidence so far for the Saptamatrika cult.
- It is also the **earliest Sanskrit inscription to have been discovered in South India** as on date.
- Saptamatrikas are a **group of seven female deities worshipped in Hinduism** as personifying the energy of their respective consorts.
- The inscription is in Sanskrit and in Brahmi characters and was issued by **Satavahana king Vijaya in 207 A.D.** It was discovered in Chebrolu village in Guntur district of **Andhra Pradesh.**
- So far the Nagarjunakonda inscription of Ikshavaku king Ehavala Chantamula issued during 4th century A.D. was considered the earliest Sanskrit inscription in South India

Vivekananda Rock Memorial: Golden Jubilee Celebrations

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-I- Art & Culture; Modern history

In Newsc

- **Vivekananda Rock Memorial** is a monument in **Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu** at the Tri-junction of Indian Ocean, Bay of Bengal and Arabian sea.
- It was **built in 1970** in honour of Swami Vivekananda who is said to have attained **enlightenment at this place** in 1892, **prior to his famous Chicago trip**
- The memorial consists of two main structures, the Vivekananda Mandapam and the Shripada Mandapam. The design of the mandapa incorporates different styles of temple architecture from all over India.

Shore temple

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains I– Culture& Geography

In News

- The shoreline on the northern side of the Shore Temple in **Mamallapuram, Tamil Nadu** is facing severe sea erosion.

- The Public Works Department is awaiting funds to construct **groynes** for coastal protection at a cost of ₹95.95 crore.
- According to PWD, every year, nearly 4-5 m of the shoreline near the temple is declining.

Groynes

- A groyne is a **shore protection structure** built perpendicular to the shoreline of the coast (or river), over the beach to reduce longshore drift and trap sediments. A groyne functions as a physical barrier by intercepting sand moving along the shore.
- Rock is often used as construction material, but wooden groynes, steel groynes, rubble-mound and sand-filled bag groynes, or groynes made of concrete elements can also be found. **Rock groynes are generally preferred as they are more durable and absorb more wave energy** due to their permeable nature.



Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya

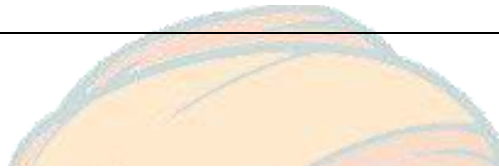
Part of: GS Prelims and GS-I- Modern History

In News

- December 25 is the birth anniversary of Madan Mohan Malaviya, the famed **Indian educationist** and freedom fighter who is also called '**Mahamana**'
- Malaviya is known for **founding the Banaras Hindu University** and for becoming one of the torchbearers of the freedom struggle — acting as a **bridge between the Moderates and the Extremists in the Congress**.
- Malaviya joined the Indian National Congress at its Calcutta session in 1886 — it had been founded a year previously at the Gokuldas Tejpal Sanskrit College in Mumbai
- He became president of Congress four times — in 1909 (Lahore), in 1918 (Delhi), in 1930 (Delhi), and in 1932 (Calcutta). Malaviya was part of the Congress for almost 50 years.

- Malaviya was one of the **early leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha**, and helped found it in 1906.
- He was a social reformer and a successful legislator, serving as a member of the **Imperial Legislative Council for 11 years** (1909–20).
- Malaviya espoused free and compulsory primary education, opposed the system of indentured labour in the British Empire, and supported the nationalisation of railways.
- In 2015, the government bestowed Malaviya with the **Bharat Ratna**, India's highest civilian honour, 68 years after his death.
- In 2016, the Indian Railways started the Varanasi-New Delhi Mahamana Express in the leader's honour.

Solar Eclipse



Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains I- Geography

In News

- On 26th December, the annular solar eclipse will be visible in places such as India, Australia, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, and Singapore – when the Moon will eclipse the Sun to form a “ring of fire” in the sky.

What is annual Solar eclipse?

- Generally, when the new Moon intersects the light of the Sun, it brings a total solar eclipse on Earth.
- But it won't be the case this time as the Moon is presently quite farther than average from Earth and once it will cross the Sun, a “negative shadow” or what technically called the antumbra will become visible in the form of the ring of fire. This is known as an annular eclipse.
- Ophthalmologists warn **against viewing the phenomenon with the naked eye** or taking pictures using mobile phones or cameras.

Safeguard your vision

Don'ts:

- Do not see the sun with the naked eye or with regular sun glasses
- Do not view the solar eclipse through your smartphone, camera view finder, unsafe filters, binoculars or telescopes
- Solar observation of more than 90 seconds (one and half minutes) exceeds the threshold of damage to the retina



Dos:

- View the solar eclipse on the television screen
- You can walk outside during the eclipse but do not look up at the sun
- Use special goggles provided either by the planetarium or certified as safe for viewing
- Ensure that the goggles do not have scratches on the surface

[Src: Click here](#)

[Rohtang Pass: Strategic tunnel under it](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains I- Geography

In News

- The Union Cabinet has decided to name the Strategic Tunnel under Rohtang Pass after former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.
- **Rohtang Pass** is a high mountain pass on the eastern PirPanjal Range of the Himalayas. It connects the Kullu Valley with the Lahaul and Spiti Valleys of Himachal Pradesh.
- The 8.8-kilometre long tunnel is the **world's longest tunnel above an altitude of 3,000 metres**. It will reduce the distance between Manali and Leh by 46 kilometres.
- It will provide all weather **connectivity** to remote border areas of Himachal Pradesh and Ladakh which otherwise remained cut off from the rest of the country for about six months **during winters**.
- The decision to construct tunnel was taken during A.B.Vajpayee's time and it is nearing completion.

[Somali Dervish movement: Negatives of 'lost' 1985 Somali epic found at NFAI](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-I Decolonization

In news:

The negatives of an epic Somali film thought to have been lost were 'discovered' in the vaults of the Pune-based National Film Archive of India (NFAI).

Value addition For Prelims:

- The **Somali Dervish movement** was an armed resistance to the colonial powers – particularly the British – in the **Horn of Africa**, between 1899 and 1920
- It was led by the **Sufi Muslim poet** and militant leader **Sayyid Mohamed**

HORN OF AFRICA



[Src: Click here](#)

- It is a peninsula in Africa. It consists of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia.

- It extends hundreds of kilometers into the Arabian Sea and lies along the southern side of the Gulf of Aden

Dadasaheb Phalke Award

- Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains I- Culture
- In News
- The country's highest film honour, the DadasahebPhalke award, was presented this year to Amitabh Bachchan
- The award comes in the year that marks Mr. Bachchan's golden jubilee in cinema, who made his debut in 1969
- DadasahebPhalke (1870–1944), was an Indian film-maker who directed India's first full-length feature film, Raja Harishchandra (1913). He is regarded as "the father of Indian cinema."
- The award is given to people for their "outstanding contribution to the growth and development of Indian cinema".
- It is presented annually at the National Film Awards ceremony by the Directorate of Film Festivals (an organisation set up by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting).
- The award prize consists of a golden lotus, a cash prize of ₹10 lakh and a shawl.
- The award was first presented in 1969. The first recipient of the award was actress Devika Rani, "the first lady of Indian cinema."



How do I remove fear of UPSC Prelims?

MAINS - 2020

PEP - 2020

What/How should I read for Prelims?

How to manage time?



PEP-2020
PRELIMS EXCLUSIVE PROGRAMME
EXCLUSIVE MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME FOR PRELIMS
STARTING FROM JAN - 2020

6 Months to UPSC PRELIMS

POLITY/GOVERNANCE

Role of the Governor

TOPIC: GS- II-Polity

Context:

- Prolonged stalemate in Maharashtra over the formation of a government as no single party had a majority of its own after the Assembly election in October.
- It was not a wholly fractured verdict. A pre-poll alliance of the Bharatiya Janata Party (105 seats) and the Shiv Sena (56) had a clear majority (161 in the 288-seat Assembly, with 145 being the majority mark), but the Sena broke the alliance over unresolved issues related to sharing of power.
- The Supreme Court of India ordered an early floor test, Ajit Pawar resigned. Mr. Fadnavis followed suit, admitting that he did not have the required majority.
- A new post-poll combination, between the Sena, NCP and the Congress and some independents, has now formed the government.
- The developments have brought under focus the role of the Governor in such circumstances.

What should the Governor do if there is a hung Assembly?

- The Constitution envisages that the Governor act on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers, except in those situations in which he is, by or under the Constitution, required to act in his discretion (Article 163).
- It is clear that in identifying a candidate who, in his opinion, is in a position to command a majority, the Governor has to make his own decision, subject, of course, to democratic norms.
- This is why one often sees the Governor of State inviting leaders for discussions as part of efforts to explore the possibility of forming a government.
- When the Governor appoints the Chief Minister in this way, it is accompanied by a stipulation that the appointee prove his or her majority within a specified time on the floor of the House.

Preferred order

- The Governor may invite the leader of the largest single party first. However, if it is clear that the largest single party has no potential ally or enough independent members to ensure a majority, he may also invite the leader of the largest pre-poll combination or alliance.
- If there is no combination or alliance, he may invite leaders one by one in the order of their size in the new Assembly.
- During this process, a post-poll combination may emerge, if any one of them agrees to form a government. The Governor may insist on letters of support from those outside the leader's party who are willing to join or extend support to him.

Sarkaria Commission on inter-State relations

- An alliance formed prior to the election;
- The largest single party staking claim with the support of others, including independents;

- A post-electoral coalition, with all partners joining the government;
- A post-poll coalition, with some joining the government, and others extending support from outside.
- Governor should look for a party or combination that commands the widest support in the Assembly
- Governor's task is to see that a government is formed, and not to try to form a government which will pursue policies which he approves".
- The Sarkaria Commission recommends that a person, who has been appointed Chief Minister without a clear majority, should seek a vote of confidence in the Assembly within 30 days.

Do you know?

Article 174, the Governor summons the House only on the advice of the Council of Ministers, but will be within his constitutional rights to cause the House to be convened if there is reason to believe that there is a doubt about the incumbent's majority.

SC Judgements:

- The key principle that ought to guide the Governor is set out in the **S.R. Bommai vs. Union of India case (1994)**.
- The court said, for testing the strength of a ministry is a floor test.
- Even though this verdict was in the context of the imposition of President's rule in different States, the principle holds good for any situation in which Governors have to decide on the appointment of a Chief Minister or continuance of a regime based on its numerical strength in the House.
- In **Rameshwar Prasad (2005)**, the court ruled that there was nothing wrong in installing a post-poll combination, and that the Governor could not decline the formation of a government on the ground that it was being done through unethical means.
- **Karnataka (2018) and Maharashtra (2019)** are instances of the court ordering a floor test in a situation in which the Assembly had not yet been convened after the general election. Therefore, the legislators were yet to take their oaths. The court directed the appointment of a pro tem Speaker, to be followed by the administration of oath to the new members and, thereafter, a floor test.
- **SC:** "In a situation wherein, if the floor test is delayed, there is a possibility of horse-trading, it becomes incumbent upon the court to act to protect democratic values."

Connecting the dots:

- In a case examining the validity a Constitution Bench cautioned Governors against acting on internal party developments or "entering the political thicket". Examine

Governor's role during fractured verdicts

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

In News

Context:

- Governors of many states are breaking the cardinal rules and provoking controversy by entering into the thick of everyday politics.

- A combination of several factors has brought on the changing role and functions of the governor.
- Today the men who occupy the Raj Bhavans are mostly superannuated politicians and party men unwilling to abandon their loyalties which cause a number of problems.

Hung Assembly

- The Constitution envisages that the Governor act on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers, except in those situations in which he is, by or under the Constitution, required to act in his discretion (**Article 163**).
- It is clear that in identifying a candidate who, in his opinion, is in a position to command a majority, the Governor has to make his own decision, subject, of course, to democratic norms.
- This is why one often sees the Governor of State inviting leaders for discussions as part of efforts to explore the possibility of forming a government. When the Governor appoints the Chief Minister in this way, it is accompanied by a stipulation that the appointee prove his or her majority within a specified time on the floor of the House.

Is there a preferred order for this process?

- The Governor may invite the leader of the largest single party first. However, if it is clear that the largest single party has no potential ally or enough independent members to ensure a majority, he may also invite the leader of the largest pre-poll combination or alliance.
- If there is no combination or alliance, he may invite leaders one by one in the order of their size in the new Assembly. During this process, a post-poll combination may emerge, if any one of them agrees to form a government.
- The Governor may insist on letters of support from those outside the leader's party who are willing to join or extend support to him.

The Sarkaria Commission on inter-State relations has dealt with this question.

- The Commission's report suggests the following orders for Governors to follow:
 1. An alliance formed prior to the election;
 2. The largest single party staking claim with the support of others, including independents;
 3. A post-electoral coalition, with all partners joining the government;
 4. A post-poll coalition, with some joining the government, and others extending support from outside.

As general principles, **the Sarkaria Commission** says the Governor should look for a party or combination that commands the widest support in the Assembly, and that "his task is to see that a government is formed, and not to try to form a government which will pursue policies which he approves".

Governor ascertain majority

- Decades ago, there were instances of party leaders parading legislators supposedly supporting them in Raj Bhavan, and Governors doing a headcount or verifying signatures. This approach has been deprecated by courts, and there is consensus now that the floor of the Assembly is the only place where the majority is to be decided.
- The Sarkaria Commission recommends that a person, who has been appointed Chief Minister without a clear majority, should seek a vote of confidence in the Assembly within

30 days. “This practice should be strictly adhered to with the sanctity of a rule of law,” it says.

- Similarly, when the majority of the Chief Minister is contested by a significant number of legislators, the Governor should not risk a determination of his own outside the House, and it would be prudent “to cause the rival claims to be tested on the floor of the House”. In this, the Governor may advise the Chief Minister to summon the Assembly, if it is not in session, to demonstrate his support.
- Normally, under Article 174, the Governor summons the House only on the advice of the Council of Ministers, but will be within his constitutional rights to cause the House to be convened if there is reason to believe that there is a doubt about the incumbent’s majority.

Principles evolved by the Supreme Court:

- Some seminal judgments of the Supreme Court have dealt with these issues. The key principle that ought to guide the Governor is set out in the **S.R. Bommai vs. Union of India case (1994)**.
- The proper course, the court said, for testing the strength of a ministry is a floor test. “That alone is the constitutionally ordained forum ...,” it observed.
- Even though this verdict was in the context of the imposition of President’s rule in different States, the principle holds good for any situation in which Governors have to decide on the appointment of a Chief Minister or continuance of a regime based on its numerical strength in the House.
- **In Rameshwar Prasad (2005)**, the court ruled that there was nothing wrong in installing a post-poll combination, and that the Governor could not decline the formation of a government on the ground that it was being done through unethical means.
- **(Jagdambika Pal vs. Union of India and Ors)**, the Supreme Court ordered a ‘composite floor test’ involving two rival claimants — Kalyan Singh and Jagdambika Pal. The Governor had dismissed the former and installed Ms. Pal in office. Kalyan Singh won the floor test that day. A significant aspect of the court’s order was that it was made clear that the floor test would be the only item on the agenda of the House.
- Karnataka (2018) and Maharashtra (2019) are instances of the court ordering a floor test in a situation in which the Assembly had not yet been convened after the general election. Therefore, the legislators were yet to take their oaths. The court directed the appointment of a pro tem Speaker, to be followed by the administration of oath to the new members and, thereafter, a floor test..

Connecting the dots:

- Governors break cardinal rules, provoke controversy by entering into everyday politics. Analyse

School Categorisation by Arunachal Pradesh

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-II- Governance
In News

- In Arunachal Pradesh State where teacher absenteeism has been a major issue in the public education system, **schools will be marked 'hard', 'soft' and 'medium'**— based on topography, accessibility and degrees of difficulty in staying at the place of posting
- Geography, lack of infrastructure and reluctance of teachers to work beyond their comfort zones are the reasons for this categorisation
- According to new **teachers posting policy**: All new recruits will be given a hard posting for a mandatory three years, inclusive of their probation period.
- The next five years will be in schools with levels of medium difficulty, followed by posting in soft schools
- This ensures **need-based distribution of teachers** to protect the academic interest of students and optimise job satisfaction among the teachers in a free and transparent manner

Zero FIR

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-II – Polity& Governance

In News

- In the context of the Hyderabad Veterinary doctor rape& murder case, her family alleged that the Shamsabad police station delayed the filing of an FIR citing **jurisdictional issues**
- FIR which stands for First Information Report has serial number, date of occurrence, time of occurrence, place of occurrence, contents of complaint etc. and it is lodged because of commission of **cognizable offence (an offence in which police can take suo moto action and no prior approval from court is required)**.
- Every police station has jurisdictional area for which they can take up the investigation if commission of cognizable offence area found under their jurisdiction.
- But in Zero FIR, **any police station can register FIR irrespective of jurisdictional area** but the investigation will be taken up the police in which place of occurrence reported in FIR.
- The police station can register the zero FIR marking it serial number zero and transfer to the competent jurisdictional area which can carry out the investigation.
- The sanctity of legal process remains same in zero FIR. It is very helpful for people as it facilitates them by not allowing making rounds of different police station for lodging the FIR.

Do You Know?

- A Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court in **Lalita Kumari v. Govt. of U.P** held that registration of FIR is mandatory under Section 154 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, if the information discloses commission of a cognizable offence.
- In spite of the **Justice Verma Committee report** and also the multiple advisories issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs on the registration of Zero FIR, the police are still reluctant to register a case of cognizable offence especially in cases relating to heinous crimes against women.

Good Governance Index (GGI)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II – Governance

In News

- Good governance can be referred as an effective and efficient process of decision making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented) keeping the amelioration of citizens as the topmost priority. Resource allocation, creation of formal establishments, setting up rules and regulations etc., are part of achieving this goal
- The objectives of GGI are to **provide quantifiable data to compare the state of governance in all states** and UTs, enable states and UTs to formulate and implement suitable strategies for improving governance and shift to result oriented approaches and administration
- **GGI will consider 10 sectors:** agriculture and allied sectors, commerce and industries, human resource development, public health, public infrastructure and utilities, economic governance, social welfare and development, judicial & public security, environment, and citizen-centric governance.
- These ten Governance Sectors are measured on total 50 indicators.
- **The states and UTs are divided into three groups:** a). Big States, b). North-East & Hill States and c). UTs.
- On the index, Tamil Nadu has got the highest score (5.62), followed by Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Chhattisgarh (5.4, 5.1, and 5.05) respectively.
- In economic governance ranking, Karnataka leads, followed by Maharashtra, Telangana, Gujarat, and Tamil Nadu.

Good Governance Index: Measure governance in Indian states

Context:

- The MoS (PP) Dr Jitendra Singh launched the 'Good Governance Index' at an event organized by the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, on the occasion of Good Governance Day.

Good Governance Day :

- Good Governance Day is observed in India annually on the 25th December, the birth anniversary of former-Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.
- Good Governance Day was established in 2014 to honor Prime Minister Vajpayee by fostering awareness among the Indian people of accountability in government.

Good governance:

- Good governance is significant in public institutions to conduct and manage public affairs and resources to guarantee human rights in free of abuse and corruption, and with due regard for the rule of law.
- It is significant because it promises to deliver on the promise of human rights: civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights.
- Good governance is thus, a function of installation of positive virtues of administration and elimination of vices of dysfunctionalities.

Elements of good governance:



SRC: IASBABA

Good Governance Index:

- GGI is a uniform tool that will help in assessing the status of governance and the impact of interventions undertaken by governments across all states and UTs.
- GGI had been “scientifically designed” to reflect various parameters of governance.

“Good governance can be referred as an effective and efficient process of decision making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented) keeping the amelioration of citizens as the topmost priority. Resource allocation, creation of formal establishments, setting up rules and regulations etc., are part of achieving this goal.” Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances

Objective of Good Governance Index:

- To provide quantifiable data to compare the state of governance in all states and UTs,
- Enable states and UTs to formulate and implement suitable strategies for improving governance and shift to result oriented approaches and administration

Measuring GGI: GGI will consider 10 sectors

- Agriculture and allied sectors,
- Commerce and industries,
- Human resource development,
- Public health,
- Public infrastructure and utilities,

- Economic governance,
- Social welfare and development,
- Judicial & public security,
- Environment,
- Citizen-centric governance.

The states and UTs have been grouped into three categories: big states, Northeast and hill categories, and UTs.

- On the index, **Tamil Nadu** has got the highest score (5.62), followed by Maharashtra, **Karnataka**, and **Chhattisgarh** (5.4, 5.1, and 5.05) respectively.
- Among the **Northeastern** and hill states, Himachal Pradesh is at the top with a score of 5.22, followed by **Uttarakhand**, **Tripura**, and **Mizoram** at 4.87, 4.5, and 4.41 respectively.
- In the list of **environment rankings**, West Bengal is on top, followed by Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Bihar.
- In **economic governance ranking**, Karnataka leads, followed by Maharashtra, Telangana, Gujarat, and Tamil Nadu.

Conclusion:

- Few challenges that are faced in accomplishment of good governance are weak institutions, lack of participation and democratisation, lack of social capital, corruption and other.
- It is essential to address these challenges to achieve good governance that plays a paramount role in the transformation of predatory state to welfare state.

Connecting the dots:

- Do you think Good Governance Index brings in healthy competition among the states?
- What are the challenges of Good Governance?

Defamation Case

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II – Governance

In News

- Supreme Court has held that internet intermediaries like Google cannot be protected from criminal defamation cases registered against them prior to October 27, 2009.
- It was only on October 27, 2009 that Parliament amended the **Information Technology Act of 2000** to protect online intermediaries from liability for criminally defamatory content published in them by third parties.
- The amended **Section 79 of the 2000 Act** provided that “an intermediary shall not be liable for any third party information, data, or communication link made available or hosted by him.”
- The amendment gave almost blanket protection to intermediaries from legal action under **Section 499/500 (criminal defamation)** of the Indian Penal Code.
- In India, defamation cases can be filed under two heads. It is either civil or criminal.
 - In civil defamation, a person who is defamed can move either the High Court or the subordinate courts and seek damages in the form of monetary compensation. There is no punishment in the form of jail sentence

- In criminal defamation, the person against whom a defamation case is filed might be sentenced to **two years' imprisonment** or fined or both.

Doorstep delivery of public services scheme

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II – Governance

In News

- The doorstep delivery of public services scheme is implemented by the administrative reforms department of the **Delhi government**.
- The scheme offers **100 government services** at the homes of citizens, helping them avoid queues, touts, bribery and multiple visits to government offices.
- Under the scheme, citizens can call on the number — **1076** — to avail government services. After the call, a person will visit the citizen and collect documents required for the service and process the request. Citizens can book an appointment online through www.edistrict.delhigovt.nic.in
- Now there are three ways to get things done at the government offices in Delhi—
 - By visiting government offices, where the success rate is 57% and 43% of the applications get rejected;
 - By applying online, wherein 45% of the applications get cleared while 55% get rejected; and
 - **Doorstep delivery, where the success rate is 91%** and only 9% of the applications get rejected
- The high success rate in doorstep delivery is due to mobile Sahayaks's intervention who ensure that all documents are complete and attached in the right order along with the applications.

Mapathon Keralam

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-II – Governance

In News

- As many as 10,130 government offices have already been mapped as part of the ₹4.24-crore-Mapathon Keralam project which is part of the Rebuild Kerala Initiative.
- The project aims at creating **micro-level maps** of the entire state for identifying all the **natural and physical assets**
- Maps will be useful for planning and implementing flood control and rehabilitation activities.
- **A crowdsourcing mapping initiative:** The maps are to be created online with public participation, and anyone with a computer/mobile phone and an internet connection can participate in the initiative.

About Rebuild Kerala Initiative.

- After damage caused by floods in the state during August 2018, Kerala government launched Rebuild Kerala Initiative with the objective of building resilience and mitigating risk, adopting the concept of 'building back better'.
- The aim of RKI is to catalyse rebuilding of Kerala in a way that addresses key drivers of floods, natural disasters & climate change risks and **strengthens the State's preparedness against future disasters**.
- It is the government's vision of converting the crisis into an opportunity by more explicitly embedding the idea of building a green and resilient Kerala.

Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) drops Monitoring agency plan

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-II- Governance

In News

- UIDAI was seeking to hire a social media agency that will employ 'social listening' tools to monitor and influence conversations on Aadhaar on Facebook and Twitter.
- However, it has informed the Supreme Court -which is hearing a plea objecting such a proposal – that it has decided to withdraw hiring Social media monitoring agency

About UIDAI

- UIDAI was created with the objective to issue Unique Identification numbers (UID), named as "Aadhaar", to all residents of India that is (a) robust enough to eliminate duplicate and fake identities, and (b) can be verified and authenticated in an easy, cost-effective way.
- UIDAI is a **statutory authority** established under the provisions of the Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act, 2016.
- Prior to its establishment as a statutory authority, UIDAI was functioning as an attached office of the then Planning Commission (now NITI Aayog)
- Under the Aadhaar Act 2016, **UIDAI is responsible for**
 - **Aadhaar enrolment and authentication**, including operation and management of all stages of Aadhaar life cycle,
 - Developing the **policy**, procedure and system for issuing Aadhaar numbers to individuals and
 - Perform authentication and
 - To ensure **the security** of identity information and authentication records of individuals.
- It comes under the Electronics & IT ministry.

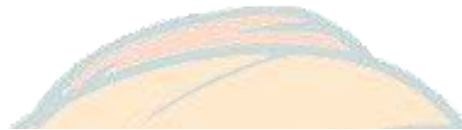
No State-wise minority classification

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-II – Polity

In News

- The petition asked the Supreme Court to frame guidelines to “identify and define” religious minorities in every State, especially where **Hindus are in a minority (in eight states)** so as to protect their culture and interests.
- **Articles 29** (protection of the interests of minorities) and **Article 30** (the right of minorities to administer educational institutions) of the Constitution deals with special provisions for minorities.
- However, the Supreme Court dismissed a petition stating that the **States have been carved language-wise**. But religion is beyond all borders, especially political borders. **Religion has to be taken on a pan-India basis**

Increase Lok Sabha seats

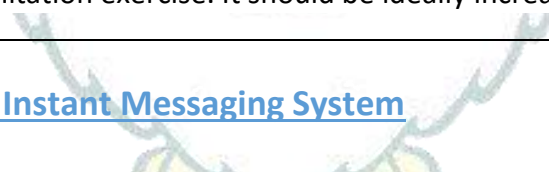


Part of: GS Prelims and GS-II- Polity

In News

- Former President Pranab Mukherjee made a case for raising the number of Lok Sabha constituencies to 1,000 from the existing 543 and for a corresponding increase in the Rajya Sabha’s strength,
- He argued that India has a “disproportionately large size” of electorate for elected representatives and thus needs expansion of Parliament
- The last time the **strength of the Lok Sabha was revised was in 1977**, which, he noted, was based on the 1971 census that put the total population at 55 crore.
- The population since then has more than doubled, and there is a ‘strong case’ to remove the freeze in the delimitation exercise. It should be ideally increased to 1,000.

GIMS or Government Instant Messaging System



Part of: GS Prelims and GS-II – Governance

In News

- The government is testing a prototype of an Indian equivalent of popular messaging platforms, such as WhatsApp and Telegram, for **secure internal use** – codenamed GIMS
- Designed and developed by the **Kerala unit of National Informatics Centre (NIC)**
- GIMS is being packaged for employees of Central and state government departments and organisations for intra and inter organisation communications
- It is being developed as a secure Indian alternative without the security concerns attached with apps hosted abroad or those owned by foreign entities. Like WhatsApp, GIMS **employs end-to-end encryption for one-to-one messaging**

Do You know?

- There was a **WhatsApp breach** through a spyware called **Pegasus** some Indian users’ mobile devices were targeted

- Pegasus code can be transmitted via Whatsapp call. It sends the targets contacts, calls and messages to its controller. It can also turn the phone into a spy device by switching on the camera or microphone.

GST compensation

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-II – Federalism

In News

- The Centre released ₹35,298 crore to the States in Goods and Services Tax (GST) compensation, just two days before a crucial meeting of the GST Council.
- Earlier in Nov 2019, the Centre had written to States voicing concern that due to lower GST collections, the compensation cess might not be enough to pay for the losses arising out of the adoption of the tax system.
- While the government had budgeted for ₹6,63,343 crore in GST collections for the current fiscal, 2019-20, it had garnered only about 50% of its budget estimate in the first eight months.

About GST Council

- The GST Council is a **constitutional body** established under **Article 279A** of Indian Constitution
- It makes recommendations to the Union and State Government on issues related to Goods and Service Tax (GST).
- The GST Council is **chaired by the Union Finance Minister**.
- Its other members are the Union State Minister of Revenue or Finance and Ministers in-charge of Finance or Taxation of all the States.

NHRC seeks report on assault cases

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-II – Polity

In News

- Expressing concern over the recent sexual assault cases, NHRC issued notices to the Centre, States and Union Territories seeking reports on the standard operating procedure (SOP) for dealing with such cases and the use of the Nirbhaya Fund.
- The Commission's action comes in the wake of the gang-rape and murder of a doctor in Hyderabad that has spurred a debate on the condition of women's security in the country once again
- **Taking suomotu cognisance** of media reports, the NHRC observed that there was a "dire need for all stakeholders to work jointly to get rid of this evil."

About National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)

- It is a statutory organization established under the Protection of Human Rights Act (PHRA), 1993.
- It is in conformity with the **Paris Principles**, adopted at the first international workshop on national institutions for the protection of human rights held in Paris in 1991

- The purpose of the NHRC is, suo moto or through the petition of a person, to investigate the violation of human rights or the failures of the state or other to prevent a human rights violation.
- The commissions may also take on research about human rights, create awareness campaigns through various mediums, and encourage the work of NGOs.

About Nirbhaya Fund

- It was established in 2013 for implementation of initiatives aimed at enhancing the safety and security for women in the country.
- It is a non-lapsable corpus fund, established by Union **Finance Ministry**

National Register of Indian Citizens



TOPIC: General Studies II -Indian Constitution

Context:

- On November 20, 2019 the Union Home Minister, Mr. Amit Shah, answered a starred question in the Rajya Sabha thus: “Preparation of National Register of Indian Citizens (NRIC) is governed by the provisions of Section 14A of The Citizenship Act, 1955 and The Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and Issue of National Identity Cards) Rules 2003. Section 14A of the Citizenship Act, 1955 provides for compulsory registration of every citizen of India and maintenance of NRIC. The procedure to prepare and maintain NRIC is specified in The Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and Issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003.”

Rules that authorise an NRIC

- **Rule 11** states that the “Registrar General of Citizen Registration shall cause to maintain the National Register of Indian Citizen in electronic or some other form which shall entail its continuous updating on the basis of extracts from various registers specified under the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969 and the [Citizenship] Act [1955].”
- **Rule 4** places the responsibility to carry out a census-like exercise on the Central government and not on citizens. This deals with the “Preparation of the National Register of Indian Citizens” which provides that the Central Government shall carry out a “house-to-house enumeration for collection for particulars related to each family and Individual including the citizenship status”.
- **Rule 6** provides that every individual must get himself/herself registered with the Local Registrar of Citizen Registrations during the period of initialisation (the period specified as the start date of the NRIC). Note that this does not begin with a non-obstante clause or words that give it overriding effect over all other clauses. What this means is that this rule is circumscribed by the other clauses in the Act.

Do you know?

NRC: The National Register of Citizens (NRC) is a register maintained by the Government of India containing names & certain relevant information for identification of Indian citizens First started in Assam state of India.

Who are illegal migrants?

- Migration of people into a country in violation of the immigration laws of that country, or the continued residence of people without the legal right to live in that country.

What is the Passport Act?

- The Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920, was one of the early set of rules made against illegal migrants,
- It empowered the government to make rules requiring persons entering India to be in possession of passports.
- It also granted the government the power to remove from India any person who entered without a passport.
- The concept of “burden of proof” was introduced in Foreigners Act, 1940.
- Section 7 of the Act provided that whenever a question arose with regard to the nationality of a person, the onus of proving that he was not a foreigner lay upon the person.

When was the Foreigners Act made more stringent?

- The legislature enacted the Foreigners Act, 1946, by repealing the 1940 Act.
- It conferred wide powers to deal with all foreigners.
- It empowered the government to make provisions for prohibiting, regulating or restricting the entry of foreigners into India.
- It also restricted the rights enjoyed by foreigners in terms of their stay in the country if any such orders are passed by the authority.
- The 1946 Act empowered the government to take such steps as are necessary, including the use of force for securing compliance with such directions.
- The ‘burden of proof’ lies with the person, and not with the authorities is still applicable in all States and Union Territories.
- This has been upheld by a Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court.

What about the Foreigners (Tribunals) Order?

- In 1964 the Foreigners (Tribunals) Order was brought in.
- The tribunal has the authority to decide whether a person is a foreigner within the ambit of the Foreigners Act, 1946.
- The tribunal has powers similar to those of a civil court.
- It gives reasonable opportunity to the person alleged to be a foreigner to produce evidence in support of his case, before passing its order.
- In June this year, the Home Ministry made certain amendments in the Foreigners (Tribunals) Order, 1964.
- It was to empower district magistrates in all States and Union Territories to set up tribunals to decide whether a person staying illegally in India is a foreigner or not.

Why did the IMDT Act fail?

- The Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunals) Act, 1983, was also referred to as the IMDT Act.
- It was introduced for the detection and deportation of illegal migrants who had entered India on or after March 25, 1971.
- It was unsuccessful.
- One factor for its failure was that it did not contain any provision on ‘burden of proof’ similar to the Foreigners Act, 1946.

- This put a very heavy burden upon the authorities to establish whether a person is an illegal migrant.
- The result of the IMDT Act was that a number of non-Indians who may have entered Assam after March 25, 1971 without possession of valid documents, continue to reside in Assam.
- In the Supreme Court landmark verdict on a petition by Sarbananda Sonowal (now the Chief Minister of Assam), challenging the IMDT Act in 2005 the top court quashed the IMDT Act.
- The verdict also closed all tribunals in Assam functioning under the Act.
- It transferred all pending cases at the IMDT tribunals to the Foreigners Tribunals constituted under the Foreigners (Tribunals) Order, 1964.
- Any person excluded from the National Register of Citizens (NRC) recently concluded in Assam can approach The Foreigners Tribunals, established only in Assam, within 120 days of receiving a certified copy of rejection.
- In other States, a person suspected to be a foreigner is produced before a local court under the Passport Act, 1920, or the Foreigners Act, 1946.

Connecting the dots:

- The NRC mess in Assam should serve as a cautionary tale for a nationwide exercise. Comment.

National Population Register (NPR): West Bengal Opts out of the exercise

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-II- Governance, Federalism

In News

- The objective of the NPR, is to create a comprehensive identity database of every **usual resident in the country**.
- Usual resident is defined as a person **who has resided in a local area for the past six months or more** or a person who intends to reside in that area for the next six months or more
- The database will contain **demographic as well as biometric particulars**.
- It is **mandatory** for every usual resident of India to register in the NPR.
- Unlike the NRC, the NPR will **also include foreigners** living in India.
- The NPR is being developed under the principles of the Citizenship Act of 1955, and the Citizenship Rules set out in 2003
- **When was it recently conducted?**
 - The data for National Population Register was collected in 2010 alongwith the houselisting phase of Census of India 2011.
 - It has been decided to update the National Population Register along with the Houselisting phase of Census 2021 during April to September 2020 in all the States/UTs except Assam.
- **Criticism:** About the government's capability to manage and protect this information.

Political Parties Registration Tracking Management System (PPRTMS)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-II – Polity

In News

1. The Election Commission of India has reviewed the system and process of registration of political parties.
2. Accordingly, the PPRTMS will be implemented through an online portal, to facilitate tracking of status of application by applicants.
3. The salient feature in the PPRTMS is that the applicant (who is applying for party registration from **1st January, 2020 onwards**) will be able to track the progress of his / her application and will get status update through SMS and email.
4. The applicant is required to provide contact mobile number and email address of the party / applicant in his application if he/she wishes to track the progress of the application.
5. The Registration of Political Parties is governed by the provisions of section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951.

PM-AASHA scheme

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II –Governance

In News

- **Less than 3% of this season's sanctioned** amount of pulses and oilseeds have actually been procured so far under the PM-AASHA scheme, Agriculture Ministry data show
- A total of 37.59 lakh metric tons of procurement had been sanctioned under the Centrally-funded scheme. However, only 1.08 lakh tons have been procured so far.
- The PM-AASHA or Pradhan Mantri Annadata AaySanrakshan Abhiyan, was announced in September 2018, as an effort to ensure that farmers growing pulses, oilseeds and copra actually get the minimum support prices they are promised for their crops each year.
- Apart from initiatives to allow cash payment to farmers or procurement by private traders, PM-AASHA's main feature was a **price support scheme whereby Central agencies would procure pulses and oilseeds directly from farmers.**
- The Centre had budgeted ₹15,053 crore over two years to implement the scheme apart from an additional government credit guarantee of ₹16,550 crore for agencies undertaking procurement.

Fifteenth Finance Commission

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II – Polity

In News

- **The 15th Finance Commission** submitted its interim report on devolution formula for the financial year 2020-21 to President Ram NathKovind.
- The devolution formula spells out how the Centre plans to share the taxes collected by it with the States.

- Since, the formula is to be applied in the new Budget, the award has not been made public.
- Now, the report will first be studied and then a final view will be taken by the Cabinet following which it will be tabled in Parliament just before the Union Budget next year. Only after that will the contents be made public.
- Normally, the government accepts the award in toto, however, it is free to accept or reject other suggestions in the report.

Do You Know?

- The Finance Commission was constituted by the President of India under **Article 280 of the Constitution** on 27th of November 2017 to make recommendations for a period of five years from 1st April 2020 to 31 March 2025.
- However, the Gazette Notification dated 27 November 2019 mandated the Commission to submit the report for the financial year 2020-21 by 30 November 2019 and then the final report for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2026 by 30 October 2020.
- This extension has been necessitated after Article 370 of the Constitution was amended. Following this the State of Jammu & Kashmir was bifurcated into two Union Territories, Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh. Thus, there was a need to change the terms of reference and **extension of the term**.
- The last time an interim report was submitted was during the term of **11th Finance Commission (2000-05)**, when the new States of Jharkhand, Uttarakhand and Chhattisgarh were created.

126th Constitution Amendment Bill

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-II – Polity

In News

The reservation given to SCs, STs and the Anglo-Indian community for the past 70 years is to end on January 25, 2020

- The 126th Constitution Amendment Bill **seeks to extend by 10 years reservation** to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Lok Sabha and the Assemblies
- The reservation has been included in **Article 334** and therefore the bill seeks to amend the article.
- Article 334 lays down that the provisions for reservation of seats and special representation of Anglo-Indians, SC and ST will cease after 40 years. The clause was included in 1949. After 40 years, it is being amended with an extension of 10 years.
- A similar reservation for the Anglo-Indian community in Lok Sabha and state assemblies is not being extended, as per the provisions of the bill.
- According to Law Minister, there are **only 296 members of the Anglo-Indian community in India**.

Citizenship Amendment Bill

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

In News

- The Union Cabinet recently cleared the contentious **Citizenship Amendment Bill** for Parliament to take over. The Citizenship Bill is now likely to be tabled in the Lok Sabha for clearance.

Background

- The Union Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi today cleared the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2019, paving way for its introduction in Parliament during the ongoing Winter session.
- In its amended form, the Citizenship Amendment Bill 2019 (CAB) seeks to provide Indian nationality to six minority communities — Hindu, Christian, Sikh, Parsi, Jain and Buddhist — fleeing “persecution” from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh.
- Ever since it was first tabled in the Parliament in July 2016, the Bill has been **mired in controversies** for granting citizenship rights to specific communities.

History/Background

- While illegal migrants cannot become Indian citizens, the government had exempted specified groups of illegal migrants in 2015 and 2016 from provisions of The Foreigners Act, 1946 and The Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920.
- The Centre’s intervention meant that these particular categories of illegal migrants would not be deported or jailed for being in India without valid documents.
- The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016 was tabled in Lok Sabha in 2016 during NDA-1 to amend The Citizenship Act, 1955 so that these people could be made eligible for citizenship of India.
- However, massive protests erupted in the North East and acted as a deterrent for the introduction of the Bill in Rajya Sabha.
- Rajya Sabha adjourned sine die in 2019, without the Bill being tabled.
- The Bill lapsed as the 16th Lok Sabha was dissolved.

Highlights :

- The bill amends the Citizenship Act, 1955 to make illegal migrants who are Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan, eligible for citizenship.
- Under the earlier proposed Act, one of the requirements for citizenship is that the applicant must have resided in India during the last 12 months, and for 11 of the previous 14 years.
- The Citizenship Bill 2019 relaxes this 11-year requirement to 6 years for applicants belonging to these six religions, and the aforementioned three countries.
- The Bill allows that registration of Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholders may be cancelled for violation of any law, including minor offences such as parking in a no-parking zone.

Govt stand and criticism:

- Centre says these minority groups have come escaping persecution in Muslim-majority nations. However, the logic is not consistent – the bill does not protect all religious minorities, nor does it apply to all neighbours.

- The Ahmedia Muslim sect and even Shias face discrimination in Pakistan. Rohingya Muslims and Hindus face persecution in neighbouring Burma, and Hindu and Christian Tamils in neighbouring Sri Lanka.
- The government responds that Muslims can seek refuge in Islamic nations, but has not answered the other questions.

Why the concern in Northeastern states?

- The North-eastern states have flagged concerns over the Citizenship Amendment Bill time and again.
- The prospect of citizenship for massive numbers of illegal Bangladeshi migrants has triggered deep anxieties, including fears of demographic change, loss of livelihood opportunities, and erosion of the indigenous culture in the north-eastern states.
- Massive protests had erupted in anticipation of the introduction of the Bill.

Exceptions in the bills:

- CAB won't apply to areas under the sixth schedule of the Constitution – which deals with autonomous tribal-dominated regions in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.
- The bill will also not apply to states that have the inner-line permit regime (Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Mizoram).

How is it different from NRC(National register for citizens)?

- The National Register of Citizens or NRC that we saw in Assam targeted illegal immigrants.
- A person had to prove that either they, or their ancestors were in Assam on or before March 24, 1971.
- NRC, which may be extended to the rest of the country, is not based on religion unlike CAB.

What is the controversy around the Citizenship Amendment Bill 2019?

- The government has maintained that the bill has significance equivalent to its decision on Article 370.
- The government argued that the Bill aims to grant citizenship to minorities who have faced religious persecution in Muslim-majority foreign countries.
- The Opposition has attacked the government for leaving out Muslims, terming it in violation of Constitutional provisions.
- Article 14 of the Constitution guarantees the right to equality.
- The BJP leaders have pitched the NRC and the CAB as a package that will root out illegal migrants but will provide citizenship to persecuted communities from the neighbouring Muslim-majority countries.

Conclusion:

- India was not created on the basis of religion, Pakistan was. Only the Muslim League and the Hindu Right advocated the two nation theory of Hindu and Muslim nations, which led to Partition.
- All the founders of India were committed to a secular state, where all citizens irrespective of religion enjoyed full membership.

Connecting the dots:

- Citizenship law amendment goes against non-discriminatory norms in the Constitution. Critically Analyse

Assam protests against Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II –Govt. policies

Context:

- In the protests in the Northeast against the Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB), 2019, the outrage has been most intense, sustained and widespread in Assam.
- Large parts of the other Northeastern states have been exempted from the ambit of the CAB, although there have been protests there too. On the other hand, the larger part of Assam is under CAB.

Reason for protests in Assam

- Angst against the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill rooted in a fear that illegal Bengali Hindu migrants from Bangladesh, if regularized, will threaten cultural and linguistic identities.
- Students, activists, writers, actors, musicians and people from all walks of life thronged the streets to voice their angst against the bill since they believe the bill will pose a serious threat to their livelihood and political destiny.
- Though this provision covers refugees from three nations, the people in the North-East fear that it will primarily benefit the illegal Bengali Hindu migrants from Bangladesh who have settled in “large numbers” across the region.
- Though the BJP has tried to hard sell the bill projecting it as a strategy to protect the Hindu identity of Assam against the influx of Muslims from Bangladesh, it failed to take into account the fear among the Assamese people of cultural hegemony of Hindu Bengalis
- The Assamese fear that if Bengali Hindus and Bengali Muslims join hands, Bangla speakers will easily outnumber Assamese-speaking people in the state, as it has happened in Tripura where Bengali-Hindu immigrants from East Bengal now dominate political power, pushing the original tribals to the margins.

Areas which are exempted

There are two categories that have been given exemption — states protected by the ‘Inner Line’, and areas covered under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.

- **Inner Line Permit (ILP):** This is a special permit that citizens from other parts of India require to enter a state protected by the ILP regime. Without an ILP granted by the state government, an Indian from another state cannot visit an state that is under the ILP regime.
- **Sixth Schedule:** The Sixth Schedule relates to special provisions in administration of certain Northeastern states. It provides special powers for Autonomous District Councils (ADCs) in these states. ADCs have powers to enact laws in areas under their jurisdiction on a variety of subjects, one of its objectives being to boost self-governance by tribal communities.

State by state

- **Assam:** The state has three Autonomous District Councils, two of which are geographically contiguous. While these are protected, CAB will be in effect in a larger area.
- **Meghalaya:** This state too has three ADCs. Unlike in Assam, the ADCs in Meghalaya cover almost the entire state. Only a small part of Shillong is not covered. CAB will be effective in that part of Shillong while the rest of the state is protected.

- **Tripura:** One ADC covers around 70% of the state's area. However, the remaining 30% holds about two-thirds of the population. CAB is effective in the smaller, more densely populated regions.
- **Arunachal Pradesh:** Entire state covered under ILP regime, protected from CAB.
- **Nagaland:** Entire state covered under ILP regime, protected from CAB. So far, only Dimapur used to be outside the regime. Now, ILP has been extended to Dimapur, too, so the whole state is now exempt.
- **Mizoram:** Entire state covered under ILP regime, protected from CAB. Additionally, the state has three ADCs that are also protected under the Sixth Schedule.
- **Manipur:** Entire state gets new ILP protection. The state was not protected under either option, but following the introduction of CAB in Parliament, the government has introduced ILP in Manipur too.

Do you know?

- The new amendment to the Citizenship Act of 1955 aims to provide Indian citizenship to Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi and Christian refugees from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan.
- A person belonging to any of these faiths – who entered India on or before December 31, 2014 and have lived in the country for six years – can apply for Indian citizenship.

Connecting the dots:

- Citizenship Amendment Bill not only excludes Muslims but creates other complications. Analyse.

Protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill 2019

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II –Govt. policies

Context:

- Protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act at Jamia Millia Islamia in Delhi and Aligarh Muslim University, followed by violent clash between students and police, have had a ripple effect across the country.

Background

Acquiring Indian citizenship:

- According to the Ministry of Home Affairs, there are four ways in which Indian citizenship can be acquired: birth, descent, registration and naturalisation.
- The provisions are listed under Citizenship Act, 1955.

By birth:

1. Every person born in India on or after 26.01.1950 but before 01.07.1987 is an Indian citizen irrespective of the nationality of his/her parents.
2. Every person born in India between 01.07.1987 and 02.12.2004 is a citizen of India given either of his/her parents is a citizen of the country at the time of his/her birth.
3. Every person born in India on or after 3.12.2004 is a citizen of the country given both his/her parents are Indians or at least one parent is a citizen and the other is not an illegal migrant at the time of birth.

By registration with conditions:

1. A person of Indian origin who has been a resident of India for 7 years before applying for registration.
2. A person of Indian origin who is a resident of any country outside undivided India.
3. A person who is married to an Indian citizen and is ordinarily resident for 7 years before applying for registration.
4. Minor children of persons who are citizens of India.

By descent:

1. A person born outside India on or after January 26, 1950 is a citizen of India by descent if his/her father was a citizen of India by birth.
2. A person born outside India on or after December 10, 1992, but before December 3, 2004 if either of his/her parent was a citizen of India by birth.
3. If a person born outside India or or after December 3, 2004 has to acquire citizenship, his/her parents have to declare that the minor does not hold the passport of another country and his/her birth is registered at an Indian consulate within one year of birth.

By naturalisation:

- A person can acquire citizenship by naturalisation if he/she is ordinarily resident of India for 12 years (throughout 12 months preceding the date of application and 11 years in the aggregate) and fulfils all qualifications in the third schedule of the Citizenship Act.

Dual citizenship:

- The amended Citizenship Act of 1955 does not provide for dual citizenship or dual nationality.
- Any citizen of India, who by registration, naturalisation or otherwise voluntarily takes the citizenship of another country, shall upon such acquisition cease to be a citizen of India.
- Cases of termination or cessation of citizenship will be determined ultimately by courts of law.

The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill 2019:

- The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill or CAB, which grants Indian citizenship to the non-Muslims of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh (Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhist, Jains and Parsis)
- The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill proposes to grant citizenship to the non-Muslims Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhist, Jains and Parsis — from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh who arrived in India before December 31, 2014.
- CAB paves way for Indian citizenship to lakhs of immigrants, who identify themselves with any of the given religions, even if they lacked any document to prove their residency. It also means that any immigrant who does not belong to the said communities would not be eligible for Indian citizenship
- Any illegal immigrant from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh who belongs to these said communities will not be deported or imprisoned if they are not carrying any valid documents for their residency in India
- The duration of the immigrants' residency was 11 years. The amended bill has reduced it to five years. This means that immigrants from the three countries and from the mentioned religions, who have entered India before December 31, 2014, would not be treated as illegal immigrants.

Exemptions:

- Bill exempts certain areas in the North-East from this provision tribal areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura as included in **Sixth Schedule of the Constitution** and the area covered under the **Inner Limit notified** under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873.(Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Mizoram along with almost whole of Meghalaya and parts of Assam and Tripura)

The Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) cardholders:

- As per the citizenship bill, a foreigner may register as an OCI under the 1955 Act if they are of Indian origin (e.g., former citizen of India or their descendants) or the spouse of a person of Indian origin.
- The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill entitles the OCI cardholders to benefits such as the right to travel to India, and to work and study in the country. The Citizenship Bill, which was passed in the Rajya Sabha, amends the Act to allow cancellation of OCI registration if the person has violated any law notified by the Central government.

Concerns :

- Lack of inclusion of several non-Muslim countries around India, such as Sri Lanka, concern about the citizenship status of Tamil-speaking Hindus who were allowed to legally settle in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu due to previous discrimination on the
- Tibetan refugees from China are also excluded from the bill despite being an ongoing concern and being unable to acquire Indian nationality
- The passage of the Act caused large scale protests in India Muslim groups and secular groups have protested alleging religious discrimination, for violating the secular Constitution of India and its promise of equality under Article 14 and believe it legalises religious discrimination
- The people of Assam and other north-eastern states continue to protest fearing that the non-Muslim illegal immigrants in their regions would be allowed to stay. The protests stem from the fear that illegal Bengali Hindu migrants from Bangladesh, if regularised under CAB, will threaten cultural and linguistic identities of the state.
- Act was criticised by the **United States Commission on International Religious Freedom**

Way forward:

- Conciliation would be the best way forward to contain violence and reassure those in need of reassurance, pending a determination by the Supreme Court on the constitutional validity of the Act.
- Incendiary statements and irresponsible finger-pointing on the basis of no evidence is not needed

Conclusion:

- Preamble of India ensures equality of status and opportunity the act is evident that it violates this principle and it also violates UDHR 1948 declaration so steps must be taken to ensure this status

[Section 144: Protests against Citizenship Amendment Act & Section 144](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II –Govt. policies

Context:

- As protesters against the Citizenship Amendment Act hit the streets in large numbers in several states, state governments sought to tamp down on the demonstrations by issuing prohibitory orders under Section 144 of the Code Of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), 1973.

Section 144 CrPC:

- Section 144 CrPC, a law retained from the colonial era,
- It empowers a district magistrate, a sub-divisional magistrate or any other executive magistrate specially empowered by the state government in this behalf to issue orders to prevent and address urgent cases of apprehended danger or nuisance.
- The magistrate has to pass a written directed against a particular individual, or to persons residing in a particular place or area, or to the public generally.
- In emergency cases, the magistrate can pass these orders without prior notice to the individual against whom the order is directed.

<p>Section 144: What it Says and What it Means</p>	3	<p>Such orders are issued for two months at a time and powers are supposed to be used in cases of urgency and when a quick response is needed</p>	4	<p>The Supreme Court has ruled that section 144, if used appropriately, is not unconstitutional. Powers are supposed to be used in an emergency</p>
	1	<p>Usually seen as a law to ban protests in a certain area, the ambit of section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code is actually much wider</p>	2	<p>First introduced in 1861, the law gives powers to a magistrate to order a person to abstain from an act, which could obstruct or cause annoyance or injury to any person "lawfully employed", or pose a "danger to human life, health or safety, or a disturbance of the public tranquillity"</p>

Powers under Section 144 CrPC

- The magistrate can direct any person to abstain from a certain act or to take a certain order with respect to certain property in his possession or under his management.
- This usually includes restrictions on movement, carrying arms and from assembling unlawfully. It is generally believed that assembly of three or more people is prohibited under Section 144.
- It can be used to restrict even a single individual.
- Order passed under Section 144 can remain in force for more than two months from the date of the order

Criticisms:

- It is too broad and the words of the section are wide enough to give absolute power to a magistrate that may be exercised unjustifiably.
- An aggrieved individual can approach the High Court by filing a writ petition if his fundamental rights are at stake. However, fears exist that before the High Court intervenes, the rights could already have been infringed

- Imposition of Section 144 to an entire state has also drawn criticism since the security situation differs from area to area.

SC Judgements:

1961 in **Babulal Parate vs State of Maharashtra and Others**

- The Supreme Court refused to strike down the law, saying it is “not correct to say that the remedy of a person aggrieved by an order under the section was illusory”.

1970 (**Madhu Limaye vs Sub-Divisional Magistrate**):

- a seven-judge Bench the power of a magistrate under Section 144 “is not an ordinary power flowing from administration but a power used in a judicial manner and which can stand further judicial scrutiny”.
- It ruled that the restrictions imposed through Section 144 cannot be held to be violative of the right to freedom of speech and expression, which is a fundamental right because it falls under the “reasonable restrictions” under Article 19(2) of the Constitution. The fact that the “law may be abused” is no reason to strike it down

Conclusion:

- Section 144 is a useful tool to help deal with emergencies. However, absence of any narrow tailoring of wide executive powers with specific objectives, coupled with very limited judicial oversight over the executive branch, makes it ripe for abuse and misuse.

Connecting the dots:

- Do you think Section 144 is being misused?
- Do you think Section 144 curbs Fundamental rights?

Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) of 2019: Consequences on the domestic and foreign policy

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II –Govt. policies

Context:

- In India, widespread protests that began in the Northeast are now raging across the country.
- Two Bangladesh ministers cancelled their visit to India, the Japanese Prime Minister postponed his visit to the country and the annual India-Japan summit was cancelled.

JAPAN’S Investment in North- East :

- As part of its Free and Open Indo-Pacific strategy, Japan has been investing in the Northeast in a big way.
- Recently Japan decided to invest Rs 13,000 crore in different projects in the Northeast.
- Building Northeast road network connectivity, water supply projects and economic modernisation of the region.
- It will be financing the construction of India’s longest bridge between **Dhubri in Assam and Phulbari in Meghalaya**.
- Japan has contributed official development assistance loans for the North East Road Network Connectivity Improvement Project.

- Private Japanese organisations are also financing a host of developmental projects in the region.

Impact of CAA on Japan India relations:

- The CAA protests and Internet shutdowns in the region have come as a huge shock to Japan and its investment plans in the region which hinge on stability and a business-friendly environment conducive.
- If Japan has to rethink on these development projects, it will do so keeping in mind not only the Northeast but the rest of India too. (Japan is involved in various big-ticket infrastructure projects in Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Odisha, etc.)
- The volatility of the Northeast can possibly be a setback to the collaborative efforts between India and Japan in providing an alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative.
- Japan is also a member of the **Quad**, which came into existence to counter Chinese economic prowess and unlock India's potential in the Indo-Pacific.

Impact on India's International relations:

- UN human rights office has described the CAA as "fundamentally discriminatory".
- The U.S., the U.K., Canada and others have issued travel advisories to those visiting the Northeast.

Way forward:

- The government should utilise diplomatic channels to put forth its views before the stakeholders in the international community

Conclusion:

- The government should analyse how such a decision like CAA would affect the economic development of the Northeast.

Connecting the dots:

- When Kashmir is already volatile, can India afford to open another frontier of vulnerability in the Northeast?
- What are the side effects on the country's relationship with foreign stakeholders heavily invested in the Northeast?

National Population Register (NPR): Census will be conducted in 2021

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II –Govt. policies

Context:

- The Union Cabinet approved a proposal to conduct Census 2021 and update the National Population Register (NPR). While the Census will be conducted in 2021, the NPR update will take place from April to September 2020 in all the States/UTs except Assam.
- According to the sources, the Union Cabinet has approved a proposal of the Home Ministry to spend Rs 8,754 crore for the Census 2021 and Rs 3,941 crore for updating the NPR.

NPR

- The NPR is a register of usual residents of the country.
- It is mandatory for every usual resident of India to register in the NPR.
- It includes both Indian citizens as well as a foreign citizen.

Objectives:

- To create a comprehensive identity database of every usual resident in the country.
- The first National Population Register was prepared in 2010 and updating this data was done during 2015 by conducting door to door survey.
- The next update of the NPR will take place next year from April to September with the House listing phase of the Census 2021.
- It is being prepared at the local (Village/sub-Town), sub-District, District, State and National level under provisions of the Citizenship Act 1955 and the Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003.

Usual resident

- According to the Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003, a usual resident is a person who has resided in a local area for the past 6 months or more or a person who intends to reside in that area for the next 6 months or more.

Census:

- The Census is the enumeration of the population of the country It is being conducted at an interval of 10 years.
- Census 2021 will be 16th census in the country since the first census happened in 1872
- For the first time, the Census 2021 will use the Mobile App for data collection. It will also provide a facility to the public for self-enumeration.

NPR connected to NRC?


- The Citizenship Act empowers the government to compulsorily register every citizen and maintain a National Register of Indian Citizens.
- A nationwide NRC — if undertaken — would flow out of NPR.
- This does not necessarily mean that an NRC must follow NPR — no such register was compiled after the previous NPR in 2010.
- After a list of residents is created, a nationwide NRC — if it happens — could go about verifying the citizens from that list.

Concerns:

- Another debate has been about privacy.
- The NPR intends to collect many details of personal data on residents.
- The government position is based on two grounds. One is that every country must have a comprehensive identity database of its residents with demographic details.
- Largely to justify the collection of data such as driving licence, voter ID and PAN, is that it will ease the life of those residing in India by cutting red tape

Concerns in West Bengal and Kerala:

- These Opposition-ruled states are making a political point. Citizenship, aliens and naturalisation are subject matters listed in List 1 of the Seventh Schedule that fall exclusively under the domain of Parliament.
- Legally, the states have no say in implementing or ruling out NPR. However, given that the manpower is drawn from the states, the defiance could potentially result in a showdown.

DATA COLLECTION, THEN & NOW	
<p>Details of individual required for NPR in 2020</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Name of person Relationship to head of household Sex Date of Birth Marital status Educational qualification Occupation/Activity Father's Name/Mothers Name/Spouse Name Place of birth Present address of usual residence Duration of stay at present address Nationality (as declared) Permanent residential address <p>NEW</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Aadhaar Number (Voluntary) Mobile Number Date & Place of Birth of Parents Place of Last Residence Passport Number* Voter ID Card Number Permanent Account Number Driving License Number <p><small>*If holder of Indian Passport</small></p>	 <p>Details of individual required for NPR in 2010</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Name of person Relationship to head of household Father's name Mother's name Spouse's name (if married) Sex Date of Birth Marital status Place of birth Nationality (as declared) Present address of usual residence Duration of stay at present address Permanent residential address Occupation/Activity Educational qualification

Helping Hand

NPR will seek verification of biometrics from UIDAI


Exercise will be carried out across country, except Assam

Those holding Aadhaar not required to give biometrics for NPR

NPR will have both biometric & demographic details

15 demographic parameters included in NPR

To be conducted between April 1, 2020, and Sept 30, 2020



SRC: IE

Citizenship Act:

- It is being prepared at the local (Village/sub-Town), sub-District, District, State and National level under provisions of the Citizenship Act 1955 and the Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003.
- The announcement on the NPR came amid continuing protests against the recent Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), 2019, in many parts of the country

Concerns:

- NRC or NPR exercise, in combination with the recently enacted Citizenship (Amendment) Act, or CAA, could lead to disenfranchisement and harassment of the poor and undocumented segments of the population was not born out of anyone's imagination

Criticisms

- The NRC, as it was rolled out in Assam, puts the burden of proof on citizens to establish that they are indeed citizens. The undocumented and the poor will bear the brunt of this approach.
- The proposed format for enumerating the NPR only exacerbates this concern and adds a third axis to the ongoing confusion and turmoil.
- With the passage of the CAA, and the announcement of the NRIC, there is enough factual basis for doubting the government's claim that the NPR has nothing to do with the NRIC.

Way forward:

- If the government has a rethink on its strident position on the NRC, it must say so upfront, and at any rate desist from denigrating critics.

Conclusion:

- The NPR is not about citizenship but only about residency. However, when additional questions such as “place of birth of father and mother”, etc are being proposed for the forthcoming exercise, the concern that this may be a prelude to the NRIC is logical.

Connecting the dots:

- Do you think NPR creates Confusion among people?
- Do you think NPR NRC and CAA are Inter related?
- Do you think NPR and NRC can create panic among the citizens?

The International Financial Services Centres Authority Bill

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II & III – Economics and Polity

Context:

- The International Financial Services Centres Authority Bill, 2019 is likely to be taken up by Parliament for discussion.
- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman introduced the Bill in Lok Sabha recently.
- The Bill provides for the establishment of an Authority to develop and regulate the financial services market in the International Financial Services Centres in India.

Who is covered?

- The Bill will be applicable to all International Financial Services Centres (IFSCs) set up under the Special Economic Zones Act, 2005.
- The first IFSC in India has been set up at the Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City) in Gandhinagar.
- According to a release issued by the government when the Bill was first cleared by the Union Cabinet, “An IFSC enables bringing back the financial services and transactions that are currently carried out in offshore financial centres by Indian corporate entities and overseas branches/subsidiaries of financial institutions (FIs) to India by offering business and regulatory environment that is comparable to other leading international financial centres in the world like London and Singapore”.
- IFSCs are intended to provide Indian corporates with easier access to global financial markets, and to complement and promote further development of financial markets in India, the release said.

Authority to be set up:

- The International Financial Services Centres Authority will consist of nine members, appointed by the central government.
- They will include the chairperson of the authority, a member each from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI), and the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA); and two members from the Ministry of Finance. In addition, two other members will be appointed on the recommendation of a Search Committee.
- All members of the IFSC Authority will have a term of three years, subject to reappointment.

Functions of Authority:

- The Authority will regulate financial products such as securities, deposits or contracts of insurance, financial services, and financial institutions which have been previously approved by any appropriate regulator such as RBI or SEBI, in an IFSC.
- It will follow all processes which are applicable to such financial products, financial services, and financial institutions under their respective laws.
- The appropriate regulators have been listed in a Schedule to the Bill, and include the RBI, SEBI, IRDAI, and PFRDA.
- The central government may amend this schedule through a notification.
- Among the other functions of the Authority are the regulation of any other financial products, financial services, or financial institutions in an IFSC, which may be notified by the central government?
- Another function is to recommend to the central government any other financial products, financial services, or financial institutions, which may be permitted in an IFSC.

Need for such an Authority:

- The release issued by the government explained that currently, the banking, capital markets and insurance sectors in IFSC are regulated by multiple regulators, i.e. RBI, SEBI and IRDAI.
- It requires regular clarifications and frequent amendments in the existing regulations governing financial activities in IFSCs.
- The development of financial services and products in IFSCs would require focussed and dedicated regulatory interventions.
- Hence, a need is felt for having a unified financial regulator for IFSCs in India to provide world class regulatory environment to financial market participants.
- This would also be essential from an ease of doing business perspective.
- The unified authority would also provide the much needed impetus to further development of IFSC in India in sync with the global best practices.

Connecting the dots:

- The dynamic nature of business in the IFSCs necessitates a high degree of inter-regulatory coordination. Comment.

Arms Amendment Bill, 2019

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

Context:

- Parliament recently approved a legislation providing for a maximum punishment of life imprisonment for manufacturing and carrying illegal arms.
- The Bill seeks to amend the Arms Act, 1959.
- It seeks to decrease the number of licensed firearms allowed per person and increase penalties for certain offences under the Act.
- It also introduces new categories of offences.

Features:

- **License for acquiring firearms:** Under the Act, a license must be obtained to acquire, possess, or carry any firearm. A person can obtain a license for up to three firearms. The Bill reduces the number of permitted firearms from three to one.
- The validity of a firearm license will be from three years to five years.
- **Ban on firearms:** The Act bans manufacture, sale, use, transfer, conversion, testing or proofing of firearms without license. The Bill additionally prohibits obtaining or procuring un-licensed firearms.
- **Increase in punishment:** The Bill increases the punishment related to un-licensed firearms and various other offences to between seven years and life imprisonment, along with a fine.
- **New offences:** The Bill adds new offences. These include: (i) forcefully taking a firearm from police or armed forces (ii) using firearms in a celebratory gunfire which endangers human life or personal safety of others. Celebratory gunfire refers to use of firearms in public gatherings, religious places, marriages or other functions to fire ammunition.
- **Tracking of firearms:** The central government may make rules to track firearms and ammunition from manufacturer to purchaser to detect, investigate, and analyse illicit manufacturing and trafficking.
- heirloom or heritage weapons could be kept if they have been de-activated.
- The bill has also accorded special status to sportsperson who need firearms and ammunition for practice and participating in tournaments.
- As per the bill, those who own more than two firearms will have to deposit the third one with police station concerned or authorised gun dealers.
- The new legislation has a provision for life imprisonment for those who snatch or loot arms and ammunition from police or other security forces.
- The Bill amends a Section of the Arms Act, 1959, to give punishment from the usual life term of 14 years to “imprisonment for the remainder of that person’s life” for manufacturing, selling, repairing and possessing “prohibited” arms.
- The minimum punishment under this section will be 14 years.
- According to an estimate, India has a total of around 35 lakh gun licences. Thirteen lakh people have licences to carry weapons in Uttar Pradesh, followed by militancy-hit Jammu and Kashmir, where 3.7 lakh people possess arms licences, most of which were taken in the name of personal security.
- Punjab, which witnessed terrorism in 1980s and 1990s, has around 3.6 lakh active gun licences, most of which were issued during the two decades of strife.

Connecting the dots:

- Arms Amendment Bill, 2019 will ensure effective control over arms and ammunition which is very important for safety and security in the country. Critically analyse.

Transgender Persons’ Bill, 2019

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II – Welfare schemes and Polity
In News

- Rajya Sabha has passed **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2019**. The bill has already been passed in Lok Sabha in the ongoing Winter Session.

What is this bill about?

- The bill seeks to provide a mechanism for social, economic and educational empowerment of transgender persons in India.
- The Bill prohibits the discrimination against a transgender person, including denial of service or unfair treatment in relation to education, employment, healthcare, access to, or enjoyment of goods, facilities, opportunities available to the public, right to movement, right to reside, rent, or otherwise occupy property, opportunity to hold public or private office, and access to a government or private establishment.
- The Bill also seeks to provide rights of health facilities to transgender persons including separate HIV surveillance centres, and sex reassignment surgeries.
- The Bill also has a provision of certificate of identity for a transgender person by making application to the District Magistrate for a certificate of identity, indicating the gender as 'transgender'.
- A revised certificate may be obtained only if the individual undergoes surgery to change their gender either as a male or a female.
- It also calls for establishing a National Council for Transgender persons (NCT).
- Offences against transgender persons will attract imprisonment between six months and two years, in addition to a fine.

Why the transgender community is protesting against it?

- The Bill, which is supposed to protect the rights of transgender people, was drafted and passed without approaching anyone from the community. As a result, assumptions were made based on stereotypes.
- It requires a transgender person to approach a District Magistrate to obtain a certificate stating that they are transgender. It's only after this that they will be able to change their gender to either Male or Female on government-issued identification cards.
- The process to obtain this certificate is to show proof of sex reassignment surgery, which A) is not something all transgender people want B) is a very expensive procedure, which many aren't able to afford C) does not have a clear definition regarding how the District Magistrate will actually examine the person or their documents D) is a violation of privacy.
- It also does not specify the kind of surgery they are expecting, because there is more than one type.
- This also contradicts the 2014 NALSA (National Legal Services Authority of India) judgement by the Supreme Court, which gave transgender people the right to self-identify, and did not mandate surgery.
- The bill also says that a transgender person is someone with intersex variations. However, not every intersex person identifies as transgender, and not every transgender person is intersex.
- The Bill makes sexual abuse against a transgender person a punishable offence. However it fails to clearly define what constitutes sexual abuse. Also, the minimum sentence is six months and can extend to a maximum of just two years.
- The Bill does not provide any reservations to transgender people, who often come from disadvantaged backgrounds and find it hard to get mainstream jobs or quality education.

- If the family of a transgender person is unable to take care of them, the person may be placed in a rehabilitation center, with orders from the court. This denies the right of a person to join other transgender communities, such as the hijra community.
- The Bill does not have any provisions to apprehend those who discriminate against, bully, or harass transgender people at educational institutes, workplaces or anywhere else.
- The Bill also has no mention of things like marriage rights, adoption rights, property rights, social security, or pension. This deprives the transgender community of some of the most fundamental rights.

Conclusion:

- It's true that not all problems can just be legislated away. At the heart of the issue here is social prejudice and trans-phobia. Unless this is addressed at a basic societal level, no law will be able to empower the marginalised and persecuted transgender community.

Connecting the dots:

The Transgender Persons Act should have factored in suggestions from the community. Justify.

Personal Data Protection Bill

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II & III – Polity, Security

In News

The Personal Data Protection (PDP) Bill, 2019, has been approved by the Cabinet and is slated to be placed in Parliament this winter session.

What do we mean by data?

- Data usually refers to information about messages, social media posts, online transactions, and browser searches.
- The individual whose data is being stored and processed is called the data principal in the PDP Bill.
- This large collection of information has become an important source of profits, but also a potential avenue for invasion of privacy because it can reveal extremely personal aspects.

Companies, governments, and political parties can use it to find the most convincing ways to advertise online.

Who handles data and how?

- Data is stored in a physical space similar to a file cabinet of documents, and
- It is transported across country borders in underwater cables that run as deep as Mount Everest and as long as four times the Indian Ocean.
- To be considered useful, data has to be processed, which means analysed by computers.
- Data is collected and handled by entities called data fiduciaries.
- The fiduciary controls how and why data is processed,
- The processing itself may be by a third party, the data processor.
- For example, in the US, Facebook (the data controller) fell into controversy for the actions of the data processor — Cambridge Analytica.
- The physical attributes of data — where data is stored, where it is sent, where it is turned into something useful — are called data flows.

- Data localisation arguments are premised on the idea that data flows determine who has access to the data, who profits off it, who taxes and who “owns” it.
- However, many contend that the physical location of the data is not relevant in the cyber world.

How does the PDP Bill propose to regulate data transfer?

- To legislate on the topic, the Bill trifurcates personal data.
- The umbrella group is all personal data — data from which an individual can be identified.
- Some types of personal data are considered sensitive personal data (SPD), which the Bill defines as financial, health, sexual orientation, biometric, genetic, transgender status, caste, religious belief, and more.
- Another subset is critical personal data. The government at any time can deem something critical, and has given examples as military or national security data.
- The approved Bill requires individual consent for data transfer abroad.
- The Bill also requires sensitive personal data to be stored only in India.
- It can be processed abroad only under certain conditions including approval of a Data Protection Agency (DPA).
- The final category of critical personal data must be stored and processed in India.
- The Bill mandates fiduciaries to give the government any non-personal data when demanded. Non-personal data refers to anonymised data, such as traffic patterns or demographic data.
- The Bill requires social media companies, to develop their own user verification mechanism.
- While the process can be voluntary for users and can be completely designed by the company, it may decrease the anonymity of users and “prevent trolling”.
- The Bill includes exemptions for processing data without an individual’s consent for “reasonable purposes”, including security of the state, detection of any unlawful activity or fraud, whistleblowing, etc.
- The Bill calls for the creation of an independent regulator DPA, which will oversee assessments and audits and definition making.
- Each company will have a Data Protection Officer (DPO) who will liaison with the DPA for auditing, grievance redressal, recording maintenance and more.
- It also grants individuals the right to data portability, and the ability to access and transfer one’s own data.
- It legislates on the right to be forgotten. With historical roots in European Union law, this right allows an individual to remove consent for data collection and disclosure.

The two sides of the debate:

For data localisation

- A common argument from government officials has been that data localisation will help law-enforcement access data for investigations and enforcement.
- As of now, much of cross-border data transfer is governed by individual bilateral “mutual legal assistance treaties” — a process that almost all stakeholders agree is cumbersome.
- In addition, proponents highlight security against foreign attacks and surveillance.
- The government doubled down on this argument after news broke that 121 Indian citizens’ WhatsApp accounts were hacked by an Israeli software called Pegasus.

- Many domestic-born technology companies, which store most of their data exclusively in India, support localisation. Eg: Paytm and Reliance Jio.
- Many economy stakeholders say localisation will also increase the ability of the Indian government to tax Internet giants.

Against the Bill

- Civil society groups have criticised the open-ended exceptions given to the government in the Bill, allowing for surveillance.
- Moreover, some lawyers contend that security and government access are not achieved by localisation.
- Even if the data is stored in the country, the encryption keys may still be out of reach of national agencies.
- Technology giants like Facebook and Google and their industry bodies, especially those with significant ties to the US, have slung heavy backlash.
- Many are concerned with a fractured Internet (or a “splinternet”), where the domino effect of protectionist policy will lead to other countries following suit.
- Much of this sentiment harkens to the values of a globalised, competitive internet marketplace, where costs and speeds determine information flows rather than nationalistic borders.
- Opponents say protectionism may backfire on India’s own young startups that are attempting global growth, or on larger firms that process foreign data in India, such as Tata Consulting Services and Wipro.

Conclusion:

- Without an enabling law, the exemptions provided in the bill will fall short of securing accountability from the state for activities such as dragnet surveillance. The grey areas must spark public and parliamentary debate before a final legislation comes to fruition.

Connecting the dots :

- The data protection bill ticks many boxes. Critically examine

[Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II – Governance

In News

Almost six years after the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013, was signed into law, several key provisions needed for the anti-corruption ombudsman to function have still not been operationalised.

The process of constituting the **Lokpal’s inquiry and prosecution wings has not yet begun.**

Section 60 of the Act empowers the Lokpal to make regulations on the manner and procedure of conducting preliminary inquiry. Till now, no such regulations have been made.

While it approved a logo and motto for itself, the Lokpal has not yet notified a **format for filing complaints.**

- The process of setting up of a **special wing to prosecute public servants** for corruption, as mandated by the Act, has also not moved further

- **The rules for the disclosure of assets and liabilities by public servants** have not been notified either
- The term Lokpal was coined in 1963 but it was not until January 2014 that the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act came into force. It was more than five years later, in March 2019, that the first chairperson and members of the Lokpal were appointed.

About The Act

- The Lokpal Act, which envisages establishment of the anti-graft body Lokpal at the Centre and Lokayuktas in states to look into cases of corruption against certain categories of public servants, was passed in 2013.
- The Lokpal selection committee is headed by the Prime Minister and consists of the Lok Sabha Speaker, leader of the opposition in the lower house, the Chief Justice of India or a judge of the apex court nominated by him, and an **eminent jurist** who could be nominated by the President or any other member.

Composition of Lokpal

- There is a provision for a chairperson and a maximum of eight members in the Lokpal. Of these, **four need to be judicial members.**
- Not less than 50 per cent of the members of the Lokpal shall be from amongst the persons belonging to the SCs, the STs, OBCs, minorities and women.

Terms of Office

- Upon selection, the chairperson and members shall hold office for a term of **five years** or till they attain **70 years of age.**
- The salary and allowances of the chairman of the Lokpal will be same as that of the Chief Justice of India, and that of members will be same as that of a judge of Supreme Court.
- The chief and members of the Lokpal are **not eligible for reappointments.**
- They will also **not be eligible** for any diplomatic assignment, appointment as administrator of a Union territory and for further employment to **any other office of profit under the government of India.**

Creamy layer in SCs, STs

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II- Polity

In News

Context:

- The Narendra Modi government's demand for a review of a 2018 Supreme Court verdict in **Jarnail Singh vs Lachhmi Narain Gupta** case has brought focus back on the exclusion of 'creamy layer' within the Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) categories from reservation benefits.
- Asserting that the creamy layer concept, which distinguishes between the affluent among disadvantaged sections, should not apply to SCs/STs, the central government has demanded that the matter be referred to a seven-judge bench.

What does creamy layer mean?

- The concept has its genesis in a 1992 Supreme Court judgment in the Indira Sawhney vs Union of India case. Since then, two other significant Supreme Court judgments — one in M. Nagaraj vs Union of India and another in the Jarnail Singh case — have laid down the law in this regard

The Mandal Commission case

- The Mandal Commission was set up in 1979 under Article 340 of the Constitution by the Janata Party government when Morarji Desai was prime minister with a mandate to “identify the socially or educationally backwards”. It laid down 11 indicators or criteria for determining social and economic backwardness.
- In light of this report, the government provided 27 per cent reservation in central government jobs for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in 1990.
- This was challenged in the Supreme Court by several writ petitions.
- A nine-judge bench in the Indira Sawhney case had upheld reservations for OBCs in 1992, but ruled that creamy layer among the backward class of citizens must be excluded “by fixation of proper income, property or status criteria” by the central government.
- The court asserted that on these specifications, people falling in the creamy layer would not get the benefit of reservations. The Supreme Court also held that reservations in appointments — under Article 16(4) of the Constitution — do not apply to promotions.

The 1993 creamy layer norms

- Following the SC judgment, the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) had laid down categories under the creamy layer in 1993.
- According to the 1993 order, sons and daughters of Group A/Class I Officers of All India Central and State Services (direct recruits), Group B/Class II Officers of Central and State Services (direct recruits), employees of Public Sector Undertakings etc. and armed forces fall within the creamy layer, and, therefore, they would not be entitled to reservation benefits.
- The order also included within the creamy layer sons and daughters of people with a gross annual income of Rs 1 lakh above or possessing wealth above the exemption limit as prescribed under the Wealth Tax Act for a period of three consecutive years.
- It, however, clarified that income from salaries and agricultural land will not be clubbed, and asserted that the income criteria in terms of rupee will be modified taking into account the change in its value every three years.
- However, the ceiling has been revised only four times since 1993 — the last time it happened was in September 2017 when the cap was raised to Rs 8 lakh per annum.

The amendments that followed

- Meanwhile, in order to change the effect of the judgment in the Indira Sawhney case, there were some amendments to enable the government to make laws regarding reservation in promotion for SCs and STs.
- The first of these amendments was when the Parliament enacted the Constitution (77th Amendment) Act, 1995, inserting Article 16(4A), thereby enabling the government to make laws providing quota in promotion for SCs and STs.
- Article 16(4B) was also inserted, providing that reserved promotion posts for SCs and STs that remain unfilled can be carried forward to the subsequent year. While the SC judgement in the Indira Sawhney case capped the reservation quota at 50 per cent, the

government's amendment ensured that the 50 per cent ceiling for these carried-forward unfilled posts does not apply to subsequent years.

- Another instance was when Article 335 of the Constitution was amended during Atal Bihari Vajpayee's government in 2001. While Article 335 specified that reservations have to be balanced with the "maintenance of efficiency", the 2001 amendment stated that the Article will not apply to the government if it relaxes evaluation standards in matters of promotion.
- 'Maintenance of efficiency' is a constitutional limitation on the discretion of the government in making reservation in promotion for SCs and STs.

Creamy layer to SCs & STs

- These amendments led to the 2006 Supreme Court judgment in M. Nagaraj vs Union of India, where a five-judge bench approved Parliament's decision to extend reservations for SCs and STs to include promotions with three conditions.
- It required the government to provide proof for the backwardness of the class benefitting from the reservation, for its inadequate representation in the position/service for which reservation in promotion is to be granted and to show how reservations in promotions would further administrative efficiency.
- The judgment also held that the creamy layer concept was applicable to SCs and STs.

Creamy layer shouldn't bag all coveted jobs: SC

- The M. Nagaraj case judgment was challenged in the Jarnail Singh case via two reference orders, the latest one having been issued in November 2017, stating that it needed to be referred to a seven-judge bench.
- The top court refused to refer it to a larger bench, asserting that even though it had not expressly chosen to apply the creamy layer principle to SCs and STs in its verdict in the Indira Sawhney case, the principle can still be applied in view of the principles of equality enshrined in Constitution.
- The court also asserted that the SC and high courts would be well within their jurisdiction to exclude creamy layer from getting reservations, rejecting the central government's submissions that only the Parliament can exclude or include people from SC/ST lists.

Conclusion:

- "The whole object of reservation is to see that backward classes of citizens move forward so that they may march hand in hand with other citizens of India on an equal basis. This will not be possible if only the creamy layer within that class bag all the coveted jobs in the public sector and perpetuate themselves, leaving the rest of the class as backward as they always were,"

Connecting the dots:

- Supreme Court's order on anti-atrocities law is a caution against entering legislative domain. Comment

IS 10500:2012

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

- Government stated that the Bureau of Indian Standards is preparing the ground for enforcement of **piped water quality standards – IS 10500:2012**, in cooperation with state departments.
- However, it is not yet clear whether the Centre's own flagship mission (Jal Jeevan Mission) to provide piped water to all households by 2024 will implement the BIS standard.
- Unlike the BIS standard for bottled water, which is mostly produced by private companies, the **standard for piped water** — largely supplied by government agencies — is **not yet mandatory**.
- **Jal Shakti** is the nodal Ministry for the **Jal Jeevan Mission** to provide functional household tap connections to 14.6 crore rural households by 2024.

About Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)

- It is a **statutory body established in 1987** under the **BIS Act 1986**. It replaced the Indian Standards Institution (ISI), a body set up under the Societies Registration Act, 1860.
- It works under the guidance of **Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution**.
- The objective of BIS is to achieve harmonious development of the activities of standardization, certification marking and quality certification of goods.
- BIS is involved in various activities such as Standards Formulation, Product Certification Scheme, Hall Marking Scheme, Laboratory Services etc.

Appointment of judges

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II–Judiciary

In News

- **213 names recommended** for appointment to various High Courts are **pending** with the government/Supreme Court Collegium
- Supreme Court has said in a judicial order, at least the names on which the Supreme Court Collegium, the High Courts and the governments had agreed upon should be appointed within six months.
- The **High Courts are functioning at nearly 50% of their sanctioned judicial strength**. Of a total 1,079 judges sanctioned in the High Courts, there are 410 vacancies.
- There were three SC judgments which made it crystal clear that the government had no option but to make the appointments if the collegium reiterated them after the government returned the names with objections.
- On the Supreme Court collegium clearing the recommendees, the **Union Law Ministry has to put up within three weeks** the recommendations to the Prime Minister who would advise the President on the appointment. However, no time limit has been prescribed for action by the Prime Minister and the President.

Empty chairs

38% of all sanctioned posts for judges in High Courts are lying vacant as of December 1, 2019. The six HCs with most vacancies:

Name of High Court	Sanctioned strength	Working strength	Vacancies	% of vacancies
A.P.	37	15	22	59.46
Rajasthan	50	21	29	58
J&K	17	8	9	52.94
Patna	53	27	26	49.06
Odisha	27	14	13	48.15
Gujarat	52	28	24	46.15

[National Company Law Appellate Tribunal \(NCLAT\): Reinstates Cyrus Mistry as Tata Sons Chairman](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II – Polity; GS –III – Corporate Governance

In News

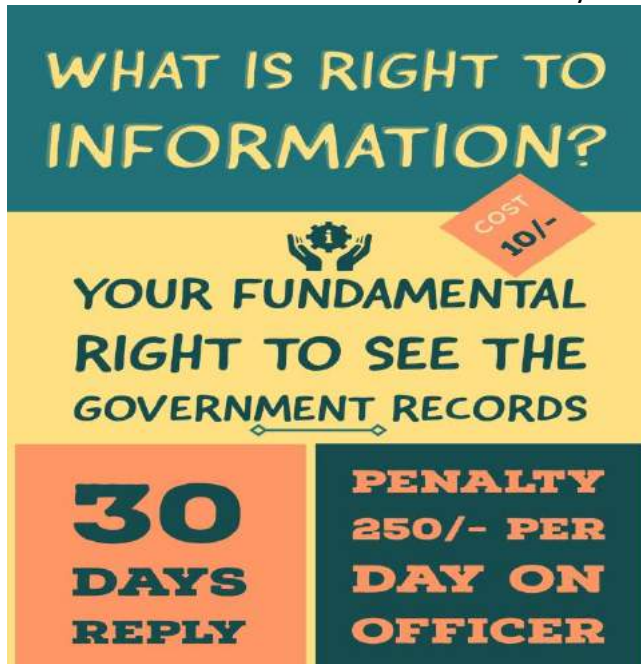
- NCLAT along with reinstating Cyrus Mistry (who was removed by the Board of Tata Sons) as Chairman of Tata Sons, also ordered to Tata Sons to go back from ‘private company’ to ‘public company’

Value Addition: About NCLAT

- NCLAT was constituted under Section 410 of the **Companies Act, 2013**.
- NCLAT is the Appellate Tribunal for hearing appeals against the orders passed by –
 1. **National Company Law Tribunal(s)** NCLT(s) under Section 61 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (IBC)
 2. **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India** (IBBI) under Section 202 and Section 211 of IBC.
 3. **Competition Commission of India (CCI)** – as per the amendment brought to Section 410 of the Companies Act, 2013

Right to information: 'Abuse' of RTI

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II–Judiciary



Context:

- Chief Justice of India said the unbridled use of the Right to Information (RTI) Act had created a sense of “paralysis and fear” in the government.
- Paralysis and fear about this Act (RTI). People are not taking decisions
- CJI said time had come to lay down guidelines on the use of the RTI. Guidelines should be put in place to check the locus of the RTI applicant and put a “filter” on the kind of requests made under the 2005 Act.

Justice Bobde said :

The court was not against the exercise of the right to information. “But it cannot be an unrivalled right. There is the serious problem of people filing RTI requests with malafide intentions, people set up by rivals,” he said. The RTI Act had become a source of criminal intimidation by people with an axe to grind. “Criminal intimidation is a nice word for ‘blackmail’,” Justice Bobde said.

Genesis of RTI:

- 1975, in State of Uttar Pradesh vs Raj Narain “The people of this country have a right to know every public act, everything that is done in a public way by their public functionaries. They are entitled to know the particulars of every public transaction in all its bearing. Their right to know, which is derived from the concept of freedom of speech, though not absolute, is a factor which should make one wary when secrecy is claimed for transactions which can at any rate have no repercussion on public security.”

- It observed, “Voters’ (little man-citizens’) right to know antecedents including criminal past of his candidate contesting election for MP or MLA is much more fundamental and basic for survival of democracy.

RTI Act

- An applicant making request for information shall not be required to give any reason for requesting the information or any other personal details except those that may be necessary for contacting him.
- “The information which cannot be denied to the Parliament or a State Legislature shall not be denied to any person ”Bhagat Singh vs CIC in 2007, then Delhi High Court Justice Ravindra Bhat (now a Supreme Court judge) observed: “Access to information, under Section 3 of the Act, is the rule and exemptions under Section 8, the exception.
- Section 8 being a restriction on this fundamental right, must therefore be strictly construed.

Jayantilal N Mistry vs Reserve Bank of India

- Public Information Officers under the guise of one of the exceptions given under Section 8 of RTI Act, have evaded the general public from getting their hands on the rightful information that they are entitled to.
- The ideal of ‘Government by the people’ makes it necessary that people have access to information on matters of public concern.

It should not be interpreted in manner as to shadow the very right itself.”

SC Judgements:

DAV College Trust and Managin vs Director of Public Instructions

- Declared that NGOs are not beyond the RTI Act.
- This was based on an examination of the question whether NGOs are substantially financed by the government.
- Because of this observation, the spotlight falls of several NGOs that have been getting public money and were not covered under the RTI.

Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) & Anr vs Aditya Bandhopadhyay and Others in 2011

- Nearly 60-70 lakh RTI applications are filed in India every year, and activists have questioned whether addressing these would require 75% of the time of government staff.
- Several public authorities have used this observation while denying information, ignoring the fact in the same case, the Supreme Court had ordered disclosure of the requisite information.

SC : “The nation does not want a scenario where 75% of the staff of public authorities spends 75% of their time in collecting and furnishing information to applicants instead of discharging their regular duties”

Girish Ramchandra Deshpande vs Central Information Commission & Ors in October 2012

- The performance of an employee/officer in an organisation is primarily a matter between the employee and the employer and normally those aspects are governed by the service rules which fall under the expression ‘personal information’ the disclosure of which has no relationship to any public activity or public interest.
- if the Central Public Information Officer or the State Public Information Officer of the Appellate Authority is satisfied that the larger public interest justifies the disclosure of such information, appropriate orders could be passed but the petitioner cannot claim those details as a matter of right

Conclusion:

- A Transparency Audit report submitted to the Central Information Commission (CIC) in November 2018 sought feedback from 2,092 PAs under the CIC to evaluate implementation of Section 4 of the Act. Only 838 (40%) responded and even here, 35% of the PAs fared poorly with little transparency in parameters such as organisation and functions, budget and programme, e-governance, and other information disclosures.
- The other key misgiving with RTI implementation has been the persisting problem of vacancies in the CIC and State commissions — the CIC has four vacancies and 33,000 pending cases. After the top court's directions, this lacuna should be addressed by governments quickly.

Three Capital of Andhra Pradesh: there was nothing wrong in having the capital at three places says CM

Context:

- Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy hinted in the Legislative Assembly recently that there was nothing wrong in having the capital at three places, similar to the South African model.
- He hinted that the High Court could be based in Kurnool, Amaravati could continue to be the Legislative capital and Visakhapatnam the Executive capital.

History of the formation of Andhra Pradesh State:

- The first reference of decentralisation was made in the Sri Bagh pact, which was signed by the then political leaders from Coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema on November 16, 1937.
- According to the pact, for a balanced decentralisation, it was decided to continue with Andhra University in Visakhapatnam and the High Court and the capital be divided between the two regions.
- Visakhapatnam has all the settings to become a good living space. Even after Amaravati was carved out, most of the bureaucrats did not shift their families and they continued to stay in Hyderabad.

Sri Krishna panel:

- The advantages and qualities of Visakhapatnam to become the capital was discussed not only in the Sri Bagh pact but was also elaborately deliberated by the Sri Krishna Committee.
- The Sri Krishna Committee primarily took up three things for consideration — creation of single city or super city in Greenfield location, expanding existing cities and distributed development.
- The Committee however did not consider a single large capital city as a feasible option available to Andhra Pradesh as of then. But the State government had pushed the VGTM (Vijayawada, Guntur, Tenali, Mangalagiri) area for development.
- Visakhapatnam was in the radar, as it was felt that it has all the requirement.

Cosmopolitan:

- Rapid industrialisation, the presence of Eastern Naval Command and a number of public sector units, Visakhapatnam only city in the State that wears a cosmopolitan fabric.
- the presence of such culture lends peace and gives readymade quality manpower,

Decentralisation:

- **Decentralisation** was elaborately described in the Sri Bagh pact.
- The pact clearly defined decentralisation, for the benefit of all three main regions such as Coastal AP, Godavari and Krishna districts and Rayalaseema.

Land:

- There is about 10,000 acres of government land.
- Land is not an issue, as the requirement to set up a few new offices and quarters will not exceed 2,000 to 3,000 acres.

Conclusion:

- Decision is a win-win situation both for the government and the city

Connecting the dots:

- Do you think there is nothing wrong in 3 capitals?

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Kerala is in the top slot

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-II- Federalism; GS-III- Sustainable Development

In News

- NITI Aayog has released its latest **SDG India Index 2019**, which assesses each state and Union Territory's achievement on 16 sustainable development goals (SDG).
- A score of 100 implies that the state/ UT has achieved targets set for 2030
- Kerala is in the top slot with a score of 70, while Bihar is at the bottom with 50.
- Himachal Pradesh and Sikkim have joined the four southern States among the front-runners, which scored over 65 points out of a possible 100
- **Ending hunger and achieving gender equality** are the areas where most States fall far short, with the all-India scores at a dismal 35 and 42 points respectively.

Value Addition for Prelims

- The SDGs are a set of 17 broad-based global goals adopted by the United Nations General Assembly **in 2015**, and intended **to be achieved by 2030**
- The UN has developed 232 indicators to measure compliance by member nations. The NITI Aayog has adapted the monitoring approach to the Indian context, with 100 indicators of its own for the Index.

GOAL BY GOAL, THE STATES

Sustainable development goal	Top score	2nd place	Bottom rank
SDG 1: No poverty	Tamil Nadu (72)	Tripura (70)	Jharkhand (28)
SDG 2: Zero hunger	Goa (76)	Mizoram (75)	Jharkhand (22)
SDG 3: Good health	Kerala (82)	Andhra (76)	Nagaland (29)
SDG 4: Quality education	Himachal (81)	Kerala (74)	Bihar (19)
SDG 5: Gender equality	Himachal (52)	Kerala (51)	Telangana (26)
SDG 6: Clean water & sanitation	Andhra (96)	UP (94)	Tripura (69)
SDG 7: Affordable & clean energy	Sikkim (97)	Goa (95)	Odisha (50)
SDG 8: Decent work & economic growth	Telanganaga (82)	Andhra (78)	Manipur (27)
SDG 9: Industry, innovation, infrastructure	Gujarat (88)	Kerala (88)	Mizoram (8)
SDG 10: Reduced inequalities	Telangana (94)	Manipur (81)	Goa (19)
SDG 11: Sustainable cities & communities	Goa (79)	Himachal (79)	Meghalaya (22)
SDG 12: Sustainable consumption & production	Nagaland (100)	Tripura (92)	Rajasthan (30)
SDG 13: Climate action	Karnataka (71)	Andhra (70)	Jharkhand (27)
SDG 14: Marine ecosystems	Coastal states only, not counted in overall SDG		
SDG 15: Life & land	Manipur (100)	Sikkim (100)	Haryana (40)
SDG 16: Peace, justice & strong institutions	Andhra (86)	Gujarat (86)	Assam (52)

Src: [click here](#)

Regional Reservations: Karnataka Students in National Law School

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II- Federalism, Development

In News

- In order to provide reservation to those students who have studied in Karnataka for at least 10 years, Karnataka government is mulling passing a bill that provide 25% reservation to such students in National Law School of India University (NLSIU)
- A similar Bill, proposing 50% reservation to Kannadigas, was passed in 2017. However, the Governor sent it back, saying that such a regional reservation could not be accepted.
- NLSIU at Bangalore was established was established by a statute passed by the Legislative Assembly of the State of Karnataka (NLSIU Karnataka Act 22 of 1986). The statute states that **Chief Justice of India serves as the school's chancellor.**

SOCIAL ISSUE/WELFARE

PISA test

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II –Education

In News

- The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a study done to produce comparable data on education policy and outcomes across countries
- It is initiated by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (**OECD**), an intergovernmental economic organisation with 36 member countries.
- The study, which began in the year 2000, conducts a test evaluating 15-year-olds in member and non-member countries to assess the quality and inclusivity of school systems in these countries.
- The PISA test is **held every three years** and the next test will be held in 2021, in which students from **government schools in Chandigarh will represent India**.
- PISA test does not assess students on their memory, but attempts to evaluate whether students can apply the knowledge they have gained through primary and secondary education.
- India has participated in the PISA test only once before, in 2009. In this round of PISA, where students from Himachal Pradesh and Tamil Nadu sat for the test, India ranked 72nd out of 73 countries, outranking only Kyrgyzstan. Since then, India has strayed away from the test until now.

Human Rights Day

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains I – Social Issues

In News

- Human Rights Day is celebrated on the **10th December** every year to commemorate the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which was adopted and proclaimed by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1948.
- The Declaration recognizes that the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of mankind are the foundation of justice, freedom and peace in the world.
- The United Nations' theme for this year's Human Rights Day is: **"Youth Standing up for Human Rights."**
- The youth will be celebrated as agents of change and encouraged to amplify their voices against racism, hate speech, bullying, discrimination, and fight for climate justice, among other issues.
- Since its inception on the 12th October, 1993, the **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)** has endeavoured to promote a culture of human rights.
- The NHRC, like most of the human rights institutions in the world, is a **recommendatory body** as per the Protection of Human Rights Act passed by Parliament.

- An important initiative of the Commission this year has been that NHRC is proposing to set up a task force to prepare a **National Action Plan on Human Rights (NAPHR)** comprising the representatives of various Ministries, NGOs, Civil Society and the NHRC among the other stakeholders.
- This plan will help flag the key issues of human rights for the government(s), which would require to be addressed with a targeted approach to improve the human rights situation in the country through a sustained mechanism.

Accessible India campaign

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-I – Society

In News

- Accessible India campaign aims at making public spaces friendly for persons with disabilities.
- The deadline for the government’s Accessible India campaign has been extended to March 2020 due to “slow progress,” the **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment** has informed the Lok Sabha
- The original deadlines under the Accessible India campaign were July 2016 for conducting an accessibility audit of 25-50 of the most important government buildings in 50 cities and making them completely accessible and March 2018.
- Under the Rights of PwD Act, 2016, all existing and new public buildings have to follow the accessibility standards notified on June 15, 2017. The existing buildings were given five years to comply.

National Strategy for Suicide Prevention under discussion

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains I- Society

In News

- **India** continues to have the dubious distinction of recording the highest number, or **34% of all suicides in the world**.
- According to provision of **Section 309 of the IPC** attempted suicide continues to be a criminal offence. It says that suicide attempt is punishable with simple imprisonment, which may extend up to one year.
- **However, Section 115 of the MCHA, 2017** states that “any person who attempts to commit suicide shall be presumed, unless proved otherwise, to have severe stress and shall not be tried and punished under the said Code (Section 309 of IPC).”
- After the **Mental Healthcare Act (MCHA), 2017**, the Section has become “redundant” but still remains in law books.
- Therefore, once National strategy of prepared, it is expected to remove confusion surrounding inconsistencies between IPC and MCHA

Global Gender Gap Index, 2020(India has ranked 112th among 153)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-I – Society

SRC: Outlook

Context:

- India has ranked 112th among 153 countries in the annual Global Gender Gap Index for 2020,
- The Report was published by the World Economic Forum (WEF) recently.
- Iceland, Norway, and Finland occupy the top three spots in the Report.

The Global Gender Gap Index

- The Report benchmarks countries on their progress towards gender parity in four dimensions.
- The dimensions are: Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival and Political Empowerment.
- The Report aims to serve as a compass to track progress on relative gaps between women and men on health, education, economy and politics.
- It measures women's disadvantage compared to men, and is not a measure of equality of the gender gap.
- Through this annual yardstick, stakeholders within each country are able to set priorities relevant in each specific economic, political and cultural context.

Global Gender Gap Index for 2020: Key findings

- Globally, the average (population-weighted) distance completed to gender parity is at 68.6%, which is an improvement since last edition.
- The largest gender disparity is in political empowerment.
- Projecting current trends into the future, the overall global gender gap will close in 99.5 years, on average.
- There is a sharp deterioration in the economic opportunity gap, especially in women's under-representation in emerging roles, such as cloud computing, engineering and data and artificial intelligence.

India's Status

- India has slipped four places in the report to 112, behind neighbours China, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh,
- It is due to due to rising disparity in terms of women's health and participation in the economy.
- The country ranked 98th in WEF's first report in 2006. Since then, it has fallen due to poor performance in three out of four indicators.
- India is also ranked in the bottom-five in terms of women's health and survival and economic participation.
- The report showed that economic opportunities for women are extremely limited in India (35.4 per cent).
- India also ranked among countries with very low women representation on company boards.

- The report highlighted abnormally low sex ratios at birth in India (91 girls for every 100 boys).
- On health and survival, four large countries — Pakistan, India, Vietnam and China — fare badly with millions of women not getting the same access to health as men.
- India is the only country among the 153 countries studied where the economic gender gap is larger than the political one.
- On a positive note, India has closed two-thirds of its overall gender gap.

Way forward

- The Indian government needs to make sure that maternal and women's healthcare is a top priority.
- It needs to increase efforts to skill more women in technology-based fields.
- Else, the potential of a large chunk of the population will remain unrealised.

Conclusion:

- Supporting gender parity is critical to ensuring strong, cohesive and resilient societies around the world.
- Diversity forms an essential element in the global economy too.

Connecting the dots:

- Do you agree that India badly needs to focus on improving women's access to healthcare?
- What ways would you suggest to improve gender parity?

Intersex Person: Call for National ban on unnecessary medical surgeries

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-I- Society

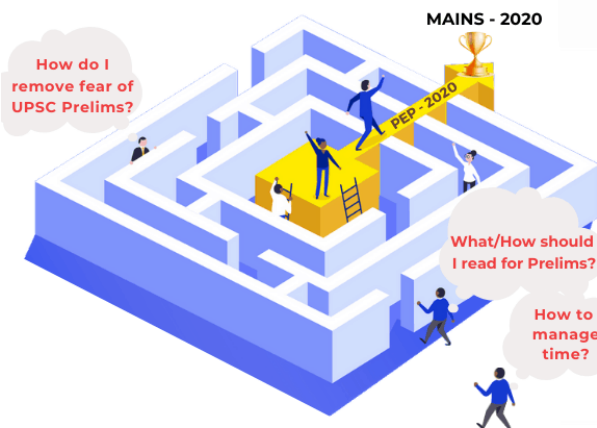
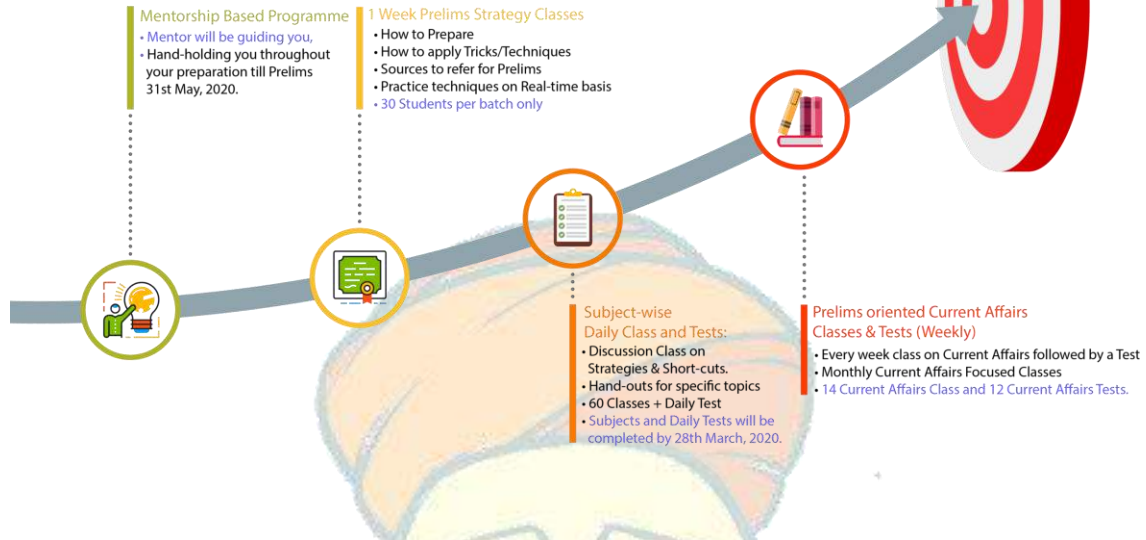
In News

- The term intersex is confused with transgender, the two in-fact have very different meanings.
 - Individuals who identify as **transgender or transsexual** have a gender that is different from the one traditionally associated with the sex they were assigned at birth.
 - **Intersex** refers to people born with biological or physical characteristics that are more diverse than stereotypical male or female bodies.
 - Intersex individuals and rights organisations have sought a national ban on unnecessary medical surgeries conducted on children with intersex traits and appealed to the Union government to protect their human rights.
 - Call for nation-wide ban comes after the **Tamil Nadu government banned** normative surgeries on infants and children except in life-threatening situations after a historic **judgment of the Madras High Court on April 22, 2019**
 - WHO and the UN Human Rights Council have called upon Member States to end invasive and irreversible medical surgeries and other medical treatment on intersex children.
 - If adopted nationally, India could become only the third country after Malta and Taiwan, to have a legal regime which protects the rights of intersex children.
-

Prelims Exclusive Program (PEP) - 2020

One Stop Destination for Prelims Preparation

UPSC Prelims - 2020



PEP-2020

PRELIMS EXCLUSIVE PROGRAMME

EXCLUSIVE MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME FOR PRELIMS

STARTING FROM JAN - 2020



6 Months to UPSC PRELIMS



WOMEN ISSUE

Rape and sexual crimes law in India

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains I – women

SRC: Human Rights watch

Context:

- There has been an outcry for justice for the victims after the rape and murder of a veterinarian in **Hyderabad** and the burning of a rape survivor in **Unnao**, Uttar Pradesh.

History of Rape law:

- First introduced in the Indian Penal Code in 1860.
- The first Law Commission under the chairmanship of Lord Macaulay decided to put the criminal law of the land in two separate codes. (Indian Penal Code & Code of Criminal Procedure)

Indian Penal Code IPC :

- **Section 375** of the IPC made punishable the act of sex by a man with a woman if it was done against her will or without her consent.
- Her consent has been obtained by putting her or any person in whom she is interested, in fear of death or of hurt is considered to be Rape
- Sex with or without her consent, when she is under 18 years is considered rape.
- **Exception** : sexual intercourse or sexual acts by a man with his wife, the wife not being under 15 years of age, is not rape.
- **Section 376** provided for seven years of jail term to life imprisonment

Mathura custodial rape case 1972

- In 1972 a young Adivasi girl named Mathura was allegedly raped by policemen in the Desai Gunj Police Station in Maharashtra.
- In the trial that ensued, the sessions court came to the conclusion that she had sexual intercourse while at the police station but rape had not been proved and that she was habituated to intercourse.
- The sessions court acquitted both the policemen, the High Court reversed the order of acquittal.
- When the case reached the Supreme Court, it overturned the High Court verdict saying that “the intercourse in question is not proved to amount rape”.
- SC 1978 verdict, said no marks of injury were found on the girl after the incident and “their absence goes a long way to indicate that the alleged intercourse was a peaceful affair”.

Controversy and Criminal Law (Second Amendment) Act 1983

- Controversial SC 1978 verdict sparked widescale protests across the country seeking a change in existing rape laws. **This led to Criminal Law (Second Amendment) Act of 1983.**
- **Section 114A** in the Indian Evidence Act of 1872 was inserted which presumed that there is absence of consent in certain prosecutions of rape if the victim says so. This applied to custodial rape cases.
- **Section 228A** was added which makes it punishable to disclose the identity of the victim in Rape case

Law Commission:

- Law Commission in its 172th report recommended widening the scope of rape law to make it gender neutral.
- While the rape law in India even today remains gender specific, as the perpetrator of the offence can only be a 'man', the 172nd report led to the amendments in the Indian Evidence Act in 2002.

Nirbhaya case in Delhi 2012 & Criminal Law (Amendment) Act in 2013

- Parliament made the amendments on the recommendation of the **Justice J.S. Verma Committee**, which was constituted to re-look the criminal laws in the country and recommend changes.
- The 2013 Act, increased jail terms in most sexual assault cases and also provided for the death penalty in rape cases that cause death of the victim or leaves her in a vegetative state.
- It also created new offences, such as use of criminal force on a woman with intent to disrobe, voyeurism and stalking.
- Unwelcome physical contact, words or gestures, demand or request for sexual favours, showing pornography against the will of a woman or making sexual remarks stalking was made punishable acid attack was increased to 10 years of imprisonment.

Offences against minors (Kathua Rape case in Jammu and Kashmir)

- Led to the passing of the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2018 which for the first time put death penalty as a possible punishment for rape of a girl under 12 years;
- The minimum punishment is 20 years in jail.
- The minimum jail term for rape, which has remained unchanged since the introduction of the IPC in 1860, was increased from seven to 10 years.

National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) 2017 report:

- A total of 3,59,849 cases were reported against women in 2017. (2016, 3.38 lakh, 3.2 lakh cases 2015) The number of cases reported has increased.
- **Uttar Pradesh** has again topped the list with 56,011 cases of crime against women, followed by Maharashtra with 31,979 cases and West Bengal at 30,002.
- Crimes against women constitute murder, rape, dowry death, suicide abetment, acid attack, cruelty against women and kidnapping.
- 'Cruelty by husband or his relatives' accounts for 27.9 per cent of the crimes against women.
- 'Assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty' comprise 21.7 per cent, followed by 'kidnapping and abduction of women' with 20.5 per cent and 'rape' with 7.0 per cent of reported cases.

Rape data :

- 'Rape' stands with 7.0 per cent of reported cases.
- A total of 32,559 rapes were reported in 2017 in India.
- **Madhya Pradesh** has recorded the highest number of rape cases at 5,562 cases being reported in 2017. Uttar Pradesh is second to MP.
- Delhi, saw a decline in reporting of rape cases, in 2017, 13,076 were reported, which is the lowest in the last three years.
- 93.1 percent cases the accused were known to the victims.

- Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura can be seen as moderately safer than other states as they recorded the lowest number of cases

Way forward:

- Make the criminal justice system tougher on an offender committing sexual crimes against women and children.

Connecting the dots:

- Punishments must reinforce people's faith in the rule of law, not undermine it. Analyse

Andhra Pradesh Disha Bill, 2019



Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains I – women

Context:

- The Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly passed the Andhra Pradesh Disha Bill, 2019 (Andhra Pradesh Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2019).
- Disha is the name given to the veterinarian who was raped and murdered in Hyderabad.

Highlights:

- The bill provides for awarding death sentence for offences of rape and gang rape and expediting trials of such cases to within 21 days.
- At present, provision for punishing an offender in a rape case is a fixed jail term leading to life imprisonment or the death sentence.
- Completion of investigation in seven days and trial in 14 working days, where there is adequate conclusive evidence.
- Reducing the total judgment time to 21 days from the existing four months.
- The existing judgment period as per the Nirbhaya Act, 2013 and Criminal Amendment Act, 2018 is 4 months (two months of investigation period and two months of trial period)
- The AP Disha Act also prescribes life imprisonment for other sexual offences against children and includes Section 354 F and 354 G in IPC.
- Two years imprisonment for the first conviction and four years for second and subsequent convictions for cases of social media harassment.
- The Government of Andhra Pradesh prescribes life imprisonment for other sexual offences against children.
- At present, in cases of molestation/sexual assault on children under the POCSO Act, 2012, punishment ranges from a minimum of three years to maximum of seven years of imprisonment.
- Andhra Pradesh government will establish, operate and maintain a register in electronic form, to be called the 'Women & Children Offenders Registry'.
- This registry will be made public and will be available to law enforcement agencies.

National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) 2017 report:

- A total of 3,59,849 cases were reported against women in 2017. (2016, 3.38 lakh, 3.2 lakh cases 2015) The number of cases reported has increased.
- Uttar Pradesh has again topped the list with 56,011 cases of crime against women, followed by Maharashtra with 31,979 cases and West Bengal at 30,002.

- Crimes against women constitute murder, rape, dowry death, suicide abetment, acid attack, cruelty against women and kidnapping.
- 'Cruelty by husband or his relatives' accounts for 27.9 per cent of the crimes against women.
- 'Assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty' comprise 21.7 per cent, followed by 'kidnapping and abduction of women' with 20.5 per cent and 'rape' with 7.0 per cent of reported cases.

Rape data:

- 'Rape' stands with 7.0 per cent of reported cases.
- A total of 32,559 rapes were reported in 2017 in India.
- Madhya Pradesh has recorded the highest number of rape cases at 5,562 cases being reported in 2017. Uttar Pradesh is second to MP.
- Delhi, saw a decline in reporting of rape cases, in 2017, 13,076 were reported, which is the lowest in the last three years.
- 1 percent cases the accused were known to the victims.
- Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura can be seen as moderately safer than other states as they recorded the lowest number of cases.

Conclusion:

Make the criminal justice system tougher on an offender committing sexual crimes against women and children.

Connecting the dots:

- Don't you think acts of sexual violence are deeply traumatic for survivors, and that it takes great courage and faith in the system to report them?

MAINS - 2020

PEP - 2020

How do I remove fear of UPSC Prelims?

What/How should I read for Prelims?

How to manage time?

PEP-2020
PRELIMS EXCLUSIVE PROGRAMME
EXCLUSIVE MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME FOR PRELIMS
STARTING FROM JAN - 2020

6 Months to UPSC PRELIMS

HEALTH ISSUE

World AIDS day

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-I & GS- II – Society, Health

In News

- The World AIDS Day 2019 was observed in India on the 1st of December.
- It is a pandemic disease caused due to the infection of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)
- World AIDS Day was the first global health day to be celebrated. This year, the theme is “Communities Make the Difference.”
- As per the latest estimate of 2017, there are around 21.40 lakh people living with HIV in the country. The government is implementing National AIDS Control Programme (NACP) as a hundred per cent Central Sector Scheme for prevention and control of AIDS.
- NACP response to HIV epidemic comprises a comprehensive three-pronged strategy of prevention, testing and treatment.
- The Government has also developed a seven-year National Strategic Plan from 2017 to 2024 to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal of ending AIDS as a public health threat by 2030.

Bill banning e-cigarettes passed

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-II – Health

In News

- A Bill banning the manufacture and sale of electronic cigarettes, but not their possession and use, was passed by Parliament
- The Rajya Sabha passed the Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes (Production, Manufacture, Import, Export, Transport, Sale, Distribution, Storage and Advertisement) Bill, 2019 by voice vote after four hours of discussion.
- The Bill, which was passed by the Lok Sabha on November 27, will replace an ordinance brought by the government on September 18.
- Opposition MPs, however, alleged that the ban was enacted to benefit tobacco companies.

Do You Know?

- Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) had in June 2019 recommended a complete ban on Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS) including e-cigarettes, saying their use can initiate nicotine addiction among non-smokers.
- ENDS, which includes e-cigarettes, Vape and E-Hookah, are devices that heat a solution to create an aerosol, which also frequently contains flavours, usually dissolved into propylene glycol and glycerin

- E-cigarettes adversely affects the cardiovascular system, impairs respiratory immune cell function and airways in a way similar to cigarette smoking and is responsible for severe respiratory disease.

Anaemia: Nearly 3 out of 5 babies and children in India are anaemic

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II –Health

In News

- As many as 58.5% of children between the ages of 6 months and 59 months, and 53.1% of women between the ages of 15 and 49 years, are anaemic in the country.
- **Anaemia** means that either the level of red blood cells or the level of haemoglobin is lower than normal.
- When a person has anaemia, their heart has to work harder to pump the quantity of blood needed to get enough oxygen around their body.
- The data, based on the findings of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) IV (2015-16), divide the incidence of anaemia into 'Mild', 'Moderate' and 'Severe' kinds for both rural and urban India.
- Government had launched in 2018 Anaemia Mukt Bharat (AMB) Strategy under POSHAN Abhiyaan with the aim to reduce anaemia prevalence by three percentage points every year till 2022
- AMB is a 6x6x6 strategy that is targeting six age groups, with six interventions and six institutional mechanisms.
- The six age groups include pre-school children (6-59 months), children (5-9 years), adolescent girls (10-19 years), adolescent boys (10-19 years), women of reproductive age group (15-49), and pregnant women and lactating mothers

PREVALENCE OF ANAEMIA AMONG CHILDREN (6-59 MONTHS)

	RURAL	URBAN	TOTAL
Mild (10.0-10.9 gm/dl)	28.2	26.8	27.8
Moderate (7.0-9.9 gm/dl)	29.8	27.5	29.2
Severe (<7.00 gm/dl)	1.5	1.6	1.6
Any (<11.00 gm/dl)	59.5	56.0	58.5

PREVALENCE OF ANAEMIA AMONG WOMEN (15-49 YEARS)

	RURAL	URBAN	TOTAL
Mild (10.0- 11.9 gm/dl)	40.3	38.3	39.6
Moderate (7.0-9.9 gm/dl)	12.8	11.6	12.4
Severe (<7.00 gm/dl)	1.1	0.9	1.0
Any (<12.00 gm/dl)	54.2	50.8	53.1

India State Level Disease Burden Initiative (ISLDBI)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II –Health

In News

- Union Environment Minister stated in Lok Sabha that there were no Indian studies that showed a “direct correlation” between pollution and mortality. However, this is in contrast with the report of ISLDBI which was funded by Union Health Ministry
- **India State-Level Disease Burden Initiative** is a venture of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), the Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI) and the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

Some of the findings of ISLDBI 2018 report are:

- India, with 18% of the world’s population, has **26% of the global premature deaths and disease burden due to air pollution.**
- **One in eight deaths** in India was attributable to air pollution in India in 2017.
- Over half of the deaths due to air pollution were in persons less than 70 years of age.
- In 2017, **77% population of India was exposed to ambient particulate matter PM2.5** above the recommended limit by the National Ambient Air Quality Standards.
- **The disability-adjusted life years (DALYs)**, attributable to air pollution in India in 2017 for major non-communicable diseases were at least **as high as those attributable to tobacco use.**
- The average life expectancy in **India would have been 1.7 years higher** had the air pollution levels been less than the minimal level causing health loss
- The **highest PM2.5 exposure level was in Delhi**, followed by the other north Indian States of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Haryana.

Indian Pharmacopoeia (IP)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-II- Health

In News

- Afghanistan has become the first country to formally recognize Indian Pharmacopoeia (IP).
- As per the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, IP is designated as the official book of standards for drugs imported and/or manufactured for sale, stock or exhibition for sale or distribution in India.
- The IP specifies the standards of drugs manufactured and marketed in India in terms of their identity, purity and strength.

About Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC)

- It is an autonomous institution of the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** which sets standards (in form of IP) for all drugs that are manufactured, sold and consumed in India.
- The IP Commission’s mission is to **promote public and animal health** in India by bringing out authoritative and officially accepted standards for quality of drugs including active pharmaceutical ingredients, excipients and dosage forms, used by health professionals, patients and consumers

- The Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, is the Chairperson and the Chairman-Scientific Body is the Co-Chairman of the Commission

Centre for Science and Environment (CSE): CSE has alleged excessive and “dangerous” level of salt

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-II- Health

Context:

- A new report by Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) has alleged excessive and “dangerous” level of salt and under reporting of transfats in various well-known packaged foods brands.
- The report has said the levels of salt are much higher than the thresholds set by industry body Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI).

Recommended dietary allowance (RDA):

- To calculate this, the organisation relied on the concept of the recommended dietary allowance (RDA), a daily ceiling on the amount of salt, fat, carbohydrate and trans-fat.
- It says that, ideally, an adult should consume no more than 5g of salt, 60g of fat, 300g carbohydrate and 2.2 g of transfats every day.
- the RDA from breakfast, lunch and dinner should not be more than 25% and that from snacks (assumed to be those munched between meals), must be no more than 10%. Thus, a snack should ideally have no more than 0.5g of salt and 6g of fat.

Food Safety and Standards:

- Food Safety and Standards (Packaging and Labelling) Regulations, 2011 only require companies to disclose energy (kilo calories), protein, carbohydrates, total fat, trans-fat and saturated fat contained per 100g or per millilitre or per serve.
- In 2018, the FSSAI came up with a draft law, the Food Safety and Standards (Labelling and Display) Regulations, 2018.
- The draft recommended that a packet should have clear information on how much each nutrient, such as salt, sugar, contributed to the RDA.
- The draft said salt must be declared as sodium chloride for instance, and that those ingredients which breached the RDA should be marked in ‘red’.
- Food companies had reservations mainly because they felt ‘red’ signified danger, fearing that this would give consumers the impression that they were consuming toxic food.

Draft Food Safety and Standards (Labelling and Display) Regulations, 2019:

- A third committee was formed, headed by B. Sesikeran, a new draft (Draft Food Safety and Standards (Labelling and Display) Regulations, 2019) was prepared.
- This replaced sodium chloride with salt, total fat with saturated fat and total sugar with added sugar which CSE says, dilutes information on the health harm posed by packaged foods.
- The proposed law allows companies three years to adjust to the new laws. the contribution of each individual nutrient to the RDA and whether it is breaching safe limits will have to be displayed on the front of the package

- The CSE's calculations are based on recommended nutritional values in the draft versions of these laws.

Chile example:

- Chile, has a system where a black hexagon in a white border appears on the front of a package. In the hexagon is a phrase that says a product is “high in salt” or “high in trans-fat.” The more the hexagons the less desirable the product becomes for the consume

Connecting the dots:

- Do you think companies agree with the new law ?
- Do you think children are becoming more conscious about the health impact of their favourite snacks and influencing parents' buying choices?

Poshan Abhiyaan: Merely 30% of the funds used after 3 years

Part of: GS Prelims and GS III- Governance & Health

In News

- Barring Mizoram, Lakshadweep, Himachal Pradesh and Bihar, none of the state governments used even half of the sum granted in the past three years, according to an analysis of the data shared in Parliament.
- Average utilization of the funds allotted under the scheme, in the country is 29.97%
- Value addition for Prelims
- The Poshan Abhiyaan, the Centrally sponsored scheme, is aimed at improving nutritional outcomes among pregnant women, lactating mothers and children
- 50% of the funding comes through budgetary support while remaining 50% is from the World Bank or other multilateral development banks.
- POSHAN Abhiyaan is a multi-ministerial convergence mission with the vision to ensure attainment of malnutrition free India by 2022.
- Target: Reducing stunting, under-nutrition, anaemia (among young children, women and adolescent girls) and low birth weight by 2%, 2%, 3% and 2% per annum respectively.



ILP-2020
Integrated Learning Programme
ONLINE
New Batch on 20th November

GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

Mission Parivar Vikas (MPV)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II- Government Schemes

In News

- Mission Parivar Vikas (MPV) was launched by Union Health Ministry in **145 high focus districts having the highest total fertility rates(TFR) in the country**
- These 145 districts are in the seven high focus, high TFR states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Assam that constitute 44% of the country's population.
- The main objective of 'Mission Parivas Vikas' will be to accelerate **access to high quality family planning choices** based on information, reliable services and supplies within a rights-based framework.
- Data suggests that these 145 districts have TFR of more than/equal to 3.0 and are home to 28% of India's population (about 33 Crores).
- The scheme aims for immediate, special and accelerated efforts to reach the **replacement level fertility goals of 2.1 by 2025**
- These districts also have a substantial impact on maternal and child health indicators as about 25-30% of maternal deaths and 50% of infant deaths occur in these districts Moreover, 115 of these districts (79%) have high percentage of adolescent mothers.

Call for Universalisation of Pradhan MantriMatruVandanaYojana(PMMVY)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II –Women & Government schemes

In News

- The Pradhan MantriMatruVandanaYojana (PMMVY) was announced on December 31, 2016 which gives a **benefit of ₹6,000 to pregnant and lactating mothers for the birth of the first child.**
- ₹5,000 would be disbursed in three installments upon meeting several conditionalities — registration of pregnancy, at least one ante-natal check-up, registration of child birth and vaccinations.
- The remaining cash incentive of up to ₹1,000 is to be given under a separate scheme called the Janani Suraksha Yojana so that on an "average" women get a total sum of ₹6,000.
- The objective is to **compensate women for wage loss due to child birth.**
- Some of the reasons which has led to exclusion of many beneficiaries under PMMVY
 - Only for the first born
 - **Proof of address of marital home** – which proves challenging for a newlywed expecting a child and often residing in her natal home during pregnancy. She is then forced to go from pillar to post to claim benefits.

- **Minimum age of 19 years** – leaves out younger brides, who hesitate in getting their marriages registered as the legal age of marriage is 18 years.
- **Husbands Aadhar Card** – Affects single women which include unwed mothers, deserted wives and widows
- **Tedious documentation:** Total 6 application forms to be filled, with total of 30 of 32 pages to be filled by the beneficiary
- **As many as 9 IDs to be produced** – Aadhaar card, voter ID card; ration card copy of bank passbook and maternal and child protection (MCP) card etc.
- Activists urge for a need for reviewing the scheme and **making it universal** by removing restrictions on the number of children as well as including all women, whether they are in the formal or informal sector, engaged in paid or unpaid work.
- Also, there is a demand that the sum promised should also be at least on par with minimum wages for women in self-employment, unpaid work, or working for less than minimum wages

Ujwal DISCOM Assurance Yojana (UDAY): sharp spike in discom losses

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II –Government schemes

Context:

- Discom losses, which had progressively reduced in the first couple of years since the scheme's rollout in November 2015, have rebounded in FY '19 to nearly double the losses recorded the previous year.
- Book losses of discoms, which had reduced from Rs 51,562 crore in FY '16 to Rs 15,132 crore in FY '18, have nearly doubled this financial year to Rs 28,036 crore,
- Discoms have also missed the FY '19 UDAY target to bring down their aggregate technical and commercial (AT&C) losses to 15 per cent.

DISCOM PERFORMANCE				
Financial Parameters	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19*
Loss (Rs cr)	51,562	38,080	15,132	28,036
AT&C losses (%)	20.81	20.28	18.80	18.19
ACS-ARR gap (Rs/ kWh)	0.60	0.42	0.17	0.27

*Based on provisional/unaudited data entered by states/discoms on UDAY portal; *AT&C and ACS-ARR gap for FY19 based on data submitted by 28 states, P&L data based on submissions by 27 states, rest from Q3FY19 or latest available data on UDAY portal (as on Sept 27); Source: Govt data*

Daily

[SRC: IE](#)

Reason for failure:

- The primary reason for failure, as is being recognised in policy circles, is the failure of discoms to collect the full cost that they pay for power — the same issue that had led to the floundering of the previous two schemes.

Solutions:

- Franchise or PPP models.
- The Centre is also likely to back up the new scheme by providing some grant support, which it did not do in UDAY.

Problems with the Sector:

The massive transmission and distribution losses can be attributed to the following reasons:

- Inadequate Tariff increases
- Poor Power purchase planning
- Sale of power at prices lower than the discom's procurement costs
- Political Willingness
- Lack of timely Subsidy Payments
- Inefficiencies in metering and billing
- Illegal Connections
- Reckless funding by banks to loss-making Discoms

Why UDAY?

- The UDAY Scheme (not compulsory) will pave way for the takeover of the 75 per cent of Discom liabilities by state governments over a two-to-five year period
- **Financing of the Debt:** Via bonds with a maturity period of 10-15 years
- **Effects:**
 - It will help relieve debt-ridden discoms
 - It will lead to the acceptance of debts in the balance sheet of the discom while encouraging them to align tariffs to costs and ensuring the sustainable working of the same

The utility of UDAY:

- Unsustainable borrowings should be curbed to put a stop on ever-increasing loss. Under Uday, the future losses can be permitted to finance only when a discom bond is guaranteed by the State Government, thus ensuring that the discom applies a profitable discretion
- With elements like the guided intervention of the State governments and the graded manner in which it needs to be taken up, the scheme assumes an all-season ongoing approach and not a one-time settlement effort.
- Certain conditions put across by Uday involves:
 - Loss reduction needs to be aided by circle-wise targets, feeder and DT Metering as well as upgrading and replacement of transformers
 - Regions with sustained loss reduction should be incentivised (rewarded) by increased hours of supply
- Other initiatives that can be taken to reduce discom inefficiencies:
 - Laying down a specific performance-monitoring & compliance mechanism (can be incentivised by additional funding and other inputs)
 - Monitoring of lending by banks to ensure reliable supply of investment
 - Ensure regular tariff setting

- Energy auditing of feeders
- Metering of distribution transformers (DT)
- Elimination of revenue gaps
- Allow fuel-cost adjustments in final tariffs
- Reduction in short-term power purchase
- Liquidation of Regulatory Assets
- Ensuring advance payments of subsidies

Attractive to States:

- The additional liability will not be considered for assessing fiscal responsibility limits of States
- The 3 to 4 percentage point reduction in interest rates will serve as a relief

Issues with Uday

- **State Subject:** Electricity is not a Central subject and thus, the scheme cannot be made a compulsory one- which leaves the door open for unequal working of the Discom per State.
- No monetary assistance is being provided by the State though states willing to become a part of the scheme will be granted with subsidised funding in the government's schemes and priority in the supply of coal
- The conversion of discom debt into bonds is not as difficult as is finding a suitable buyer for those bonds, not enjoying SLR Status additionally

IASbaba's Views:

- Political unwillingness needs to be fixed and mechanisms need to be strictly followed to plug the loopholes to address the debt-ridden discoms and fix the losses.
- This restructuring package needs to be designed in a way that it can deal with both; an unexpected tariff shock or an increased burden on the State Government, taking into due consideration the certain measures that needs to be effectively worked out (enumerated above)

Connecting the Dots:

- Do surplus and shortages go together? Analyse
- In the light of the grave situation of power loss, can State prove to be a beacon of light, leading the path away from the crisis? Discuss

[Atal Bhujal Yojana \(ATAL JAL\)](#)

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

In News

- The **Central Sector scheme** aims to improve **ground water management through community participation** in identified priority areas in seven States, viz. Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.
- The Department of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation, Ministry of Jal Shakti is the implementing agency for the scheme.
- Out of the total outlay of Rs. 6000 crore, 50% shall be in the form of World Bank loan, and remaining 50% shall be through Central Assistance from regular budgetary support. The entire amount shall be passed on to the States as Grants.
- **ATAL JAL has two major components:**

- **Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Building** for sustainable ground water management in the States including improving monitoring networks, capacity building, strengthening of Water User Associations, etc.
- **Incentivising the States** for achievements in improved groundwater management practices namely, data dissemination, preparation of water security plans etc.

Do You know?

- Out of 17.87 Crore rural households in the country, about 14.6 Crore which accounts for 81.67% are yet to have household water tap connections.
- Government's Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) aims to provide Functional Household Tap Connection (FHTC) to every rural household by 2024.

MGNREGA: fewer jobs since July, wider demand-supply gap

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-III Policy Vulnerable sections

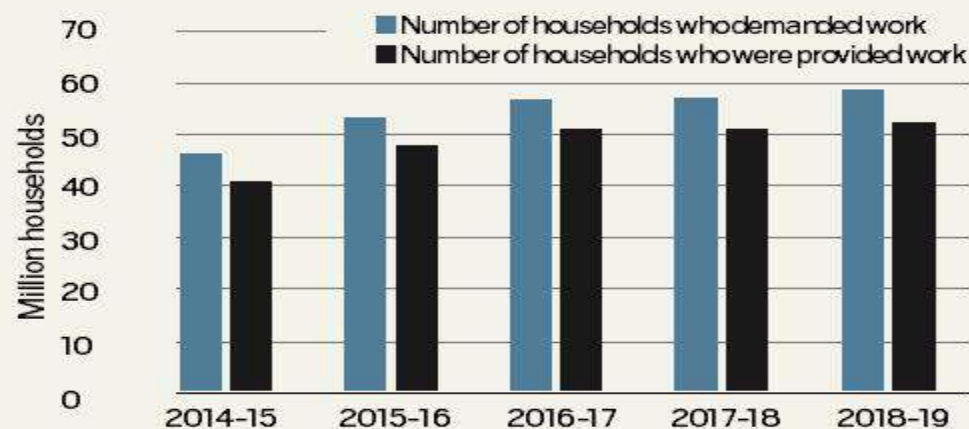
In news

- Jobs generated under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) have shown a dip compared to last year after July.
- Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) is also witnessing a deceleration of activity.
- 2018-19, the year that preceded the Lok Sabha elections, saw a record number of households demanding as well as being provided employment under the flagship rural public works programme.
- In 2018-19, demand was registered from 5.88 crore households, and 5.27 crore of them were provided work.

Funds:

- For 2019-20, the Modi government has allocated Rs 60,000 crore towards MGNREGA. But out of this budgeted sum, Rs 9,493.80 crore would be required for clearing the liabilities of wages, material and administrative costs for previous years.

CHART 1: DEMAND & SUPPLY



SRC: IE**Fall in Employment due to:**

- The fall in MGNREGA employment after July has been largely due to the onset of the southwest monsoon. Rainfall during the monsoon season (June-September) this year was 10% above the historical long-term average — the highest since 1994 — whereas it was 9.4% below average in 2018

Value addition For Prelims:**PM-KISAN Scheme**

- It aims to extend direct income support at the rate of Rs. 6,000 per year to farmer families, having cultivable land upto 2 hectares.
- This income support will be transferred directly into the bank accounts of beneficiary farmers, in three equal instalments of Rs. 2,000 each.
- Around 12 Crore small and marginal farmer families are expected to benefit.
- This programme will be funded by Government of India.
- This programme will entail an annual expenditure of Rs.75,000 crore.
- PM-KISAN would pave the way for the farmers to earn and live a respectable living.

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA),

- The MGNREGA provides a legal guarantee for one hundred days of employment in every financial year to adult members of any rural household willing to do public work-related unskilled manual work at the statutory minimum wage.
- The Ministry of Rural Development (MRD), Govt of India is monitoring the entire implementation of this scheme in association with state governments

TLP CONNECT-2020
Think Learn & Perform
ONLINE + OFFLINE

ILP-2020
Integrated Learning Programme
ONLINE
New Batch on 20th November

INTERNATIONAL

Power of Siberia

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

In News

- Chinese President Xi Jinping and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin remotely inaugurated the “Power of Siberia” gas pipeline
- Russia has been a primary gas supplier to Europe, but the Power of Siberia is the first **cross-border gas pipeline between Russia and China**, adding a prominent eastern dimension to Moscow’s energy blueprint.
- Under the contract, Russia will deliver 1 trillion cubic meters of natural gas to China over the next 30 years.
- From Siberia to China’s Yangtze River delta in Shanghai, the massive pipeline will cover 8,000 km, with 5,111 km inside China, passing through nine provinces and municipalities.
- A massive cross-border undertaking not only central to China’s energy security but also for bolstering special ties between Beijing and Moscow.
- The 30-year project is anchored by a \$400 billion gas deal.

U.S. threatens 100% tariffs on French goods

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

In News

- On the sidelines of the NATO alliance talks, the U.S. announced that it could possibly levy duties up to 100% on \$2.4 billion in French imports into the country.
- The proposed tariffs could include French champagne, porcelain and some cheese varieties.
- The announcement comes after the office of the U.S. Trade Representative’s (USTR) probe(301 probe) into **France’s Digital Services Tax (DST)** concluded that a French tax measure is discriminatory towards specific U.S. technology companies.
- **The ‘301’ probe is a trade tool** authorised by Section 301 of the U.S. Trade Act of 1974, which the U.S. uses to assert its rights under trade agreements if it decides American industries are facing “unfair” foreign trade practices.
- France’s DST is a 3% tax on the turnover of digital companies with global turnover of at least €750 million, of which €25 million is generated in France.
- U.S. tech giants, including Google, Amazon and Facebook, had called for the tax to be scrapped.
- USTR said that the tax was inconsistent with prevailing tax principles due to its retroactivities, application to revenue rather than income and extraterritorial application.
- While this particular round of tariffs does not impact India directly, the USTR’s use of 301 probes is of relevance to the country.

- US in July had stated that a '301 probe' was among the options the U.S. was considering at the time with regard to India. Currently, New Delhi and Washington are in the middle of a negotiation on a limited trade deal.

Ukraine – Trump issue

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

In News

- The House Intelligence Committee released a 300-page impeachment report accusing President Donald Trump of trying to enlist Ukraine to help him in the 2020 presidential election and obstructing the congressional inquiry by trying to cover it up.

Background:

- It revolves around efforts by U.S. President Donald Trump to coerce Ukraine and other foreign countries into providing damaging narratives about 2020 Democratic Party presidential primary candidate Joe Biden as well as information relating to Russian interference in the 2016 United States elections.
- Trump enlisted surrogates within and outside his official administration, including his personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani and Attorney General William Barr, to pressure Ukraine and other foreign governments to cooperate in supporting conspiracy theories concerning American politics. Trump blocked but later released payment of a congressionally mandated \$400 million military aid package to allegedly obtain quid pro quo cooperation from Volodymyr Zelensky, the president of Ukraine.
- Number of contacts were established between the White House and the government of Ukraine, culminating in a July 25, 2019, phone call between Trump and Zelensky
- The scandal reached public attention in mid-September 2019 due to a whistleblower complaint made in August 2019. The complaint raised concerns about Trump using presidential powers to solicit foreign electoral intervention in the 2020 U.S. presidential election

Takeaways from the report:

- The president leveraged Ukraine's military aid and a White House meeting for political investigations.

"subverted U.S. foreign policy toward Ukraine and undermined our national security in favor of two politically motivated investigations that would help his presidential reelection campaign."

- Trump 'ordered and implemented' a campaign to conceal his conduct from the public and Congress.

"The damage to our system of checks and balances, and to the balance of power within our three branches of government, will be long-lasting and potentially irrevocable if the president's ability to stonewall Congress goes unchecked,"

- The report is a road map to the president's possible impeachment and removal from office.

“Today, we may be witnessing a collision between the power of a remedy meant to curb presidential misconduct and the power of faction determined to defend against the use of that remedy on a president of the same party,”

- Report prompts new phase in impeachment inquiry as Judiciary Committee considers articles of impeachment.

“The release of the report largely concludes the investigation by the Intelligence Committee and moves the impeachment inquiry into a new phase led by the House Judiciary Committee, which plans to hold its first hearing”

US impeachment process

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

Indian Impeachment process

- In India, President can be impeached for violation of the Constitution (Article 61)
- The motion for impeaching President can be introduced in any House of Parliament.
- After the investigation, the motion of impeachment must be passed by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the total membership of the House by both Houses of the Parliament.

Connecting the dots:

- Subverted U.S. foreign policy toward Ukraine and undermined our national security in favor of two politically motivated investigations that would help his presidential re-election campaign. Comment

Israel Palestine issue

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

In News

- Britain took control of the area known as Palestine after the ruler of that part of the Middle East, the Ottoman Empire, was defeated in WW1.
- The land was inhabited by a Jewish minority and Arab majority.
- Tensions between the two peoples grew when the international community gave Britain the task of establishing a “national home” in Palestine for Jewish people.
- For Jews, it was their ancestral home, but Palestinian Arabs also claimed the land and opposed the move.
- Between the 1920s and 40s, the number of Jews arriving there grew, with many fleeing from persecution in Europe and seeking a homeland after the Holocaust of WWII.
- Violence between Jews and Arabs, and against British rule, also grew.

UN

- In 1947, the UN voted for Palestine to be split into separate Jewish and Arab states, with Jerusalem becoming an international city.
- That plan was accepted by Jewish leaders but rejected by the Arab side and never implemented.

The creation of Israel and the ‘Catastrophe’

- In 1948, unable to solve the problem, British rulers left and Jewish leaders declared the creation of the state of Israel.
- Many Palestinians objected and a war followed. Troops from neighboring Arab countries invaded.
- Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians fled or were forced out of their homes in what they call **Al Nakba, or the “Catastrophe”**.
- By the time the fighting ended in a ceasefire the following year, Israel controlled most of the territory.
- Jordan occupied land which became known as the West Bank, and Egypt occupied Gaza.
- Jerusalem was divided between Israeli forces in the West, and Jordanian forces in the East.
- Because there was never a peace agreement – each side blamed the other – there were more wars and fighting in the decades which followed.

1967:

- In another war in 1967, Israel occupied East Jerusalem and the West Bank, as well as most of the Syrian Golan Heights, and Gaza and the Egyptian Sinai peninsula.
- Most Palestinian refugees and their descendants live in Gaza and the West Bank, as well as in neighboring Jordan, Syria and Lebanon.
- Neither they nor their descendants have been allowed by Israel to return to their homes – Israel says this would overwhelm the country and threaten its existence as a Jewish state

Present day

- Israel still occupies the West Bank, and although it pulled out of Gaza the UN still regards that piece of land as part of occupied territory.
- Israel claims the whole of Jerusalem as its capital, while the Palestinians claim East Jerusalem as the capital of a future Palestinian state.
- Only the US recognises Israel’s claim to the whole of the city.
- In the past 50 years Israel has built settlements in these areas, where more than 600,000 Jews now live.
- Palestinians say these are illegal under international law and are obstacles to peace, but Israel denies this.
- Tensions are often high between Israel and Palestinians living in East Jerusalem, Gaza and the West Bank.
- Gaza is ruled by a Palestinian militant group called **Hamas**, which has fought Israel many times. Israel and Egypt tightly control Gaza’s borders to stop weapons getting to Hamas.
- Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank say they’re suffering because of Israeli actions and restrictions.
- Israel say it is only acting to protect itself from Palestinian violence.

Conclusion:

- The situation isn’t going to be sorted out any time soon. A new peace plan is being prepared by the United States, which has described it as the “deal of the century”.

Connecting the dots:

- Any future solution must be one that rectifies past evils and offers democracy to all Palestinians. comment

Uighur issue

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

In News

- On December 3rd, the US House of Representatives passed by a 407-1 vote a Bill –**The Uighur Human Rights Policy Act 2019** – that seeks to impose sanctions on senior Chinese officials for their involvement in the detention of Muslims.
- The bill also calls for the United States Secretary of Commerce to consider **prohibiting the sale of US-made goods or services** to any state agent in Xinjiang.
- The Uyghurs are a Turkic ethnic group who live in East and Central Asia. They live primarily in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China, where they are one of 55 officially recognized ethnic minorities. Uyghurs primarily practice Islam.
- China has detained at least a million **Uighurs** and other Muslims, including ethnic Kazakhs and Uzbeks, in “re-education camps” in the country’s northwestern **Xinjiang province**.
- The crackdown against the Muslims in the region — who **are ethnically and culturally closer to central Asia than to the mainland Han Chinese** — intensified after riots broke out in the regional capital Urumqi in 2009, in which over 200 people were killed.

Do You Know?

- President Trump signed into law on November 27 **The Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act 2019**. Under this law, the US government must impose sanctions against Chinese and Hong Kong officials responsible for human rights abuses in Hong Kong.

France Protest**Context:**

- Since December 5, hundreds of thousands of protesters including railway workers, teachers, and hospital staff, have been staging one of the biggest strikes in France in decades against the government’s pension reform project.
- The strike is expected to continue for at least the next few days, and
- It will affect intercity commutes as well.

Background:

- The protesters argue that President Emmanuel Macron’s proposed pension reforms will force them to make a choice between working for long hours and receiving lower payments.
- The protests are the second during Macron’s presidency, after last year’s “Yellow Vest” or “gilets jaunes” protests.

Yellow Vest Protests

- Yellow vest protests were triggered by general discontent, especially high fuel prices and cost of living.
- The movement was a populist, grassroots political movement for economic justice that began in France in October 2018.
- The movement was initially motivated by rising fuel prices and a high cost of living;
- It claims that a disproportionate burden of the government's tax reforms were falling on the working and middle classes, especially in rural and peri-urban areas.
- The protesters called for lower fuel taxes, a reintroduction of the solidarity tax on wealth, a minimum-wage increase, the implementation of Citizens' initiative referendums, among other things.
- Rising fuel prices initially sparked the demonstrations.
- Yellow high-visibility vests, which French law required all drivers to have in their vehicles and to wear during emergencies, were chosen as "a unifying thread and call to arms" because of their convenience, visibility, ubiquity, and association with working-class industries.

Pension Reforms:

- Through the pension reforms, Macron aims to merge the pension system — one of his core election promises — which currently has 42 sector-specific pension schemes, with different levels of contributions and rewards, into one central points-based system.
- The French government spending on pensions is among the highest in the world, at 14 percent of their economic output.
- As per the reformed pension schemes, each day that a worker works will earn them a point for future pension benefits.
- Macron maintains that a points-based single pension scheme will be fairer and less complicated.
- At the moment, pension benefits in France are based on a worker's 25 highest earning years in the private sector, and the last six months in the public sector.
- Additionally, the retirement age in France is 62, one of the lowest among the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries.
- While Macron has not indicated that the retirement age will be pushed back, he has, indeed, said that workers in France will be required to work for longer.
- This is not the first time that French people are protesting against a change in the pension scheme.
- In 2007, rail and public transport workers staged a similar strike against then President Nicolas Sarkozy's plans for pension reforms.

Connecting the dots:

- France Protests are effective on all sides of the political spectrum. Critically comment.

Finland gets world's youngest PM

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-II – International Affairs; GS-I- Society (Women empowerment)
In News

- The 34-year-old Finnish politician **Sanna Marin**, her country's Transport Minister, will soon become the world's youngest Prime Minister.
- The Transport Minister was chosen by **Finland's Social Democratic Party** to succeed Prime Minister Antti Rinne who on December 3 announced he was resigning in the face of criticism over the government's handling of a postal strike that lasted two weeks in November
- Prime Minister-elect Marin will be Finland's **third woman head of government**.
- Marin will lead a **five-party Centre-Left political coalition which is all led by women**. Four of these women are in their early thirties.
- New Zealand PM Jacinda Ardern is 39, while Ukrainian premier Oleksiy Honcharuk is 35.

U.S. International Commission on Religious Freedom (USCIRF)

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

In News

- In the wake of the passage of the **Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB)** in the Lok Sabha, USCIRF has expressed concern over it and considered recommending sanctions against Home Minister Amit Shah and other top leaders.
- USCIRF fears that the Indian government is creating a religious test for Indian citizenship through CAB that would strip citizenship from millions of Muslims
- In response, the External Affairs Ministry said India had the prerogative to validate its citizenry through various policies like any other country.

About USCIRF

- The USCIRF is an independent, bipartisan US federal government commission- an **advisory body**, which advises the US Congress and the administration on issues pertaining to **international religious freedom**
- In practice, the USCIRF **has little teeth in implementation**, but acts as a conscience-keeper for the two branches in the US government — the legislature and the executive.
- It often takes maximalist or extreme positions, and has been **used by civil society groups to put pressure on US Congress members** and administration officials.

President Impeachment: US President Trump to be impeached

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

Context:

- Donald Trump became the third US President to be impeached. The first was Andrew Johnson in 1868 and then Bill Clinton in 1998.
- The impeachment inquiry against Donald Trump was initiated on September 2019 when a whistleblower alleged that Trump may have abused the power of the presidency
- The House Intelligence Committee released a 300-page impeachment report accusing President Donald Trump of trying to enlist Ukraine to help him in the 2020 presidential election and obstructing the congressional inquiry by trying to cover it up.

Why?

- A whistleblower alleged that Trump may have abused the power of the presidency by withholding military aid as a means of pressuring newly elected president of Ukraine **Volodymyr Zelensky** to perform two favors:
 1. To pursue investigations of Joe Biden and his son Hunter,
 2. To investigate a conspiracy theory that Ukraine, not Russia, was behind interference in the 2016 presidential election.
- More than a week after Trump had put a hold on the previously approved military aid, 400mn
- He made the aforementioned requests in a July 25 phone call with the Ukrainian president, which the whistleblower alleged was intended to help Trump's re-election bid.

US impeachment process

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

Indian Impeachment process

- In India, President can be impeached for violation of the Constitution (**Article 61**)
- The motion for impeaching President can be introduced in any House of Parliament.
- After the investigation, the motion of impeachment must be passed by a two-thirds majority of the total membership of the House by both Houses of the Parliament.

Connecting the dots:

- Do you think Donald trump has misused the power?
- What is the difference between Indian and US President Impeachment process?

USMCA trade deal

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

In News

- The US, Mexico and Canada have finalised the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) that will replace the 25-year-old North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).
- But the deal needs approval by legislatures in the three countries before it can move forward.

Salient Features of U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA)

- USMCA is intended to **last 16 years and will be reviewed every 6 years.**
- **Agriculture:** Farmers of major crops no longer have to worry about President Trump potentially pulling out of the existing Nafta and leaving them fewer major export markets. USMCA also **gives dairy farmers more access to Canada.** Tariffs of up to 275% have kept most foreign milk out of the Canadian market.

- **Auto Rules:** Compared with Nafta, USMCA significantly tightens the rules that the auto industry has to follow in order to trade vehicles duty free in North America. A certain proportion of a car will have to be produced by workers with higher wages, and a greater proportion of components will have to originate in North America.
- **Pharma:** The new dealer moves requirements for a 10-year exclusivity period for **biologic drugs** [medication derived from or containing components of biological organisms, rather than having been totally synthesized], which would have benefited large pharmaceutical companies.
- It also includes stronger protections for workers, tough environmental rules, updates the trade relationship to cover the digital economy and provides tougher intellectual property protections.
- **Digital Freedom:** USMCA, unlike the current Nafta, includes rules mandating the free flow of data among the three countries.
- Canada managed to preserve the **dispute-settlement mechanism** as a protection for its wood industry.
- It also adds provisions to **prevent “manipulation” of the trade rules**, including covering currency values, and controls over outside countries trying to take advantage of the duty-free market.

[Biggest parliamentary majority for Boris Johnson \(BREXIT\)](#)

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

Context:

- Britain’s Prime Minister Boris Johnson has won the biggest parliamentary majority
- Prime Minister has promised to quickly push through Parliament the Withdrawal Agreement giving consent to his Brexit deal.

What next?

- Johnson’s Withdrawal Agreement Bill (WAB) will be introduced within days
- They will have until the deadline of January 31 to get the Bill through both Houses of Parliament.
- Once Parliament has passed the Bill, the European Parliament will need to ratify the Brexit deal at its end.
- That done, Britain will be out of the EU.
- A British delegation will thereafter begin talks on a trade deal that will define the UK’s future relationship with the EU.
- Separate delegations will begin talks on trade deals with other countries as well, including India

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

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:

- Do you think UK should come back into the EU after leaving?

US and China: 'Phase One' agreement

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

Context:

- United States and China recently announced a “Phase One” agreement
- With this US will reduce some tariffs in exchange for increased Chinese purchases of American farm and energy goods.

Background:

- Donald Trump in 2018 began setting tariffs and other trade barriers on China with the goal of forcing it to make changes to what the U.S. says are “unfair trade practices” of China
- Among those trade practices and their effects are the growing trade deficit, the theft of intellectual property, and the forced transfer of American technology to China
- The trade war has brought struggles for farmers and manufacturers and higher prices for consumers.
- It has also caused economic damage In some countries, some countries have benefited from increased manufacturing to fill the gaps. It has also led to stock market instability.

Impact of trade war on India :

- The US manufacturers are setting up their bases in India. For India, this will be beneficial as it would create more jobs for us.
- There is a possibility that China could soon start flooding excess steel and aluminium into India’s market after this raised tariffs on Chinese products by US.
- Mobile phones, refrigerators, washing machines, ACs, water purifiers, and possibly electric vehicles will now see increased investment flow directed towards India.
- The Indian consumers will get the products at a cheaper rate but the domestic producers of India will have to compete with the Chinese imports or else face loss.
- Indian producers will get an opportunity to fill this generated gap and penetrate in the US market. This will increase their trade and profit.
- There will be a short-term impact on the stock markets.

Features:

- The US will halve its 15 per cent tariff on about \$120 billion in Chinese goods

China has agreed to increase its total purchases of US goods and services by at least \$200 billion over the next two years. Also included is a commitment by China to increase its buying of US agricultural products

- Addresses unfair currency practices by committing to refrain from competitive devaluations and exchange rate targeting. “This approach will help reinforce macroeconomic and exchange rate stability and help ensure that China cannot use currency practices to unfairly compete against U.S. exporters”
- China have agreed not to pressure foreign companies to transfer their technology to Chinese companies.
- The agreement also include a dispute-resolution mechanism that will serve as the enforcement arm.

Critics:

- It would bring **only temporary relief** in the over 18-month-old trade war between the US and China.
- Does little to resolve the United States’ biggest concerns about China’s trade practices, including its use of **industrial subsidies and state-owned enterprises to dominate global industries like steel and solar panels.**
- The deal would increase Chinese purchases of American agricultural and energy products,
- It limits on China’s ability to weaken its currency and provide greater protection to US companies that are operating in China.

Way forward:

- China and the United States, the world’s two largest economies, must deal with bilateral economic and trade relations with the big picture in mind.
- Reaching the agreement will serve the fundamental interests of the people of the two countries and the world,
- It is expected to bring positive influences on areas including economy, trade, investment and the financial market

Conclusion:

- The economic and political benefits of de-escalation in the trade war have become readily apparent.
- A rollback of tariffs and cancellation of new levies, makes sense for the US economy and for the World economy.

Connecting the dots:

- Do you think Phase One” agreement make a positive impact on Indian economy?

What UK poll result means for Brexit?

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

Context:

- British Prime Minister Boris Johnson won UK election

Takeaways:

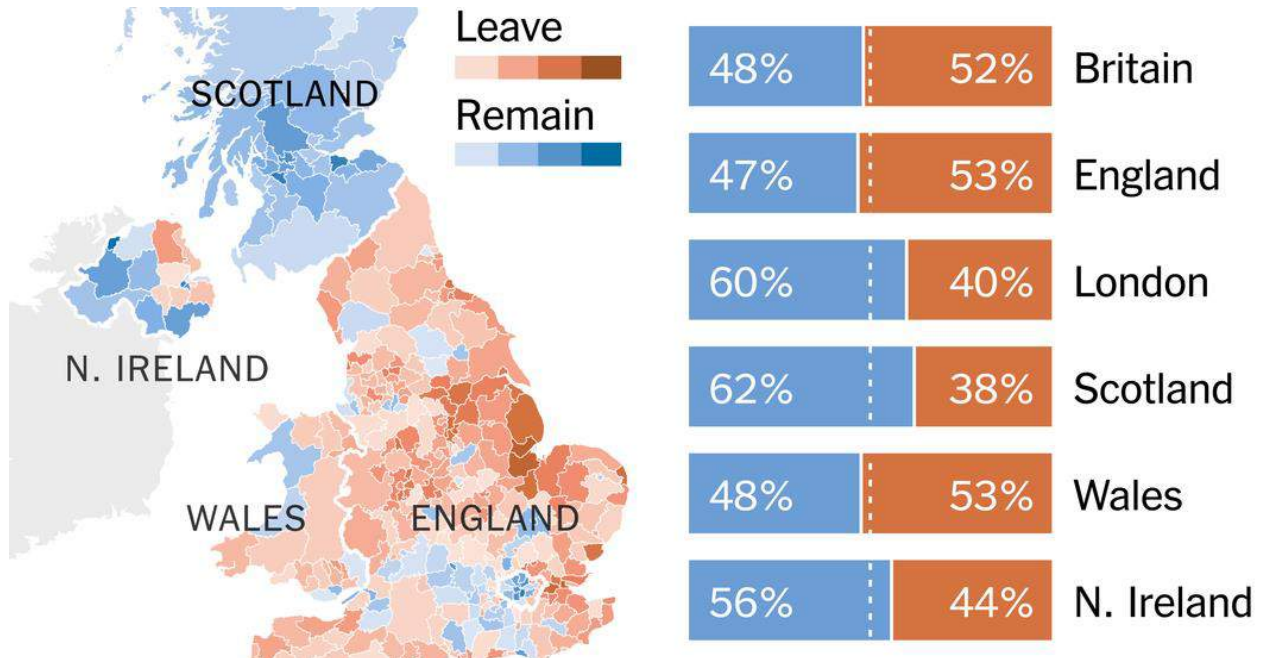
- The likelihood of Brexit being put on the fast track.
- the biggest defeat of the Labour Party since 1935,

- A sweep of Scotland's seats by the Scottish National Party, and its implications on the possibility of independence.

What does the result mean?

- The size of the victory sets the stage for a Britain of Johnson's ideological vision – nationalism, with tougher laws on immigration.
- Britain will also have to deal with Brexit's effect on its economy.
- This includes the long process of new bilateral trade agreements with many other countries.

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).
- 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.

Why is the UK leaving?

- A public vote – or referendum – was held on Thursday 23 June 2016, to decide whether the UK should leave or remain.
- Leave won by 52% to 48%. The referendum turnout was very high at 72%, with more than 30 million people voting – 17.4 million people opting for Brexit.

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

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.

Advantages and disadvantages for India

<https://iasbaba.com/2019/12/biggest-parliamentary-majority-for-boris-johnson-brexite/>

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:

- Do you think India will get more opportunities in Britain after BREXIT?
- Do you think BREXIT is Detrimental for the global economy?

Brexit :Withdrawal Agreement Bill (WAB)

Contest:

- Armed with its new majority, the Britain government has published a revised version of its Withdrawal Agreement Bill (WAB) to ensure that it can take the UK out of the EU on 31 January.
- The House of Commons voted 358-234 for the Withdrawal Agreement Bill.

Key changes :

- First, a new clause outlaws an extension to the standstill transition period that would expire on December 31, 2020. Following the announcement, the pound slid 1.1% against the dollar relative to the gains after the election results, reviving market anxiety. Besides the £33 billion settlement contained in the withdrawal deal, any extension after next December would entail additionally about €10 billion a year.
- The bill dispenses with the need for parliamentary approval, for the government's negotiating mandate as well as the final agreement on the country's future relationship with the bloc .The provision risks sidestepping normal democratic channels for industries and trade unions to influence the shape of their future trading relations with the EU, worth an estimated £90 billion.
- Bill guarantees on labour rights previously included in the withdrawal bill have been removed. This vindicates sceptics' fears about a drift to a low-tax low-regulation U.K. economy after Brexit. Brussels is wary of granting these concessions to a major economy such as Britain.

Challenges ahead :

- Northern Ireland will continue to remain within the EU jurisdiction after Brexit.
- The government will enforce customs checks for goods traded across the Irish Sea to the rest of the U.K., increasing costs for the bulk of small enterprises.
- The regulatory divergence within U.K. territory is the compromise London has conceded to protect the EU's single market.

- The arrangement would maintain the existing soft border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, which has underpinned the region's tenuous peace since the 1998 Good Friday Agreement

Impact on India:

- Direct impact on currency as it will weaken against dollar
- Indian-based companies and investments in UK will suffer direct negative impact.
- Gateway to Europe being closed, huge trade costs to be occurred in dealing with EU separately.
- Lower commodity prices, crude oil prices may help narrowing CAD
- More investments done in safe options like gold. This has increased cash outflow and surged prices of gold
- Decrease in FII's
- Not much impact on pharma industry as US is the bigger market

However, India is not expected to be too much impacted due to its deep foreign exchange reserves, a high growth rate, somewhat restrained inflation, a not significant current account deficit and fiscal discipline maintenance.

Connecting the dots:

- Has Brexit affected India?
- How should India view Brexit?

First Global Refugee Forum (GRF)

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

In News

- The **first Global Refugee Forum (GRF)**, a two-day gathering of United Nations member states, began in Geneva, Switzerland, on December 17th
- The Forum, jointly hosted by the **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)** and the government of Switzerland,
- Aims to debate and discuss the response of the world's countries to the global refugee situation.
- The first GRF has been organised around six areas of focus: burden- and responsibility-sharing, education, jobs and livelihoods, energy and infrastructure, solutions, and protection capacity.
- The number of refugees has risen to over **25 million people worldwide**
- The GRF will be held every four years at the Ministerial level.
- It is intended to present an opportunity for UN member states and other stakeholders to announce action plans and pledges towards meeting objectives such as easing the burden on the host country, enhancing refugee self-reliance, expanding access to third-country solutions, and supporting conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.

UNICEF: Ensure Child Rights

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

In News

- Children’s rights to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression, including in peaceful protest, are enshrined in the **Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**
- UNCRC is a human rights treaty which sets out the civil, political, economic, social, health and cultural rights of children. The Convention defines a child as any human being under the **age of eighteen**.
- The treaty came into force in 1990. Currently, **196 countries have signed and ratified it (including India)** except the United States (signed but not ratified)
- UNICEF thus urged its member-states to ensure that children can exercise this right in a safe and peaceful manner.

About United Nations International Children’s Education Fund(UNICEF)

- **UNICEF** was created in **1946** as International Children’s Emergency Fund (ICEF) by UN relief Rehabilitation Administration to help children affected by World War II
- UNICEF became a permanent part of the United Nations in 1953 and is devoted to aiding national efforts to improve the health, nutrition, education, and general welfare of children.

Financial Action Task Force (FATF): Grills Pakistan

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

In News

- FATF has asked Pakistan more questions on the action it has taken against madrassas run by proscribed outfits.
- The FATF has kept Pakistan on **the Grey List until February 2020** and warned that it would be put to black list (along with Iran & North Korea) if it did not take requisite actions.
- FATF is an intergovernmental organization founded in **1989** on the initiative of the **G7** to develop policies to combat money laundering.
- Its objective is 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

US Space Force: China raises objection

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

In News

- 2020 National Defence Authorization Act was signed by U.S. President Donald Trump, which creates a new branch of the U.S. military – Space Force
- The **Space Force will be the sixth formal force of the U.S. military**, after the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard
- The new branch will be stood up over the next 18 months. The Space Force would comprise around 16,000 Air Force and civilian personnel.

- It is not intended to put troops into orbit, but **will protect US assets** – such as the hundreds of satellites used for communication and surveillance.
- China has criticised US of turning the cosmos into a battlefield and pursuing the **weaponisation of outer space**

[Hypersonic Weapons: Russia becomes the first country to deploy it](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-III- Security, GS-II- International Affairs

In News

- President Vladimir Putin said that Russia is the only country in the world that has hypersonic weapons- weapons that **travel faster than Mach5** (~6174kmph) and have the capability to manoeuvre during the entire flight.
- The first unit equipped with the **Avangard hypersonic glide vehicle** is set to go on duty by Dec 2019, while that the air-launched **Kinzhal hypersonic missiles** already have entered service.
- **Avangard** has an intercontinental range and can fly in the atmosphere at a speed 20 times the speed of sound. Its ability to change both its course and its altitude en route to a target makes it immune to interception by the the enemy.
- **The Kinzhal**, which is carried by MiG-31 fighter jets, entered service with the Russian air force last year. The missile flies **10 times faster than the speed of sound**, has a range of more than 2,000 kilometers (1,250 miles) and can carry a nuclear or a conventional warhead. It is capable of hitting both land targets and navy ships.

Do You Know?

- **Mach number** is the **ratio of the speed of the body to the speed of sound** in the undisturbed medium through which the body is traveling. E.g. If the body is flying at Mach 3, then its speed is thrice the speed of sound in air (which is 332 m/s or 1195 km/hr).
- It is named in honor of **Ernst Mach** (1838-1916), a physicist from Austria.
- Types of Aircrafts/missiles based on Mach Number:
 - Subsonic ($M < 1$)
 - Transonic ($M = 1$)
 - Supersonic ($1 < M < 3$)
 - High Supersonic ($3 < M < 5$)
 - Hypersonic ($M > 5$)
 - High Hypersonic ($M \sim 25$)

[China, Iran and Russia: held joint naval drills in the Indian Ocean and Gulf of Oman](#)

In news:

- China, Iran and Russia held joint naval drills in the Indian Ocean and Gulf of Oman, amid heightened tension in the region between Iran and the United States.
- This is being seen as a response to recent US manoeuvres in the region.

- exercise has been launched from the port city of **Chabahar (The Chabahar port, which is near Iran's border with Pakistan, was built with Indian assistance and is operated by India)**

Why tensions?

- Last year U.S. President Donald Trump pulled the United States out of Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with six nations and re-imposed sanctions on the country, crippling its economy.
- Several attacks recently on international merchant vessels, including Saudi tankers, in Gulf waters which the United States blamed on Iran.
- US accused Iran of carrying out drone attacks on oil fields in Saudi Arabia. The attacks had immediately reduced Saudi Arabia's oil production by half (5% of global oil production),
- Since attacks US sent a number of its troops to the region, and provided Saudi Arabia with missile defence systems.

Gulf of Oman:

- The Gulf of Oman connects the Arabian Sea with the Strait of Hormuz (**through which about a fifth of the world's oil passes**), which then runs to the Persian Gulf.
- It borders Iran and Pakistan, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates.



SRC: CNN

Why Indian Ocean and Gulf of Oman?

- The Indian Ocean and Gulf of Oman are key areas for international trade and maintaining security in the waterways is an important task

Significance:

- The Gulf of Oman, where the exercise is being held, is a critical waterway as it connects the Arabian Sea to the Strait of Hormuz, a 33-km wide passage which opens into the Persian Gulf — located between energy producers Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman (the exclave of Musandam), and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

- A fifth of the world's oil passes through this waterway — around 30% of all sea-borne crude oil globally.
- Since 2019, Gulf of Oman has been a focal point of global tensions.

Conclusion:

- The three-nation drill is expected to further provoke US
- It may bolster security of international maritime commerce, combating piracy and terrorism and sharing information... and experience
- The most significant challenge to the post-Cold War international order is the growing power of ambitious states opposed to the West. Iran, Russia, and China are taking advantage of the U.S. withdrawal from the world stage and while they seek opportunity, cooperation between them remains fragmentary.

Connecting the dots:

- Do you think this Tri- lateral exercise is going to Impact India?
- What do you think will be the next step of US?

Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC): Pakistan to host OIC meet on Kashmir, CAA

Context:

Pakistan will hold a ministerial meeting with Organisation for Islamic Cooperation (OIC) on Jammu and Kashmir in April 2020,

The development is linked to a broader Saudi-Pakistan deal.

Focus on the “human rights situation in occupied Jammu and Kashmir and enactment of an CAA in India”

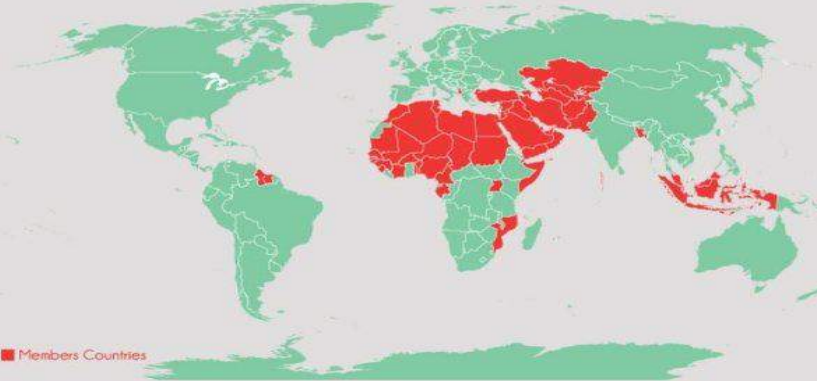
Recent developments:

- The announcement came days after recently-appointed Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud visited Islamabad and met with the Pakistani leadership, including Prime Minister Imran Khan and Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi
- Malaysian PM Mahathir Mohammad had convened the “Kuala Lumpur” summit, with the leaders of Turkey, Iran and Qatar, calling for reforms in the Muslim world.

About OIC:

- The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is the second largest inter-governmental organization after the United Nations
- It has membership of 57 states spread over four continents.
- It is an organisation of the collective voice of the Muslim world.

What is OIC?



■ Members Countries

OIC- Organization of the Islamic Cooperation

It was founded in **1969**

First OIC Charter Adopted in **1972**

Number of Member Countries **57**

Founding Members **30**

Key Bodies of OIC:

- ▶ Council of Foreign Ministers
- ▶ General Secretariat
- ▶ Islamic Summit
- ▶ Al-Quds Committee

© 2019 MapsofWorld.com

Src: MOW

Objectives:

- The main motive of the organisation is to safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony among various people of the world.
- The Organization was established upon a decision of the historical summit which took place in Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco 25 September 1969 as a result of criminal arson of Al-Aqsa Mosque in occupied Jerusalem.

India and Islamic World

- In the last few years, India has improved ties with the Islamic world from Saudi Arabia to Indonesia, while building on good relations with countries like Qatar and Oman.
- While it was Bangladesh that floated the idea of India becoming an observer at the OIC in 2018, the UAE invite offered India an opportunity to address the forum.

- The Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan (MBZ), was a very special Chief Guest at the 68th Republic Day celebrations in 2017, the first time that India laid out the Republic Day red carpet for a leader who was neither a Head of State nor Head of Government.
- The Crown Prince MBZ had earlier visited India in February 2016, following a visit by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the UAE in August 2015.
- Recently, Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, Mohammed bin Salman visited India.

India – OIC Relation:

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

Conclusion:

Saudi Arabia leads OIC nations to showcase its control of the Islamic world, while allowing its members to use the forum to attack their own rivals, While OIC resolutions mean very little in real terms, Pakistan wants to use the forum against India

Connecting the dots:

- Do you think CAA impacts India- Saudi relations?
- Do you think Pakistan will get any support from OIC on Kashmir issue?



The banner features a cartoon guru on the left, the text 'ILP-2020 Integrated Learning Programme ONLINE' in the center, and a student at a desk on the right. A yellow box at the bottom center says 'New Batch on 20th November'.

INDIA AND THE WORLD

Palestine-India techno park

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

In News

- India releases one more tranche of funds worth \$3 million, for the construction of a Palestine-India Techno Park.
- In total, **India has made a commitment of investing over \$12 million**, part of India's broader framework of capacity building in Palestine. The Indian government pays \$3 million on a half-yearly basis.
- Once completed, the **Technopark will serve as an IT hub** in Palestine with complete IT facilities offering a one-stop solution to all IT-related service requirements, providing state-of-the-art technology, hosting IT companies and foreign companies benefitting local business, Universities and other institutions
- The park will be located next to the Birzeit University Academic Campus located in West Bank near **Ramallah**.
- In 2017, the park became a member of the International Association of Science Parks and Areas of Innovation (IASP), a global network of science and technology parks.

India-Palestine Relationship

- In 1974, India became the **first non-Arab state to recognise** the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.
- India maintained its **support for the two-state solution** and championed a “sovereign, independent, united” Palestine with its capital in East Jerusalem.
- In 1996, India opened its Representative Office to the State of Palestine in Gaza, which was shifted to Ramallah in 2003.
- In July 2017, Prime Minister Narendra Modi became the first Indian Prime Minister to visit Palestine.
- Trade between India and Palestine stands at roughly US \$40 million and spans automotive spare parts, medical tourism, agro-products, textiles, agro-chemicals and pharmaceuticals among others.

Haj

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

In News

- India has signed the bilateral annual Haj 2020 agreement with Saudi Arabia
- With this agreement India has become the first country to make the entire process for pilgrims going on Haj completely digital.
- An online application, e-visa, Haj mobile app, ‘e-MASIHA’ health facility, “e-luggage pre-tagging” providing all information in India itself regarding accommodation and

transportation in Mecca and Madina will be provided to 2 lakh Indian Muslims going for Haj in 2020.

- **E-MASIHA (E-Medical Assistance System for Indian Pilgrims Abroad)**, an online system to maintain the health database of Indian pilgrims has been developed to deal with any emergency in Mecca and Madina.
- For the first time facilities were provided for **digital pre-tagging of pilgrims' baggage**.
- A portal of **Haj Group Organisers (HGOs)** – <http://haj.nic.in/pto/> – has been developed which contains all the details of HGOs and their packages.

Land Boundary Agreement

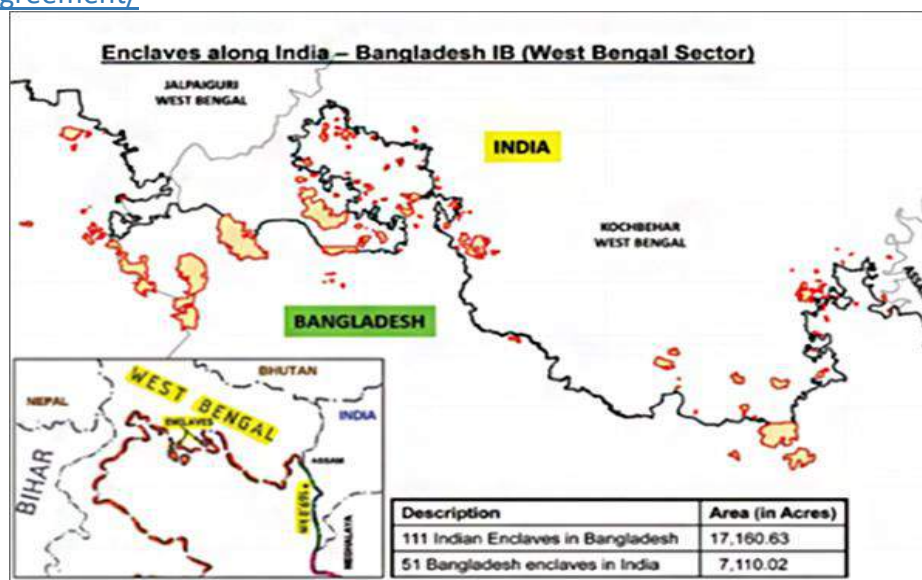


Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II – International Relations

In News

- More than four years after the historic Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) **between India and Bangladesh**, a report released by civil rights organisation – Masum- on the situation in erstwhile enclaves states that protest and resistance have become an essential part of their survival in India.
- The report says that the **condition of the people is far from what they had imagined**. They are yet to get land records and nothing has been done for providing them employment
- The report calls for a comprehensive survey should be undertaken to identify and assimilate the people whose names have been left out of the headcount previously, and all the benefits of being a citizen in India should be extended to them
- LBA settles land boundary dispute which dates back to colonial times as **India transfers 111 border enclaves to Bangladesh** in exchange for 51 enclaves.
- It also settles the question of citizenship for over 50,000 people in these enclaves.

For more details, refer: <https://iasbaba.com/2015/05/big-picture-india-bangladesh-land-boundary-agreement/>



INDIA'S FOREIGN RELATION

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II – India-Australia signed Mutual Logistics Support Agreement

Context

- India and Australia moved closer to closing in on the Logistics Support Agreement (LSA), as the Foreign and Defence Secretaries from both countries met recently.
- The dialogue comes ahead of Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison's scheduled January 13-16 trip to India.
- The first such two-plus-two meeting happened in December 2017.
- The LSA will be one of the key agenda points during Prime Minister Morrison's visit.
- The Agreement will allow the two countries to use each other's military bases for logistics support, including food, water, and petroleum.
- During their meeting, the two sides carried out a comprehensive review of their strategic engagement and the regional security scenario, which is continuously evolving given China's military expansion and economic influence.

India-Australia bilateral relations

- When it comes to defence, India and Australia share a common concern over China.
- While Australia is worried about China's presence in the Pacific, India is worried about China's increasing activities and influence in the Indian Ocean.
- Earlier this year, the Australian and Indian navies concluded a two-week-long bilateral maritime exercise code-named AUSINDEX.
- The exercise was conducted to strengthen and enhance mutual cooperation and interoperability between the IN (Indian Navy) and RAN (Royal Australian Navy), providing opportunities for interaction and exchange of professional views between the personnel of the two navies.
- From 2016-18, the armies of the countries conducted a joint military exercise dubbed "AUSTRAL HIND".
- Significantly, for the first time in 2017, Australia's Foreign Policy White Paper identified India as being at the "front rank" of Australia's international partnerships, "on par with the US, Japan, Indonesia, and China".

The Quad

- The informal strategic Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QSD) that was initiated by Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2007 was largely in response to China's growing power and influence.
- Initially, the "Quad" members included India, Japan, the US, and Australia; however Australia chose to withdraw when Kevin Rudd was Prime Minister, since it did not want to be a part of an anti-China alliance at the time.
- However, Australia later rejoined the dialogue in 2017 on the sidelines of the ASEAN Summit, signalling a re-ignition in Australia's interest in the dialogue.

Connecting the dots:

- 2+2 dialogue will further cement India-Japan strategic relations. Critically examine.

Joint River Commission: Bangladesh gives a miss

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

In News

- Bangladesh has not sent a delegation for the Joint River Commission (JRC) meeting with India which casts doubt **over progress of Feni river water sharing agreement**
- Bangladesh had agreed to let India withdraw 1.82 cusecs from **the Feni river** to supply the border town of Sabroom in the northeastern **State of Tripura** for drinking water purposes
- Feni River is a trans-boundary river that **originates in Tripura and** flows through Sabroom town and then enters Bangladesh.

Industrial Security Annex (ISA): Signed between India and USA

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

In News

- ISA signed between India and the U.S. at **the second 2+2 dialogue** in Washington, will open the door for U.S. defence companies to partner with the Indian private sector.
- ISA will enable smooth transfer of classified technology and information **between private entities of the U.S. and India.**
- The ISA is a part of the General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA), which India signed with the U.S. long back
- The '2+2' dialogue is a meeting between the India **Ministers for External Affairs and Defence**, and the US Secretaries of State and Defence to focus on "strengthening strategic, security and defence cooperation" between the two countries.
- Other agreements signed during the 2+2 dialogue are
 - Finalisation of **Defense Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI)** Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) which will harmonise the two side's processes for identification, development and execution of projects under the DTTI.
 - **Tiger Triumph Exercise:** It has been decided to hold the India-U.S. joint tri-services and amphibious exercise 'Tiger Triumph' **on an annual basis.** It was first held in November 2019 as a Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) Exercise.
 - **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI):** USA announced its commitment to being the founding member of the CDRI whose headquarters will be located in India.

ECONOMY

Telecom sector changes

TOPIC: General Studies III- Infrastructure

Context:

- The telecommunications sector has grown at a rapid pace with growing demand and increasing competition that has pushed down prices to levels not seen anywhere else in the world.
- The sector is in trouble
 - Due to the fast-paced growth in the past and regulation that increased tele-density by pushing down average revenue per user (ARPU) which led the businesses to work with a single mind focus on consumer acquisition as the base of users increased
 - SC ruling on revenue-sharing agreement
 - India is faced with the prospect of a telecom monopoly or duopoly.

Background:

- **In 1990s**
 - India had merely 7 million telephones with a waiting time of seven to eight years to get a connection. The reason was that the cost of installing a landline telephone was too high and the required average revenue per user (ARPU) just to break even was ₹1,250 per month, which was too high for most Indians at that time.
 - Indian telecom grew at a slow pace.
- **In 1995,**
 - Wireless telephony was introduced which brought down the capital cost, made telephones affordable in India, brought in private investments.
 - The first telecom auctions for private players through “License Fee Model”
 - The financial bids were unbelievably high which went on to be economically unsustainable.
 - Several legal ploys were used to stop the payment against bids, cases multiplied
- **In 1999, “Revenue Share Model” was introduced**
 - The installation cost of wireless telephony was less than one-fourth of a landline telephone.
 - Low ARPU was no longer a big concern.
- **By 2003,**
 - India had around 300 million telephone lines and the urban market was saturating.
 - Airtel, Vodafone and Idea, with their GSM mobile-license, were the leaders and were happy with the urban market though it was saturating.
 - GSM trio resisted reduction in tariffs which was the necessity if the market had to penetrate the rural areas
- **2003-2007**
 - Market grew at a slow pace
- **After 2007,**

- Government found ways to give new GSM licenses using primarily revenue-share.
- Newcomers, primarily Reliance Communications (RCOM) and Tata Teleservices, dropped tariffs and introduced per-second billing. Others had to follow.
- The market grew quickly to 900 million lines.
- The operators were making decent money, even with lower tariffs.
- India was still using only 2G telephony. Data and Internet was at very low speed;
- 3G telephony was just being introduced and operators were haggling for more 3G spectrums in 900 MHz and 1800 MHz bands.
- The government was periodically conducting auctions since 2010, fetching large spectrum bids.
- **After 2013,**
 - Government made available some spectrum in the 2300-2500 MHz band which was not considered suitable for 3G telephony then
 - 4G growth
 - It was in its infancy and there was some concern about technology standards and technology readiness.
 - A new company, Reliance Jio, betted on it and won the whole spectrum pan-India through a partner company at a relatively lower price as there was little interest from established operators.
- **After 2016,**
 - Jio had to wait four years to get the technology ready and launched the 4G service late in 2016 and caught the imagination of users.
 - It made voice calls almost free and offered good quality video on smart handsets at very low tariffs.
 - Others did follow suit but paid higher amounts for spectrum in later auctions.
 - Jio has been gaining market share since then.
 - The older operators have been on the defensive, facing serious erosion in market share and profitability.
 - RCOM and Tata Teleservices have been wiped out
 - Vodafone and Idea merged to just about survive.
 - Airtel, the strongest operator two years back, continues to lose market share and profitability.
- **2019,**
 - SC ruling on revenue-sharing agreement
- Future steps needed from the govt.
 - Government needs to act, just like it did in 1999.
 - The government should not look at the telecom sector primarily as a revenue-earner.
 - They could offer the operators payment of principal in instalments and waive off interest and penalties which will limit the government's taxes and earnings from telecom
 - This will help bring back multiple players in telecom services.
 - Help India is to reap the benefit of being fully digital
 - The money could be better spent by operators to improve today's average service-quality.

- This would help telecom reach the remotest parts of the country and the service needs to continue to be affordable.

Connecting the dots:

- What are the challenges being faced by the Telecom sector? Discuss.

Bharat Bond ETF

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-III- Economy

In News

- The Union Cabinet approved the government's plan to create and **launch India's first corporate bond exchange traded fund (ETF)** — Bharat Bond ETF.
- Bharat Bond ETF will **only hold bonds issued by public sector undertaking (PSUs)**
- The ETF will comprise a basket of bonds issued by Central Public Sector Undertakings (CPSUs), Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs), Central Public Financial Institutions (CPFIs), and other government organisations and all will be initially AAA-rated bonds.
- The aim is to **create an additional source of funding** for the CPSEs, CPSUs, CPFIs, and other government organisations.
- The unit size of the bond has been kept at just ₹1,000 so that retail **investors can invest** and deepen India's bond market
- Each ETF will have a **fixed maturity date** and initially they will be issued in two series, of three years and 10 years.
- Bond ETF will provide **safety** (underlying bonds are issued by CPSEs and other government-owned entities), **liquidity** (tradability on exchange) and **predictable tax efficient returns**

Extra Neutral Alcohol (ENA)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III- Economy

In News

- Anticipating shortage of domestic supplies, Alcohol manufacturers have sought a reduction in import duty to make it cost-effective for them to import Extra Neutral Alcohol from global markets.
- Extra Neutral Alcohol (ENA) is the **primary raw material for making alcoholic beverages**. It is a colourless food-grade alcohol that does not have any impurities.
- It has a neutral smell and taste, and typically contains over 95 per cent alcohol by volume.
- It is derived from different sources — sugarcane molasses and grains — and is used in the production of alcoholic beverages such as whisky, vodka, gin, cane, liqueurs, and alcoholic fruit beverages.
- ENA also serves as an essential ingredient in the **manufacture of cosmetics and personal care products** such as perfumes, toiletries, hair spray, etc.

- Given its properties as a good solvent, ENA also **finds industrial use and is utilised in the production of some lacquers, paints and ink** for the printing industry, as well as in pharmaceutical products such as antiseptics, drugs, syrups, medicated sprays.
- Like ethanol, ENA is a **byproduct of the sugar industry**, and is formed from molasses that are a residue of sugarcane processing

RBI keeps interest rate unchanged

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III – Economy

In News

- The Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) announced that it would not cut the repo rate (presently at 5.15%) in its last monetary policy review for the current calendar year
- **Repo rate** is the rate at which India's central bank loans money to the banking system.
- It is also the rate to which all new loans in the economy are benchmarked.
- A cut in the repo rate would have signalled a further reduction in the interest rate new borrowers — hoping to avail loans for homes and cars etc. — will be charged by the banking system.
- Most economists and bankers expected the RBI to cut the repo rate in a bid to boost India's sharply **decelerating economic growth**.
- In the first five bi-monthly policy reviews of 2020, the RBI had cut repo rate by 135 basis points. But only about 44 bps have been passed on to the consumers of new loans. The RBI believes that with more time, the monetary transmission will deepen.
- RBI also pointed to the fact that there is money in the market if one wants to borrow but credit off-take has been weak and it is unlikely to improve by another rate cut.
- When it comes to monetary policy, the RBI's most important mandate is **to maintain price stability**. With rising inflation, RBI is worried that further cut in repo rate would further fuel inflation.

Do You Know?

- The RBI is required by law to maintain **retail inflation — which is based on Consumer Price Index (CPI)** — at the 4% level (with a band of variation of 2 percentage point)
- Retail inflation rose to a 16-month high in October and breached the RBI's target level of 4% even as India's GDP growth decelerated for the sixth consecutive quarter to just 4.5% in Q2 (July to September), which is a new six-year low.
- The reason for the rise in inflation is the spike in food prices, as agriculture sector suffered from the **unexpected weather shocks such as unseasonal rains** (in Karnataka, Maharashtra & Kerala)

Status quo

The RBI has retained the repo rate (rate at which the central bank lends to commercial banks) at 5.15%. It had reduced the rate at five consecutive policy meetings till October



Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-III – Economy

In News

- IEPFA signed a MOU with Bank of Baroda for Investor Awareness.
- In 2016, Government of India established IEPFA **under the provisions** of section 125 of the **Companies Act, 2013**.
- The Authority is entrusted with the responsibility of administration of the Investor Education Protection Fund (IEPF), make refunds of shares, unclaimed dividends, matured deposits/debentures etc. to investors and to promote awareness among investors.

Nirav Modi now a fugitive economic offender

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III- Economy

In News

- A **special Prevention of Money Laundering Act court** declared diamond trader Nirav Modi, an accused in the Punjab National Bank scam case, a fugitive economic offender.
- Nirav Modi is the second person to be declared a fugitive economic offender, under the new **Fugitive Economic Offenders Act**, after liquor baron Vijay Mallya.
- Now, the Union government can **confiscate his assets**.
- The declaration would also help in the extradition proceedings pending before a United Kingdom court

About Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018

- The objective of the act is to deter economic offenders from avoiding the process of Indian law by remaining outside the jurisdiction of Indian courts.
- FEO is defined as an individual who has committed offences involving an amount of **100 crore rupees or more** and has ran away from India to avoid criminal prosecution.

Fugitive Economic Offender (FEO)

**Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III- Money-laundering and its prevention
In News**

- A Mumbai PMLA judge **declared jeweller Nirav Modi**, a “fugitive economic offender” (FEO) on a plea by the Enforcement Directorate (ED).

Background:

- Diamantaire Nirav Modi is wanted in the Rs13,570 crore-fraud caused to the Punjab National Bank.
- He left the country to avoid criminal prosecution,
- After getting him declared a Fugitive Economic Offender (FEO), way has been paved for the premier probe agency to confiscate his offshore assets.
- He is the second citizen to be declared FEO under the special law.
- Embattled liquor baron Vijay Mallya was the first Indian national to be declared earlier this year.
- Both Mallya and Nirav Modi are in the United Kingdom, and fighting extradition to India.

Fugitive Economic Offender (FEO):

- An FEO is defined by The Fugitive Economic Offenders (FEO) Act, 2018 as “any individual against whom a warrant for arrest in relation to a scheduled offence has been issued by any court in India, who (i) has left India so as to avoid criminal prosecution; or (ii) being abroad, refuses to return to India to face criminal prosecution”.
- The FEO Act aims “to provide for measures to deter fugitive economic offenders from evading the process of law in India by staying outside the jurisdiction of Indian courts, to preserve the sanctity of the rule of law in India and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.”
- The FEO Bill came into effect in 2018.

Why was such a law required?

- Economic offences relate to fraud, counterfeiting, money-laundering, tax evasion, etc.
- Among the laws available for prosecuting these offences are The Prevention of Money-Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, The Benami Properties Transactions Act, 1988, and The Companies Act, 2013.
- Sections of The Indian Penal Code, 1860 and The Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, also cover offences such as forgery and cheating.
- In 2017, Finance Ministry released a draft Bill to address cases of high-value economic offenders fleeing the country to avoid prosecution.
- It was observed that existing civil and criminal laws did not contain specific provisions to deal with such offenders, and that a new legal framework was needed to prosecute them.

- The ministry also argued that procedures under these laws were time-consuming, led to roadblocks in investigation and impacted the financial health of banks.
- In March 2018, the Ministry of External Affairs stated that over 30 businessmen, under investigation by the CBI and the ED, had absconded to avoid facing prosecution before Indian courts.

What is the process for declaring an individual an FEO?

- Under the Act, an application must be filed in the special court asking that a particular individual may be declared an FEO.
- The application must be accompanied by “reasons for the belief that an individual is a fugitive economic offender; any information available as to the whereabouts of the fugitive economic offender; a list of properties or the value of such properties believed to be the proceeds of crime, etc.”
- The special court may then issue a notice to the individual to appear at a specified place, and drop the proceedings if the individual complies.
- If, however, the special court is satisfied that an individual is an FEO, it may, record so in order, along with reasons.
- The court may then order the confiscation of the properties of the accused individual in India or abroad.
- In the case of Nirav Modi, the ED filed an application under the FEO Act in July 2018. In the case of Mallya, the application was moved in June 2018, when the Act was still an Ordinance.

Connecting the dots:

- With new rules, ‘fugitive economic offender’ law has more teeth. Comment.

Asia’s biggest surge pool

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-III – Economic Development

In News

- The Stage is all set for the filling of the Asia’s biggest surge pool (open to sky) with the waters of the **Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project**
- The surge pool measures 92 meters deep and 56 meters diameter and **would store one tmc feet of water**, which would be lifted by using four motors to the Ananthagiri Reservoir.
- The open-to-sky Surge pool was constructed in a record time of 13 months at a cost of Rs 2,700 crore

Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project

- It was previously known as Pranahita-Chevella Lift Irrigation Project
- It is multi-purpose irrigation project at the confluence point **of Pranhita River and Godavari River** i.e, at Kaleshwaram village in Telangana.
- Pranahita river in itself is a confluence of various other smaller tributaries like Wardha, Penganga and Wainganga Rivers.
- Under the scheme, 89 cumecs (cubic metres per second) of water will be lifted to a height of 106 metres from the Sripada Yellampalli reservoir to Medaram reservoir and will be used for irrigation and water supply in nearby drought-prone areas.

Indian economy is losing its growth momentum (Part 1)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-III – Economy



Context:

- In April, the IMF had that predicted India will grow at a rate of 7.2 per cent in FY20, but recent data indicates a falling GDP growth (4.5 per cent).
- The IMF particularly spoke of the “slow growth in rural incomes, domestic demand (as reflected in a sharp drop in sales of automobiles) and credit from non-banking financial companies (NBFCs)” as plausible causes.
- According to the World Inequality Report 2018, the top 10 per cent of India’s population got 54 per cent of all income while the bottom 50 per cent shared only 15 per cent.
- Low wages and income inequality have led to a fall in demand.

Fundamental equation in macroeconomics:

$$\text{GDP} = \text{C} + \text{G} + \text{I} + (\text{NX})$$

In other words, four drivers determine a country’s GDP.

These are:

C – the total expenditure (demand) by private individuals

G – the total expenditure (demand) by the Government

I – the total expenditure (demand) on investments made businesses in the country

NX – the net effect of imports and exports

Current status of Indian Economy:

- Indian economy is facing both **structural** (that is, more long-term issues related to the overall framework of the economy such as the flexibility or inflexibility of labour laws etc.) and **cyclical** (that is, more short-term issues such as a bad monsoon that disrupts production of food articles etc.) challenges.
- Since the causes are both **structural and cyclical**, Experts say, arresting this economic slowdown is proving to be so difficult.

Two balance sheets- TBS:

- The two balance sheets are referred to the **Indian banks** (especially public sector banks or the government-owned banks) and **the corporate sector**, respectively.
- The balance sheets of Indian banks were burdened by a high proportion of **non-performing loans** and the balance sheet of corporate were clogged because they had **over-borrowed** and were unable to pay.

Economic boom 2005-09:

- The origins of India's TBS is credited to the economic boom that happened between **2005 and 2009**.
- This was a period when economic prospects were rosy and the economy was growing at near double-digit growth rates.
- Companies borrowed heavily in the hope of making profits in the future.
- The banks, especially the government-owned ones, too, ignored prudential norms and lent a lot of money to companies in the hope that this would help boost economic growth.
- As it happened, economic prospects collapsed quite sharply after the **Global Financial Crisis (GFC)** and companies found that their projects were no longer viable.
- The end result was that the companies were left with huge loans they could not pay back in time and the banks were left with huge loans that had turned to NPA.
- This meant that neither the Indian companies were in position to invest nor were the Indian banks in a position to lend.

Economic growth 2010-12:

- Economy continue to grow faster between 2010 and 2012 9% to 10% in the succeeding years (2010 and 2011).
- Between 2009 and 2013, companies were in no position to invest. So the "I" (total expenditure (demand) on investments made businesses in the country)component became weak.
- During this period There was a hit to India's exports because of a decline in global demand. So "NX" component also weakened.
- But unlike in the developed world, where such companies would have been declared bankrupt and liquidated, in India, both the companies and the banks survived.
- **Why?** Because most of the struggling banks were owned by the government and so there was no risk associated with them because it was always believed that the government would bail them out.
- Most companies survived because banks took a call that giving these companies more time will help the companies repay and many banks lent new loans to such companies so that these companies stayed afloat.

- Another reason why India continued to grow fast in the immediate aftermath of the GFC. That had to do with the robust demand from the other two components – C the total expenditure (demand) by private individuals and G– the total expenditure (demand) by the Government . In particular, private consumer demand — which is quite weak these days

Economy going from 2014 to 2018

- Even though the TBS problem remained unsolved – in other words, the bank NPAs continued to climb and share of debt-ridden companies unable to pay interest payments continued to rise – yet, **due to sharp fall in crude oil prices**, Indians experienced an income boost.
- During 2015 and 2016, international crude oil prices fell to a third of what they were in 2014. This essentially meant that Indians could spend more and the “C” component of the equation boosted the GDP. Experts claim this gave a 1 to 1.5 percentage point boost to the GDP.
- 2017 and 2018 saw an uptick in world demand and a real depreciation of the rupee, resulted non-oil export growth rose from -8.6 percent in 2015-16 to 8.9 percent in 2017-18”.the “NX” component helped bump up the GDP growth.
- Increased government spending increased the “G” component
- India’s growth was boosted by a lending spree provided by non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) like IL&FS and DHFL.
- NBFCs took over the leading role of lending to the economy because banks were still struggling with NPAs and were largely unwilling to lend directly to businesses. T
- he credit provided by NBFCs fuelled both private consumption (C) and business investment (I), and through this route fuelled GDP growth.

Connecting the dots:

- Do you think govt shouldn’t bail out Public sector banks during distress?
- Do you think NPA problems of the Banks can be resolved ?

GST Council: Votes for first time to tax all lotteries at 28%

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III – Economy; GS-II- Federalism

In News

- GST Council broke its tradition of taking decision by consensus and for first time voted for a proposal to tax all lotteries at a uniform rate at 28% (21-7 in favour)

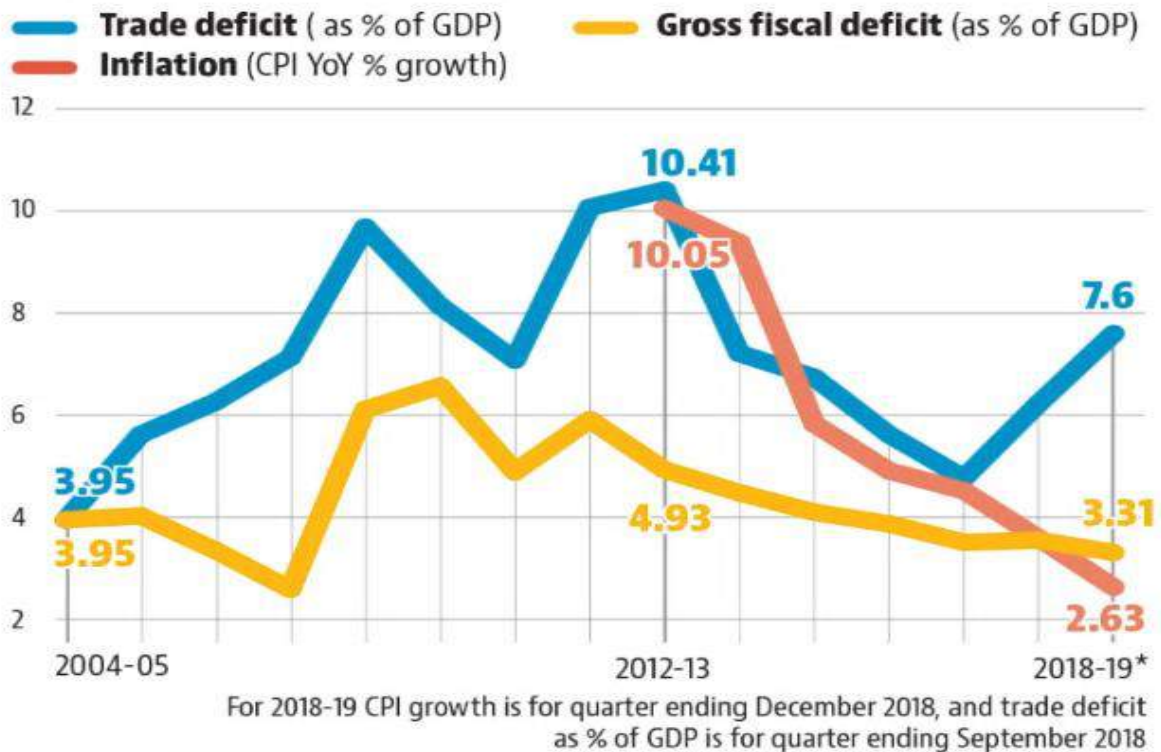
Do You Know?

- In the first eight months of this financial year, only about **50% of GST collection targets** (₹6,63,343 crore) and 60% of compensation cess collection targets have been **achieved**.
- The GST Council is a **constitutional body** established under **Article 279A** of Indian Constitution
- The GST Council is **chaired by the Union Finance Minister**.
- Its other members are the Union State Minister of Revenue or Finance and Ministers in-charge of Finance or Taxation of all the States.
- **Voting Rights**

- **Centre:** One third of total votes cast
- **States:** Two-thirds of the total votes cast (Each state, big or small, will have equal vote)
- For any proposal to be cleared by the council, it has to get **75 per cent of the vote.**

Indian economy is losing its growth momentum (Part 2)

Modi government stabilised economic fundamentals



Before reading this read part 1 : <https://iasbaba.com/2019/12/indian-economy-is-losing-its-growth-momentum-part-1/>

$$\text{GDP} = \text{C} + \text{G} + \text{I} + (\text{NX})$$

In other words, four drivers determine a country's GDP.

These are:

C – the total expenditure (demand) by private individuals

G – the total expenditure (demand) by the Government

I – the total expenditure (demand) on investments made businesses in the country

NX – the net effect of imports and exports

Derailed Indian economy in 2016 and 2017

Two reasons & 4 Balance sheets problem

1. The unresolved TBS problem

2. The fall of NBFCs and the real estate sector

Together, they make for the Four Balance Sheet Challenge for the Indian economy

Reason for the failure of NBFCs : collapse of ILFS in 2018, with Rs 90,000 crores of debt

Reason 1 : NBFCs relied on raising short-term funds ,This leads to a situation called an asset-liability mismatch. For example, an NBFC raises money by selling 6-month debt papers and on-lends this as a car loan with a tenure of 5 years. This leads to a situation where the NBFC has to roll over (or renew) the 6-month debt paper or raise fresh loans to repay the debt paper. In good times, this happens as a matter of course. But when times are tough, this cycle is broken.

Reason 2 : The cycle was broken by a default of some firms of the IL&FS group. There were fears that this would turn out to be a contagion. Simply put, banks, mutual funds and their investors were afraid that more such entities wouldn't default. As this fear took hold, many institutions refused to give money to NBFCs. The cost of funds rose by as much as 150 basis points for NBFCs.

Impacts of the NBFCs Failure on Indian economy :

- NBFCs are playing an increasingly important part in the economy. Their share of credit has increased because they were lending in sectors where banks refused to go or did not want to go.
- Now that NBFCs are finding it difficult to raise money or having to pay a huge cost for doing so, this will choke the flow of credit to the economy.
- It will hit the MSME sector which is already suffering from the twin blows of demonetisation and the goods and services tax.
- It will hit consumption demand in the economy(consumption was the primary engine driving the economy).
- A reduction in credit further adds to economic slowdown pressures, which are already visible.
- Slowdown in credit could lead to another pile of **non-performing assets** in sectors such as commercial real estate and infrastructure, which could have economy-wide knockdown effects

Real estate story:

- Builders launched numerous projects since the start of mid-2000s in the hope that these flats would be sold
- But after the Global Financial Crisis, the demand for flats as well as bank funding for builders collapsed.
- The NBFCs took the lead in lending to the real estate sector.
- By June-end 2019, the real estate sector reached a breaking point with close to **10 lakh unsold units** (as against an annual demand of just 2 lakh units) in just the top 8 cities in the country.
- Real estate sector was unable to pay back to the NBFCs , which, in turn, started defaulting.

Conclusion:

- India's GDP has been affected by different factors at different times.
- After Global Financial Crisis, private consumption bailed India out. However, this component – "C" – has become progressively weaker since 2017 and is today the main worry.

- Government spending bailed out the GDP but at the cost of hiding the true fiscal deficit.
- The “I” or business investment component has been weak since the GFC
- sharp repo rate cuts and corporate tax cuts appear ineffective in the short term.
- The net exports or “NX” component has remained weak all through since the GFC

Connecting the dots:

- Do you think Demonetisation and GST contributed to Indian Economic distress?
- How do you think Indian economy can be recovered from the distress?

Operation Twist: RBI's Open market operations

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-III- Economy

In News

- RBI will simultaneously buy and sell government securities worth ₹10,000 crore under its **open market operations** — a move aimed at managing the yields.
- The RBI will purchase the longer-term maturities, that are trading at a spread of 150 bps (basis points) over the repo rate, and sell the shorter duration ones
- RBI will buy ₹10,000 crore of 6.45% government bonds maturing in 2029 so that the **yield of these long-term papers will soften**
- It will simultaneously sell ₹10,000 crore of short-term bonds maturing in 2020.
- Operation Twist is a move taken by U.S. Federal Reserve in 2011-12 to make long-term borrowing cheaper.

Import Cover: Rises to 10 months

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-III- Economy

In News

- RBI has stated that the foreign exchange reserves has increased to **\$429.84 billion as at end June 2019** from \$412.47 billion as at end March 2019.
- As a result, the **import cover rose to 10 months** compared with 9.6 months
- **Import Cover** measures the number of months of **imports** that can be covered with foreign exchange reserves available with the central bank of the country.
- Eight to ten months of **import cover** is essential for the stability of a currency.

Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI): Annual Report for 2018-19 released

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III- Economy

In News

- Some of the highlights of the released report are:

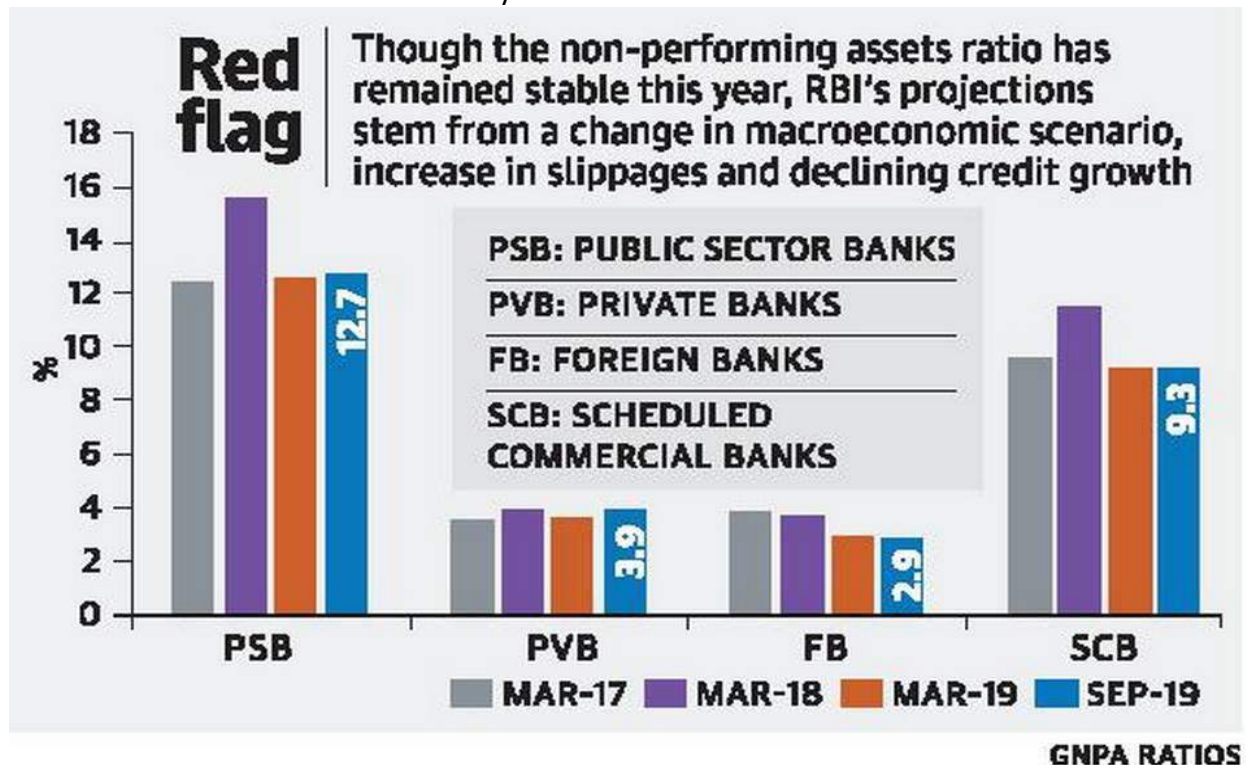
- **Life insurance penetration** for 2018 was 2.74%, slightly lower than the 2.76% of 2017. Insurance penetration is measured as the ratio of premium (in US\$) to GDP (in US\$).
- Life insurance penetration increased from 2.15% in 2001 to 4.60% in 2009, and has thereafter showed a generally decreasing trend.
- The **insurance density** of the life insurance sector in 2018 was \$55 (same as previous year). Insurance density is measured as the ratio of premium (in US dollars) to the total population

Do You Know?

- The IRDAI is an autonomous, **statutory body** established under Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority Act, 1999
- It is tasked with regulating and promoting **the insurance and re-insurance** industries in India.
- Its **headquarters is in Hyderabad**, Telangana and is a 10-member body including the chairman, five full-time and four part-time members appointed by the government of India.

Non-Performing Asset: Gross NPAs may rise to 9.9% by next Sept., says RBI report

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-III Economy



SRC: The Hindu

For Mains:

- The gross non-performing asset (GNPA) ratio of banks may increase to 9.9% by September 2020 from 9.3% in September 2019.
- Due to change in macroeconomic scenario, marginal increase in slippages and the denominator effect of declining credit growth.
- The asset quality of agriculture and services sectors, as measured by their GNPA ratios, deteriorated to 10.1%
- Reviving the twin engines of consumption and investment remains the key challenge even while remaining vigilant about spillovers from global financial markets.

Value addition For Prelims:

- **A non-performing asset (NPA)** is a loan or advance for which the principal or interest payment remained overdue for a period of 90 days.

NPAs classified further into Substandard, Doubtful and Loss assets.

1. **Substandard assets:** Assets which has remained NPA for a period less than or equal to 12 months.
2. **Doubtful assets:** An asset would be classified as doubtful if it has remained in the substandard category for a period of 12 months.
3. **Loss assets:** As per RBI, "Loss asset is considered uncollectible and of such little value that its continuance as a bankable asset is not warranted, although there may be some salvage or recovery value."

Economic crisis: economy in bad shape

Context:

- Growth in the quarter from July to September had slipped to 4.5%.(lowest level recorded in six years)
- 6.1% nominal GDP growth (real growth plus inflation) the slowest in a decade.
- Fixed investment slumped to 1%, private consumption growth halved year on year, and manufacturing activity contracted by 1%.

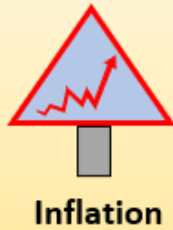
Evidences for Slowdown:

- The 12.2% decline in electricity generation(it is a good barometer of demand generated by all economic activity, not just industrial production.)
- Metrics one would usually look at to assess economic activity and consumption such as Imports, merchandise exports, automobile sales, bank credit..., are indicating warning
- Bank credit growth is expected to hit a 58-year low in 2019-2020.

Stagflation:

- With retail inflation hitting a 40-month high of 5.54% in November and Food inflation hit 10%, vegetables (onions) and pulses.
- This has led to worries about India entering a phase of stagflation, (persistent high inflation combined with high unemployment and stagnant demand in a country's economy)

Stagflation



Components



SRC: Wall street

Concerns:

- The current slowdown is closer in nature to what was faced as far back as 1991 — the year India liberalised.
- India's current crisis is driven by both cyclical and structural factors
- Problems in finance have exacerbated the slowdown.
- The World Bank has said this cyclical slowdown is severe.
- Demand collapsing due to reasons ranging from poor rural income growth,
- The ghosts of demonetisation and a hastily implemented Goods and Services Tax (GST).

Point to be noted:

- India's growth recovered after global financial crisis 2008 without fixing the problems
- Series of fortuitous developments such as lower oil prices and a boom in credit from non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) which may be partly driven by demonetisation sending more cash into the formal financial system.
- With the collapse of IL&FS in late 2018, this support also ended .
- Now the twin balance sheet crisis (of stressed banks and corporates with infrastructure bets) raised

Way forward:

- Reserve Bank of India must cut interest rates for spurring growth out of the equation.
- Increase public expenditure by investing in agriculture
- raise funds for the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act

- Investment in Skill , Education and Health

Conclusion:

- This is a cyclical phenomenon and will pass like the circle of life... what goes up, must come down, but govt must also address the concerns of economy

Connecting the dots:

- Do you think economy seems headed for the intensive care unit?
- Do you think Demonetisation is responsible for the current slowdown?



AIPTS-2020
All India Prelims Test Series (ENGLISH/HINDI)
ONLINE + OFFLINE
New Batch on 20th November

The advertisement features a cartoon guru with a white beard and orange turban on the left. On the right, there is an illustration of a study scene with a person at a desk, a lightbulb, and various educational icons.



OPTIONAL MAINS TEST SERIES - 2020
MOST RELIABLE AND QUALITATIVE OPTIONAL TEST SERIES TRUSTED BY
THOUSANDS OF ASPIRANTS.

The advertisement features a cartoon guru with a white beard and orange turban on the left. On the right, there is an illustration of an open book surrounded by various educational icons like a globe, a pencil, and a lightbulb.

AGRICULTURE

New Seed Bill 2019

- **Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III-** Transport and marketing of agricultural produce and issues and related constraints

In News

Context

- The National Seed Association of India (NSAI), suggested some changes in the proposed Seed Bill 2019, including a more scientific definition of transgenic variety, enhanced farmer rights on seeds and enlisting the services of private firms for evaluating new varieties before seed registration.

Current The Seeds Act, 1966:

- Only covers “notified kinds or varieties of seeds”, regulation of quality, too, is limited to the seeds of varieties that have been officially notified.
- The provisions of The Seeds Act, 1966, apply only to certified seeds produced of notified varieties.

New Seeds Bill, 2019 :

- The **new Seeds Bill, 2019** provides for compulsory registration of “any kind or variety of seeds” that are sought to be sold.
- Even hybrids/varieties of private companies will need to be registered.
- Their seeds would have to meet the minimum prescribed standards relating to germination, physical and genetic purity, etc.
- Breeders would be required to disclose the “expected performance” of their registered varieties “under given conditions”.
- If the seed of such registered kind or variety “fails to provide the expected performance under such given conditions”, the farmer “may claim compensation from the producer, dealer, distributor or vendor under The Consumer Protection Act, 1986”.

Background:

- The 1966 legislation was enacted at the time of the Green Revolution, when the country hardly had any private seed industry.
- The high-yielding wheat and paddy varieties, which made India self-reliant in cereals by the 1980s, were developed by the various ICAR institutes and SAUs.
- These public sector institutions have retained their dominance in breeding of wheat, paddy (including basmati), sugarcane, pulses, soybean, groundnut, mustard, potato, onion and other crops, where farmers largely grow open-pollinated varieties (OPV) whose grain can be saved as seed for re-planting.
- Over the last three decades or more, however, private companies and multinationals have made significant inroads, particularly into crops that are amenable to hybridisation.
- Today, the size of the private hybrid seeds industry is estimated at about Rs 15,000 crore.

Response of private seed industry

- Seed companies have welcomed the provision of compulsory registration of all varieties/hybrids, based on the results of multi-location trials for a prescribed period to establish their performance vis-à-vis the claims of the breeders concerned.
- This should help minimise the risk of farmers being sold seeds of low-quality genetics, especially by fly-by-night operators taking undue advantage of the “truthful labeling” and “self-certification” processes.
- The industry, however, wants the process of registration to be time-bound.
- Given the lack of manpower and infrastructure within the government system, the registration may be granted or refused on the basis of multi-location trials carried out by the breeder/applicant itself.
- But the industry’s main reservation is the provision for regulation of sale price “in emergent situations like scarcity of seeds, abnormal rise in prices, monopolistic pricing or profiteering”.
- The fact that this power of fixing sale price of seed has been given both to the Centre and state governments has added to their nervousness.
- Their contention is that seed accounts for not even a tenth of the total operational costs in most crops, despite the genetic information contained in it being the main determinant of grain yield and quality.

Connecting the dots:

- The new Seeds Bill is tilted against farmers’ interests and loaded in favour of seed companies. Critically Analyse.

Locust invasion in Gujarat

In News

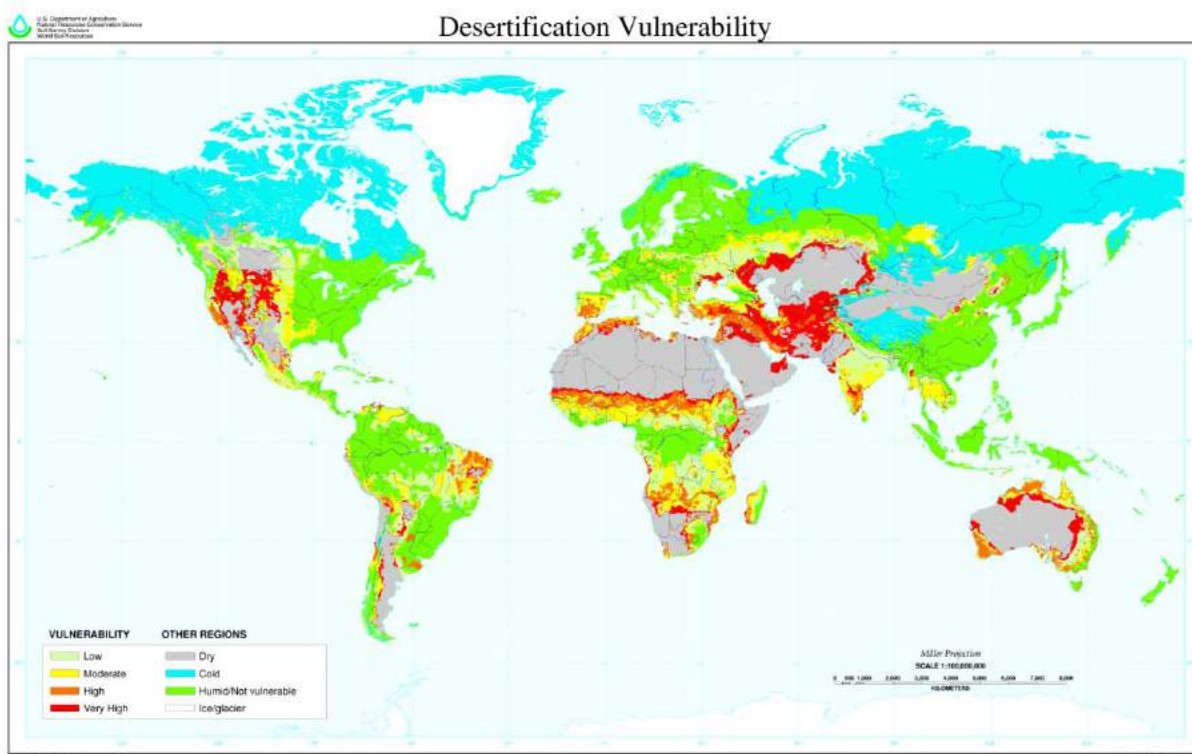
- According to the Agriculture Ministry’s Locust Warning Organisation (LWO) in Jodhpur, **locusts (species of grasshoppers)** are flying in from Pakistan’s Sindh province and spreading in villages in Rajasthan and Gujarat where south western monsoon was prolonged this year.
- Originally, the locusts emerged in February this year from Sudan and Eritrea on Africa’s Red Sea Coast and travelled through Saudi Arabia and Iran to enter Pakistan.
- Locust invasions usually occurs in **areas that receive less than 200 mm of rain annually**. This is about 16 million sq km consisting of about 30 countries.
- The insects fly in during the day and settle on the farms at night, making it difficult to ward them off negatively impacting farm output.
- The last **major upsurge in India occurred in 1993** which saw the incursion of 172 locust swarms. India has only one locust breeding season- from July to October
- How to tackle?
 - Government also explored the possibility of **sprinkling pesticides and chemicals through choppers** in affected areas.

Desertification: Another 30% of the India's land is undergoing degradation

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-III- Environment, Agriculture

Context:

- Every year during the monsoon, Hemant Waman Chowre faces a peculiar situation. On the one hand, he hopes for good rainfall to water his crops but on the other, he is scared, for even a mild shower can destroy his saplings.
- These are clear signs of desertification which, as per the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), is degrading 12 million ha of productive land across the world every year. This is over 80 times the size of Delhi and is enough to grow 20 million tonnes of grain.
- Dry lands affected by desertification not only lose their ability to support plant life, but also their ability to offer ecosystem services, such as management of water systems and storage of carbon use in global warming.
- Desertification has occurred throughout history. But what's alarming is that its pace has accelerated 30 to 35 times the historical rate in the recent decades. With changing climate, prolonged droughts and increasing incidences of floods, landslides and frost heaving are in any case reducing the amount of productive land.
- The World Atlas of Desertification, 1997, shows overgrazing is responsible for 90 per cent of dryland degradation in Australia and 60 per cent in Africa. Deforestation has caused 40 per cent dryland degradation in South America and Europe and 30 per cent in Asia.



Daily Current Affairs IAS | UPSC Prelims and Mains Exam – 26th December 2019

[SRC: U.S. Department of Agriculture map from 1998](#)

“According to Desertification and Land Degradation of Selected Districts of India, an atlas published by the Indian Space Research Organisation’s Space Application Centre (SAC), Ahmedabad in 2018, some 96.40 million ha, or about 30 per cent of the country’s total area, is undergoing degradation”

- SAC mapped India’s 76 drought-prone districts and two sub-basins in Ladakh to prepare the atlas and found that in drylands, which span 228.3 million ha, or 70 per cent of the country’s total land, 82.64 million ha is under desertification.
- TERI’s conservative estimate shows land degradation costs \$48.8 billion to the country’s exchequer annually.
- This is almost 2.08 per cent of India’s GDP in 2014-15 and over 13 per cent of gross value added from agriculture and forestry that year.
- The economic cost of forest degradation accounts for 55 per cent of the total loss. There has been a consistent increase in the area under water erosion, said the report.

State-wise plight:

- In **Maharashtra**, the timber mafia was eating into already thin forests, leading to soil erosion. More than a million trees were felled between 2005 and 2014, using permits issued by the state’s forest department every year. Another 0.26 million were cut illegally.
- Excessive mining in **Jharkhand** has triggered soil erosion and aggravated water scarcity in the state. Data with the Central Ground Water Board shows that water table in the entire block has lowered from 8 m below the ground level in 2013 to about 10 m in 2017.
- Rampant mining and expanding urbanisation has taken a toll on **Goa**. Lack of planning could, further, degrade land in the state.
- In **Nagaland**, shifting cultivation (where people slash trees and burn them to prepare the land for farming), deforestation and rising population are to blame for desertification. The rapidly vanishing vegetation cover has intensified soil erosion in the state.
- In **Andhra Pradesh**, low rainfall and increased dependence on borewells have led to soil aridity, while less snow and more rainfall has deepened the desertification crisis in Himachal Pradesh.
- Overgrazing and encroachment of grassland for agricultural activities have affected **Gujarat**.
- On the other hand, in **Rajasthan**, canals, tubewell irrigation and shelterbelts have led to an increase in the green cover.

Various schemes by the Government of India which are helping to reduce land degradation:

- Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY)
- Soil Health Card Scheme
- Soil Health Management Scheme
- Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojna (PKSY)
- Per Drop More Crop

Launch of a flagship project on enhancing capacity on forest landscape restoration (FLR) and Bonn Challenge in India, through a pilot phase of 3.5 years implemented in the States of Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Nagaland and Karnataka. Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) in partnership with The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), through this flagship project aims to develop and adapt best practices and monitoring protocols for the Indian states and build capacity within the five pilot

states on FLR and Bonn Challenge. This will be eventually scaled up across the country through subsequent phases of the project.

Connecting the dots:

- Discuss the problem of desertification. Which parts of the world are suffering from this phenomenon?

The graphic is divided into two main sections. The upper section is titled 'PEP-2020 PRELIMS EXCLUSIVE PROGRAMME' and 'EXCLUSIVE MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME FOR PRELIMS'. It features a cartoon guru with a white beard and orange turban. To the left, a 3D maze is shown with several figures navigating it. A yellow path leads to a trophy labeled 'MAINS - 2020'. Three thought bubbles pose questions: 'How do I remove fear of UPSC Prelims?', 'What/How should I read for Prelims?', and 'How to manage time?'. Two hourglass icons are placed on either side of the text '6 Months to UPSC PRELIMS'. An orange box states 'STARTING FROM JAN - 2020'. The lower section is a banner for 'TLP CONNECT-2020' with the tagline 'Think Learn & Perform ONLINE + OFFLINE'. It features the same cartoon guru on the left and an illustration of a student sitting at a desk reading a book, with a calendar, a lightbulb, and a checkmark icon nearby.

ENVIRONMENT/POLLUTION

OPERATION CLEAN ART

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

In News

- Operation Clean Art was recently conducted in India to ensure that the mongoose hair brush trade be closed down across the country.
- It was the first pan India operation to crack down on the smuggling of mongoose hair in the country.
- It was conceived by **Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB)**.
- It was a planned raid, not to apprehend criminals, but to check on organized factories that were making paint brushes with mongoose hair.
- Raids were carried out not only in Uttar Pradesh, but also at Jaipur in Rajasthan, Mumbai and Pune in Maharashtra, and in Kerala, on the same day. The entire operation across the country yielded 54,352 brushes and 113 kg of raw hair
- Mongoose hair is in high demand among artists worldwide because of the **quality of brushes they help create**, which define lines clearly and hold paint properly. India is a major source for these brushes. For about 150 kg of mongoose hair, at least 6,000 animals would have been killed
- The mongoose is listed under **Schedule II of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972** – making its hunting, possession, transportation and trade a punishable offence

Not a pretty picture

A look at the seizure of paint brushes made of mongoose hair in recent years



	Cases	No. of brushes seized	Arrests
2017	15	62,924	23
2018	16	79,021	19
2019	27	54,352	49

▪ For about 150 kg of mongoose hair, at least 6,000 animals would have been killed, according to an estimate

▪ Mongoose is listed in Schedule II Part 2 of the Wildlife Protection Act

▪ Any smuggling or possession of its body part is a non-bailable offence

Water regulation

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

In News

- Punjab Cabinet approved the creation of the **Punjab Water Regulation and Development Authority** in a bid to check the depletion of groundwater in the State

- The authority would be empowered to issue general directions related to **extraction and use of groundwater**, besides ensuring optimal and efficient utilisation of all water resources in Punjab State, including canal irrigation.
- It will also issue **guidelines on recycling and reuse of water** and its conservation.
- It cannot impose any restrictions or tariff on extraction of water for drinking, domestic and agriculture purposes
- It would, however, be required to issue tariff orders for use of water for industrial and commercial use.
- The step is therefore aimed at development, management and regulation of water resources of the State for ensuring their judicious, equitable and sustainable utilisation and management.

Global Climate Risk Index 2020

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

In News

- The Global Climate Risk Index analyses the extent to which countries and regions have been affected by weather-related events such as severe rainfall, storms, floods and heatwaves.
- The Index stresses on the level of vulnerability of nations to severe climate events, which they should view as warnings for more frequent or severe events in the future.
- The Global Climate Risk Index 2020 is published by **International Environmental think tank Germanwatch**.
- **India was the fifth most climate-affected country** in 2018, which suffered water shortages, crop failures and worst flooding,
- Japan, the Philippines and Germany were found to be the most climate-affected countries in 2018 followed by Madagascar, India and Sri Lanka
- The heatwave was one of the major causes of damage in 2018.
- Across Europe, extreme heat spells are now up to 100 times more likely than a century ago, says the report.
- The impact of heatwaves on African countries may be under-represented due to a lack of data.
- The index results showed that the “signs of climate crisis”, on all continents, could no longer be ignored.

The seas have less oxygen now

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

In News

- According to the study released by IUCN at Madrid Climate conference, the **levels of oxygen in oceans fell by around 2 per cent from 1960 to 2010**. Also, the water in some parts of the tropics had experienced a 40 per cent to 50 per cent reduction in oxygen.

- The deoxygenation of the oceans occurred **due to climate change** and other human activities (such as the nutrient runoff from farm fertilizers into waterways)
- The loss of oxygen in the oceans can **affect the planetary cycling of elements such as nitrogen and phosphorous** which are essential for life on Earth
- As oceans lose oxygen, they **become more acidic**, a phenomenon that has resulted in some places in shellfish having their shells degraded or dissolved — the so called **“osteoporosis of the sea”**.
- In many parts of the world, **fish have been dying in masses** — a clear illustration of the ways in which deoxygenation is choking the oceans.
- Apart from their declining oxygen content, oceans have, since the middle of the 20th century, **absorbed 93 per cent of the heat associated with human-caused greenhouse gas emissions**, leading to mass bleaching of coral reefs.

Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI)

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

In News

- CCPI measures the emissions, renewable energy share and climate policies **of 57 countries and the European Union**, collectively responsible for about 90% of the global GHG emissions.
- It is released annually after analysing four parameters – greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, renewable energy, climate policy and energy use
- The CCPI 2020 is released by **three international NGOs – German watch, New Climate Institute and Climate Action Network**
- India for the first time ranks among the top ten countries in the index. It has improved its ranking from 11th last year to ninth this year
- It found the **U.S. ranks last, followed by Saudi Arabia and Australia**, although several countries did report falls in emissions last year, largely due to an industry-wide fade out of coal
- While climate performance varied greatly, the report found that none of the countries surveyed were currently on a path compatible with the Paris climate goals.
- The **2015 Paris accord** saw nations agree to work towards limiting global temperature rises to **“well below” two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels**.

River Pollution

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

In News


- Samples taken from **two-thirds of the water** quality stations spanning India's major **rivers** showed contamination by one or more heavy metals, **exceeding safe limits** set by the Bureau of Indian Standards.

- The study spanned 67 rivers in 20 river basins and was conducted by Central Water Commission (CWC) from May 2014 to April 2018.
- **Iron emerged as the most common contaminant** with 156 of the 442 sampled sites registering levels of the metal above safe limits.
- None of the sites registered arsenic levels above the safe limit.
- The other major contaminants found in the samples were lead, nickel, chromium, cadmium and copper.
- **Source of metal pollution:** Mining, milling, plating and surface finishing industries that discharge a variety of toxic metals into the environment.
- The **presence of metals in drinking water** is to some extent unavoidable and certain metals, in trace amounts, **required for good health**. However, when present above safe limits, they are associated with a range of disorders.
- **Health Impact:** Long-term exposure to the above-mentioned heavy metals may result in slowly progressing physical, muscular, and neurological degenerative processes that mimic Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, muscular dystrophy and multiple sclerosis.

Pollution check
Instances when metals exceed the threshold value in some key rivers. The threshold value is an averaged Index that captures the persistence of pollutants through the year as well as their lethal capacity

River	Chromium	Lead	Iron
Ganga	Exceeds		Exceeds
Yamuna			Exceeds
Brahmaputra			Exceeds
Ramganga		Exceeds	
Rapti	Exceeds		Exceeds
Narmada			Exceeds
Godavari			Exceeds

SOURCE: CENTRAL WATER COMMISSION STUDY



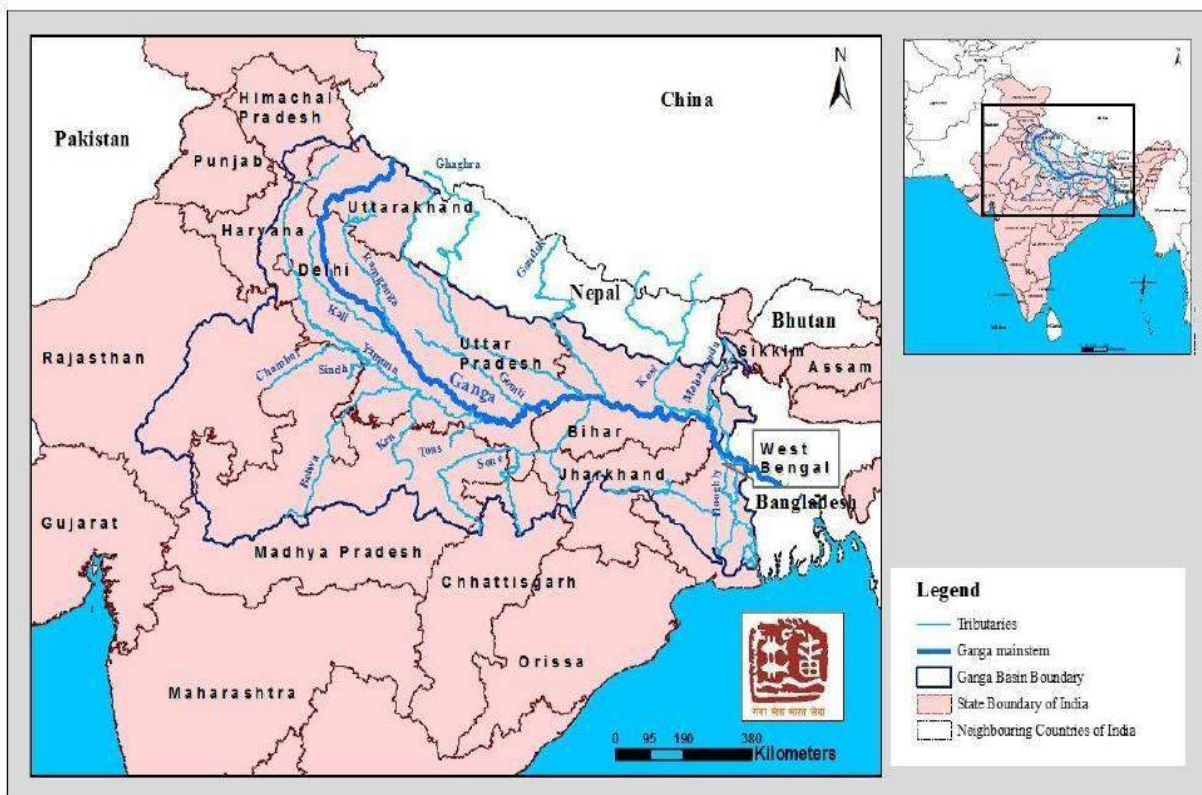
[National Ganga Council \(NGC\)](#)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-III – Environment Conservation
In News

- The **National Ganga Council (NGC)**, which is headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi met for the first time at Kanpur since its inception in 2016, with the proposal to save and enhance the population of **the Gangetic Dolphin**
- The council also discussed the concept of “River Cities” and an action plan to provide sewer connection to every household in towns along the Ganga and its tributaries.
- The council consists of chief ministers **from five states along the Ganga** — Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Uttarakhand, Bihar and Jharkhand along with nine Union ministers and NITI Aayog vice-chairman.
- The central **objective** of the council is to work on the “protection, prevention, control and **abatement of environmental pollution in River Ganga** and its rejuvenation to its natural and pristine condition and to ensure continuous adequate flow of water”.

About Gangetic River Dolphins

- The Gangetic river dolphins were officially discovered in 1801 and are one of the oldest creatures in the world along with some species of turtles, crocodiles and sharks, according to the World Wildlife Fund (WWF).
- In 2009, the Gangetic dolphins were declared India’s **National Aquatic animal**
- It is placed under the “**endangered**” category by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
- The Gangetic river dolphins **can only live in freshwater** and prefer deep waters
- **They are blind** and catch their prey in a unique manner, using **ultrasonic sound waves**.



COP25: Longest climate talks end



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

Context:

- The 25th annual talks under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), referred to as the Conference of Parties (COP), were recently held in Madrid.
- It ended without any outcome.
- It was the 15th meeting of the parties for the Kyoto Protocol (CMP15), and also, it was the second meeting of the parties for the Paris Agreement.
- The prime objective of the conference is to complete the rule-book to the 2015 Paris Agreement that will become effective in 2020 to replace the 1997 Kyoto Protocol (comes to an end in 2020).

Conference of Parties (COP)

- The COP is the supreme decision-making body of the Convention.
- All States that are Parties to the Convention are represented at the COP, at which they review the implementation of the Convention and any other legal instruments that the COP adopts and take decisions necessary to promote the effective implementation of the Convention.
- The first COP meeting was held in Berlin, Germany in March, 1995.

Kyoto Protocol 1997

- The Kyoto Protocol is an international treaty which extends the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) that **commits state parties to reduce greenhouse gas emissions**, based on the scientific consensus that (part one) global warming is occurring and (part two) it is extremely likely that human-made CO₂ emissions have predominantly caused it.
- That protocol legally bound developed countries to emission reduction targets.
- However, the agreement was widely believed to be ineffective because the world's two top carbon dioxide-emitting countries, China and the United States, chose not to participate

Paris Agreement, 2015

- Paris Agreement or COP21 was adopted in December 2015.
- It aimed to reduce the emission of gases that contribute to global warming.
- The Paris Agreement also aimed at replacing the Kyoto Protocol (to strengthen emission reductions, in 1997)

Aims of Paris Agreement

The aim of the agreement is to decrease global warming, enhancing the implementation of the UNFCCC through:

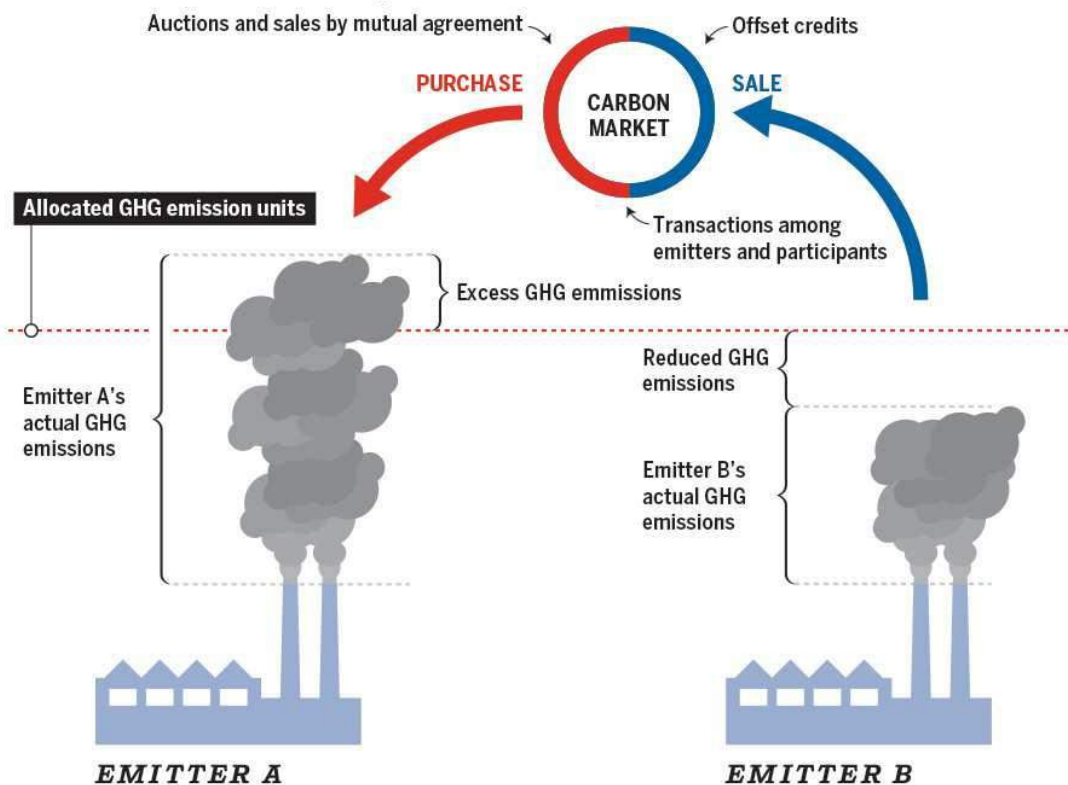
- Holding the increase in the global average temperature to well **below 2 °C above** pre-industrial levels.
- Increasing the **ability to adapt** to the adverse impacts of climate change.
- Making finance flows consistent with a pathway towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development
- This strategy involved so-called 20/20/20 targets, namely the reduction of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions by 20%, the increase of renewable energy's market share to 20%, and a 20% increase in energy efficiency.

COP 25: Focus

- Ambitions for this conference were limited because many countries were focused on narrow technical details such as the workings of the **global carbon markets**.
- It was hoped that countries would resolve to work on more ambitious carbon targets needed to fulfil the goals of the 2015 Paris agreement.

CAP & TRADE: THE CARBON MARKET

Businesses that emit more GHGs (greenhouse gases) than they are allocated per year must buy enough allocations to cover their emissions. Businesses that have reduced their emissions can sell their surplus credits on the same market.



SOURCE: GOVERNMENT OF QUEBEC

DENNIS LEUNG/OTTAWA CITIZEN

Why CoP25 failed?

- The failure of the talks underlined starkly the massive gap between what scientists say the world's nations need to do on climate change, and what the most powerful political leaders on the planet are prepared to even discuss.

- According to scientist, talks focused on some of the rules for implementing the 2015 Paris agreement, but the overriding issue of how fast the world needs to cut greenhouse gas emissions has received little official attention.
- Countries agreed in Paris in 2015 to revisit their climate pledges by 2020. But many countries were pushing this year for a clear call for all countries to submit more ambitious climate pledges next year.
- But countries such as China and Brazil opposed placing any obligation on countries to submit enhanced pledges next year, arguing it should be each country's own decision. They instead argued the focus should be on pre-2020 action by developing countries to meet their previous pledges
- There was a recognition that tougher carbon targets are needed globally, but few countries came up with any and the resolve to come back next year with more ambitious plans was worded too weakly to satisfy most campaigners.

India's stance:

- India played a mixed role at the recently concluded 25th Conference of Parties (CoP 25) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change at Madrid.
- On the question of markets, India emphasised the transition of the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) credits earned under the Kyoto Protocol to the Paris Agreement.
- Pointed out that that excessively cheap emissions reductions enabled by the CDM as well as the possibility of double counting could corrupt the process.
- India played a strong role in critiquing the developed world's continuing poor record on climate action.
- It argued that unless a stocktaking exercise of the fulfilment of various pre-2020 commitments by developed countries, India would not raise its climate ambition for its next round of Paris Agreement targets due in 2020.
- India also took a lead in calling for more finance for developing countries for climate action, (*"not even 2 per cent" of the promised "\$1 trillion in the last 10 years" had been delivered*)

Way forward

- It is entirely appropriate for countries such as India to insist on not taking on an even more unfair share of the global mitigation burden unless developed countries deliver on the minimal parameter of fulfilling their existing promises.
- It is crucial that India continue to push developed countries in this fashion as the entire global climate action framework has been put in jeopardy by the inaction of big polluters.

Connecting the dots:

- Do you think COP25 climate summit has ended in staggering failure of leadership?
- Do you think Climate change is real?

CoP 25: Climate Emergency

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

Context:

- The 25th annual talks under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), referred to as the Conference of Parties (COP), was recently held in Madrid.

- It ended without any outcome.
- It was the 15th meeting of the parties for the Kyoto Protocol (CMP15), and also, it was the second meeting of the parties for the Paris Agreement.
- The prime objective of the conference is to complete the rule-book to the 2015 Paris Agreement that will become effective in 2020 to replace the 1997 Kyoto Protocol (comes to an end in 2020).

The Paris Agreement:

- The Paris Agreement was the first legal instrument to set an explicit temperature target. It pushes countries to keep the average global temperature rise to below 2°C over pre-industrial levels and encourages them to limit it to 1.5°C. It does this largely through voluntarily agreed Nationally Determined Contributions, or NDCs.
- Even if all NDC commitments are met, the global mean temperatures would still rise by 3.2°C by 2100, estimates the United Nations Environment Programme's Emissions Gap Report To limit warming to 1.5°C, annual global emissions in 2030 need to be under 25 GtCO₂e while the less ambitious 2°C target requires limiting emissions to 41 GtCO₂e. even if all NDCs are met, the annual emissions in 2030 will be 54 GtCO₂e.

Big economies, big emissions

Most G20 nations are unlikely to meet their Paris Agreement targets



*Russia and Turkey might meet their climate action targets, but the targets themselves are "Critically Insufficient", as per Germany's Climate Action Tracker

SRC: DTE

- The question of meeting the Paris Agreement is usually reduced to whether countries are on track to meet the first round of NDCs, which were announced in 2015.
- The Agreement requires countries to declare new, progressively ambitious targets every five years and the second round of NDCs are due in 2020.

Under the Article 4 of the Paris Agreement — the requirement that each party shall communicate a NDC every five years, and that each successive NDC must be a “progression” beyond the party’s current NDC.

DELAYED ACTION

By 2020, all countries have to announce a second set of nationally determined contribution (NDC) to mitigate climate change as per the Paris Agreement. Only one—the Marshall Islands—has done that so far

68

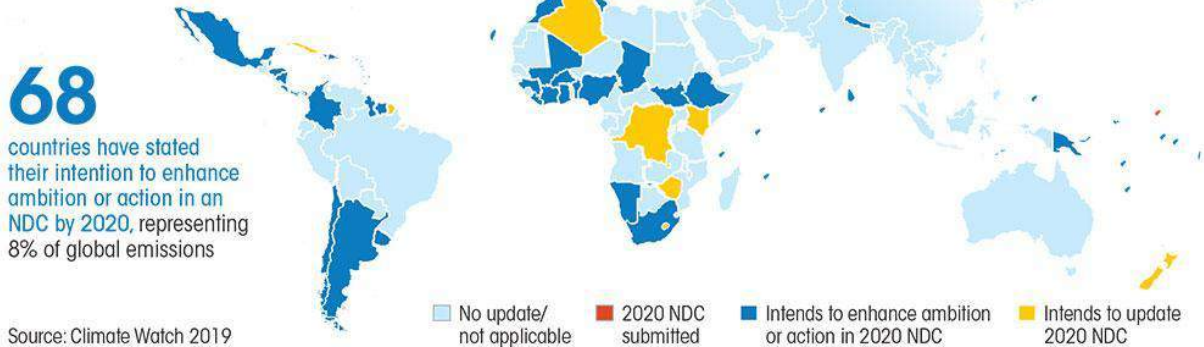
countries have stated their intention to enhance ambition or action in an NDC by 2020, representing 8% of global emissions

41

countries have stated their intention to update an NDC by 2020 (including the European Union), representing 10.1% of global emissions

1

country has submitted a 2020 NDC, representing 0% of global emissions



SRC : DTE

- **Mexico** (1.49 per cent of annual global emissions) currently aims for its 2030 emissions to be 22-36 per cent below levels seen in 2000, and a 50 per cent reduction in 2000 levels by 2050.
- These targets were submitted as part of a mid-century strategy published in 2016, and Mexico contends they are consistent with the 2°C threshold.
- South Korea (1.29 per cent of global annual emissions), which published its 2050 strategy in 2009, much before the Paris Agreement legally established the 1.5°C and 2°C thresholds to assess NDCs.
- Other significant emitters with a declared intent to update targets in 2020 include South Africa (1.08 per cent of global annual emissions), Nigeria (1.01 per cent), Argentina (0.91 per cent) and Ukraine (0.70 per cent).

Conclusion:

- Do you think India must follow NDCs?
- Do you think Paris agreement is a failure?

EcoClub Programme: To sensitize children about Environmental issues

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

In News

- Environment Education Awareness and Training (EEAT) is **acentral sector scheme** of the Ministry of the Environment, Forest and Climate Change started in 1983-84
- It aims to promote environmental awareness and **mobilize student's participation for environment conservation.**
- Under the scheme, **National Green Corps (NGC) 'Ecoclub' programme** was initiated in 2001-2002 with the objective to impart knowledge to school children through hands on experience about their immediate environment, interactions within it and the problems therein.

- The programme aims to inculcate proper attitude towards environment and sensitize children on issues related to environment and development.
- It is envisaged that number of Ecoclubs shall be enhanced from about 1.5 lakh at present to 2 lakh in the ensuing year 2020-21.

Miscellaneous

- **One-third of global coal exports come from Australia**, accounting for 7% of global carbon emissions. The country is the largest exporter of coal and liquefied natural gas in the world, and the energy sector is an important employer here.
- **Sivaramakrishnan Committee**, constituted by the Central government to suggest choices for the capital of Andhra Pradesh State (post-bifurcation in 2014), did not favour one 'super-capital' and pitched for decentralised development.

Atal Bhujal Yojana — Why a scheme for groundwater?

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

Context:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Atal Bhujal Yojana, or Atal Jal, a day after the Cabinet approved it.
- Atal Jal is a World Bank-funded, central scheme aimed at improving groundwater management.
- It was approved by the World Bank Board in June 2018.

Background:

- The idea first came up in 2015, in view of depleting groundwater resources.
- The government announced its intention to start a programme for management of groundwater resources in the Budget of 2016-17, with an estimated cost of about Rs 6,000 crore.

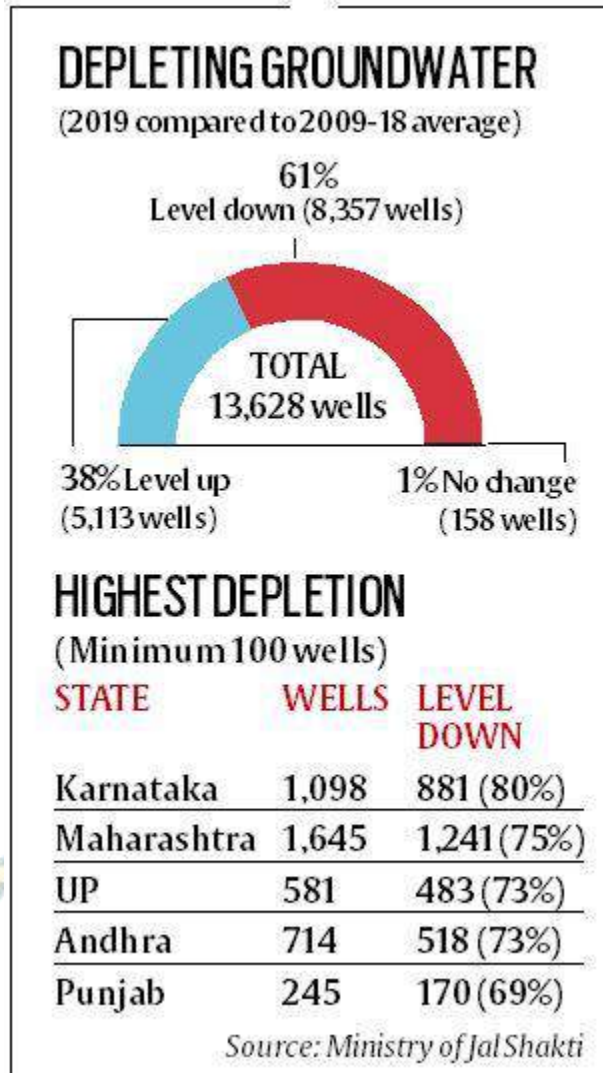
Scarcity of water in India:

- India accounts for 16 per cent of the world's population living in less than 2.5 per cent of the global area, and has just 4 per cent of the global water resources.
- According to the Central Water Commission (CWC), the estimated water resources potential of the country, which occurs as natural runoff in the rivers, is 1,999 billion cubic metres. Of this, the estimated utilisable resources are 1,122 billion cubic metres per year — 690 BCM per year surface water and 432 BCM per year replenishable groundwater. With the population rising, demand for water will increase manifold in coming years.
- According to the CWC, per capita availability in the country will decrease from 1,434 cubic metres in 2025 to 1,219 cubic metres in 2050.
- By CWC benchmarks, a water-stressed condition happens when per capita availability is less than 1,700 cubic metres, and a water-scarcity condition when per capita availability falls below 1,000 cubic metres.
- Some river basins are facing a water-scarcity condition.(Krishna, Cauvery, Subarnarekha, Pennar, Mahi, Sabarmati and east-flowing rivers, and west-flowing rivers of Kutch and Saurashtra including Luni.)

- Water scarcity is most acute in the basins of the Cauvery, Pennar, Sabarmati and east-flowing rivers, and west-flowing rivers of Kutch and Saurashtra including Luni.

Groundwater situation:

- Water and Related Statistics 2019', a report published by the CWC, the annual replenishable groundwater resources in India (2017) are 432 BCM, out of which 393 BCM is the annual "extractable" groundwater availability.
- Jal Shakti Ministry in Parliament recently. Among the states where at least 100 wells were monitored, the highest depletion has been in Karnataka (80%), Maharashtra (75%), Uttar Pradesh (73%), Andhra Pradesh (73%), Punjab (69%).



SRC: IE

Atal Bhujal Yojana seek to address:

- For now, the Atal Bhujal Yojana will be implemented in seven states – Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and UP over five years from 2020-21 to 2024-25. It is expected that it will benefit about 8,350 gram panchayats in 78 districts.
- According to Jal Shakti Ministry sources, if the scheme meets its objectives in water-stressed areas, it will be extended to other parts of the country.

Major components of the scheme:

- One is institutional strengthening and capacity building for sustainable ground water management in the states including improving monitoring networks, capacity building, strengthening of water user associations.
- The second component is incentivising the states for achievements in improved groundwater management practices.

Beneficiaries:

- Priority areas in seven states will be identified.
- The seven states are Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.
- The scheme is expected to benefit nearly 8,350 gram panchayats in 78 districts in these states.

How does the scheme works ?

- The focus will be on arresting the rate of decline of groundwater levels as well as water consumption. The scheme will seek to strengthen the institutional framework and bring about behavioural changes at community level for sustainable groundwater resource management. It envisages community-led Water Security Plans.

Connecting the dots:

- Do you think groundwater management is a solution to agrarian crisis?
- Do you really think India's Ground water is in Distress?

Red sand boa snake: Rare Snake rescued in Madhya Pradesh

Part of: GS Prelims and GS III- Environment

In News

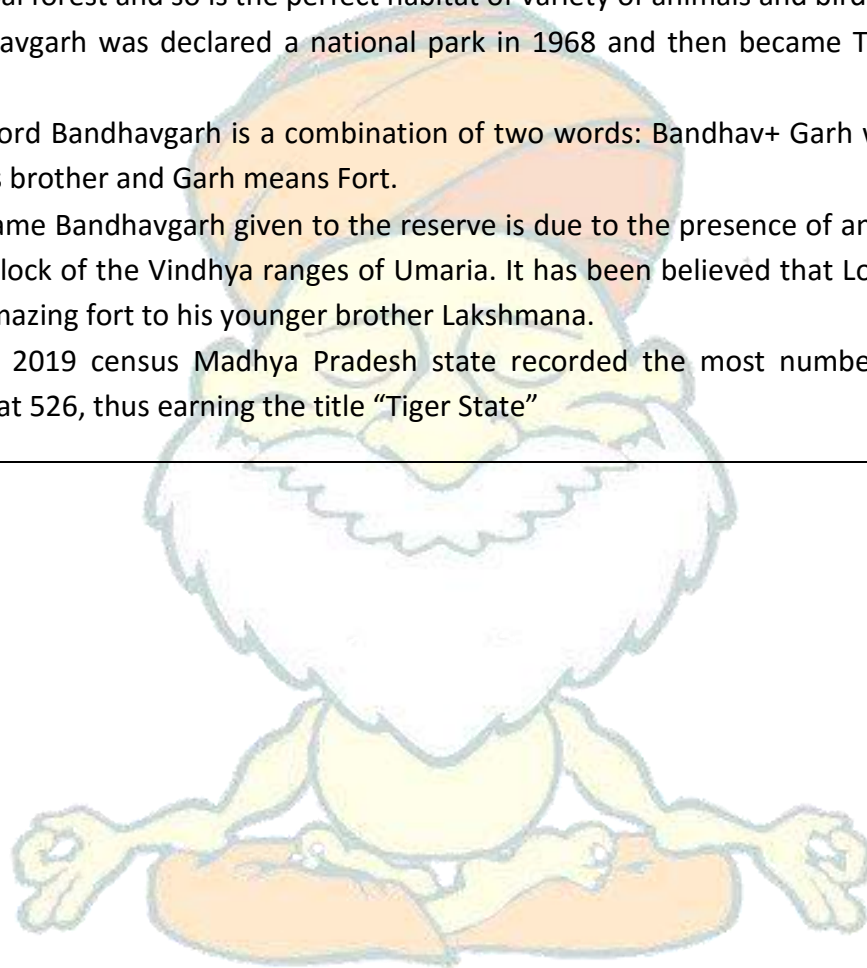
- Red Sand Boa Snake which worth around ₹1.25 crore, was rescued from five persons, who were trying to sell it in Madhya Pradesh
 - The rare non-poisonous snakes are used for making certain medicines, cosmetics and in black magic, and are in huge demand in the international market
 - They are also believed to bring good luck and wealth.
 - Persons were charged under the Wildlife (Protection) Act.
 - Value addition for Prelims
-
- The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 is an Act of the Parliament of India enacted for protection of plants and animal species.
 - Article 48-A of the Constitution says that the State shall endeavour to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard the forest and wildlife of the country.
 - Article 51A (g) imposes a fundamental duty on every citizen of India to protect and improve the environment and have compassion for living creatures.

Bandhavgarh Forest: Gets its first Elephant Colony

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

In News

- Bandhavgarh National Park is spread at Vindhya hills in Madhya Pradesh. It is known for the Royal Bengal Tigers. The density of the Tiger population at Bandhavgarh is the highest known in India.
- Bandhavgarh National Park consists of mixed vegetation ranging from tall grasslands to thick Sal forest and so is the perfect habitat of variety of animals and birds.
- Bandhavgarh was declared a national park in 1968 and then became Tiger Reserve in 1993.
- The word Bandhavgarh is a combination of two words: Bandhav+ Garh where Bandhav means brother and Garh means Fort.
- The name Bandhavgarh given to the reserve is due to the presence of an ancient fort in the hillock of the Vindhya ranges of Umaria. It has been believed that Lord Rama gifted this amazing fort to his younger brother Lakshmana.
- In the 2019 census Madhya Pradesh state recorded the most number of estimated tigers at 526, thus earning the title "Tiger State"



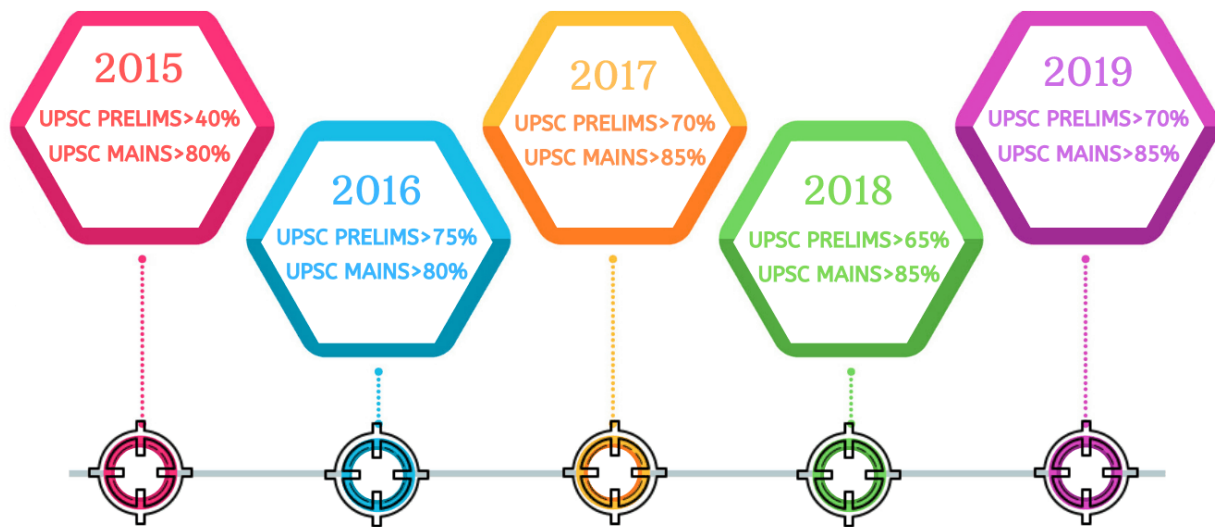
ANIMALS/NATIONAL PARKS IN NEWS

GANGETIC DOLPHINS

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

In News

- According to data provided in Rajya Sabha by Ministry of Environment, At last count, the rivers of Assam and Uttar Pradesh respectively had 962 and 1,275 Gangetic dolphins (or Platanistagangetica).
 - The International Union for Conservation of Nature has listed the **Gangetic dolphin as an endangered species in India.**
 - According to the WWF, the main threat to the Gangetic dolphin is the creation of dams and irrigation projects.
 - In addition to the species being **India's national aquatic animal**, the Gangetic dolphin has been notified by the Assam government as the state aquatic animal, too.
- Silting and sand lifting from rivers in Assam has been stopped to maintain its population.



INFRASTRUCTURE/ENERGY

Shipping Ministry approves Loktak Inland Water ways project

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III – Economy

In News

- The Shipping Ministry gave approval for the development of Loktak Inland Water ways improvement project in **Manipur under the central sector scheme**
- The estimated cost of the project is over 25 crore rupees.
- The Loktak Lake is the largest fresh water lake in North east located at Moirang in **Manipur**.
- The project will develop the Inland water transport connectivity in North East States and give boost to the tourism sector also.

Do You Know?

- Loktak Lake is famous for the **phumdis floating over it**. Phumdis are a series of floating islands, exclusive to the Loktak Lake in Manipur. They are heterogeneous masses of vegetation, soil and organic matter, in different stages of decay.
- It has been designated as a wetland of international importance under the **Ramsar Convention** in 1990.
- It is also listed under the **Montreux Record in 1993**, “a record of Ramsar sites where changes in ecological character have occurred, are occurring or are likely to occur”.

Delhi to get 11,000 hotspots across city

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III- Infrastructure

In News

- Delhi government announced the installation of 11,000 hotspots across Delhi as part of the free Wi-Fi scheme promised by the AamAadmi Party in its 2015 manifesto.
- Of the 11,000 hotspots, around 4,000 would come up near bus stands and the remaining 7,000 across marketplaces with each constituency to get 100 hotspots each
- The total expenditure on the installation will be around **₹100 crore**,
- The people of Delhi will be able to locate a Wi-Fi connection **after every 500 meters**, with the hotspot connections supporting a radius of 100 meters.
- Every user will get **free 15 GB data per month**, with a data limit of 1.5 GB per day.
- On an average, the maximum speed of the connection will be 200 Mbps, but the estimated speed will be between **100 and 150 Mbps**
- Each hotspot would be able to **support 150-200 users simultaneously**.
- The Delhi government will pay the rent every month to the company for each hotspot installed

Train18

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-III – Infrastructure

In News

- One of the main reasons the Indian Railways decided to halt the production of Train18 rakes at the Integral Coach Factory (ICF) in Chennai is that the **self-propelled train** set is heavier and consumes more power compared to Shatabdi Express on the same route and speed
- Train18 rakes, later launched as **Vande Bharat Express**, are running successfully connecting **New Delhi with Varanasi** and Katra, the Railway Ministry is looking at a light weight version that could conserve power
- Thus, the government plans to float global tenders to procure the train sets and not from the ICF that indigenously built Train18 in a record 18 months.
- All India Railwaymen Federation (AIRF) has stated that the move to halt production and float global tenders to procure production from foreign players had hit the morale of the skilled workforce in the ICF.

About Train 18

- It is **India's first engine-less train**. It doesn't have a locomotive to pull the coaches, rather it is a self-propelled trainset.
- The semi-high-speed trainset can reach a **maximum speed of 200 km per hour**.
- The 16-coach trainset has world class amenities such as on-board Wi-Fi to GPS-based passenger information system, 'touch-free' bio-vacuum toilets, LED lighting, mobile charging points etc.

Indian Railway Management Service (IRMS): Railway Board Restructuring

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III – Infrastructure; GS Mains II- Governance

In News

- Union Cabinet approved the restructuring of the Railway Board, including a reduction in its strength as well as the merger of the different cadres into a central service called the **Indian Railway Management Service (IRMS)**.
- The Railway Board started in 1905, and over a period of time, it has divided the management into several silos
- The Board presently consists of eight members, including the Chairman, from different service departments such as traffic, civil, mechanical, electrical and signal & telecom
- The **newly constituted Board will henceforth consist of five members** – Chairman, who will act as a CEO, along with four members responsible for infrastructure, operations and business development, rolling stock and finance.
- There will also be a DG (HR) under the Chairman. The Board will also have some independent members, who will be highly distinguished professionals.
- Restructuring of the board would help **end "departmentalism"**, while ensuring smooth functioning of the Railways and expediting the decision-making process.

FASTags deadline extended

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

In News

- The government issued an order extending the deadline for FASTags to become mandatory by 30 days and requiring 25% of lanes at toll plazas to be kept open for cash transactions.
- FASTag is an electronic toll collection system in India, operated by the **National Highway Authority of India (NHA)**.
- It employs **Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology** for making toll payments directly from the prepaid or savings account linked to it or directly toll owner.
- It is affixed on the windscreen of the vehicle and enables to drive through toll plazas without stopping for transactions.

National Broadband Mission

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-III – Economic Development

In News

- The government announced a new 'mission' aimed at **providing broadband access in all villages** in the country by 2022,
- Under the mission, the government plans to lay incremental 30 lakh route km of Optical Fiber Cable, while also increasing tower density from 0.42 to 1 tower per thousand of population by 2024.
- The mission envisages stakeholder **investment of \$100 billion** (Rs7 lakh crore), including Rs70,000 crore from **Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF)** in coming years
- The vision of the national broadband mission is to fast-track growth of digital communications infrastructure, bridge the digital divide, facilitate digital empowerment and inclusion, and provide affordable and universal access of broadband for all
- Additionally, a **Broadband Readiness Index** will be developed to measure the availability of digital communications infrastructure within a State/UT.

Digital Communications Commission (DCC): Approves auction of Spectrum

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-III- Infrastructure

In News

- The Digital Communications Commission (DCC) approved plans to auction over 8,300 MHz of spectrum, including airwaves to be used for **offering 5G services**, with a **reserve price of ₹5.22 lakh crore**.
- Challenges for the auction are:
 - Spectrum **reserve prices** 4 to 6 times higher than that of similar spectrum sold recently in several countries

- With high levels of debt and prevailing **financial stress** in the sector, telecom service providers will find it difficult to raise funds to participate in the auctions
- The **quantum of spectrum** in the 5G band being put up for auction will be only 175 MHz, 'woefully inadequate' for operators to roll out robust 5G networks and services

About Digital Communications Commission

- The Government of India, vide **executive resolution** has re-designated the Telecom Commission (set up in 1989 by executive order) as the 'Digital Communications Commission'.
- The DCC consists of a Chairman, four full time members and four part time members. The **Secretary** to the Government of India in the **Department of Telecommunications** is the **ex-officio Chairman of the DCC**.
- The DCC is responsible for:
 - Formulating the policy of Department of Telecommunications for approval of the Government;
 - Preparing the budget for the Department of Telecommunications for each financial year and getting it approved by the Government; &
 - Implementation of Government's policy in all matters concerning telecommunication.

Mahadayi Project: Goa gets relief

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II- Federalism

In News

- Union Environment Ministry kept in suspension its letter issued to Karnataka which had stated no environmental clearance was required for Kalasa Banduri Project.

About Kalasa Banduri project

- The project involves diverting water from **Mahadayi river, the lifeline of Goa**, into the Malaprabha river.
- The Kalasa Banduri project is aimed at **providing drinking water to three important districts of north Karnataka** — Belagavi, Gadag and Dharwad — which go parched in summer due to acute water scarcity.
- Mahadayi river originates from a cluster of 30 springs at Bhimgad in the Western Ghats in the Belgaum district of Karnataka. Then it enters Goa and **finally drains in Arabian sea**.
- Goa state **capital Panaji lies on the banks of Mandovi**
- **Mahadayi Water Tribunal (MWT)** Award in 2018:Karnataka has been allocated 13.5tmcft of water, Goa has been 24tmcft while Maharashtra has been allocated 1.3tmcft.

Core Catcher: Device to contain nuclear accidents

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III- Energy, Infrastructure, Science & Technology

In News

- Moscow-based Rosatom State Corporation installed a core melt localisation device (CMLD) or "**core catcher**" at Unit 3 of Tamil Nadu's **Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KKNPP)**.

- The device is designed to localise and cool the molten core material **in case of a meltdown accident.**
- Such an accident occurs when the nuclear fission reaction taking place inside a reactor is not sufficiently cooled, and the buildup of heat causes fuel rods to melt down
- In 2011, the device was first installed at the Tianwan nuclear power plant in China, which is of Russian design
- In 2018, a 200-tonne core catcher is being installed **Rooppur 1 Nuclear Power Plant in Bangladesh (India-Russia collaboration** which goes into operation in 2023)

Bharatnet Project: Free WiFi to all villages

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III- Infrastructure (Digital)

In News

- To promote uptake of the Internet in rural areas, government promised **free Wi-Fi to about 48,000 villages**, which are connected through the government's flagship Bharatnet project
- With the BharatNet initiative, the Centre aims to connect all 2.5 lakh gram panchayats through optical fibre.
- Digital Village, which was conceptualised by the Common Service Centre (CSC) SPV under the **Ministry of Electronics and IT**, is a village where citizens can avail various e-services of the central and the State governments, as well as of private players.
- These services include banking, insurance, tele-medicine, pension and e-governance services. Such villages are also equipped with LED bulb assembly unit, sanitary napkin unit, and rural-Wifi infrastructure.
- There were about 3.6 lakh CSCs in the country covering 2.25 lakh gram panchayats.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Battling anti-microbial resistance

Part of GS- III

Context:

- Recently (Nov 18-24) world observed Antibiotic Awareness Week
- It is one of the WHO Campaigns.
- The campaign highlights best practices among the general public, health workers and policy makers to help stop the further emergence and spread of antibiotic resistance.
- It is observed in the month of November

Antibiotics

- Antibiotics, also known as antibacterial, are medications that destroy or slow down the growth of bacteria.
- Antibiotics have saved millions of lives till date.
- In humans antibiotics are primarily used for treating patients,
- In Animals they are used as growth promoters often because they offer economic shortcuts that can replace hygienic practices.

Present antibiotics becoming ineffective

- Many infectious diseases have ceased to respond to antibiotics.
- In their quest for survival and propagation, common bugs develop a variety of mechanisms to develop antimicrobial resistance (AMR).
- The indiscriminate use of antibiotics is the greatest driver in selection and propagation of resistant bugs.

AMR

- Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is the ability of a microorganism (like bacteria, viruses, and some parasites) to stop an antimicrobial (such as antibiotics, antivirals and antimalarials) from working against it. As a result, standard treatments become ineffective, infections persist and may spread to others.
- AMR has been recognized worldwide as an important public health challenge with serious impact on economy and development.
- AMR is a manmade disaster by the Irresponsible use of antibiotics which is rampant in human health, animal health, fisheries, and agriculture. Globally, use of antibiotics in animals is expected to increase by 67% by 2030 from 2010 levels.
- AMR can lead to further complications such as
 - Minor untreatable infections can become fatal
 - Complex surgeries such as organ transplantation and cardiac bypass might become difficult to undertake because of untreatable infectious complications that may result post-surgery.

Can new antibiotics be developed?

- No new class of antibiotics has been discovered in the past three decades

- The pipeline for the discovery, development and dissemination of new antibiotics has virtually dried out, the reason being for the development of new anti-biotics it takes about 10-12 years and an investment of \$1 billion.
- Even if developed once it comes into the market, its indiscriminate use swiftly results in resistance, rendering it useless.

Steps taken globally:

- Every year, World Antibiotic Awareness Week (WAAW) is observed by governments, health facilities, schools and communities across the globe in the month of November.
- The Sustainable Development Goals have highlighted the importance of containing AMR.
- Various economic and political platforms such as UN general Assembly, G7, G20, EU, ASEAN etc. have dealt with the subject of containing AMR
- O'Neill report on AMR
- Global Action Plan on AMR

Steps taken by India:

Government of India has taken a number of steps that will contribute to global efforts to preserve and prolong the efficacy of antibiotics such as

- Bringing out its National Action Plan on AMR (NAP) in 2017.
- Surveillance networks have been established in human health and animal health.
- In July, the Indian government banned the manufacture, sale and use of **colistin** in the poultry industry.
- The FAO has assisted India in forging the 'Indian Network for Fishery and Animals Antimicrobial Resistance' for the generation of reliable data on the magnitude of the problem and monitoring trends in response to control activities.

Issues in India:

The health of humans and animals falls in State list which adds complexity to the nationwide response

Need in the future:

- World must launch a global movement to contain AMR which will include the capacity augmentation for regulatory mechanisms, infection control practices and diagnostics support, availability and use of guidelines for therapy, biosecurity in animal rearing practices and understanding the role of the environment and the engagement of communities.
- Implementation of India's NAP needs to be accelerated.

O'Neill report on AMR

- The Review on Antimicrobial Resistance, often referred to as the O'Neill Commission, was commissioned by the UK Prime Minister David Cameron and is chaired by esteemed economist Jim O'Neill.
- This report examines the need to boost the development of new antibiotic drugs, and proposes national and international strategies that will meet those needs, including reforms to the current economic models surrounding antibiotic development and sales.
- Published in 2016
- It has stated that inaction in containing AMR is likely to result in annual mortality reaching 10 million people and a 3.5% fall in global GDP by 2050.



Global Action Plan on AMR

- In 2015 World Health Assembly endorsed a global action plan to tackle antimicrobial resistance as a part of the tripartite collaboration with World Health Organization, Food and Agricultural Organization, and World Organization for Animal Health.
- five strategic objectives
 - to improve awareness and understanding of antimicrobial resistance;
 - to strengthen knowledge through surveillance and research;
 - to reduce the incidence of infection;
 - to optimize the use of antimicrobial agents;
 - develop the economic case for sustainable investment that takes account of the needs of all countries, and increase investment in new medicines, diagnostic tools, vaccines and other interventions.

National Action Plan on AMR (NAP)

- It is developed on the lines of Global Action Plan for AMR
- It is based on the 'One Health approach', which means that human health, animal health and the environment sectors have equal responsibilities and strategic actions in combating AMR.

Collistin

Colistin is a 50 year-old antibiotic that is being used increasingly as a 'last-line' therapy to treat infections caused by Multi Drug Resistant bacteria, when essentially no other options are available.

Connecting the dots:

- UN deputy secretary-general had said that 'antimicrobial resistance is one of the greatest threats we face as a global community'. In this context explain what is AMR and steps taken by India against the same?

Sexed Semen

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

In News

- The Union Minister for animal husbandry, dairying and fisheries said that government plans to provide dairy farmers with 'sexed semen' for cattle for as cheap as Rs 100 per straw by 2020.
- The reproduction system of cattle is similar to humans. Cows carry XX chromosomes while bull semen carries both X and Y.
- Sexed semen is specially processed semen of bulls from which '**Y** chromosomes in sperm cells — **which lead to the birth of a male calf** — are either removed through a 'sorting' process or killed.
- Semen which has only 'X' chromosomes can ensure that a female calf is born.
- **Sexed semen can help solve the stray cattle problem** in country as male calves (and cows which has stopped giving mil) are abandoned on the roads by farmers as they do not give milk.
- The guarantee of a female calf being born is never 100 per cent. It can be up to 90 per cent
- High quality conventional semen straws are available for just around Rs 20-40 per straw only whereas sexed semen costs at least **Rs 1,200 per straw without subsidy**.

World Malaria Report 2019

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II- Health

In News

- World Malaria Report 2019 was recently released by the World Health Organization (WHO).
- Globally, there were 228 million cases of malaria in 2018, down from 251 million cases in 2010
- 20 countries in sub-Saharan Africa and India accounted for **85 per cent of the global malaria burden in 2018**
- Compared to 2017, India reported 2.6 million fewer cases in 2018. This makes India the country with the largest absolute reductions among the countries that share 85% of the malaria burden.
- The major challenges in India remains decreased funding, treatment failures and vector resistance to pyrethroids, the insecticides used against the vectors

Do You Know?

- Malaria is mainly caused by Plasmodium falciparum and Plasmodium vivax parasites.
- It is transmitted to people through the bites of infected female Anopheles mosquitoes.

- Malaria is transmitted by blood, so it can also be transmitted through an organ transplant, a transfusion and use of shared needles or syringes.
- It is preventable and curable.

Chandrayaan 2

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

In News

- Nasa released some images showing the site of the Vikram lander's impact and the associated debris field. Nasa credited a Chennai-based techie with the discovery
- Nasa said the debris is about 750 metres northwest of the main crash site where Vikram made a hard landing on September 7th 2019
- Isro's Chandrayaan 2 mission was expected to make a soft landing on the Moon's surface when it lost contact with the Vikram lander ahead of the scheduled touchdown.
- Chandrayaan 2's Vikram lander hard-landed on Moon's surface as reduction in velocity during its descent did not match with the designed parameters.
- The indigenously developed Chandrayaan-2 spacecraft **comprising of orbiter, lander (Vikram) and rover (Pragyan)** was successfully launched on-board the indigenous **GSLV MK III-M1** Mission on July 22, 2019
- The Isro is planning to launch Chandrayaan 3 probably in November next year.

What are the scientific objectives of Chandrayaan2 ?

- Moon provides the best linkage to Earth's early history. Extensive mapping of lunar surface to study variations in lunar surface were essential to trace back the origin and evolution of the Moon.
- Evidence for water molecules discovered by Chandrayaan-1, required further studies on the extent of water molecule distribution on the surface, below the surface and in the tenuous lunar exosphere to address the origin of water on Moon.
- India would have been the first country to land a mission on the **south pole** of the Moon, if the landing was a success.

Didymos



Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III – Space Science

In News

- NASA and ESA want to hit an asteroid called Didymos
- The twin-asteroid system **Didymos** is a binary near-Earth asteroid.
- According to NASA, while the primary body of Didymos is approximately 780 meters across, its secondary body or "moonlet" is about 160-meters in size, which is more typical of the size of asteroids that could pose the most likely significant threat to Earth.
- Amidst the growing concern of need of a planetary defense mechanism, scientists are trying to find ways to deflect asteroids from a collision course with Earth

- One such project is the **Asteroid Impact and Deflection Assessment (AIDA)**, which includes **NASA's Double Asteroid Redirection Test (DART) mission** and the European Space Agency's (ESA) Hera.
- DART is scheduled to launch in 2021 with an aim to slam into the smaller asteroid of the Didymos system at around 6 km per second in 2022.
- Hera will arrive at the Didymos system in 2027 to measure the impact crater produced by the DART collision and study the change in the asteroid's orbital trajectory.

Do You Know?

- There are around 25,000 near-Earth objects (NEOs) that orbit the Sun on a trajectory that brings them close to our planet's orbit.
- However, certain near-Earth objects have been classified as "potentially hazardous" which are 140 metres or more in size and come within 0.05 AU (astronomical unit) to Earth
- The distance in space is usually measured in astronomical units where **1 AU is the distance between Earth and the Sun**, which is around 93 million miles or 150 million kilometers

RISAT

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III – Space

In News

- India's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle, in its 50th flight (PSLV-C48), successfully launched **RISAT-2BR1, an earth observation satellite**, along with nine commercial satellites of Israel, Italy, Japan and USA from **Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) SHAR, Sriharikota**.
- These satellites were launched under commercial arrangement with NewSpace India Limited (NSIL), the commercial arm of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

RISAT-2BR1:

- It is a **radar imaging earth observation satellite** weighing about 628 kg.
- The satellite will provide services in the field of Agriculture, Forestry and Disaster Management. The mission life of RISAT-2BR1 is 5 years.
- It is believed that RISAT-2BR1 along with Cartosat-3, a remote sensing satellite which was launched on November 27, 2019, will also be used for **military reconnaissance**.
- Before the launch of RISAT (Remote Imaging Satellite), India relied on images provided by Canadian satellites as the current domestic remote sensing spacecraft are not equipped to capture images of the earth during cloud cover.

PSLV

- Initially, the PSLV had a carrying capacity of 850 kg, and over the years it has been enhanced to 1.9 tons.
- The PSLV is very versatile, having various mission options. The PSLV had helped take payloads into almost all the orbits in space, including the Geo-Stationary Transfer Orbit (GTO), the moon and mars, and would soon be launching a mission to the Sun
- The PSLV has failed only twice — the maiden flight of the PSLV D1 in September 1993 and the PSLV C-39 in August 2017.

Electric commercial aircraft

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

In News

- World's first fully-electric commercial aircraft took its inaugural test flight in **Vancouver, Canada**.
- It involved a six-passenger aircraft fitted with an electric motor.
- Seattle-based Engineering firm magniX designed the plane's motor and worked in partnership with Harbour Air.
- The push to electric could **help slash carbon emissions** in the high-polluting aviation sector.
- The technology would mean significant **cost savings for airlines**
- An aircraft like the one flown in Vancouver could only fly about 160km (100 miles) on lithium battery power. Still, electric aircraft that can **travel long distances** remain a **big challenge for the sector**.
- The e-plane has to be tested further to confirm it is reliable and safe. In addition, the electric motor must be approved and certified by regulators.

Voice over Wi-Fi (VoWiFi)

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

In News

- Bharti Airtel, which recently removed its FUP (Fair Usage Policy) on calls to other networks, has introduced **Voice over Wi-Fi (VoWiFi)**, a first for India
- Wi-Fi Calling makes use of high speed Internet connection, available via broadband, to make and receive high definition (HD) voice calls. Users don't have to pay extra for these calls as it is using a Wi-Fi network.
- Wi-Fi Calling is aimed especially for areas where cellular networks are not strong.
- This is not much different from a voice call using WhatsApp or any other over-the-top messaging platform, but here the **call is from one number to another, and not using an app**.
- Wi-Fi Calling can be configured on compatible smartphones by upgrading operating systems to the version that supports Wi-Fi Calling, and enabling this in Settings.
- Airtel says it will soon be compatible with all broadband services and Wi-Fi hotspots, and rolled out in other locations.

Fog Pass

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

In News

- The South Central Railway (SCR) has started supplying Fog Pass devices, a **GPS-based portable equipment**, to loco pilots.

- During the **winter, when visibility is low due to fog**, loco pilots face a tough challenge of ensuring safe operations of trains. They are forced to restrict the speed of the train as they are unable to sight signals
- The entire data of a particular section such as location of signals, stations, level-crossing gates, warning boards, curves and gradients, are mapped with GPS and fed into the device.
- A fog pass device displays details of at least three oncoming landmarks along with distance from the current location. An audio alert is given, around 500 metres before any approaching landmark
- Fog device helps **in alerting the crew** about upcoming landmarks or structures, during foggy weather, through audio and visual indications.

Pyrolysis

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-III- Science & Technology, Environment Conservation

In News

- The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has pulled up 270 tyre pyrolysis units in 19 States for employing technology that is polluting and harmful to the health of the workers employed.
- The CPCB has reported that there were 637 units in 19 States of which 251 units were compliant, 270 non-compliant and 116 were closed.
- Tyre pyrolysis refers to a technique of **breaking down used tyres in the absence of oxygen** at temperatures between 250o C and 500o C. Shredded tyres produce liquid oil and gases.
- While this is considered **a safer technique than burning tyres**, pyrolysis leaves fine carbon matter, pyro-gas and oil as residue and the inadequate management of these by-products poses health risks

Do You Know?

- India is also a recipient of used tyres from Australia and the U.K., which are sent for recycling and disposal.
- As of 2016-17, official estimates indicate 127.34 million tyres were produced in India, which was seen to be a 12% increase from the previous year.
- The National Green Tribunal in 2014 prohibited used tyres from being burnt in the open or being used as fuel in brick kilns, because of the toxic emissions. However, it allowed for pyrolysis technique to be employed for used tyre disposal.

Odisha students develop smart water dispenser

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

In News

- Three students of Odisha's Kendriya Vidyalaya, Berhampur, have developed a 'smart water dispenser' to ensure equal distribution of drinking water through pipelines in any urban or rural habitat to **combat future water crisis**.
- In August 2019, this project was shortlisted as top 50 innovations under '**Atal Innovation Mission**' of NitiAyog.

- The 'Smart water dispenser' is an **electronic water flow controlling mechanism** that can replace the water meter and provide control of amount of water supply to the authorities for equal distribution. These units will be directly connected to a central server of the local governing body by GSM or Wi-Fi.
- Cost of the prototype was just ₹2,000. Its main components include an easily available microprocessor, a solenoid valve and a flow sensor.

About Atal Innovation Mission

- It is a flagship initiative set up by the **NITI Aayog** to promote innovation and entrepreneurship across the length and breadth of the country.
- Long term goals of AIM include establishment and promotion of Small Business Innovation Research & Development at a national scale (AIM SBIR) for the SME/MSME/startups and in **rejuvenating Science & Technology innovations in major research institutions of the country**

Hydrogen cell technology (Fuel Cell Technology)

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

In News

- Ahead of next July's Tokyo Olympics, Japan is gearing up to put on its roads thousands of vehicles based on a hydrogen cell technology, also known as 'fuel cells'.
- At the heart of the **fuel cell electric vehicles (FCEV)** is a device that uses a source of fuel, such as hydrogen, and an oxidant to create electricity by an electrochemical process.
- Like conventional batteries under the bonnets of automobiles, hydrogen fuel cells too **convert chemical energy into electrical energy**.
- From a long-term viability perspective, FCEVs are billed as vehicles of the future, given that **hydrogen is the most abundant resource in the universe**.
- Fuel cells generate electricity through an **electrochemical process**, it **does not store energy**
- Relies on a constant supply of fuel and oxygen — in the same way that an internal combustion engine relies on a constant supply of petrol or diesel, and oxygen
- Unlike battery-powered electric vehicles, fuel cell vehicles **do not need to be plugged in**, and most models exceed 300 km of range on a full tank. They are filled up with a nozzle, just like in a petrol or diesel station

Criticism of Hydrogen Cell Technology:

- The **process of making hydrogen needs energy** — often from fossil fuel sources. That has raised questions over hydrogen's green credentials.
- **Safety** — hydrogen is more explosive than petrol.

Concrete Maturity Meter: To measure the strength of concrete

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

In News

- The Construction Engineering Research Foundation (PCERF)- a non-profit body- has developed the **country's first indigenous Concrete Maturity Meter** that determines the strength of concrete used in construction.
- The device can help in significantly **reducing the margin of error** in estimating the strength of a structure
- It also helps in **cutting project costs (10-12%)** as it will be available at 30% to 40% of the cost of the foreign maturity meter(₹3 – ₹5 Lakh) that is in use in the market
- The method to measure concrete strength is based on the principle that concrete strength is directly related to its hydration (temperature) and age (time)
- The device can **also be directly connected to mobile phones** so as to suit the techniques and skills of end users in India

Electro-kinetic streaming: To produce energy from flowing or stagnant water

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

In News

- Researchers at the IIT-Guwahati (IIT-G) has developed materials that can produce energy from flowing or stagnant water in households.
- **Electro-kinetic streaming potential:** When fluids stream through tiny channels(made up of special semiconducting material) that are charged, they can generate an electrical voltage, which may be harnessed through miniaturised generators.
- Devices with **doped graphene flakes** was also fabricated for generating power by dipping it in a bucket of water or any stagnant water source to “complementary charge transfer activities”
- Graphene is the sheet produced by oxidation followed by reduction of natural **graphite flakes**.

Value Addition for Prelims – Graphene:

- Graphene is a **form of carbon** and a super-strong, ultra-light material discovered in 2004
- Graphene consists of a single layer of carbon atoms arranged in a hexagonal lattice, each atom bound to its neighbours by chemical bonds.
- It enables flexible electronic components, enhances solar cell capacity, and promises to revolutionise batteries.

Indian State of Forest Report 2019 (ISFR)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS II- Governance; GS-III- Environment

In News

- **The ISFR** is a biennial publication of **Forest Survey of India (FSI)** an organization under the Ministry of Environment Forest & Climate Change Government of India
- The report assesses the forest and tree cover, bamboo resources, carbon stock and forest fires.
- At 7,12,249 sqkm, the **forest cover constituted 21.67% of the nation's** geographical area or 0.12% more than last year.

- The forest cover in the country increased by 3,976 square kilometres (sqkm) but with the sharpest declines in the northeastern States of Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Mizoram.
- However, these states have higher proportion of forest than most States — Mizoram (85.4%), Arunachal Pradesh (79.63%) and Nagaland (75%)
- The top three States showing an increase in forest cover are Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala.
- Tree cover, defined as patches of trees less than 1 hectare and occurring outside the recorded forest area, grew by 1,212 sqkm
- Tree and forest cover together made up 25.56% of India's area. In the last assessment it was 24.39%.
- **Quality of forest** — in terms of the **canopy density** of the trees comprising forest patches — is wavering.
- **National Forest Policy, 1988** had envisaged 33% of total area to be under tree and forest cover.
- Ujjwala scheme, which provides free cooking gas to extremely poor families, has had a positive impact on reducing the demand for fuelwood.

Internet rights: Internet shutdown in India

In news:

- In Kashmir, the government imposed a complete.
- The enactment of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act led to protests all over the country and State governments responded by suspending the Internet.
- The Software Freedom Law Centre data says there have been more than a 100 Internet shutdowns in different parts of India in 2019 alone.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

- Internationally, the right to access to the Internet can be rooted in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states that “everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”

Human Rights Council

- The Human Rights Council of the United Nations Resolution dated 2018, noted with concern the various forms of undue restriction on freedom of opinion and expression online, including where countries have manipulated or suppressed online expression in violation of international law.

Recommendation by: Justice BN Srikrishna Committee

- The appropriateness of a right to be forgotten in specific circumstances would require that the right to privacy be balanced with the freedom of speech
- It called right to confirmation, access and correction to be included in the data protection law.

Kerala High Court:

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

Observations by the Court

- The Court observed that the internet acts as a **learning tool** and nobody can impose restrictions on it, citing discipline.
- The petitioner argued that the restriction on the use of internet amounted to a violation of the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression under **Article 19(1)(a)** of the Constitution.
- The Kerala HC in response cited the Supreme Court judgment in the **S. Rengarajan and others v/s P. Jagjivan Ram case (1989)** that the fundamental freedom under **Article 19(1)(a)** can be reasonably restricted only for the purposes mentioned in the **Article 19(2)**.

Conclusion:

- Internet broadband and mobile Internet services are a lifeline to people in India from all walks of life. While the Internet is certainly a main source of information and communication and access to social media, it is so much more than that. Hence it is high time to recognise the right to Internet access as a fundamental right.

Connecting the dots:

- Do you think Internet access should be a basic human right?
- What do you think about Kerala high court decision?

SnowEx: To assess how much water does snow contain

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

In News

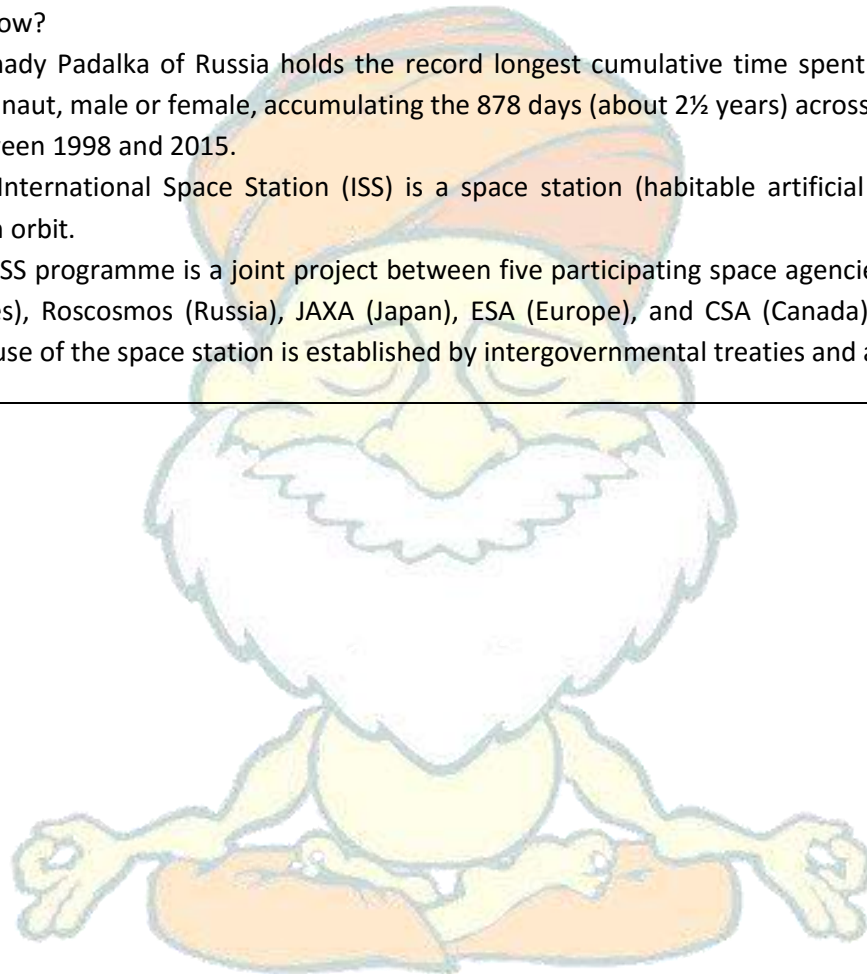
- In order to better understand how water is contained in each winter's snowfall and how much will be available when it melts in the spring, NASA has launched a seasonal campaign called SnowEx.
 - The goal is to address the most important gaps in our snow remote sensing knowledge, and thus lay the groundwork for a future snow satellite mission.
 - SnowEx assesses where snow has fallen, how much there is and how its characteristics change as it melts. It uses airborne measurements, ground measurements and computer modelling
 - The geographical focus of SnowEx is proposed as North America which contains the six broad snow climate categories identified in the literature: tundra (alpine or Arctic), taiga (Boreal forest), warm (temperate) forest, maritime, prairie, and ephemeral.
-

US astronaut Christina Koch

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

In News

- US astronaut Christina Koch set the record for the longest single spaceflight by a woman when she reached, and crossed, 289 days in her current mission at the International Space Station (ISS).
- Having reached the ISS in March this year, she is expected to spend a total of 328 days on board before returning to Earth in February 2020.
- In October 2019, she was part of the first all-female spacewalk, together with Jessica Meir
- Did you Know?
 - Gennady Padalka of Russia holds the record longest cumulative time spent in space by any astronaut, male or female, accumulating the 878 days (about 2½ years) across five spaceflights between 1998 and 2015.
 - The International Space Station (ISS) is a space station (habitable artificial satellite) in low Earth orbit.
 - The ISS programme is a joint project between five participating space agencies: NASA (United States), Roscosmos (Russia), JAXA (Japan), ESA (Europe), and CSA (Canada). The ownership and use of the space station is established by intergovernmental treaties and agreements



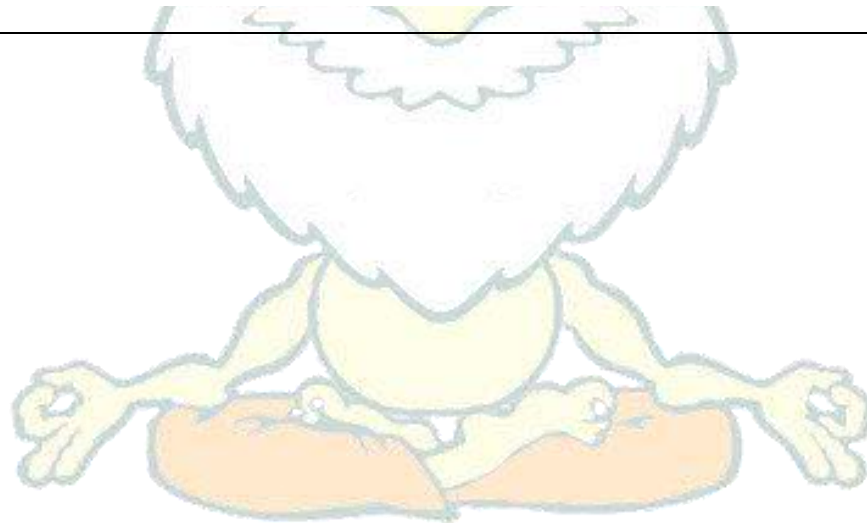
DISASTER MANAGEMENT

National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM)

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-III- Disaster Management

In News

- The Ministry of Environment has set up the National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM) at
- It has been setup to undertake studies and research in the area of Coastal Zone Management including coastal resources and environment.
- The aims and Objectives of the Center are:
 - Strive for being a **World Class Knowledge Institution** related to coastal zones, environment, resources and processes,
 - To **promote integrated and sustainable management of the coastal** and marine areas in India for the benefit and wellbeing of the traditional coastal and island communities, and
 - **Advice the Union and State Governments** and other associated stakeholder(s) on policy, and scientific matters related to Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM).
- For the first time, Integrated Island Management plans including holistic island development plans have been prepared by NCSCM for implementation by coastal States/UTs.



DEFENCE/INTERNAL SECURITY/SECURITY

EXERCISE SURYA KIRAN – XIV

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III- Security

In News

- Joint military exercise 'SURYA KIRAN – XIV' between India and Nepal will be conducted in Nepal from 03 to 16 December 2019.
- It is an annual event which is conducted alternatively in Nepal and India.
- The aim of this exercise is to conduct a Battalion level combined training between Indian Army and Nepal Army to increase interoperability in jungle warfare and counter terrorist operations in mountainous terrain, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief etc.

Exercise INDRA 19': India-Russia Trilateral Exercise

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II- International Affairs; GS-III- Security

In News

- The air force component of 'Ex INDRA 19', a joint exercise between India and Russia, successfully concluded at the Air Force Station in Lohegaon, **Pune**
- The exercise provided an opportunity to enhance the IAF's operational capability, synergise joint operations and improve interoperability with Russian Federation Air Force
- The **INDRA series of exercise began in 2003**. It was conducted as a single service exercise alternately between the two countries. However, **the first joint Tri Services Exercise was conducted in 2017**.
- The 2019 exercise included joint training in **counter-terrorism** and counter-insurgency operations under the United Nations mandate.

EXERCISE HAND-IN-HAND-2019

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

In News

- The **8th India-China** joint training exercise 'HAND-IN-HAND 2019' with the theme counter terrorism under United Nations mandate is scheduled to be conducted at Umroi, Meghalaya from 07 to 20 December 2019.
- The Chinese contingent from the Tibet Military command comprising of 130 personal and the Indian Contingent of similar strength will participate in the 14 day long training exercise.

- The aim of the exercise is to practice joint planning and conduct of counter terrorist operations in semi urban terrain.
- Two tactical exercises are scheduled during the training; one on counter terrorism scenario and the other on Humanitarian and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations

BrahMos Missile: Latest upgrades

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II- International Affairs; GS-III- Security

In News

- DRDO carried out two successful tests of the latest variant of the BrahMos missile, one from the land platform and the other from air.
- BrahMos is a **cruise missile**, meaning it can be guided towards a pre-determined land- or sea-based target. With a capability to attain speeds 2.8 times that of sound (Mach 2.8), BrahMos is classified as supersonic cruise missile.
- An amalgam of the names of the rivers Brahmaputra and Moskva, BrahMos is being produced by BrahMos Aerospace, a joint venture company set up by **DRDO** and Mashinostroyeniya of **Russia** in 1998.
- Its land-to-land, submarine-fired and now air-fired variants have been developed stage by stage
- A **newer version** under development is aimed at flying at **speeds greater than Mach 5**. These are called hypersonic cruise missiles.
- **BrahMos Air-Launched Cruise Missile (ALCM):** Another test was carried out from air, using the Sukhoi-30 MKI fighter jets of the Indian Air Force as the base. The missile destroyed a target at sea

Cruise Missile Vs Ballistic Missile

- The ballistic missile is targeted as a projectile from a single launch force with not much-added guidance.
- A cruise missile locates its target, or has a preset target, and navigates there. It generally consists of a guidance system, payload, and aircraft propulsion system, housed in an airframe with small wings and empennage for flight control.

Operation Prahar: Started by Haryana Police to fight Organised Crime

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III- Internal Security

In News

- Operation Prahar' is a Haryana police drive to fight organised crime and growing **drug menace** in the State.
- Haryana government also announced that a separate "**Haryana Narcotics Bureau**" would be set up in an attempt to curb drug menace in the State.

Do You Know?

- India's strategic location places it amid two largest sources of illicit drugs in South Asia- **Golden Crescent** (Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iran) on the northwest and the infamous **Golden Triangle** (Myanmar, Thailand, and Laos) on the northeast.

PREVALENCE OF ILLICIT DRUG USE: COMPARISON OF GLOBAL, ASIAN ^a AND NATIONAL (INDIA) ESTIMATES (IN %)			
Drug Category	World (15-64 years)	Asia (15-64 years)	India (10-75 years)
Cannabis ^a	3.9	1.9	1.2
Opioids	0.70	0.46	2.06
Cocaine	0.37	0.03	0.11
ATS	0.70	0.59	0.18

Dolphin's Nose: Joint Operation to crackdown on Espionage racket

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III – Security

In News

- In a joint operation —'Dolphin's Nose' — conducted by the **Andhra Pradesh State**, Naval and Central intelligence agencies, seven naval personnel and hawala operator were arrested for alleged espionage and suspected links with Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence (ISI)
- Two of the personnel were from the Eastern Naval Command (ENC) and the rest from the Western Naval Command (WNC).
- The importance of the **Eastern Naval Command (HQ at Vishakapatnam, AP)** has grown with the presence of the Ship Building Centre, which builds the **Arihant-class nuclear submarines**.
- The ENC is also coming up with **strategic Naval Alternative Operations Base (NAOB)** in Visakhapatnam district.
- The NAOB and the Arihant Project are listed under the "top-secret" strategic weapons projects and are directly under the **control of the Prime Minister's Office**.

Apache attack helicopters: India to import more from USA

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains II- International Affairs; GS-III- Security

In News

- In early 2020, India will probably sign a deal with **Boeing Company of USA** for additional six AH-64E Apache attack helicopters, estimated to cost around \$930 million.

- These are in addition to 22 Apaches already being inducted by the Indian Air Force (IAF).
- It will replace the ageing **Russian Mi-35 attack helicopters in service.**
- Feature of Apache helicopters are:
 - It is capable of delivering variety of weapons which include fire and forget anti-tank guided missiles
 - Air to ground Hellfire missiles
 - 70 mm Hydra rockets
 - Air to air Stinger missiles
 - They are day/night, all weather capable
 - They also have high agility and survivability against battle damage.

Pinaka missile system successfully flight-tested

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-III- Security

In News

- India successfully conducted test firing of the **indigenously developed Pinaka missile** system from the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur off the Odisha coast

About Pinaka

- It is **developed by DRDO**
- Pinaka is a Multi-Barrel Rocket System to supplement the existing artillery gun at ranges beyond 30 kilometres to make precision hits.
- The guided weapon system is equipped with state-of-the-art guidance kit comprising of an advanced navigation and control system.
- The system is mounted on a Tatra truck for mobility.

Panel finalises role of Chief of Defence Staff

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III- Security

In News

- An implementation committee constituted to finalise the responsibilities of the post of Chief of the Defence Staff (yet to be created) has submitted its report
- The government said the post would come within the ambit of the RTI Act
- In his 2019 Independence Day address, Prime Minister Modi announced the creation of the post of Chief of Defence Staff to provide “effective leadership at the top level” to the three wings of the armed forces, and to help improve coordination among them
- The CDS will act as the single-point military adviser to the government on military and strategic issues and oversee procurement, training and logistics
- CDS offers seamless tri-service views and single-point advice to the Executive on long-term defence planning and management, including manpower, equipment and strategy, and above all, “jointmanship” in operations.

Existing scenario in India:

- India has had a feeble equivalent known as the **Chairman, Chiefs of Staff Committee (CoSC)**; but this is a toothless office, given the manner in which it is structured.
- The senior-most among the three Service Chiefs is appointed to head the CoSC, an office that lapses with the incumbent's retirement.

DRDO to develop naval fighter jet

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III- Security

In News

- DRDO has offered to develop a new twin-engine deck-based fighter aircraft for the Navy based on the experience of the naval light combat aircraft (LCA)
- The new aircraft should be ready by 2026, after meeting the qualitative requirements.
- The naval LCA recently successfully completed the take-off and landing trials on the shore-based test facility in Goa

Do You Know

- The Navy expected to have the first indigenous aircraft carrier (IAC-I) Vikrant operational by 2022.
- The Navy is scheduled to host its **largest multilateral exercise, MILAN** off the coast of Visakhapatnam in March 2020, for which 41 countries have been invited. So far, over 15 countries have confirmed their participation.
- However, **China has not been** invited as Indian Navy invited "like-minded" countries.

Nod for Data Protection Bill

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III- Security

In News

- The Union Cabinet approved the introduction of the Personal Data Protection Bill in Parliament.
- The draft bill, the Personal Data Protection Bill, 2018, was prepared by a high-level expert committee headed by former Supreme Court judge **B.N. Srikrishna**.

Some of the features of the proposed bill are:

- The bill classifies '**sensitive personal data**' as including passwords, financial data, health data, sex life, sexual orientation, biometric data, genetic data, transgender status, intersex status, caste or tribe, and religious or political belief or affiliation.
- The draft Bill says that such sensitive personal data can be **processed only with the explicit consent of the person**, and this consent needs to be informed, clear, and specific, as defined by the Bill itself.
- The draft bill also has a provision for the **right to be forgotten**, where the person "shall have the right to restrict or prevent continuing disclosure of personal data".

- There is also a provision for the central government to notify categories of personal data as **critical personal data**, which will then be **only processed in a server or data centre located in India**.
- Personal data is to be stored in India, but can be processed outside with the consent of the person.
- The draft Bill also specifies **penalties for not following its provisions**, including a penalty of ₹5 crore or 2% of turnover, whichever is higher, if no action is taken on a data leak.

Blue Water Force



Part of: GS Prelims and GS-III- Security

In News

- On December 4, Navy Day, the office of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh called **Indian Navy is the Formidable Blue Water Force**.
- A Blue Water Navy is one that has the capacity to project itself over a much bigger maritime area than its maritime borders. Simply put, it is a Navy that can go into the vast, deep oceans of the world.
- However, while most navies have the capacity to send ships into the deep oceans, a Blue Water Force is able to carry out operations far from its borders, without being required to return to its home port to refuel or re-stock.
- While it is evident that Blue Water navies belong to the most powerful nations, there is no one internationally agreed upon definition. **Owning one or more aircraft carriers is sometimes seen as a marker**.
- Navies are classified in terms of colours. A navy whose operations are restricted close to the shore, where the water is muddy, is called a **Brown Water Force**. A navy that can go farther out is called a **Green Water Force**. And then there is a Blue Water Force.

Strandhogg



Part of: GS Prelims and GS-III- Cyber Security

In News

- The Union Home Ministry has sent an alert to all States warning them about the vulnerability of the Android operating system to a **bug called 'StrandHogg.'**
- StrandHogg allows real-time malware applications to pose as genuine applications and access user data of all kind.
- This malware can then potentially listen to their conversations, access photo album, read/send messages, make calls, record conversations and get login credentials to various accounts.
- Pop-ups asking for permission to send notifications, messages etc., are one of the main entry points for 'StrandHogg' to launch the attack.

About Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C) scheme

- **The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** has rolled out a scheme 'Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)' which is a 7-Pronged Scheme to combat cybercrime in the country, in a coordinated and effective manner.
- Components of The I4C Scheme
 - National Cybercrime Threat Analytics Unit (TAU)
 - National Cybercrime Reporting
 - Platform for Joint Cybercrime Investigation Team
 - National Cybercrime Forensic Laboratory (NCFL) Ecosystem
 - National Cybercrime Training Centre (NCTC)
 - Cybercrime Ecosystem Management Unit
 - National Cyber Research and Innovation Centre

Tech firms facing antitrust issues

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-III- Cyber Security

Context:

Google and Amazon are under Scrutiny for their influence on **consumer privacy, labor conditions, public discourse and violation of antitrust law**

Background

Silicon Valley giants – Facebook, Google, Amazon and Apple – are new age Tech companies which through their **data business model** have gained tremendous market power and now wield tremendous **influence on socio-economic-political aspects** of people.

This has led regulators across the world to frame guidelines/policies so as to curb their market monopoly power.

What are the primary sources of tension between these companies and Governments?

There are two sources of tension relating to these four tech firms that have caused alarm across the United States, Europe and elsewhere:

- First, that they may have engaged in **anti-competitive behaviour** over many years thus undercutting smaller potential rivals and holding onto an outsized market share;
- Second, that as a result of this metastatic growth, they now have a vast influence on politics, policy and personal reputations across the spectrum, making cost of **data privacy** breaches by these firms catastrophic.

Concerns of each platform

Amazon: It is an online sales platform has disrupted the traditional business of retail sellers and small business. Allegations that Amazon favours its own self-branded products over those of third-party sellers through manipulation of search results.

Apple: Its App Store policies, specifically regarding how Apple ranks search results on that platform, is questioned as it has lead exclusion of certain competing apps from the Store (Ex. Spotify). Questions have also been raised on how Apple determines the share of revenue it takes from in-app purchases

Facebook: Regulators have focused their attention on Facebook's acquisitive streak in capital markets, for example, the U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC) enquiry into whether Facebook

defensively purchased certain companies to maintain its dominant market position in the social networking ecosystem.

Google: This company handles more than 90% of online searches across the world. In recent years concern has grown over the fact that Google has increasingly been sending users to its own sites to answer their queries, including products such as Google Flights and Google Maps. Thus there are allegations of abuse of its dominance in internet search, advertising and its mobile system, to the detriment of rival content producers. The European Union has already fined Google \$5.1 billion in 2018.

What steps has US authorities taken against these tech giants?

- The House of Representative's Antitrust Subcommittee announced a bipartisan investigation into competition and "abusive conduct" in the tech sector.
- It also made an enormous information demand to all four tech giants, requesting 10 years' worth of detailed records relating to competition, acquisitions, and other matters relevant to the investigation.
- Attorneys-General across 50 U.S. states and territories announced a joint antitrust probe into Google and Facebook

What is the Political Scenario in USA with regard to these investigations?

- U.S. President Donald Trump could hardly be considered a tech ally as he warned in August 2018 that tech companies could be in a "very antitrust situation."
- In March 2019 U.S. Senator and Democrat Elizabeth Warren announced as part of her 2020 presidential campaign, a plan to break up Amazon, Facebook, and Google.

What are anti-trust laws?

- Antitrust laws also referred to as competition laws developed to protect consumers from predatory business practices. They ensure that fair competition exists in an open-market economy.
- These laws have evolved along with the market, vigilantly guarding against would-be monopolies and disruptions to the productive ebb and flow of competition.

India's Anti-Trust Regulation Framework

- **The Competition Act, 2002** is India's antitrust law. It replaced the Monopolistic and Restrictive Trade Practices Act of 1969.
- The Act prohibits: anti-competitive agreements; abuse of dominant position by enterprises; and regulates combinations (Mergers and Acquisition), which causes or likely to cause an appreciable adverse effect on competition within India.
- From the provisions under the Competition Act, 2002, the central government has established Competition Commission of India in 2003 which acts as a watchdog of free market economy.
- In 2018, **The Competition Commission of India (CCI)** has also imposed **Rs.136 crore fine on Google** for unfair business practices and for infringing antitrust conduct in India.

Way Forward:

- India should closely follow the proceedings of these cases in USA and learn the necessary jurisprudence and regulatory framework to be imbibed within Indian anti-trust governance structure
- Justice B.N.Srikrishna Committee report on data protection should be implemented in letter and spirit so as to deal effectively with new age data-centred tech giants.

- In the light of Supreme Court's verdict on privacy in K.Puttaswamy case, India should come out comprehensive guidelines on data usage so as to balance the need of digital innovation and individual's right to privacy.

Connecting the dots:

- Should India also launch Joint Parliamentary committee to investigate whether these tech giants are indulging in anti-competitive trade practices in India?
- If these tech giants are broken up, would it impact the digital revolution which is witnessed around the globe and also in India?

Sarvatra Kavach: Indigenously developed Bullet-proof jacket

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-III- Security

In News

- Major Anoop Mishra was felicitated by Army chief Gen. Bipin Rawat with the **Army Design Bureau (ADB) excellence award** for indigenously developing Sarvatra Kavach.
- Sarvatra Kavach is a bulletproof jacket that can provide protection against various ammunition **including that of sniper rifles.**
- The suit was named Sarvatra Kawach as it provides protection from neck to ankle and upper arms
- The project was sanctioned in June 2017 and initially the design and development of a Level IIIA soft body armour suit was sanctioned and was subsequently revised to include a Level IV **hard armour panel inserts.**
- The ADB was set up to liaise with the industry and the academia and develop indigenous solutions for the Army

Chief of Defence Staff (CDS): Union Cabinet gives approval

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-III- Security

In News

- CDS will **function as the Principal Military Adviser to the Defence Minister** and also as the Permanent Chairman, Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC)
- The CDS will also head the **Department of Military Affairs (DMA)**, to be created in the Ministry of Defence, and function as its Secretary. The armed forces will be brought under the DMA
- The **CDS will look after the jointness in operations**, logistics, transport, training, support services, communications, repairs and maintenance etc. of the three Services, within three years of the first CDS assuming office.
- CDS will be **member of Defence Acquisition Council** chaired by RakshaMantri and Defence Planning Committee chaired by NSA.
- CD will also function as the **Military Adviser to the Nuclear Command Authority** chaired by the Prime Minister

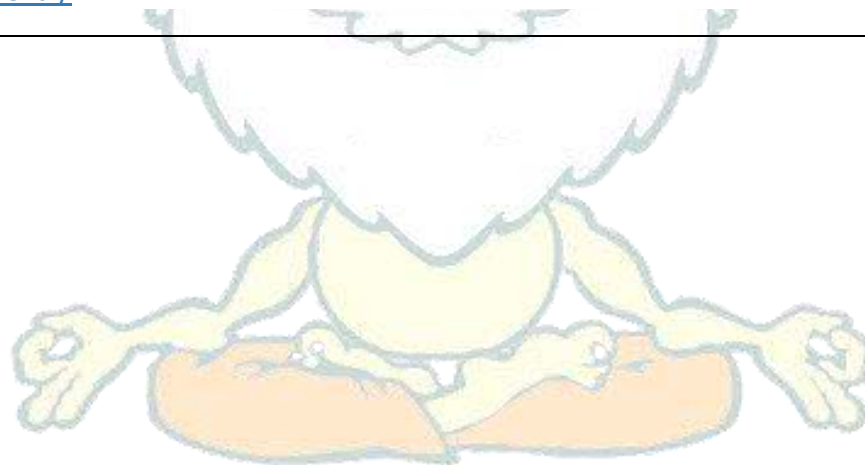
- CDS will be a **rank of a four-star General**, with salary and perquisites equivalent to a service chief.
- **CDS will not exercise any military command, including over the three Service Chiefs**, so as to be able to provide impartial advice to the political leadership.
- CDS would come in the ambit of 'Right to Information Act', in accordance with the provisions of the RTI Act, 2005.
- CDS would also evaluate plans "for 'Out of Area Contingencies', as well other contingencies such as Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR).

Chief of Defence Staff: Gen. Rawat Appointed as first CDS

Part of: GS Prelims and GS Mains III- Security

In News

- The Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) is a high military office that oversees and coordinates the working of the three Services
- He offers seamless tri-service views and **single-point advice to the Executive** (Prime Minister) on long-term defence planning and management, including manpower, equipment and strategy, and above all, "jointsmanship" in operations.
- The upper age limit for the CDS has been fixed at **65 years**.
- Service chiefs have a tenure of three years or 62 years, whichever is earlier. However, the **tenure of CDS has not been fixed**
- Read more here: <https://iasbaba.com/2019/12/chief-of-defence-staff-cds-union-cabinet-gives-approval/>



PERSON IN NEWS

Person in news	Description
1. Akkitham Achuthan Namboothiri	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He has been chosen for the 55th Jnanpith Award. • A Padma Shri awardee, he has won several literary accolades including the Sahitya Akademi Award (1973), Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award (1972 and 1988), Mathrubhumi Award etc <p>Jnanpith Award</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is given by Bharatiya Jnanpith, a literary and research organization based in Delhi. • It is given annually to an author for their “outstanding contribution towards literature”. • It is bestowed only on Indian writers writing in Indian languages included in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution of India and English. • There is no posthumous conferral. Also only works published during the preceding twenty years is considered for the award. • The award consists of cash prize is ₹11 lakh and a Bronze replica of Saraswati, the Hindu goddess of knowledge and wisdom.
2. Shashi Tharoor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wins Akademi’s 2019 award for English • Sahitya Akademi award established in 1954, is a literary honour that is conferred annually by Sahitya Akademi, India’s National Academy of letters. • Award is presented to the most outstanding books of literary merit published in any of the twenty-four major Indian languages recognized by the Akademi (including English). • Sahitya Akademi award is the second highest literary honour by the Government of India, after Jananpith award. • The Award in the form of an engraved copper-plaque, and cash prize of Rs. 1,00,000/- • The author must be of Indian Nationality. Indian film-maker Satyajit Ray is the designer of the plaque awarded by the Sahitya Akademi.

MISCELLANEOUS

In News	Description
1. China's facial recognition roll out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China put into effect new regulations that require Chinese telecom carriers to scan the faces of users registering new mobile phone services. • This move the government says is aimed at cracking down on fraud. • China is home to some of the world's leaders in facial recognition software, including Megvii and SenseTime. • Supermarkets, subway systems and airports already use facial recognition technology. Alibaba gives customers the option to pay using their face at its Hema supermarket chain. • Reception by people: Surveillance technologies have encountered little public opposition within China, but there has been some mostly anonymous debate on social media platforms like Weibo • Some users argue that it is a needed to combat fraud, like scam calls, but others have voiced concerns about its implications for personal data, privacy and ethics. • Revenue Potential: Countries from Myanmar to Argentina have purchased surveillance technology from the likes of China's ZTE Corp and Huawei Technologies as part of plans to create "smart cities"
2. UN Development index	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India ranks 129 out of 189 countries on the 2019 Human Development Index (HDI) — up one slot from the 130th position last year • Human Development Report (HDR) is released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) • The HDI measures average achievement in three basic dimensions of human development — life expectancy, education and per capita income. • Norway, Switzerland and Ireland occupied the top three positions in that order. Germany is placed fourth along with Hong Kong, and Australia secured the fifth rank on the global ranking • Among India's neighbours, Sri Lanka (71) and China (85) are higher up the rank scale while Bhutan (134), Bangladesh (135), Myanmar (145), Nepal (147), Pakistan (152) and Afghanistan (170) were ranked lower on the list. • However, for inequality-adjusted HDI (IHDI), India's position

	<p>drops by one position to 130. The IHDI indicates percentage loss in HDI due to inequalities.</p>
3. Gender Inequality Index	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The GII is an inequality index released by UNDP. It measures gender inequalities in three important aspects of human development— • reproductive Health, measured by maternal mortality ratio and adolescent birth rates; • Empowerment, measured by proportion of parliamentary seats occupied by females and proportion of adult females and males aged 25 years and older with at least some secondary education; and • Economic status, expressed as labour market participation and measured by labour force participation rate of female and male populations aged 15 years and older. • The GII is built on the same framework as the IHDI—to better expose differences in the distribution of achievements between women and men. • It measures the human development costs of gender inequality. Thus the higher the GII value the more disparities between females and males and the more loss to human development. • In the Gender Inequality Index (GII), India is at 122 out of 162 countries. Neighbours China (39), Sri Lanka (86), Bhutan (99), Myanmar (106) were placed above India. • The report forecasts that it may take 202 years to close the gender gap in economic opportunity
4. Gandhipedia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government is developing 'Gandhi Encyclopedia' to spread awareness in the society. • Ministry of Culture has approved a project for development of GandhiPaedia by National Council of Science Museums, Kolkata. • The objective of the initiative is promotion of Gandhian philosophy and thoughts through social media platforms • Government is providing financial assistance of Rs. 5.25 cr for this project and has released an amount of Rs. 2.95 cr against first installment.
5. MattuGulla	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MattuGulla is a variety of brinjal that has Geographical Indication (GI) tag • Known for its unique taste, MattuGulla is grown in Mattu, Kaipunjali and Uliyargoli villages of Udupi district in Karnataka • About 200 farmers cultivate this rare variety of brinjal on about 120 acres of land from October to June. • The speciality of MattuGulla, besides its taste, is that it has less

	<p>seed and more pulp</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An export network to UAE is being planned so that MattuGulla gets exported. As a result, the demand for it will increase and farmers will get good price for it.
6. Indian Culture Portal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture Minister unveiled a portal on Indian culture which brings together all the cultural resources of the country on one platform i.e. www.indianculture.gov.in • The Indian Culture Portal is a part of the National Virtual Library of India project, funded by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India. • The portal has been created and developed by the Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay. • Data has been provided by organisations of the Ministry of Culture (such as the National Archives of India, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Smriti, Archaeological Survey of India and Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts) and curated by Indira Gandhi National Open University. • The portal currently has details on 90 lakh items, including manuscripts, archives, research papers, audio books and folk tales with some of them dating back to 4000 years •
7. Gandhiprize: Portugal sets up the prize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portugal would launch the prize in order to promote Gandhi's ideals. • Every year, the prize would be inspired by Gandhi's thoughts and quotes. • The first edition of the prize would be dedicated to animal welfare. Gandhi said "the greatness of a nation can be judged by the way its animals are treated" <p>About National Committee for the Commemoration Mahatma Gandhi's 150th Birth Anniversary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Committee was constituted for commemorating the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi at the national and international, presided by the President of India • This Committee includes Vice-President, Prime Minister, Chief Ministers of all states, representatives from across the political spectrum, Gandhians, thinkers, and eminent persons from all walks of life. • The Committee also has nine international members, including two former Secretaries-General of the United Nations – Mr Kofi Annan and Mr Ban Ki-Moon. • Portuguese Prime Minister is the only foreign Prime Minister to be a part of the committee

<p>8. Winter Solstice: Dec 22</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • December 22, is Winter Solstice, the shortest day of the year in the Northern Hemisphere • It is the day when the North Pole is most tilted away from the Sun. • In the Southern Hemisphere, conversely, today is Summer Solstice — in places like Australia, New Zealand, or South Africa, December 22 is the year's longest day. • This situation will be reversed six months after— on June 21/22, the Northern Hemisphere will see the Summer Solstice when the day will be the year's longest. • The Earth's axis of rotation is tilted at an angle of 23.5 degrees away from the perpendicular. • This tilt — combined with factors such as Earth's spin and orbit — leads to variations in the duration of Sunlight that any location on the planet receives on different days of the year.
<p>9. Uighur Muslims: Indonesian Muslims protest China's treatment of Uighurs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nearly thousand Muslims marched to the Chinese Embassy in Indonesia's capital to protest China's treatment of its Uighur Muslims <p>Value addition For Prelims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uigurs, are a minority Turkic ethnic group originating from and culturally affiliated with the general region of Central and East Asia. • The Uyghurs are recognized as native to the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China. • China rejects the idea of them being an indigenous group • Since 2016, it is estimated that over a million Uyghurs have been detained in Xinjiang re-education camps.(UN) • International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ), the main feature of the camps is to ensure adherence to Chinese Communist Party ideology.



<p>10. National Mathematics Day: Tribute to S. Ramanujan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • December 22, the birth anniversary of India's famed mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan, is celebrated as National Mathematics Day. • Ramanujan was born in 1887 in Erode, Tamil Nadu (then Madras Presidency) in an Iyengar Brahmin family. • At age 12, despite lacking a formal education, he had excelled at trigonometry and developed many theorems by himself. • Living in dire poverty, Ramanujan then pursued independent research in mathematics. • In 1914, Ramanujan arrived in Britain who worked with GH Hardy and in 1917, Ramanujan was elected to be a member of the London Mathematical Society. • His work in the number theory is especially regarded. He was recognised for his mastery of continued fractions, and had worked out the Riemann series, elliptic integrals, hypergeometric series, and the functional equations of the zeta function • Ramanujan could not get accustomed to the England's diet, and returned to India in 1919. Ramanujan's health continued to deteriorate, and he died in 1920 at the age of 32. • The Man Who Knew Infinity (2015) was a biopic on the mathematician
<p>11. Hunar Haats</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hunar Haat is an exhibition of handicrafts and traditional products made by artisans from the Minority communities. It is organized by Ministry of Minority Affairs. • Hunar Haat is organized under USTTADscheme(Upgrading the Skills and Training in Traditional Arts/Crafts for Development). • The artisans who participate in the event will get national and international markets for their indigenous handmade products through "Hunar Haat". • It has proved to be Empowerment & Employment Exchange for master artisans and craftsmen • The theme of the events to be organized between 2019 and 2020 is Ek Bharat Shresht Bharat • Government has decided to organise about 100 "Hunar Haat" in the next five years across the country to provide market and employment opportunities

(TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE)

Model questions: (Answers are provided at the end)

Q.1) Consider the following statements about Operation Clean Art

1. The aim of the initiative was to recover the stolen heritage art from across the world and bring it back to India

2. It is launched by Ministry of Culture in collaboration with UNICEF

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.2) Consider the following statements about Loktak Lake

1. It is the largest fresh water lake in North east located in Nagaland

2. Phumdis which are a series of floating islands consisting of heterogeneous masses of vegetation, soil and organic matter, is exclusive to the Loktak Lake

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.3) Consider the following statements about Jnanpith Award

1. It is given by Bharatiya Jnanpith, a literary and research organization based in Delhi.

2. It is bestowed on both Indian and foreign writers writing in Indian languages included in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution of India and English.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q.4) Exercise Surya Kiran is a joint military exercise conducted between India and which other country/countries?

- a. Nepal
- b. Sri Lanka
- c. Australia and Japan
- d. Bhutan and Bangladesh

Q.5) Consider the following statements about Hornbill festival

1. It is annually held from 1 – 10 December. The first festival was held in 2000.

2. The festival is organised by Union Ministry of Culture as an annual tourism promotional event to showcase the North East India's traditional and rich cultural heritage in all its ethnicity, diversity and grandeur.

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.6) Consider the following statements about Gangetic dolphin

1. The International Union for Conservation of Nature has listed the Gangetic dolphin as an endangered species in India.

2. The main threat to the Gangetic dolphin is the creation of dams and irrigation projects.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q.7) Consider the following statements about Anaemia Mukht Bharat

1. It is Strategy under POSHAN Abhiyaan with the aim to reduce anaemia prevalence by three percentage points every year till 2030
2. It is a 6x6x6 strategy that is targeting six age groups, with six interventions and six institutional mechanisms.

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) Consider the following statements about Power of Siberia

1. It is the first cross-border gas pipeline between Russia and China
2. It is not only central to China's energy security but also for bolstering special ties between Beijing and Moscow

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.9) Consider the following statements about National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)

1. It is a statutory organization established under the Protection of Human Rights Act (PHRA), 1993

2. It can investigate the violation of human rights or the failures of the state to prevent a human rights violation only through a petition of a person and cannot take suo moto cases.

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.10) Consider the following statements about Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)

1. It was created in 2000 post 1999-Kargil conflict.
2. The post will act as the single-point military adviser to the government on military and strategic issues and oversee procurement, training and logistics.

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.11) 1 Astronomical Unit (1 AU) is roughly equivalent to _____

- a. 100 million Kms
- b. Distance from Earth to the Sun
- c. Distance from Earth to the Moon
- d. None of the above

Q.12) The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a triennial international survey which aims to evaluate education systems worldwide by testing the skills and knowledge of 15-year-old students. It is conducted by

- a. United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture
- b. World Economic Forum
- c. Etudes Sans Frontières International

d. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Q.13) Consider the following statements about Asteroid Impact and Deflection Assessment (AIDA) initiative

1. The aim of the initiative is to deflect asteroid- Didymos from a collision course with Earth

2. It includes NASA's Double Asteroid Redirection Test (DART) mission and the Japan Space Agency's (JAXA) Hera 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.14) '301 probe' often seen in news is related to which of the following ?

- a. Investigation into Human rights violation by UNHRC
- b. War crimes probe by International Criminal Court
- c. Trade tool by USA to assert its rights under trade agreements
- d. None of the above

Q.15) Exercise HAND-IN-HAND is joint training exercise conducted between India and which other country?

- a. Nepal
- b. China
- c. Bhutan
- d. Afghanistan

Q.16) Consider the following statements

1. Political Parties Registration Tracking Management System (PPRTMS) has been introduced by NITI Aayog which will enable applicants to track the status of their application of registration with Election Commission of India.

2. The Registration of Political Parties is governed by the provisions of section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q.17) Global Climate Risk Index is released by which of the following organisation/body?

- a. United Nations
- b. World Economic Forum
- c. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
- d. International Environmental think tank Germanwatch

Q.18) Consider the following statements about Bharat Bond -ETF

- 1. It is India's first corporate bond exchange traded fund
- 2. It will hold bonds issued by public sector undertaking (PSUs) and also Corporates having market Capitalization of more than 10000 Crore Rupees.
- 3. It will provide safety, liquidity (tradability on exchange) and predictable tax efficient returns

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 2 only
- c. 1 and 3 only
- d. 1,2 and 3

Q.19) Consider the following statements about World Malaria Report 2019

1. It is released by World Health Organisation

2. 20 countries in sub-Saharan Africa and India accounted for 85 per cent of the global malaria burden in 2018

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 2 only
- c. 1 and 3 only
- d. 1,2 and 3

Q.20) Consider the following statements

1. India has become the first country to make the entire process for pilgrims going on Haj completely digital.

2. E-MASIHA (E-Medical Assistance System for Indian Pilgrims Abroad), an online system to maintain the health database of Indian pilgrims has been developed to deal with any emergency in Mecca and Madina.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 2 only
- c. 1 and 3 only
- d. 1,2 and 3

Q.21) Consider the following statements about Extra Neutral Alcohol

1. It acts as the primary raw material for making alcoholic beverages

2. It serves as an essential ingredient in the manufacture of cosmetics and personal care products such as perfumes, toiletries, hair spray

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) Uyghurs often seen in news is predominantly associated with which country?

- a. South Africa
- b. Australia
- c. Myanmar
- d. China

Q.23) Consider the following statements

1. Repo rate is the rate at which Reserve Bank of India (RBI) loans money to the banking system

2. The RBI is required by law to maintain retail inflation — which is based on Consumer Price Index (CPI) — at the 2% level (with a band of variation of 1 percentage point)

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q.24) Consider the following statements about Zero First Information Report (FIR)

1. In Zero FIR, any police station can register FIR irrespective of jurisdictional area but the investigation will be taken up the police in which place of occurrence reported in FIR.

2. It is very helpful for public as it facilitates them by not allowing to make rounds of different police station for lodging the FIR.

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.25) Consider the following statements about Fugitive Economic Offender (FEO)

1. FEO is defined as an individual who has committed offences involving an amount of 100 crore rupees or more and has ran away from India to avoid criminal prosecution.

2. Only after the Supreme Court declares the person as FEO, the Government can confiscate all his properties.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

Q.26) Consider the following statements about Finance Commission

1. The Finance Commission is constituted by the President of India under Article 280 of the Constitution

2. The 15th Finance Commission has submitted its interim report on devolution formula to President which is the first time in history where a Finance Commission has submitted an interim report.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

Q.27) Consider the following statements about Mission Parivar Vikas (MPV)

1. It is being implemented by Union Health Ministry all across India

2. The objective of the mission is to accelerate access to high quality family planning choices based on information, reliable services and supplies within a rights-based framework.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

Q.28) Consider the following statements about India State Level Disease Burden Initiative's (ISLDBI) 2018 report

1. It was released by World Bank in association with NITI Aayog

2. According to report, the average life expectancy in India would have been 1.7 years higher had the air pollution levels been less than the minimal level causing health loss

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

Q.29) Consider the following statements about Train 18

1. It is India's first engine-less train which doesn't have a locomotive to pull the coaches, rather it is a self-propelled trainset

2. The Indian-made trainset was completed at Pune's Integral Coach Factory.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

Q.30) Consider the following statements about Blue Water Force

1. Indian Navy is not considered as Blue Water Force as it is unable to carry out operations far from its borders because it needs to come back to Indian ports for refuelling or re-stocking

2. Owning one or more aircraft carriers is sometimes seen as a marker of Blue water force.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

Q.31) Consider the following statements

1. The levels of oxygen in oceans fell by around 2 per cent from 1960 to 2010

2. As oceans lose oxygen, they become more acidic that has resulted in shellfish having their shells degraded or dissolved

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q.32) Consider the following statements about Paika rebellion

1. The rebellion took place around present day Maharashtra State in 1817 and is sometimes considered as first war of independence.

2. It was led by Bakshi Jagabandhu who fought the battle against British primarily for its land revenue & land settlement policies which disrupted Tribal way of life.

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

2. persons belonging to the SCs, the STs, OBCs, minorities and women.

Q.33) Consider the following statements about Yellow Vest movement that was recently in news

1. The protests were triggered by general discontent, especially high fuel prices and cost of living.

2. It took place in Iran during early 2019 against the ruling 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.34) Consider the following statements about Pyrolysis of Tyres

1. It refers to a technique of breaking down used tyres at high temperatures (between 250°C and 500°C) in the presence of abundance of oxygen

2. It leaves fine carbon matter, pyro-gas and oil as residue and the inadequate management of these by-products poses health risks

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 Composition of Lokpal

1. It consists a chairperson and a maximum of eight members of which four need to be judicial members.

Not less than 50 per cent of the members of the Lokpal shall be from amongst the

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) Which of the following countries are generally considered as Nordic Countries

- 1. Denmark
- 2. Finland
- 3. Iceland
- 4. Norway
- 5. Sweden

Select the correct answer from the codes given below.

- a. 1,2 and 3 only
- b. 2,3 and 4 only
- c. 1,2,3 and 4 only
- d. 1,2,3,4 & 5

Q.37) Consider the following statements about Constitutional Amendment Bills

- 1. Prior recommendation of President is needed for introducing the constitution amendment bills
- 2. When Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha differs with respect to passage of Constitutional Amendment Bill, President calls for Joint Sitting of both Houses of Parliament so as to resolve the differences and pave way for its passage.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q.38) Consider the following statements about Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)

- 1. It is a statutory body established in 1987 under the BIS Act 1986 which replaced the Indian Standards Institution (ISI).
- 2. It works under the overall guidance of Ministry of Corporate Affairs

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q.39) Consider the following statements

1. Human Rights Day is celebrated on the 10th December every year to commemorate the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which was adopted by UN during its 1993 Rio Summit.

2. India's National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) is a Constitutional Body established under Article 324 to investigate the violation of human rights or the failures of the state or other to prevent a human rights violation.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are incorrect?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q.40) Human Development Index is released by which organisation/body?

- a. World Economic Forum
- b. World Bank
- c. International Monetary Fund
- d. United Nations Development Programme

Q.41) Constitution (100th Amendment) Act, 2015 deals with which of the following provision?

- a. National Judicial Appointments Committee
- b. Goods and Services Tax
- c. Constitutional status to National Commission on Backward Classes
- d. Land Boundary Agreement between India & Bangladesh

Q.42) Consider the following statements about Appointments of Judges to Supreme Court/High Court

1. Appointment of Judges to High Court is done on the basis of recommendation by Supreme Court Collegium whereas appointment of Judges to Supreme Court is done on the basis of recommendation by National Judicial Appointments Committee.

2. When the Supreme Court collegium clears the name for appointment as a Judge of High Court, Prime Minister & President have to act within the six months of receiving the recommendation from Supreme Court Collegium.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

Q.43) Consider the following statements about Gandhipedia

1. It is being developed by NITI Aayog in collaboration with Ministry of Culture.

2. The objective is to promote Gandhian philosophy and thoughts in society

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

Q.44) Consider the following statements about Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI)

1. It is released by Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in Collaboration with United Nations

2. India for the first time ranks among the top ten countries in the 2020 released index

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

Q.45) Consider the following statements about VoWiFi

1. It uses high speed Internet connection, available via broadband, to make and receive high definition (HD) voice calls.

2. This is not much different from a voice call using WhatsApp or any other over-the-top messaging platform which requires the usage of unique app designed for the purpose i.e call cannot be made from one number to another

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

Q.46) Consider the following statements about Groynes

1. A groyne is a shore protection structure which functions as a physical barrier by intercepting sand moving along the shore.

2. Groynes made of concrete are generally preferred as they are more durable and absorb more wave energy due to their permeable nature.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2

- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q.47) Consider the following statements about River Pollution

1. The presence of metals in drinking water in trace amounts is required for good health. However, when present above safe limits, they are associated with a range of disorders.

2. Mining, milling, plating and surface finishing industries that discharge a variety of toxic metals into the environment are the main source of metal pollution in 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.48) Consider the following statements about RISAT-2BR1

1. It is a radar imaging earth observation satellite

2. It is meant for applications in various fields like agriculture, forestry, disaster management support and would also serve military purposes

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.49) Consider the following statements about E-plane

1. World's first fully-electric commercial aircraft took its inaugural test flight in Bengaluru, India

2. The technology would mean significant cost savings for airlines and could help slash carbon emissions in the high-polluting aviation sector.

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.50) Consider the following statements about National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM)

1. It has been set up at Vishakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh

2. For the first time, Integrated Island Management plans including holistic island development plans have been prepared by NCSCM for implementation by coastal States/ UTs

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.51) Consider the following statements about Accessible India Campaign

1. It is being implemented by Ministry of Labour in collaboration with NITI Aayog

2. It aims at making public spaces friendly for persons with disabilities.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
b. 2 only
c. Both 1 and 2
d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q.52) Consider the following statements about Fog Pass

1. It is a GPS based Portable equipment being provided to Loco Pilots

2. It helps in alerting the crew of train about upcoming landmarks or structures, during foggy weather, through audio and visual indications

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.53) Consider the following statements about Doorstep Delivery of Public Services Scheme of Delhi Government

1. It is made available to only people who are below poverty line.
2. The high success rate in doorstep delivery is due to mobile Sahayaks' intervention who ensure that all documents are complete and attached in the right order along with the applications
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.54) Consider the following statements about Phase One Agreement recently seen in news

1. It is a trade agreement which is signed recently between USA and China
2. The deal addresses core US demand that China curb subsidies to its state-owned firms, which has allowed China to dominate global industries like Steel & Solar panels.
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.55) Consider the following statements about Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)

1. It is being implemented by Ministry of Women and Child Development which gives a benefit of ₹6,000 to pregnant and lactating mothers for the birth of the first child.

2. Its objective is to compensate women for wage loss due to child birth.
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.56) Consider the following statements about FASTags :

1. FASTag is an electronic toll collection system in India.

2. It is operated by NITI Aayog in collaboration with Private IT company – Infosys Technology Ltd.

Which of the above statement(s) are correct?

- a. Only 1
- b. Only 2
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q.57) Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C) scheme is being implemented by which Union Ministry?

- a. Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology
- b. Ministry of Home Affairs
- c. Ministry of Defence
- d. None of the above

Q.58) National Ganga Council is headed by

- a. Minister of Environment, Forests and Climate Change
- b. Minister of Jal Shakti
- c. Prime Minister
- d. Chief Minister of Ganga States on rotation basis

Q.59) Consider the following statements about Hydrogen Fuel Cell

1. The fuel cell combines hydrogen and oxygen to generate an electric current, water being the only byproduct.
2. Like conventional batteries, hydrogen fuel cells too convert chemical energy into electrical energy.

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.60) Consider the following statements about GIMS or Government Instant Messaging System

1. It is Indian equivalent of popular messaging platforms, such as WhatsApp and Telegram, for secure internal use.
2. It is being developed by National Informatics Centre

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.61) Consider the following statements about GST Council:

1. It is a constitutional body established under Article 279A of Indian Constitution
2. It is Chaired by Prime Minister of India

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a. Only 1
- b. Only 2
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q.62) Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project is at the confluence of which two rivers?

- a. Ganga and Yamuna River
- b. Godavari and Kaveri river
- c. Pranhita River and Godavari River
- d. None of the above

Q.63) Consider the following statements about the First Global Refugee Forum

1. The Forum is jointly hosted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the government of Switzerland.
2. It aims to debate and discuss the response of the world's countries to the global refugee situation

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) Consider the following statements about Indian Culture Portal

1. It is a part of the National Virtual Library of India project, funded by the Ministry of Culture
2. It is being created and developed by NITI Aayog in collaboration with Indira Gandhi National Open University.

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.65) Consider the following statements about Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF)

1. Money for this fund would be raised through a prescribed percentage of the revenue earned by the telecom licensees.
 2. The Indian Telegraph (Amendment) Act, 2003 gives statutory status to the fund which is to be utilized exclusively for meeting the Universal Service Obligation.
- Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a. Only 1
- b. Only 2
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q.66) Global Gender Gap Index is released by which body/organisation?

- a. World Bank
- b. International Council of Women
- c. United Nations Development Programme
- d. World Economic Forum

Q.67) Consider the following statements about Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI)

1. It is a statutory body established under the provisions of the Aadhar Act, 2016
 2. It functions under the overall guidance of Ministry of Home Affairs
- Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a. Only 1
- b. Only 2
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

- a. Only 1
- b. Only 2

Q.68) National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) can hear appeals against the orders passed by which of the following bodies?

1. National Company Law Tribunals
2. Competition Commission of India
3. Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India

Select the correct answer from codes given below.

- a. 1 only
- b. 1 and 2 only
- c. 1 and 3 only
- d. 1,2 and 3

Q.69) Consider the following statements about GST Council

1. GST Council is a constitutional body established under Article 279A of Indian Constitution headed by Union Finance Minister
2. Centre has 25% voting power while all the States combined have 75% voting power and for any proposal to be cleared it has to get 66% per cent of the vote.

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.70) Consider the following statements about Mahadayi River

1. Goa state capital Panaji lies on the banks of this river
2. The Kalasa Banduri project is planned across this river so as to provide drinking water to Northern Karnataka region

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q.71) Feni is a transboundary river between which two countries?

- a. India and Nepal
- b. India and Bhutan
- c. India and Pakistan
- d. India and Bangladesh

Q.72) Consider the following statements about Gandhi Citizenship Education Prize recently in news

1. It has been instituted by United Nations so as to promote Gandhian Ideals
2. The first edition of the prize would be dedicated to animal welfare.

Select the correct answer from codes given below.

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q.73) Consider the following statements about National Population Register

1. It is a register of all citizens of India who are above 18 years of age.
2. It has been decided to update NPR along with the Houselisting phase of Census 2021 during April to September 2020 in all the States/UTs except Assam

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q.74) Consider the following statements about United Nations Convention on the Rights of Child (UNCRC)

- a. Both 1 and 2
- b. Neither 1 nor 2

1. UNCRC is a human rights treaty which sets out the civil, political, economic, social, health and cultural rights of children
2. India is a signatory of the treaty but is yet to ratify it.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a. Only 1
- b. Only 2
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q.75) Operation twist recently in news is related to which of the following areas?

- a. Indian Military's strike across Myanmar border against Naga insurgents
- b. ISRO's mission to target and destroy spy satellites
- c. RBI's open market operations to manage bond yields
- d. None of the above

Q.76) Exercise Indra is joint military exercise conducted by which countries?

- a. India and Sri Lanka
- b. India, USA and Japan
- c. India and Russia
- d. None of the above

Q.77) Consider the following statements about Pinaka Missile system

1. It is developed by DRDO
2. It is a Multi-Barrel Rocket System to supplement the existing artillery gun at ranges beyond 500 kilometres to make precision hits.

Select the correct answer from codes given below.

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only

Q.78) Consider the following statements about Digital Communications Commission (DCC)

1. It is a statutory body established under Indian Telegraph Act, 1885

2. The Secretary to the Government of India in the Department of Telecommunications is the ex-officio Chairman of the DCC.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q.79) Which of the following best describes the term 'import cover', sometimes seen in the news?

- a. It is the ratio of value of imports to the Gross Domestic Product of a country
- b. It is the total value of imports of a country in a year
- c. It is the ratio between the value of exports and that of imports between two countries
- d. It is the number of months of imports that could be paid for by a country's international reserves

Q.80) Golden Triangle and Golden Crescent often seen in news is related to which field of interest?

- a. Gravitational anomalies on earth's surface
- b. USA's counter-strategy to China's string of Pearls strategy
- c. Illicit drug producing areas in the world
- d. None of the above

Q.81) Consider the following statements

- 1. Insurance penetration is measured as the ratio of premium (in US dollars) to the total population
- 2. Insurance density is measured as the ratio of premium (in US\$) to GDP (in US\$)

Which of the given statement(s) above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q.82) Consider the following statements

1. Winter Solstice is usually on December 22nd which is the shortest day of the year in the Northern Hemisphere

2. During Winter Solstice in Northern Hemisphere the North Pole is most tilted away from the Sun.

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.83) Consider the following statements about Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission

1. It is an autonomous institution of the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers

2. Its mission is to promote public and animal health in India by bringing out authoritative and officially accepted standards for quality of drugs.

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.84) Hunar Haat is an initiative by which body/ministry?

- a. NITI Aayog
- b. Union Ministry of Labour
- c. Union Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship
- d. Union Ministry of Minority Affairs

Q.85) A recent movie titled The Man Who Knew Infinity is based on the biography of _____ (UPSC CSE 2016)

- a. S. Ramanuja
- b. S. Chandrasekhar
- c. S. N. Bose
- d. C. V. Raman

Q.86) Consider the following statements with regard to Financial Action Task Force

1. FATF is an intergovernmental organization founded in 1989 on the initiative of the G7 to develop policies to combat money laundering
2. India is a member of FATF since 2010

Which of the above statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q.87) Consider the following statements about US Space Force

1. It is intended to put US troops into orbit, particularly in International Space Station, so as to protect US Space assets
2. China has criticised US of turning the cosmos into a battlefield and pursuing the weaponisation of outer space

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.88) Consider the following statements about Environment Education Awareness and Training

1. It is a centrally sponsored scheme of the Ministry of the Environment, Forest and Climate Change started in 2014

2. It aims to promote environmental awareness and mobilize student's participation for environment conservation. 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.89) Sivaramakrishnan Committee recently seen in news was constituted for which purpose?

- a. Financial Inclusion
- b. Defence Indigenisation
- c. To Suggest choice for Capital of Andhra Pradesh
- d. None of the above

Q.90) Consider the following statements with regard Kinzhal missile system

1. It is developed by India in collaboration with Russia
2. The missile can fly 10 times faster than the speed of sound and can carry a nuclear or a conventional warhead

Which of the above statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q.91) Consider the following statements about Rohtang Pass

1. It is a high mountain pass on the eastern PirPanjal Range of the Himalayas.
2. It connects the Kullu Valley with the Lahaul and Spiti Valleys of Himachal Pradesh.

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.92) Consider the following statements about Chief of Defence Staff(CDS)

1. CDS will exercise any military command, including over the three Service Chiefs, so as to be enable quick decision making

2. CDS would come in the ambit of 'Right to Information Act', in accordance with the provisions of the RTI Act, 2005.

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.93) Mach Number often seen in news deals with which of the following?

- a. Intensity of earthquakes
- b. Elasticity of material
- c. Speed of an object
- d. None of the above

Q.94) Consider the following statements about Restructuring of Railway Board

1. It will merge the different cadres within Railways into a central service called the Indian Railway Management Service (IRMS).

2. The newly constituted Board will also have some independent members, who will be highly distinguished professionals

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.95) Consider the following statements about Saptamatrikas

1. They are a group of seven female deities worshipped in Hinduism as personifying the energy of their respective consorts

2. The earliest epigraphic evidence so far for the Saptamatrika cult was recently discovered in Haryana which is also the earliest Sanskrit inscription of North India

Which of the above statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q.96) Consider the following statements about Locust Invasion

1. Locust invasions usually occurs in wet areas that receive more than 300 mm of rain annually

2. India has only one locust breeding season- from July to October

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.97) Consider the following statements about Bharatnet Project

1. It is being implemented by Prime Minister's Office in collaboration with NITI Aayog

2. It aims to connect all 2.5 lakh gram panchayats through optical fibre.

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.98) Consider the following statements about Atal Bhujal Yojana

1. It aims to improve ground water management through community participation in all states & UT of India
2. It is a centrally sponsored scheme whereby 70% of the project cost shall be through Central Assistance and the remaining 30% through State funding.

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.99) Consider the following statements about Vivekananda Rock Memorial

1. It is a monument in Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu at the Tri-junction of Indian ocean, Bay of Bengal and Arabian sea.
2. It was built in 1970 in honour of Swami Vivekananda who is said to have attained enlightenment at this place

Which of the above statement(s) given above is/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 BrahMos Missile

1. It is a ballistic missile with a range of 3000 Kms
2. It is being produced by BrahMos Aerospace, a joint venture company set up by DRDO and Russia in 1998.

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.101) Consider the following statements about Good Governance Index

1. It is being designed and released by NITI Aayog in collaboration with World Bank
2. The objective is to provide quantifiable data to compare the state of governance in all states and UTs and enable them to formulate and implement suitable strategies for improving governance

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.102) Consider the following statements about Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya

1. He was one of the early leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha, and helped found it in 1906.
2. He was staunch critic of Congress and opposed its policies & working style.
3. He founded the Banaras Hindu University for which he served as Vice-Chancellor from 1919 to 1938.

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.103) Consider the following statements

1. Increase in the Rainfall contribute to the fall in MGNREGA employment
2. PM-KISAN aims to extend direct income support for the veterans

Which of the above statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q.104) Consider the following statements

1. Somali Dervish movement was an armed resistance to the British colonial powers
 2. Somalia is a part of Horn of Africa
- Which of the above statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q.105) Uyghurs community recently in news are recognized as native to _____

- a. China
- b. India
- c. Somalia
- d. Bangladesh

Q.106) Consider the following statements

1. The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 is an Act of the Parliament of India enacted for protection of only animal species
2. Article 51A (g) imposes a fundamental duty on every citizen of India to protect and improve the environment and have compassion for living creatures.

Which of the above statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q.107) Consider the following statements

1. Dadasaheb Phalke award is given to people for their outstanding contribution to the growth and development of Indian cinema.
2. The award first presented in 1951 is presented annually at the National Film Awards ceremony by the Directorate of Film Festivals

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q.108) Which of the following are the participating space agencies of International Space Station

1. ISRO(India)
2. NASA (USA)
3. Roscosmos (Russia)
4. JAXA (Japan)
5. Canadian Space Agency

Select the correct answer from the codes given below

- a.1,2,3 and 4 only
- b.2,3,4 and 5 only
- c. 2,3 and 4 only
- d.1,2,3,4 and 5

Q.109) Consider the following statements about Poshan Abhiyan

1. It is a Central sector scheme aimed at improving nutritional outcomes among pregnant women, lactating mothers and children
2. Average utilization of the funds allotted under the scheme has been high at 89.97%, indicating success of the abhiyan.

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.110) Consider the following statements about Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)

1. The upper age limit for the CDS has been fixed at 65 years.
2. Similar to Service Chiefs, the tenure of CDS has been fixed at three years.

Which of the above statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only

- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Q.111) Consider the following statements about Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

1. The SDGs are a set of 17 broad-based global goals adopted at Rio+20-conference in 2012, and intended to be achieved by 2030
2. Kerala tops the States in progress towards the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), while Bihar is at the bottom of the NITI Aayog's SDG Index.

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.112) Consider the following statements

1. The Indian State of Forest Report is a biennial publication of NITI Aayog which

assesses the forest and tree cover, bamboo resources, carbon stock and forest fires

2. National Forest Policy, 1988 has envisaged 33% of India's total geographical area to be under tree and forest cover.

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

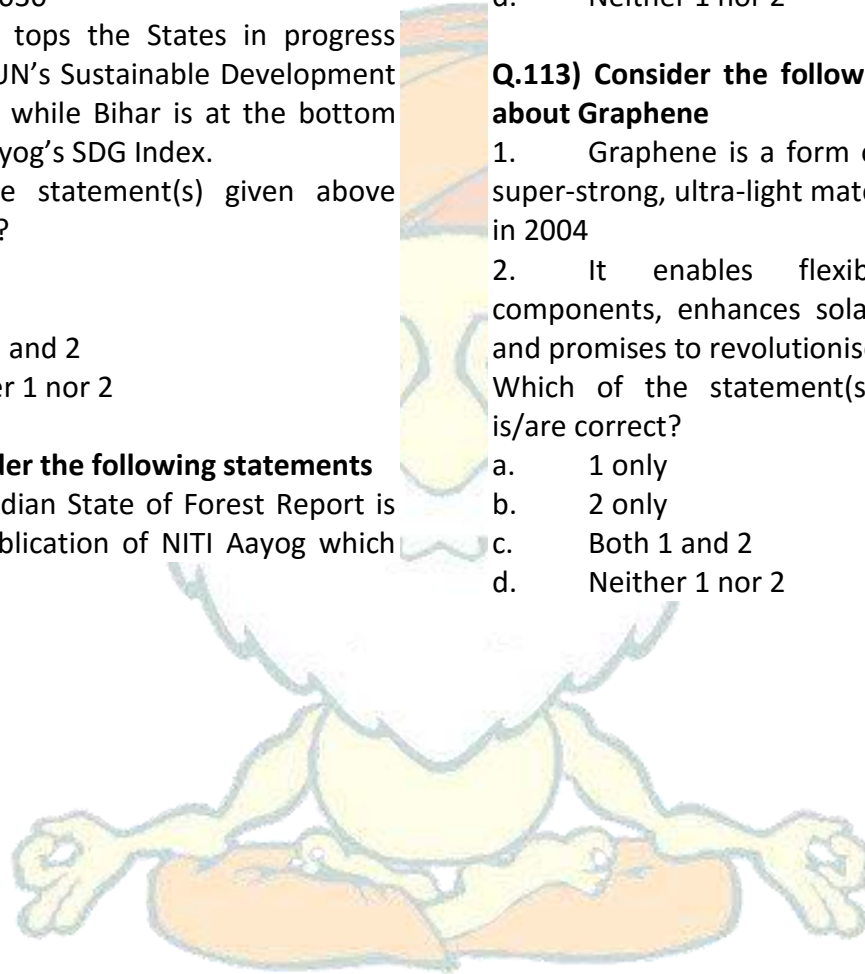
Q.113) Consider the following statements about Graphene

1. Graphene is a form of silicon and a super-strong, ultra-light material discovered in 2004

2. It enables flexible electronic components, enhances solar cell capacity, and promises to revolutionise batteries.

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



2019 DECEMBER MONTH CURRENT AFFAIRS MCQs SOLUTIONS

1	d	39	c	77	a
2	b	40	d	78	b
3	a	41	d	79	d
4	a	42	d	80	c
5	a	43	b	81	d
6	c	44	b	82	c
7	b	45	a	83	b
8	c	46	b	84	d
9	a	47	c	85	a
10	b	48	a	86	c
11	b	49	d	87	b
12	d	50	b	88	b
13	a	51	b	89	c
14	c	52	c	90	b
15	b	53	b	91	c
16	b	54	a	92	b
17	d	55	c	93	c
18	c	56	a	94	c
19	c	57	b	95	a
20	c	58	c	96	b
21	c	59	c	97	b
22	d	60	c	98	d
23	a	61	a	99	c
24	c	62	c	100	b
25	a	63	c	101	b
26	a	64	a	102	a
27	b	65	c	103	c
28	b	66	d	104	a
29	a	67	a	105	b
30	b	68	d	106	a
31	c	69	a	107	b
32	b	70	c	108	b
33	a	71	d	109	d
34	b	72	b	110	a
35	c	73	b	111	b
36	d	74	a	112	b
37	d	75	c	113	b
38	a	76	C		

